



# A Gift To The Community

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**BETHALTO — June 28, 2011** —This past Sunday, Cornerstone Church of Bethalto and Godfrey put on its fifth annual fireworks celebration at the St. Louis Regional Airport in Bethalto. The event, which ran for four hours, saw between 8,000 and 12,000 gather together at the airport's grounds for an incredible time of games, music, food, and, of course, large amounts of fireworks.

"It's a gift to our community," Phil Schneider, the Senior Pastor of Cornerstone Church, has said over and over again as way explaining the church's motives behind the massive event. It's this same attitude that his congregation has latched onto as they work diligently to ensure that everyone has a wonderful time. By no means is this event a small undertaking. An army of 200 volunteers, wearing bright, yellow t-shirts and armed with smiles, dedicated much of the past week and nearly all of Sunday to make the Fifth Annual Bethalto Fireworks the best ever.

"Free" and "cheap" describe most of what the church offers to its community: free bouncers, games, horse rides, concerts, and a petting zoo capped off with food so reasonably priced that a family could have easily eaten for under \$20. And of course, we can't forget the fireworks display, which by all accounts was incredible. The whole day seemed – weather included – to flow right around the event, providing everyone on the grounds with a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the nations' independence with their friends and family.

While many have wondered whether or not the church uses the fireworks as a fundraiser, the simple truth is that no money has been made from holding the fireworks. Cornerstone's expenses have always exceeded any money brought in through selling food and small patriotic novelties. "It's not about making money. It's about telling the people of our community that we love and appreciate them," said Erik Scottberg, Cornerstone's Executive Pastor. "Our people have a heart to serve; they absolutely love doing this for the community, and we couldn't be more proud of them," beamed Jason Pierce, the church's Connections and Volunteering Pastor.

With Independence Day right around the corner, several other cities will hold their own celebrations complete with fireworks, and many of these displays will be awe-inspiring. The Bethalto Fireworks Celebration stands out not merely a seasonal celebration, a patriotic exhibition, or even a pyrotechnic display. It stands out as a giant “thank you” from a community within the larger community of Bethalto and the surrounding towns. It’s a demonstration of one church’s love for others. It’s a gift to the community.