



BONHOMME
WHERE FAITH GROWS

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**BONHOMME PRESCHOOL AND KIDS DAY OUT
CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF SERVING CHILDREN**

In 1969 school for toddlers was vastly different than it is in 2019. Miniature students might expect to stay for but a couple of hours in their simple classrooms, learn basic colors and shapes, make new friends, laugh, sing and play. Although times have changed and our little friends might stay a bit longer, life 50 years later at Bonhomme Preschool and Kids Day Out remains as pure and play-based as it once was in 1969, with a newly inspired mission of helping children, faith and families grow.

Bonhomme Preschool and Kids Day Out opened its doors 50 years ago under the direction of Carolyn White in an old wing of Bonhomme Presbyterian Church. The school consisted of just two classrooms, one of three-year-olds and one of four-year-olds. After White, Susan Thornberry led the school through 1978. When Nancy Yost assumed the role of director in 1978, the school grew to host 136 children of which 50 percent were children of Bonhomme members.

In 1984 Lois Henderson, a Bonhomme Presbyterian Church member assumed the role of director and sought to enhance the academic aspect of the school. She focused on appropriate curriculum for each age group and led the school for approximately 15 years.

A volunteer-run Mother's Day Out program began with just 22 students in 1986. The program, in which families registered and paid for days for their children to attend, grew under Karen Perkins. Eventually, the program [now called Kids Day Out] moved under the direction of Barb Whitaker from 1993-2013. After Whitaker's retirement, Bonhomme Preschool and Bonhomme Kids Day Out merged into one program under the direction of Carol Prosser and an Assistant Director, Mary Lewis, was hired.

Prosser held the reins of preschool director from 1997-2013. While Henderson was charged with academic advancements, Prosser infused a deep spirituality into the program, helping even the littlest learn about Jesus and the Bible. Under Prosser, the school blossomed and grew, taking residence in an addition of the church that included eight classrooms, office space, playgrounds, and a brightly colored multipurpose room now called the Grow & Go Zone.

Sharon Rinklin, another Bonhomme member who began teaching music at the preschool in 2007 when her own children were students, was named director in 2013. She carries on a legacy of directors that have wanted the best for not only the students but their families. "Bonhomme

Preschool and Kids Day Out wants to serve and love the entire family, not just the student,” explains Rinklin. The school offers Moms in Prayer as well as MOPS [Mothers of Preschoolers] for moms and sprinkles fun events like family trips to MYSEUM, Dad’s Day, a Fall Kickoff, Annual Nativity Play, Spring Sing and Mother’s Day Tea throughout the year.

In its fiftieth year, the school abounds with life, love, and energy, serving nearly 200 students Monday through Friday from 9 am until 3 pm. The Kids Day Out program [now no longer run by volunteers] is open to children as young as six months through two years old. It offers nearly full-day care so that moms can head to work or have a large amount of time to focus and refresh. The preschool now offers multiple classrooms for two-year-olds, three-year-olds and a dual-classroom setting for pre-k students who are preparing for kindergarten. Students can extend their days at the school and add on days beyond their preschool classes.

Bonhomme Preschool and Kids Day Out celebrated its anniversary during Contemporary Worship on Sunday, September 22. All alumni and their families were invited to worship and then attended Fall Kickoff with food trucks, balloon twisters, the Bubble Bus, face painting, and pony rides!

For more information, or to schedule a tour of the school, contact Sharon Rinklin at 636.778.9315.

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Bonhomme Presbyterian Church was founded over 200 years ago, in 1816, with a pioneering spirit and a strong foundation of faith. That spirit and faith, established by our missionary founder, Salmon Giddings, has led us to join a new pioneering denomination of Presbyterians called the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO), and grow to nearly 1500 members. Our church is warm and welcoming, with an updated campus that includes state-of-the-art facilities (including the Bonhomme Preschool and Kids Day Out program) with comfortable commons, classrooms for all ages and technology to enhance worship. We are situated atop a hill covering approximately nine acres in West County, Saint Louis. Our people grow spiritually through worship in both traditional and contemporary styles, as well as Bible study, community groups, missional service and more. Bonhomme Presbyterian Church is led by a group of inspirational, highly educated and grounded-in-faith pastors. Dedicated to providing a spiritual life that is centered in Jesus, and intergenerational and missional in approach, our church welcomes people of all ages and circumstances. Bonhomme helps people grow in faith, hope, and love by proclaiming Jesus as Lord and Savior. We want to meet you where you are in your journey of faith and help you grow. For more information, visit bonpres.org or call 636.532.3486.

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