

# FACT SHEET

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## Tree of Life Christian Schools Purchases Former AOL Building

### The situation:

Tree of Life Christian Schools, sponsored and supported by seven north Columbus churches through their missions programs, was founded 32 years ago to provide superior education and nurture young lives in Christ. Today, its four campuses house 675 students in programs ranging from early education through grade 12. One hundred fifty (150) teachers, faculty and staff are committed to the spiritual, intellectual and personal development of the student body. Tree of Life Christian School's rigorous academic program has been accredited by AdvancEd (formerly North Central), the Ohio Department of Education and the Association of Christian Schools International. It is not a charter school.

Tree of Life facilities have become inadequate to meet the current and future needs of the students and the school. Additionally, staff has long recognized that the school's mission would be enhanced by joining all four facilities on one campus. So, leadership embarked on an arduous and extensive search for new space. Beginning in 2006, they have reviewed more than twenty sites and/or facilities in Franklin County, particularly desiring to remain within the I-270 loop to maintain ease of access and to maintain and enhance the diversity of the student body. Tree of Life currently maintains 27% racial diversity in its student body.

As a result of this search, Tree of Life has purchased the unoccupied AOL building located on Arlington Centre Court just south of Henderson Road in the city of Upper Arlington. While the campus will require extensive investment to bring it up to date for school purposes, Tree of Life believes the facility will be an excellent fit for years to come and that it will contribute immeasurably to the already high quality of education and life in the Upper Arlington community.

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## The purchase of the AOL Building by Tree of Life is good for the city of Upper Arlington because:

- Tree of Life Christian Schools will provide income tax income greater than what has been realized from this site in many years and obviously more than what is being realized now, since it is unoccupied and has been during 2008, 2009 and partially in 2010. Tax year 2004 was the last time employment at 5000 Arlington Centre Boulevard exceeded 400. The City has not added a new employer with 100-plus employees in more than a decade.
- Tree of Life currently employs approximately 150 people and, with the growth expected from unifying its campuses, expects its staff to grow to more than 260 people within a few years of opening. Annual payroll exceeds \$2.5 million. This represents a significant increase over the payroll at the buildings in recent years when AOL had 25-40 employees. At full occupancy, the payroll would exceed \$4.1 million, which would pay \$82,000 annually to the city in income tax.
- Tree of Life will not request economic development assistance surrounding the purchase of this property.
- The campus includes a Class III data center, which has been leased to a third party – Expedient Communications – providing enhanced property tax income and income tax income for Upper Arlington. Expedient has approximately 20 employees with a payroll of over \$1 million. This portion of the property is NOT exempt from real property taxes. Tree of Life will pay that tax as well as the income tax.
- Tree of Life will provide a complement to the educational offerings in the Upper Arlington area, by offering affordable tuition and a strong Christian foundation for learning.

## The property is a good investment for Tree of Life because:

- The campus will comfortably accommodate all grade levels and administration facilities for Tree of Life Christian Schools – all on one campus. The size and configuration of the buildings are ideally suited for a school.
- Its location is ideal. Being inside the I-270 outer belt makes it easier for Tree of Life to fulfill its mission of educating children from throughout central Ohio in a Christian environment. The campus will be the only preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade Christian school in the Northwest and West sectors of Franklin County.
- The campus will allow Tree of Life to meet its vision of providing quality Christian education to a greater population.

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## More about the property:

- The buildings have 253,000 square feet.
- The renovation is a perfect example of adaptive reuse, where a building is retrofitted for a use other than that for which it was built. The renovation also furthers one of the school's goals of fostering good stewardship of the environment.
- The building across the street from the main building (the former Compuserve Fitness Facility) will also be a part of the campus and will house preschool and kindergarten. It is also currently vacant.
- This renovation will result in a much greener environment, as up to 50% of current parking spaces will be replaced by green space.
- A 65,000-70,000 square-foot addition to the facility is planned to accommodate gymnasiums and a chapel to be used for religious and educational purposes. These additions will be located on the north side of the property, closest to Henderson Road, thus eliminating any impact on residential areas. The green space along the south portion of the property will not be impacted by new construction. No new construction will be taller than the current three stories.
- Athletic fields, for team sports, will not be located on this campus.

## Fund Development:

A fund development campaign has secured funding to purchase the building and prepare the school for opening its doors upon City approval.

### For More Information:

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