

**The C P L Youth Center of Brunswick**  
**Presentation Speech**

**Location : City of Brunswick – council meeting**

**Date : March 13<sup>th</sup> 2007**

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen of the Brunswick City Council and concerned citizens. My name is Judy Cheng, and I am here this evening to speak to you about a new charitable organization that we have founded to address a pressing need in the Brunswick and near-by area: the need for a safe after-school youth center for our local children and teens.

First, let me tell you a little bit about my new organization. The name of my new organization is the C P L Youth Center, with C, P, and L standing for “Care, Protect and Love.” We formed in early 2007 and we have just filed for 501(c) (3) non-profit status in the state of Maryland. We are a dedicated group of citizen volunteers who are concerned about the number of unsupervised children and adolescents in the Brunswick area who have no safe after-school alternatives on weekdays.

This problem is not unique to Brunswick—it is a national problem. According to the AfterSchool Alliance, at least 7 million children are unsupervised every day after school. According to the year 2000 U.S. Census, between 7 and 15 million “latch key” children return to empty homes every afternoon after class.

Although our local schools offer some after-school programs, these are limited in scope. For example, Brunswick High School’s “BELL Tutoring Program” offers tutoring after class on 2 days a week with a guaranteed bus ride home. But some of the high school’s at-risk students require more one-on-one mentoring and coaching to improve their grades, so 2 days is not enough for them. This area also has a concentration of low income families who cannot afford to pay the fees associated with the sports activities and social clubs offered at the schools, so many children are inadvertently excluded from these programs.

Also, due to the limited number of affordable leisure time options available in Brunswick on weekdays, many local kids and teens spend countless afternoon hours riding their bikes and skateboards or loitering on our busy city streets. Although we fully support children exercising outdoors, we are all in agreement that the danger of being hit by a car increases when our children engage in these activities on our busy downtown thoroughfares.

Unfortunately, some of our local kids have also resorted to petty crimes and vandalism when they roam our streets without adult oversight on weekdays. Brunswick is full of great kids, but anyone who reads the weekly police ledger in the *Brunswick Citizen* knows that a handful of misguided youth have been keeping our police officers busy. Our police officers have spent countless hours breaking up fights, filing theft reports, and counseling our kids about petty crimes over the past few years.

Bearing all of these factors in mind, the members of the C P L Youth Center initiative banded together in early 2007 in order to develop and provide our local youth with a safe, affordable, and enriching environment that will help our children mature physically, spiritually, and socially. Our long term goal is to finance a dedicated building that will serve as a permanent central youth center for kids from Brunswick, Knoxville, and the surrounding area. The Youth Center will provide our children with after school mentoring and tutoring in academic subjects; fun and educational classes that encourage leadership, creativity, and healthy living habits; and a safe and supervised environment free of drugs, violence, and danger.

We understand that this is a long term goal requiring much careful planning and coordination, and we do not expect to achieve this goal overnight. Over the short term, however, we are interested in collaborating with you, our City Council, and our local school system to identify an appropriate public space where we can set up a temporary youth center and begin offering our children the tutoring and hobby classes they so desperately need.

Our goal tonight is to introduce you to our charitable organization and we want to make sure that every step we take is in conformance with Brunswick’s local laws and ordinances, and we want to make sure that the Council is always informed of our efforts in a timely fashion.

I brought a brief fact sheet with me that describes our organization and some of the benefits that the C P L Youth Center will provide the Brunswick community. I will leave multiple copies of this fact sheet with you tonight. Please feel free to contact me at any time for more information about the C P L Youth Center initiative. We welcome your participation and support, and we are always in need of volunteers to help us.

On a final note, I would like to thank you all for providing me with this opportunity to speak before you tonight. I look forward to returning to the Council very soon to update you on our progress. Thank you for your time and consideration.