

# ROCK NEWS

pushtherock.org



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## Chairman's Note



Dave Walton  
Chairman of the Board

### God At Work

A few years ago, Tom Brady, the quarterback of the New England Patriots, ended an interview on 60 Minutes saying, "There has got to be more to life than this ... this isn't all that it's cracked up to be". His interviewer asked, "What's the answer?" Brady replied, "I wish I knew, I wish I knew". This was a surprising end to an interview with one of the greatest quarterbacks of all time, considering he has three Super Bowl rings, multiple MVP awards and is a certain Hall of Famer.

At Push The Rock we interact with people like this every day, people who wonder if there is more to life, people who are not sure of their future and experience a void in their life, a hole in their heart. We see people who try to fill this void with sports, relationships, drugs, success, academics and many other things. We believe that the only thing that can fill this void is a relationship with God's Son Jesus Christ. Through this relationship we not only find that there is more to life, but we find the meaning of life.

We are thankful for the increasing number of opportunities God is giving us to share the life-changing message of Jesus Christ, which fills this void. These opportunities present themselves around the world through Push The Rock sports teams, after school programs, home school physical education classes, summer camps, clinics and prison ministry opportunities. God is at work through Push The Rock and we celebrate His work through something we call the "Rock Pile" – stories of God at work. Here are a couple of current items which we hope will encourage you as our partners in ministry:

- We minister to 25-40 kids each Wednesday afternoon at an Allentown, PA after school program
- We play soccer every Saturday with adults and teenage prisoners in San Jose, Costa Rica
- A young boy, who received a scholarship

last summer, recently came to Christ along with his father at a Push The Rock basketball league game in Souderton, PA.

- We will have an AAU basketball team in Ft Wayne, Indiana this spring
- Eric Thuma joined our staff in December
- We have five overseas trips planned this year (Costa Rica – Volleyball, Italy – Basketball, Czech Republic – Baseball, Costa Rica – Soccer, Spain – Basketball)
- Three future staff members are in the process of raising support to join Push The Rock in full time ministry
- Year round activities continue to expand in Costa Rica
- Preparatory steps are under way to open offices in the Czech Republic, Italy and Zambia
- We are expanding our inner city programs

As I reflect on the vision of the Push The Rock leadership, I am drawn to II Corinthians 10:15-16, where it says, "... we hope that your faith will continue to grow so that the boundaries of our work among you will expand. Then we will be able to preach the Good News in other places beyond you ..." We have the same passion that Paul had to go beyond and impact the world for Jesus Christ. That passion exists even when it takes us out of our comfort zone. God continues to call us to stretch our faith, both in the number of programs we offer and in the places we offer them. We covet your prayers as He continues to stretch us. Please pray that God will give us wisdom and the required resources as we expand and move forward in faith in 2011.



- (2) Christmas Classic Tournament
- (2) Welcome Eric!
- (3) Mission Trips 2011
- (3) The Ten Commandments
- (4) Costa Rica

# Mark Your Calendars!

On **April 2, 2011**, Push The Rock and Livin' the Dream will host our 1st annual **5K run** and walk in the Lehigh Parkway, Allentown. For more information or to download a registration form please visit [www.pushtherock.org](http://www.pushtherock.org) or register online at [www.active.com](http://www.active.com)

On **May 7, 2011**, we will host our 7th annual **Scholarship Golf Classic** at Wedgewood Golf course. Please join us for a fun day on the greens as we raise monies for our scholarship program.

## Christmas Clinic 2010

The second annual Christmas Clinic was conducted on Dec 29 & 30, 2010 at Bethany Bible Fellowship Church in Hatfield. 18 boys ages 8-13 signed up for a quick two day learning experience. Jared Yoder, Philadelphia Biblical University head men's basketball coach and a few of his players led the clinic and taught more than just the fundamentals of the game.

The 18 boys also heard about the importance of Jesus Christ in the lives of these players. Each young man shared about how they came to trust in Christ as Savior and what difference Jesus makes in their lives while running up and down the basketball court, as they interact with teammates, opposing players, and even the referees. The attendees were encouraged to put their faith in Christ and to live and play basketball for God's glory.

Much fun was had by all but the most important aspect of the clinic was the spiritual impact that was made on the lives of these boys. There was at least one boy that trusted Christ as Savior. This is what the ministry of Push The Rock is all about and we praise the Lord for the partnership Bethany has with them as we together seek, by the power of the Spirit, to further the Kingdom of God.

**Pastor Lou Curcio**  
Bethany BFC, Hatfield

## FIRST ANNUAL

# Christmas Classic Tournament

If you would have been in Emmaus, PA near Bethel Church on December 29 or 30, you would have heard a lot of whistles blowing, kids yelling, coaches directing, and fans cheering. This is because we ran our first annual middle school boys Christmas Classic tournament. The gym was full of energy as five teams from all over the Lehigh Valley participated in what turned out to be a highly competitive demonstration of some great basketball talent from our young players. The tournament included Faith Christian Academy from Sellersville, Bethlehem Christian School from Bethlehem, Sacred Heart School from Bath, Salem Christian School from Macungie, and our tournament Champions, Midnight Basketball from Allentown. The participants competed hard but within an environment where sportsmanship was encouraged. It was a

highlight to watch some of the boys who have grown up through the Push The Rock camps put their "Play For Christ" commitments into practice as we watched them help their opponents off the floor, encourage their teammates, and compete with disciplined perseverance. Our desire is to see these young athletes grow in their abilities, but more importantly, to grow in their relationship with the Lord, so that they can use the talents God has given them to impact those around them with the light of Jesus Christ. We trust that God will take small events like this and use them to continue building the ministry, not for Push The Rock's glory, but for God's glory and God's kingdom.



**Anne Walker**  
Lehigh Valley Regional Director



## Welcome Eric!

We are thrilled to welcome Eric Thuma to Push The Rock! Eric

officially started full-time on Wednesday, December 1, 2010.

Eric, a Messiah College grad, and his wife, Corie, an Eastern University grad, were married this past summer and have recently moved to Emmaus, PA, from Dillsburg, PA. While Eric is working at Push The Rock, Corie serves as a counselor at Kids Peace in Allentown, PA.

Having been on multiple mission trips and coached at numerous summer camps over the years, both Eric and Corie are very familiar with Push The Rock. They actually met on a Push The Rock soccer trip to Costa Rica in 2007.

Eric will officially be serving in the Missions Department, helping prepare and lead our

short-term teams that go out. However, he will spend plenty of time getting intimately involved in the planning and implementation of all of our other programs.

Eric and Corie believe the Lord is calling them back to Zambia, where Eric grew up as a missionary kid. They both have a passion for the Lord, for people and for sports and are hoping to establish a Push The Rock office that will serve as a great resource and tool for churches and people throughout Zambia and southern Africa who are looking to impact their communities for eternity through sports. Still months and possibly years away, please pray for Eric and Corie and for Push The Rock as we explore this opportunity together.

Thank you for standing with Eric and Corie as they serve the Lord with Push The Rock!



**Chico Schlonecker**  
Director of Missions and Outreach

# Mission Trips 2011

We have multiple trips planned for this summer and are excited to see how God will use them for His purposes. Please continue to pray with us that the teams would fill up and that all the necessary details, both here and abroad, will continue to fall into place! More details about the specific trips can be found on the website. Be sure to check them out and sign up for a trip today!

## Czech Republic

– A team of 6 will be heading back to Prague as we continue to partner with the church plants there, using baseball as the outreach in their communities. Our focus here is building relationships through the teaching of baseball fundamentals. Trip dates: July 8-17



## Canary Islands, Spain

– A men’s basketball team and a women’s basketball team will be heading here to work along side the local church to run basketball clinics in three different communities. Be one of the 14 headed to Spain June 23 – July 10.



**Italy** – A 10 member men’s basketball team will be heading to the Venice and Bologna regions. While building relationships there through daily clinics and games we will be able to share the Gospel with the kids and their families. Trip dates: June 23 – July 10.

**Costa Rica** - A men’s and women’s soccer team will be heading back to Costa Rica as we continue our ongoing partnership with local churches in the San Jose area. We will be actively involved in the programs they are running in the schools, prisons and detention centers in and around the capital. Trip dates: May 15-25

**Zambia** – A men’s soccer team of 10 will be heading to a rural hospital community on our first soccer trip to Africa. We will partner with the local church in Macha, southern Zambia, as we work with the schools and hospital to use a mutual love of soccer to share the love of Christ. Trip dates: July 21 – August 7.



Eric Thuma  
Sports Associate

# The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17) is the Push The Rock theme for the 2011 season. Different surveys have shown that most Christians and even many clergy cannot list all ten commands. Many people can now live their entire lives without ever having heard of or seen a copy of this great document. It has become one of the great battle grounds for civil liberty groups to have the listing of the commands removed from public schools and public buildings.

Are the Ten Commandments an archaic piece of Hebrew literature or are they something far more important? I suggest they are one of the most concise revelations that God has given to us concerning His character. The heavenly Father introduces the commands with the statement “I am the Lord your God.” The Commandments are not written to show a stern God who metes out harsh rules but

rather is a precious look at His holy nature. As we read about that nature, we become increasingly aware of our sinful nature and how our rebellious spirit separates us from Him. We can then appreciate His love and grace that restores us to fellowship through His Son Jesus. NOW the commands cease to be a list of do’s and don’ts but rather a guide for us in our Christian walk.

The commandments will be studied in a variety of settings at Push The Rock this year, including staff Bible studies, camp chapels, missions preparations and sport club devotional moments. The Board and staff encourage you to join us in reconnecting with Exodus 20. The goal is that each PTR participant and staff person might have the same passion as the Psalmist who said “Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.” Psalms 119:97

Rev. Dana E Weller  
Push The Rock Chaplain

## Feedback 101

We are using an online tool to gather your feedback. Please help! Go to [www.supportptr.com](http://www.supportptr.com) and answer a few questions.

# Be a Camp Coach

Use your summer to make a difference for eternity!



Last year, the most frequent comments we received about our summer camps described the dedication and love of our coaches. We were also blessed to hear testimonies from our coaches of how much the camps impacted their lives as they chose to use their summer to serve the Lord with Push The Rock.

One coach shared the opportunity she had to sit with a girl the last day of camp and pray with her as the young girl put her faith in Jesus Christ for the first time. What a privilege it is to hear and share in these moments!

We can plan a camp, find a location and put a schedule together, but without people being the hands and feet, Push The Rock cannot exist and more importantly we miss out on these opportunities to “impact the world for Jesus Christ...one life at a time!

If you are interested in getting involved this summer please go to our website and check out how you can make a difference for eternity.

Anne Walker  
Lehigh Valley Regional Director

# Costa Rica

This winter I had the unique opportunity to start the new year in a lively church service in Costa Rica. Our team ushered in 2011 eating great food, worshipping God in Spanish, and getting to know people who are passionate about serving God in a culture different than our own. Aside from having my wife by my side I can't think of a better way to start a year! This was just one of many highlights of our time in Costa Rica.

As a Push The Rock employee I had heard much about our new office in Costa Rica, along with the people serving there. Of course, it all sounded great, but seeing what the Lord is doing in Costa Rica first hand was an awesome experience. Participating in the ongoing ministry there, and seeing the great impact Push The Rock is already making served as a reminder to me of just how big God is.

Our team consisted of 16 individuals representing several different schools, but sharing the common goal of using our gifts and abilities in the game of volleyball to share the love of Christ. We were joined by Nattie Gomez, who serves with Push The Rock, and a group of individuals from her church who are passionate about serving the Lord through the ministry. United under the banner of Christ our diverse team was well equipped to minister in each of the locations we visited.

As a team we traveled to various communities in Costa Rica in which the church or other missionaries in the country were already working. There we set up our volleyball net and led 2-3 hour volleyball clinics with time built in for sharing our testimonies, and for our Costa Ricans friends to share the Gospel. The response to both the volleyball, our times of sharing, and the Gospel was excellent and it was clear the Lord was at work.

We typically held 2 clinics per day, but were involved in various other activities throughout our time as well. We had the opportunity to play several soccer matches, including a morning of playing against teams from one of the local prisons for boys ages 13-18. We also played matches against various volleyball teams in the evenings and shared with them why we were there, and what God meant to each of us. Not to be left out was our time spent 450 feet in the air traveling through the jungle on zip lines up to 1,400 feet long!

Being a part of this trip was extremely impactful for me personally. There were so many great elements to the experience, but for me the highlight was seeing the passion with which the Gospel is being presented in Costa Rica through the ministry of Push The Rock. God has truly blessed the ministry going on in Costa Rica and I look forward to seeing how God will continue work.



**Dustin Leatherman**

Greater Philadelphia Regional Director

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