



# CHIC—A FORMATIONAL EVENT

The countdown has begun as thousands of Covenant youth plan to gather together this July.

AUNE M. CARLSON

If you haven't already participated in spaghetti feeds, pancake breakfasts, car washes, bake sales, bottle drives, or bowl-a-thons, and if you haven't been approached by a high-school student at church asking to do your yard work to raise money to help them attend CHIC—you may want to ask your youth worker if your church is sending students to CHIC this summer.

In a few months, CHIC 2012 will commence at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, where it has been held since 2000. The five-day event (July 15-20) takes place every three years and brings together more than 5,000 high-school students and more

than 1,000 adults as volunteers.

Why all the preparation, all the volunteer hours, spaghetti, and fundraisers?

At CHIC, attendees can go white-water rafting and swimming, or enter tournaments ranging from ping pong to basketball to ultimate Frisbee. They can express themselves creatively in a myriad of ways, including on one of the largest canvases they'll ever lay eyes on. They'll meet new people from throughout the United States and Canada. And they'll meet people from countries around the world—Sweden, Ecuador, Mexico, Kenya, and Thailand, to name just a few. Students spend hours crafting, competing, and

contemplating alongside others, each with a story to tell. There are opportunities to meet people they wouldn't otherwise encounter, to hear about life in other countries, and to hear what God is doing through their own home church.

After the Feast gathering last summer, one parent told the CHIC office, "I'd like my daughter to see that faith is alive and well among her peers. I suspect she experiences apathy and maybe even some subtle hostility during her daily grind at her high school. I'm hoping that

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**For more information on CHIC, including schedule, registration, and activities, go to [www.chic2012.org](http://www.chic2012.org).**

CHIC will reassure her that faith in Christ is alive and well in her age group, and even cool!...I think she got a solid dose of this at the Feast this summer but I'd like her to experience the energy and spirit of the Covenant Church again as she and her peers will eventually grow up to fill the leadership roles in the church. An early familiarity and wide network are good things."

Not only will students have such opportunities, they will also hear the word of God proclaimed by a number of gifted speakers, including North Park University's campus pastor, Judy Peterson; Harvey Carey, pastor of Citadel of Faith Covenant Church in Detroit; authors Francis Chan and Bianca Juarez; storyteller Louie Giglio; and the superintendent of the Pacific Southwest Conference, Efrem Smith. These speakers will be accompanied by a host of talented musicians, including Chris Tomlin, Gungor, Lecrae, Propaganda, and the CHIC worship band.

At CHIC students are challenged to put their faith into action. They will have opportunities to connect with others and talk about what God is doing in their lives. They will be encouraged to serve people who are homeless in the Knoxville area. CHIC is an opportunity for students to see themselves as part of something bigger, to long for and experience firsthand Christlike change, and to participate in the lifelong journey of following Christ.

One way CHIC encourages attendees to broaden their horizon is through a collection for Covenant World Relief. This summer those funds will go to Covenant Kids ministries in India, Colombia, Congo, and South Sudan. Together Covenant World Relief and Covenant World Mission are partnering with national church ministries to break the cycle of poverty for children and

students by providing formal and non-formal education in those four countries.

CHIC 2012 will also highlight the Covenant's new partnership with World Vision in Congo as students will learn how they and their churches will be able to make a difference in the life of someone living on the other side of the globe. Sponsors help to provide children with access to basic necessities such as nutritious food, clean water, health-care, and education. The Covenant Church has accepted the challenge to sponsor 10,000 children. This is exciting news!

This sort of kingdom engagement around the world isn't new to CHIC. Christine Buettgen is a Covenant short-term missionary to the Democratic Republic of Congo currently engaged in language studies in France. She will be serving in community development alongside the Congolese church. On the Youth Worker Update blog last summer she wrote:

"CHIC was a transformational experience in my life. When I look back now, I know that God was orchestrating something great, and planting seeds in me that would bear fruit in the future. I went to CHIC in Knoxville, Tennessee, with my youth group from Winnetka (Illinois) Covenant Church. I looked forward to CHIC just like all of my friends—we had heard so much about it, I couldn't wait to be there! I had a feeling it would be a fun week, but I didn't know then that it would change the trajectory of my life.

"Two major things happened in my life that week. First, there was an emphasis on the importance of forgiveness. A woman who had been a victim of rape spoke to us about the necessity of forgiveness as Christians for the sake of not only those who have hurt us, but for ourselves too. That was powerful for me. I had been

holding a bitterness toward someone for years, and CHIC was when I first began the process of truly forgiving that person. Forgiveness has given me freedom to live my life without the burden of resentment.

"Second, later that week I heard a missionary from Africa speak about her work with the poor and marginalized, and I clearly felt God calling me to the life of international missions. And now I have just been commissioned to work with Covenant World Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo! It's amazing to think that what began eleven years ago in a stadium with 7,000 young people is today leading to a life of tackling injustice and poverty in Africa.

"From these two experiences, I learned that God is real, he is moving, and he cares about my life. God might not be calling everyone to be a missionary in Africa, but he absolutely made each of us with certain gifts and talents, and he has a purpose for our lives. I challenge each person who attends CHIC to listen and obey during your time there. You might be surprised at how God shows up."

Christine's story is just one of many lives changed by their experience at CHIC.

This triennial event began in 1956 when hundreds of high-school-age Covenanters gathered together as the Covenant High Congress. Through the years CHIC has been modified and diversified, innovated and revolutionized, yet a few key elements remain. The CHIC legacy is one of continued gathering for small group Bible study and devotion, large group gatherings with speakers and music, and outdoor recreation. This legacy has been carried on to become what is now "Covenant High in Christ," best recognized as "CHIC" by the thousands who attend and tens of thousands who have attended and continue to support this ministry.

By the time students arrive at the





welcome party where CHIC officially kicks off, each student, volunteer, and youth worker, as well as the entire University of Tennessee campus and its staff, have been covered with prayers, and innumerable of hours of service have been logged. The stage is set and hundreds of volunteers are ready and waiting to receive the charter buses full of teens who arrive, often sleep-deprived and hopped-up on caffeine and sugar. Since the last CHIC wrapped up, teams have been dreaming about, praying over, and planning for this week and these participants.

Needless to say, CHIC is much more than hype, fog, and lights. It is an extension of the ministry of the Department of Christian Formation, and it is the only time the youth of our Covenant family are called together from around the world. The students who attend will come to a deeper understanding of what a Covenant identity is.

It isn't common to worship and play alongside 5,000 peers for a week. For many, being on a college campus is a new and different setting. It's also an opportunity for youth workers to "be" with their

students. (It is especially helpful for youth workers who are new to a church and need to make connections with the students they are dedicated to walk alongside as well as with the larger Covenant denomination.)

CHIC, quite simply, is a time when lives are changed as high-school students come together to worship, serve, have fun, build community, express themselves, grow in their faith, or meet God for the first time.

Whether CHIC provides the first step of faith or helps pave the way toward the next significant leap in the discipleship journey, this is a time for high-school students to come together to explore what it means to be God's people. Consider how your church might join in this legacy. It may be as simple as encouraging attendance, adding a line item to your church budget for attendees in the future, or committing to pray for those who will attend this summer. Or you may choose to go to [CovChurch.org/donate](http://CovChurch.org/donate) to give to the CHIC Legacy Fund.

See you in Knoxville! ■

## Who May Attend?

High-school students are eligible to attend CHIC if: 1) they will complete grade nine, ten, eleven, or twelve in the 2011-2012 school year, *and* 2) they will be at least fifteen years old as of September 1, 2012. Students may attend CHIC a second time if they are completing grade twelve in the 2011-2012 school year. The CHIC staff would like to accommodate all students and will make every reasonable effort to include students with physical, mental, or emotional impairments who are able to function in a public school setting. Each special needs student must provide an adult companion who is at least nineteen years old.

## Registration Information

### Student Regular

Full Payment \$590

Deposit \$50

Deposit due upon registration,  
balance due May 9, 2012

### Adult

Full Payment \$545

Deposit \$50

Deposit due upon registration,  
balance due May 9, 2012

### Student Late

Full Payment \$625

Due June 15, 2012

NOTE: No new student registrations will be accepted after June 15, 2012.

## We Are Still in Need of Volunteers!

**Counselors** must be at least twenty-one years of age by September 1, 2012.

**Staff** must be at least nineteen years of age by September 1, 2012.

**Special needs companions** must be at least nineteen years of age by September 1, 2012.