

Hope Christian Academy prepares to open in Skiatook

by Randy Bright <http://www.tulsabeacon.com/?p=5137>

I have long advocated the idea that churches should be doing more for their communities, especially in the area of education. The future of our country depends upon the current generation of children learning not only the right things, but also learning the right moral and work ethic. There is nowhere better for a child to be educated than under a Godly and Christian system.

So I was very happy to learn that there will be a new Christian school opening in August of this year in Skiatook. The school's founder, Sabrina Miller, an associate with Immanuel Baptist Church, has felt the calling to open the new school, Hope Christian Academy.

Sabrina Miller will be the technical owner of the 501(3)c organization, but the school is being treated as an outreach mission project by Immanuel Baptist. Oversight will be provided by the church and by a 3-person board of directors.

Dr Jeffrey K. Keeney has been called as a superintendent. Keeney previously served with Evangelistic Temple School in Tulsa, and most recently with Southwestern University in Bethany. Keeney holds a doctorate in education from ORU.

Initially the school will include classes K2 through 7th grade, and with each subsequent year a grade will be added each year until all four high school grades have been added. The school will operate five days per week until 4:00 each day. In addition to traditional academic classes, the school will offer a unique program called Life Experience, which will focus on ministry and vocational skills, helping the students apply their learning in challenging and enjoyable ways. While the school will teach the students about the Christian roots of America and its Founders, it also recognizes that education for this generation of children must be international in nature, so the students will learn about other countries by doing what children in other countries do, such as playing their kinds of games and eating their kinds of foods.

Science from a biblical worldview will be a priority at Hope. The school will be using the Truth in Science curriculum published by Creation Truth Foundation and the Institute of Biblical Worldview Studies founded by Dr. Thomas Sharp. Dr. Sharp holds a Ph.D. from South Florida Bible College and Seminary, a master's from The University of Oklahoma and a bachelor of science from Purdue University.

The science department of the school will be led by Shelby Smith, who has studied under Dr. Sharp and helped develop the Truth in Science curriculum.

Hope will also have an athletic program, and will also offer classes in music and art. Tuition for the school will be \$3,500 per year, which is substantially less than other schools

charge. Because there are so many families that home school their children in the area, individual classes will be offered to help support them.

At the time of the writing of this article, Hope has already had numerous families express interest in enrolling their students to begin class in August. Sabrina Miller said that there is no limit to the number of children they will accept, other than what their facilities can legally hold.

However, Hope will not be a school that any child can attend. Dr. Keeney said that each child must go through an application and interview process. Noting that other Christian schools have failed when their focus shifted from Christian education to income, he said that only children who have at least one Christian in the home will be accepted, and no child who has been expelled from a public or private school will be accepted.

Although he believes many of the students will come from families who attend Immanuel Baptist, he has already seen applicants from Hominy and the Collinsville areas. Once enrollment has been completed for this year, he believes that most of the students will come from a large area around Skiatook.

Keeney is placing a priority in hiring teachers who are not only professionally qualified, but who also have a love for God, a passion for the subjects they teach, and a passion for children. Since teachers do not earn the salaries that they could in a public school, the children of teachers can attend the school for free, and he hopes, over time, to be able to offer salaries that are more competitive with public schools.

I know that Hope Christian Academy has been a dream and a labor of love for Sabrina Miller, and it could be born in no better place than at Immanuel Baptist Church. It will fill a great need for a Christian school where there are no other Christian schools in the Skiatook area.

You can contact Sabrina Miller or Dr. Keeney at 918-396-4000 or learn more about it at www.hcaskiatook.com

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