



Off The Pews Newsletter Fall 2020



This artwork was created by Janyla Pipkins during the 2020 Virtual Summer Program. Thank you Janyla.

Sorrow and Joy

"Weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning." — Psalm 30: 5

This passage is often looked at as a way of uplifting or encouraging us as we go through various trials. It is an important passage considering we have all had our share of both joy and sorrow. However, when we really understand what is being said here it is a reminder that both sorrow and joy are daily realities.

OTP stands in this moment presently as we mourn the passing of our Director Sammie Dortch and simultaneously celebrate the impact of our amazing summer program and the incredible partnerships that were formed to make it happen.

Through an amazing partnership with OTP, Canaan Community Church, Sunshine Gospel Ministries, Hyde Park Art Center and Associated Bank we were able to provide a rich virtual summer experience for 26 middle schoolers.

Participants had the opportunity to engage in Art, Gardening and Financial Literacy for four weeks in the month of July. They experienced engaging virtual lessons, opportunities to create art and grow vegetables and flowers, as well as learn important financial planning tools they will be able to use well into adulthood. Not only was this a summer program that gave them practical tools and experiences but also offered a stipend for each student at the completion of the summer.

We were thoroughly impressed with each student and Sammie was on every Zoom call herself beaming with pride and engaging with the participants. The Monday after her passing when we had to share it with the students, it was Miss Janyla Pipkins, whose art is featured here who said, "we are praying for her and her family. She was a nice lady." While this has been a sobering summer we are thankful that OTP continues to create these kinds of experiences for underserved youth in our city and are really grateful to see the church activated to get engaged, get involved and get off the pews!

Rev. Jonathan Brooks
Senior Pastor
Canaan Community Church

Remembering Sammie: Her Life and Being

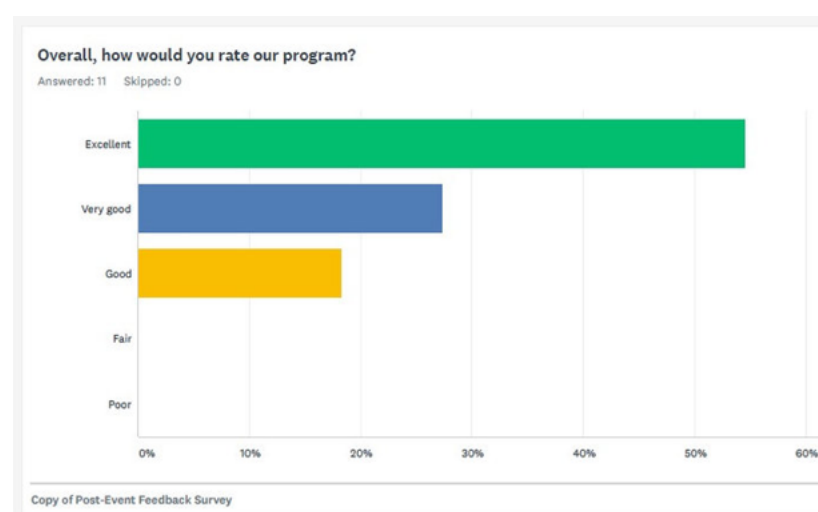
September 18, 2020 at 11 am

Apostolic Church of God
6320 S. Dorchester Avenue, Chicago

Please wear a mask and
practice social distancing.



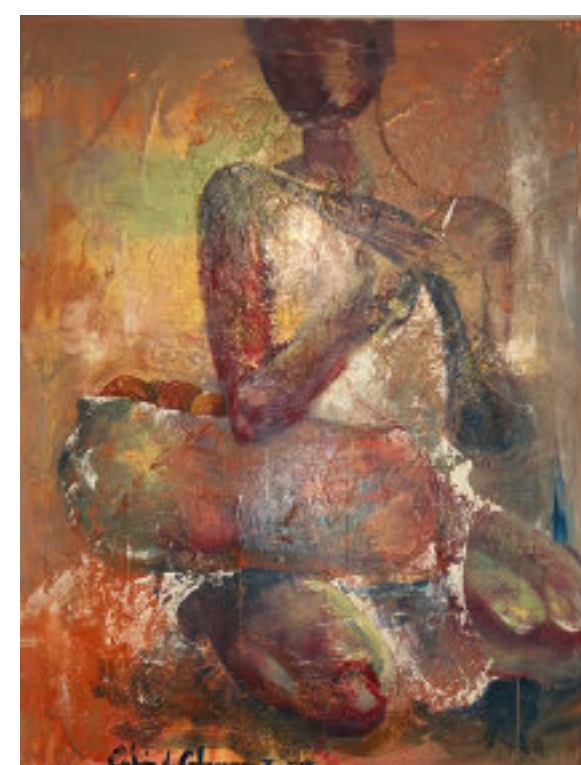
[Additional Information](#)



2020 Virtual Summer Program Participant Feedback

Thank you to the participants who provided feedback about the summer program, and to Cheryl Benson for providing those results!

[See the Results](#)



A Giver from the Heart by Jia Johnson

"I still remember my first conversation with Sammie Dortch. I remember it like it was yesterday."

Artwork from Dr. Sammie Dortch's art collection with the inscription, "A Giver from the Heart."

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Community Partners

We are very grateful to all of our community partners for their continued support. We encourage you to visit [OTP Community Partners page](#) to find links to their sites.

We would particularly like to thank these partners for organizing and/or leading the lessons in the 2020 Virtual Summer Program:

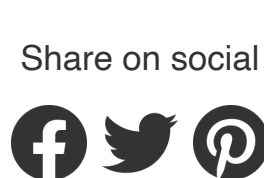
[Canaan Community Church](#) - Pastor Jonathan Brooks, Cheryl Benson, Sheila Barber, and Beverly Moores

[Hyde Park Art Center](#) - Gregory Smith and Mia Gholar

[Sunshine Gospel Ministries](#) - Donnell Williams

Thank you so very much for your leadership and dedication!

webmaster@offthepews.org



Check out our website [→](#)