



THE TORCH

a Kalamazoo Christian Schools Publication

WINTER 2022



Creation Caring

THE TORCH

The TORCH is published with the purpose of fostering strong ties between the schools and their alumni, supporters, and friends supporting Christian education. Published by Kalamazoo Christian School Association. Please inform the Association Office of address changes.

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MISSION

Kalamazoo Christian Schools
– an academically excellent Christian community equipping, inspiring, and challenging students to love and serve Christ in the world.



**KALAMAZOO
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOLS**

Undeniably Christian. Academically Excellent.

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Welcome from Marc

Marc Verkaik,
Lead Administrator & Elementary School Principal

As we look forward to spring, I am constantly reminded of the blessing of Christian Education. A few years ago we developed nine faithlines that we weave into our everyday lessons from PreK-12th grade. Each year we focus a little more intently on one of those faithlines. This year our focus is on Creation Caring from Psalm 24:1 “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.” We want the students at Kalamazoo Christian to have a more meaningful understanding of the role they play in caring for God’s creation and to appreciate the blessing of nature all around us.

This year, we started a Nature Preschool program for 3 and 4-year-old students. These students spend half of their day outdoors (rain, snow, or shine) exploring and gaining a deeper appreciation for their surroundings and using nature in their education.

Right before Christmas break, I spent a little time with them in their nature classroom as they participated in various “centers”. One center used leaves, sticks, and branches for imaginative play. Another rolled dice to place the correct number of ornaments on a Christmas tree. Another center recreated the Christmas story with rocks.

As these students use God’s creation to tell stories, play, and learn, they gain a deeper appreciation for the role they play in caring for it. They develop an understanding of what the Lord has given to us and our responsibility to steward it well. As you look through this edition of the Torch, you will read various stories on how our students are actively engaged in creation care.

We have been blessed with great resources on our campuses and it is great to see our teachers and students learn about how we can care for God’s creation each and every day.

Blessings to you and your family,
Marc Verkaik



FAITHLINES



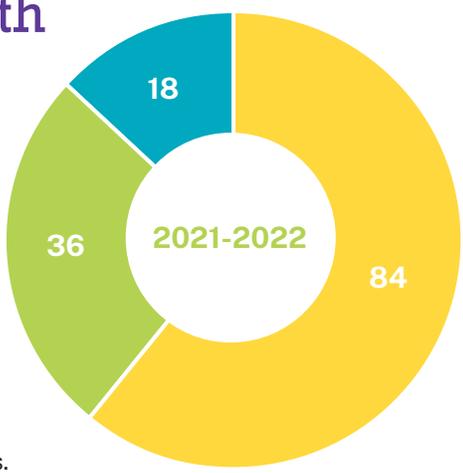
Welcome Growth

Kalamazoo Christian Schools saw another increase in enrollment this year. While the surge was not as great as last school year's 159 new K-12 students, we still saw significant growth with 138 new K-12 students. Some of our elementary and middle school grades are at full capacity. The 4th-grade classrooms started the year in the library, art room, and other locations until they could move into two large modular buildings (which hold 4 classrooms) that now rest on the grounds of the 12th Street campus.

The current elementary school, built at the 12th Street campus in 2000, and the middle school constructed in 2013, soon reached capacity, requiring the addition of two middle school classrooms in 2020. The schools broke ground for the new middle school gymnasium on September 24, 2021, and administrators find themselves once again discussing another building project to meet the continued enrollment trends.

These growing "pains" are signs of healthy growth, and we are grateful for the opportunity to embrace these families as new members of our Kalamazoo Christian community. In an effort to further welcome new families, our schools' hospitality committee* put on a Tailgate event on October 9 for all new families from last year and the current school year. 200+ people attended the tailgate party prior to the Kalamazoo United home football game against Watervliet. The event included a chili cook-off, s'mores bar, games, and more!

*We are looking for more members to join our hospitality committee. Many hands make light work! If you are interested in helping us ensure our new families feel welcomed, please contact Jaime Ekkens at the association office (jekkens@kcsa.org).



- 84** Elementary School (K-4)
- 36** Middle School
- 18** High School
- 138** Total New 2021-2022

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New Faces In Every School

Kalamazoo Christian Schools welcomed many new teachers and staff for the 2021-22 school year.



Kindergarten P.E. teacher **Candace (Kool) Bonnema** ('98) previously worked as an Athletic Trainer at South Christian High School (2002-2006) and Kalamazoo Christian (2006-2008). Candace and Brent ('96) have five children: Jordyn (9th), Jake (7th), Chase (5th), Cole (2nd), and Brooks (Young 5's). Candace enjoys traveling, baking, and physical activities/adventures with her family.



Elementary School P.E. teacher **Carla Dirksen** previously worked as a substitute teacher and in child care at Grand Rapids Christian Elementary. Carla and Jimmy ('15) are newlyweds, married in July 2021. Carla enjoys reading, cooking, and outdoor activities such as hiking, beach volleyball, running, and pickleball.



Second grade teacher **Beth (Remynse) Fryling** ('07) previously worked at Providence Christian School. Beth and Chris have two sons: Elijah (3.5 years old) and Jacob (1 year old) and a cat, Nemo. Beth loves reading, rollerblading, hiking, and camping.



Third grade teacher **Brittany McCormick** previously taught Kindergarten and Art at Barry County Christian School. Brittany and Mike have a furry family that includes Koda (husky/shepherd puppy); George, Kiki, and Meredith (cats); and Nibbles (mini rex rabbit). Brittany loves to read, bike, and work in the garden.



Fourth grade teacher **Ashley Penninga** previously taught 3rd grade at Northern Michigan Christian School. She enjoys reading, creative activities, camping, fishing, playing various sports, and hiking. Ashley also enjoys traveling and learning about other cultures; she spent a college semester studying abroad in Costa Rica.



Middle School Spanish Immersion teacher **Rosi Dull** previously taught middle school Spanish in Minnesota. Husband, Paul, is principal at Hackett Catholic High School. Paul and Rosi have two daughters in college: Rebecca (GVSU) and Danielle (MSU). Rosi likes music, reading, movies, hiking, travel, cooking, and spending time with family and friends.

Group Photo:

Front Row (left to right): Brad Heethuis*, April Thielemann, Jennifer VanderMolen, Kristin Slater, Carla Dirksen, Johanna Martinez

Back Row (left to right): Brittany McCormick, Ashley Penninga, Megan Sloterbeek, Carolyn Whitaker, Corey Scheffers*, Beth Fryling, Malena Schrauben, Saara Spitzer*, Rosi Dull, Candace Bonnema

**Hired prior to 2021-22 school year*



Eighth grade teacher **Malena Schrauben** previously taught at Portage Central Middle School. Malena and Glenn have three children; Makai (2nd), Marek (Young 5's), and Marea-Joy (PreK 3's); and two dogs: Eos and Butch. Malena enjoys tennis, camping, the beach, and spending time with her family.



High School bible teacher **Kristin (Blamer) Slater** ('99) previously taught academic support at Tree of Life School. Kristin and Joshua have three children-Brayden (8th), Rylee (6th), and Lizzie (3rd), and two dogs-Gus and Annie. Kristin loves cycling, church activities, and family vacations.



High School language arts teacher **Megan Sloterbeek** has been substitute teaching since graduating from Calvin College. Megan loves to watch TV and movies, read books (especially classics and non-fiction), write, shop at thrift stores, and spend time with friends and family.



Third grade teacher **April Thielemann** was a K-6 Educational Specialist and K-12 Theater Arts teacher at Logos Public Charter School. April and Ben have a daughter Bella (9th grade), son Gavin (5th grade), and a terrier mix named Willow. Megan enjoys traveling with family, watching documentaries, reading a good book, hiking, and drinking coffee.



Nature Preschool teacher **Jennifer VanderMolen** previously taught Spanish Immersion and English preschool at Grandville Christian School. She has a cat named Marsh. Jennifer enjoys reading, crafting, hammocking, hiking, and camping.



High School Choir Director, **Carolyn Whitaker**, has taught music for 19 years and been a choir director for 15 years. Carolyn and Ryan have two children: Otis (2nd grade) and Finley (Kindergarten), and a cat named Samson. Carolyn grew up in Tokyo, Japan as a missionary kid, so many of her interests stem from there, including her love for big cities, sushi, and sumo wrestling.

Creation Caring



PHOTO BY: AMIRAH GOOD

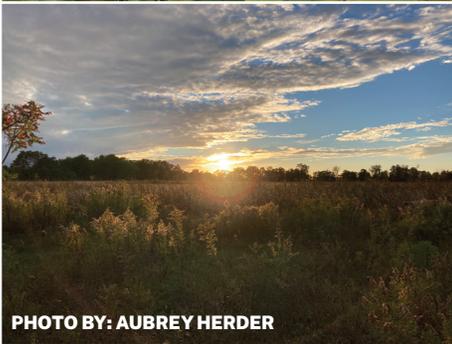


PHOTO BY: AUBREY HERDER



PHOTO BY: FAITH TERMOLEN

Faithlines

“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.” Psalm 24:1

Kalamazoo Christian Schools pursues a vision that each graduate will become a “disciple who transforms the world.” Each year our schools focus intently on one of nine qualities of discipleship (Faithlines). When put into practice, these qualities will develop lifelong disciplines in our students that will impact their character, their relationships, and their world. These nine Faithlines are Beauty Creating, Creation Caring, Faith Nurturing, God Glorifying, Image Reflecting, Justice Seeking, Kingdom Building, Stewardly Living, and Truth Pursuing.

This year’s Faithline is Creation Caring. From our new nature preschool to our high school, students are all learning about how to appreciate and care for creation in ways that honor God, the earth, and all who live on it. See page seven for an article about our new nature preschool, page nine which highlights creation-caring animations in 7th and 8th-grade technology class, page ten for a look at eighth grade recycling, and page eleven for an article about a high school field trip to Tiller’s International.

Our fall all-school chapel unified our K-12 students on the 12th Street campus with a focus on our Creation Caring theme. Older students buddied up with younger students to walk around the outside of the PreK-8 building. Along the way, buddies stopped at numerous Creation Caring stations. At one station, students sang “This Is My Father’s World”, and at another they finger-painted leaves.

One particularly special station was Mitchell’s Bench. Mitchell was a student at KCS from 4th-6th grade. In 8th grade, Mitchell passed away in a tragic accident. Mitchell’s classmates honored him by placing a memorial bench outside the school. During the all-school chapel, students had the opportunity to share Mitchell’s story and also to notice and thank God for the beautiful creation surrounding Mitchell’s Bench.

This special chapel was a great opportunity to participate together in God’s Creation as a unified school community. Our hope and prayer are that all of our students develop a life-long love, appreciation, and stewardship of all that God has made.



PHOTO BY: CONNOR TUIN



PHOTO BY: TARA MACIAS



PHOTO BY: LILY DYK



PHOTO BY: CLAIRE PSCHIGODA

Creation Caring

NEW Nature Preschool

On their first nature walk of the school year, nature preschool teacher Jennifer VanderMolen had her students stop in the middle of the woods and stay completely silent (a tall order for preschoolers!). As they listened closely to the sounds of birds singing, insects chirping, and the wind in the trees, one little boy couldn't stand the five seconds of silence any longer and had to shout out "I hear nature!"

Every day the 3's and 4's nature preschool classes have the privilege to not only hear nature, but also see it, smell it, touch it, and interact with it. Jennifer loves being able to tell kids in their Oaki all-weather suits "Yes, you can touch that bug" or "Yes, you can stomp in that mud puddle". Jennifer and teacher assistant Carlie Southland constantly look for opportunities to use nature as a tool to learn counting, colors, and shapes. "How many bugs do you see under this log?" "Find a yellow leaf." "Make a triangle out of these twigs."

Preschoolers start their day indoors for some quick tabletop time, a check of the weather, and the long process of donning their Oaki suits. Then students trek to their outdoor classroom, which includes white picnic tables, an outdoor play kitchen, stumps, and weather-proof deck boxes with plenty of supplies. Outside this area, meadows, fields, and woods are their bigger classrooms: logs, boulders, a soybean field, and wooded trails all provide countless learning opportunities for these young minds. An anonymous donor recently gifted a shed for when the class needs to get out of the elements for a while.

Jennifer feels tremendously blessed to teach these young creations about their Creator within a Christian school community. "You can't have a nature preschool without talking about the Creator." When she asks her students "What is the most important part of God's creation?" kids call out their favorite animals: "Cheetah!" "Dolphin!" "Snake!" What a privilege to be able to remind them, "No, it's you! God made you and you're the best of all His creation."

And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. Genesis 1:31

Students see the beauty of creation, but they also see the brokenness of our world with the death of a caterpillar or a decaying tree. But this provides opportunities to talk about how they can care for God's creation and treat it with gentleness and respect.

The new nature preschool has room to grow. Both classes are at full capacity with a waiting list for next year. Jennifer has dreams of a vegetable garden and a more permanent, weather proof structure. She is grateful for all of the help and support she has received from parents, teachers, and staff. Humility and flexibility have been key: having the humility to ask for help and the flexibility to meet the challenges of unpredictable weather and a brand new program.

Jennifer says she can look back at the end of each day and say, "It was very good." Every day the 4's class also declares God's goodness by singing the hymn "All Things Bright and Beautiful".

*The last verse says:
He gave us eyes to see them and lips that we might tell
how great is the Almighty who has made all things well.*



PHOTOS BY: JENNIFER VANDERMOLLEN



Excitement At The Elementary

Spanish Immersion



As a college Spanish instructor for 30 years, a dual language educator in the PreK-12 school system for 20 years, and co-owner of a small business that publishes foreign language learning materials, I peruse articles daily about dual language learning in our country. Too often, I read editorials, articles, and comments about the “negative effects” that dual-language learning could have on our young learners. Nothing could be further from the truth.

No research-based evidence exists showing academic advantages to “English Only” learning. According to the National Center for Learning Disabilities, “Bilingualism does not, in any way, harm a child’s intellectual development. In fact, researchers are starting to demonstrate that bilingualism has cognitive benefits.”



Young children that study another language develop better problem-solving skills, become more autonomous, and are better able to deal with ambiguities. Their brains are more flexible and they are able to use information in new ways. They are better at listening and resolving conflicts.

And, mull this over: as an adult, you may have cognitive superiority over young children but they are superior learners to you in the domain of language. Once they hit their teen years, their ability to learn a foreign language is drastically reduced.

I came from a monolingual, English-speaking home and absolutely loved foreign languages! My elementary school did not have any dual language programs for children, so I had to wait for high school, where I was allowed to study Spanish, French, and Latin simultaneously.



When I shared with my Dad that I wanted to major in Spanish in college and pursue a master’s degree in the language, he was puzzled but supportive. Thanks to his support and my language studies, I’ve managed to make an excellent living over the year — all because no one ever squashed my desire to study languages.

So, the next time you weigh in on the topic of dual-language learning, stop for a minute and consider all the benefits of exposing a child to another language.

This is an edited version of the full editorial, titled “Willbur Celebrates Children Learning Foreign Language” which appeared in the Pharos-Tribune (Logansport, IN) on May 14, 2016.



Middle School Math Triathlon



Last April, some stellar middle-school math students used their God-given talents to compete in the Calvin University math triathlon. While it looked a little different due to COVID restrictions, students still had the opportunity to get off campus for a few hours to compete. Students participated in an individual round, a team round, and a relay.

In the individual round, students took a test to flex their math muscles and see what they remembered from their classroom learning. In the team round, students from different grades got together in groups to collaborate on some difficult logic problems. Lastly, in the relay round, students had to run to a testing table, solve a math problem as fast as possible, and then run back so the next student could solve a problem.



Shout out to Mrs. Batts for hosting practices before the competition - her relay practices really paid off! Overall, we placed second out of nine schools. Congratulations to all who participated!

Here were our individual winners per grade level:

- 8th: Carien Ybema, Luke Birchmeier
- 7th: Zach Leonard
- 6th: Josiah DeJong, George Haan, Tyler Birchmeier
- 5th: Kailea Weeks, Eli Tressel, Jada Jager

Submitted by Christine Webb, 7th Grade Teacher



Middle School Matters

Technology

In technology class, 7th and 8th graders created short animations that represented "Creation Caring". Seventh graders practiced creating GIFs with four different digital resources. Eighth graders were taught how to use Google Slides to create animations that were ultimately published online. In both classes, one of the GIFs they created needed to focus on this year's theme, Creation Caring.

Mrs. Tarnutzer has the 5th grade students come in weekly to help care for the technology classroom. With washable clothes they clean computers and headphones to eliminate waste.



TRIP

Instant TRIP

The Association Office has a large selection of gift cards available for purchase every business day (including days off), and the 12th Street Office also has Meijer and Speedway available. You can contact TRIP at trip@kcsa.org.

Weekly TRIP

An even wider selection of gift cards is available for purchase on a weekly basis. Orders received by Wednesday at 8 am at either the 12th Street Office or the Association Office will be processed and available later that day. You can either pick up your order at the office or have it sent home in your student's backpack.

Raise Right

The greatest selection of gift card options (over 750) is available through the Raise Right app. Your e-gift cards are delivered to the app within minutes and are easily reloadable. You can also order and reload physical gift cards on the app.

Use these cards online or in stores. Find detailed information, including registration, instant, and weekly TRIP forms at:

www.kcsa.org/advancement/trip-scrip



8th Grade Recycling

Heather VanDyke's 8th-grade science class completes a unit on recycling and creation caring at the start of every year, but she notes that each group of students brings a unique focus and perspective on different areas of God's creation. This year, students created unique and innovative recycling-themed projects that were put on display or put to work throughout the middle school building.

One group of students created a bright and colorful recycling container. Since people tend to not see items they become overly familiar with (like a blue or green recycling tub), the students decided to make their container one that commands attention, painting it with bright vibrant colors and creation-themed images. Some students used recyclable materials to make pieces of art. Another created a recycling box that was in use in the classroom with a sign reading "Please wash the food off your plastic." All of the students found practical ways to promote recycling within the school and hopefully took those messages home as well!

Heather shares, "Caring for God's Creation is an attitude that we can learn when we are young and carry with us our whole lives. Like so many things that God asks of us, He wants us to be faithful first in the little things - like picking up our own trash, thinking about things before just throwing them away, choosing what we buy with care - so that we can also be trusted with the big things."

Middle School Matters



ArtPrize

Our 7th and 8th graders traveled to Grand Rapids last September to visit the bi-annual exhibits of Art Prize. Each class visited on separate days but had similar experiences. Each day started with a special tour of the Van Andel Public Museum. After lunch, the kids separated into chaperoned groups and meandered through much of the city.

Students found art in a variety of sizes and places and from all around the nation and the world. They discovered large and unique sculptures in water fountains, near trees, on fences, along the side of the road, and hidden on business properties. Students were even able to climb on some of the sculptures. Many local hotels and buildings displayed art inside as well: beautiful portraits painted on old rugs, unique photography, collaged landscapes, and more.

Students also had the wonderful privilege of speaking directly with some of the artists, learning about the process, medium, and time that artists put into their work. The volume of art pieces and the opportunity to meet and talk with the artists really encouraged good thoughts and conversations with the kids.

Art Prize was a very enlightening experience for the middle schoolers. As we later reflected on the experience, we discussed the beautiful, God-given talents so many artists have. We also noted the value of looking at art from the Christian perspective.

Submitted by Anne Brouwer



Eagle Scout

The Pathfinder District of the Southwest Michigan Council of the Boy Scouts of America and Troop 244 take great pleasure in announcing that Jonathan Patrick Shires ('24) earned the rank of Eagle Scout by the Eagle Board of Review.



An Eagle Court of Honor Ceremony honored Johnny for his achievement on August 15, 2021. To achieve this high honor, Johnny earned 23 merit badges, attended 25 camps and trips, and served his troop in many leadership roles. For his Eagle Scout project, Johnny built a gaga pit to the delight of many elementary school kids at Kalamazoo Christian Elementary School. Johnny collected \$1,200 in pop cans to fund the supplies needed for the gaga pit, which he assembled with the aid of seven other Scouts.

Johnny learned leadership skills, wilderness survival skills, first aid, finance, and many other skills that he can carry into college and adulthood. He is an extreme downhill skier, loves to fish, and plays basketball and soccer for Kalamazoo Christian. Johnny plans to attend college after high school and maintain his love of basketball. He is a member of Valley Family Church Youth Group and Radiant Church in Portage, Michigan.

Your Kalamazoo Christian family is proud of you and your accomplishments, Johnny!



High School Extras

High School Field Trip

On a cool, cloudy October day, students in my Current Issues in Political Science class visited Tiller's International in Scotts, Michigan. The field trip fit well with our unit on Creation Care and the school's theme.

Tiller's International's stated mission is "to collaborate with small-scale farmers in developing countries to improve food security concerns in their communities".

The organization is working on major projects in Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Mozambique. These projects are aimed to locally source and maintain appropriate agricultural technologies for farmers who are facing challenges from climate change.



An example of how their engineers and development specialists aid local populations is having the local community prioritize their agricultural problems, such as a plow that has the wrong angle because it was designed outside of the region. Tiller's will then think about local resources, infrastructure, culture, local soils and nutrients while helping to design an appropriate plow for that population. Simple modifications to the implements can impact the amount of food production and lessen the amount of human labor. For example, one team of oxen can plow the same amount of land in a day with 2 or 3 people that 20 people would do by hand.

The organization honors local know-how and generations of experience while helping farmers tweak their current technology to meet the needs of their community more efficiently and sustainability. We found that Tiller's International considers all kinds of systems to create and evaluate sustainability, such as marketing, economics, agriculture, gender roles, infrastructure challenges, internal conflict, migration, and climate change. Tiller's International offers college internships and classes to the public interested in their work.

Submitted by Tara Macias



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2021 ATHLETES!



INDIVIDUAL STATE TRACK & FIELD SPRING 2021

CHAMPION - TESS VANDYK

Shot - 39' 3" 1st Place

Disc - 110' 10" 1st Place

Evan Triemstra, Kyle Hoogenboom, Nathan Koetje, Isaac Bogard -
4 x 400 Relay 3:39.60 9th Place

Olivia Penzotti
High Jump - 4'10" 8th Place

GIRLS GOLF

The Fall 2021 Girls Golf season was a historic season of many "firsts". 1st Place in the KVA league, the school's 1st Regional Title and first team trip to the State Tournament, finishing 6th overall in Division 4. Six Varsity players achieved All Conference or Honorable Mention Awards in the KVA. Departing seniors Lauren Fox, Mikaela West, Josie Russell, Alyssa Ebbeler and Neve Skalla will leave behind an excellent standard for Comets Girls Golf of the future!

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL VARSITY

Girls Varsity Volleyball had a great season. They are SAC and District champions. Their final record was 31-7-3.

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL JV

The girls Junior Varsity Volleyball team had a successful season. They had a strong group of returning sophomores

TEAM STATE FINALISTS & REGIONAL CHAMPIONS SPRING 2021



GIRLS TENNIS



BOYS GOLF



BOYS TRACK AND FIELD

and incoming freshmen. They won all but one of our conference games (9-1). The team stayed competitive with large schools, and won one tournament and came in as runners up for two more! And the best of all, they played and defeated Portage Northern twice!

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL FRESHMAN

The Freshman Volleyball team consisted of 11 players this Fall. They built a record of 13 wins, 7 losses, and 2 ties. A big win was at the Schoolcraft Tournament when they lost the first game to Otsego and then won the second and third game! The girls worked hard in practice, learned to play together, and their skills improved.

CROSS COUNTRY

The men's and women's Cross Country teams had a fantastic season this past fall. Both teams won the league and both teams won the regional championship for

TEAM STATE FINALISTS & REGIONAL CHAMPIONS FALL 2021



GIRLS GOLF



GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY



BOYS CROSS COUNTRY

the 2nd year in a row. State finals week was a difficult week as the team mourned the loss of Dawson Lute, who was a big part of our Cross Country team. Going into the state finals meet, the runners had mixed emotions but had the goal of performing at a high level. The women's team placed 2nd in the state and the men's team placed 3rd, making Kalamazoo Christian one of the best Division 4 Cross Country programs in the state.

BOYS TENNIS

Junior Varsity Tennis had a great year with their team captain, Junior Joey Boel leading them to a 4-3-1 record. A highlight of the year was a solid 4th place finish at the Allegan Tournament where they were by far the smallest school there but ended up winning against a number of division 1 and 2 schools. They won their share of matches, learned a lot, and improved a great deal. Oh, and consumed a lot of ice cream! Another solid season!

Sports Update

TEAM DISTRICT WINNERS FALL 2021



UNITED FOOTBALL



GIRLS VOLLEYBALL



BOYS SOCCER

SIDELINE CHEER VARSITY

The Varsity United Cheer season was a successful return to glittery poms and hyped fans! The cheer team supported the Varsity United Football team through the regular and the cold snowy play off season! The cheerleaders were not only amazing under the lights on Friday nights but also bright and early Saturday mornings coaching the United Rocket Cheer teams. We had a young team of ten freshmen and one sophomore, and we look forward to growing in numbers next season. GO UNITED!!!

BOYS FOOTBALL JV & VARSITY

Boys Varsity Football ended the season as District Champions and a record of 8-4. Six of the players received awards. The boys Junior Varsity team ended their season with a record of 4-4-1.

BOYS SOCCER JV & VARSITY

Boys Varsity Soccer ended their season as District Champions with a final record of 9-10-2. Eight of the players ended with individual awards.

COMET BOOSTERS

The Comets Boosters Club organizes fundraisers to enhance our students' athletic experiences and community building opportunities. Fundraisers include a Fall clay shoot, Summer golf outing, and Spring flower sale. Boosters also raise funds through corporate sponsorships and concessions. Every donation, volunteer, and contribution makes a difference. Comet Athletics benefits from Boosters and your support.

COACHES OF THE YEAR

BRIAN SEIFERT	SPRING 2021 State Boys Golf Coach of the Year, Division 4
TERRY REYNOLDS	District Softball Coach of the Year
JAY ALLEN	FALL 2021 District Boys Soccer Coach of the Year
JEFF OFFRINGA	Regional (and state runner up) Boys and Girls Cross Country of the Year, Division 4
TROY AYOTTE	Regional Football Coach of the Year
MIKE SCHIELD	Regional Girls Golf Coach of the Year

SUMMER 2022 JUNIOR SKILLS CAMPS

More information to come after spring break. All camps are \$53 per camp.

BOYS BASKETBALL		
Grades 3-5	June 13-16	3-5 pm
Grades 6-8	June 13-16	1-3 pm
BASEBALL		
Grades 3-8	June 20-23	10 am-noon
SOFTBALL		
Grades 3-8	June 20-23	10 am-noon
CHEER (UNITED TITANS)		
Grades 3-8	June 20-23	10 am-noon
SOCCER		
Grades K-2	July 18-21	8:30-10 am
Grades 3-4	July 18-21	10-11:30 am
Grades 5-6	July 25-28	8:30-10 am
Grades 7-8	July 25-28	10-11:30 am
FOOTBALL (UNITED TITANS) @ HACKETT		
Grades 1-4	July 12-14	5-6:30 pm
Grades 5-8	July 12-14	7-8:30 pm
GIRLS BASKETBALL		
Grades 4-6	August 1-4	2-4 pm
Grades 7-8	August 1-4	4-6 pm

ACADEMIC ALL STATE

TEAMS - SPRING 2021
Softball 2021
Girls Soccer 2021

INDIVIDUAL - SPRING 2021
Isaac Bos - Track & Field
Avery Ekkens - Soccer
Zoe Hazelhoff - Softball
Tess VanDyk - Track & Field

TEAMS - FALL 2021
Girls Cross Country
Boys Soccer

INDIVIDUAL - FALL 2021
Rachel Allabaugh - Cross Country
Isaac Bogard - Cross Country
Isaac Bos - Cross Country
Willem de Jong - Football
Lucas Dommer - Football
Collin Durian - Football
Aubrey Herder - Cross Country
Nick Mitchell - Cross Country
Benjamin Netz - Football
Reid Stilson - Football
Annika Sytsma - Cross Country
Konraad VanDyke - Football
Hope Zichterman - Cross Country
Lucas Stecker - Soccer
Tucker Seelbinder - Soccer

COACHES VOTED

INDIVIDUAL ATHLETES
CROSS COUNTRY - FALL 2021
Rachel Allabaugh - All Conference
Aubrey Herder - All Conference
Annika Sytsma - All Conference
Hope Zichterman - All Conference
Alaina Klooster - All Conference, All State
Isaac Bogard - All Conference, All State
Isaac Bos - All Conference, All State
Nick Mitchell - All Conference
James VanderDussen - All Conference

GOLF - FALL 2021
Alyssa Ebbeler - All Conference
Josie Russell - All Conference
Kylie Gernaat - All Conference
Jordyn Bonnema - All Conference

VOLLEYBALL - FALL 2021
Ellie Batts - All Region
Reagan Broekhuizen - All Conference, All Region
Makenna Ekkens - All Region
Marisa Fetterley - All Conference, All Region
Holland DeVries - All Conference, All Region, All State-HM

UNITED FOOTBALL - FALL 2021
Willem de Jong - All Conference
Brandon DeVries - All Conference, All Region, All State
Collin Durian - All Conference
Reid Stilson - All Conference
Dawson Zuiderveen - All Region
Will Zuiderveen - All Conference, All Region

SOCCER - FALL 2021
Ethan Bouma - All Conference, All District
Brandon Miller - All District
Tucker Seelbinder - All Conference, All State
Lucas Stecker - All District
Thomas Batts - All District
Eli Dyk - All District
Johnny Shires - All District
Parker Bashaw - All Conference, All District

Financial Update

Crossing the Finish Line

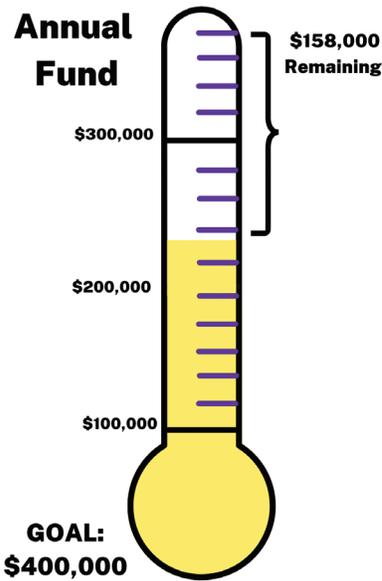
**Finish Line
2021-2024**



The Crossing the Finish Line capital campaign, launched in spring 2021, has raised a total of \$2,666,466 as of late January 2022! The 5K Color Run on August 24, 2021, raised funds and paved the way for the gym's groundbreaking a month later on September 24. We have \$802,678 left to raise in order to completely eliminate our debt and an additional \$214,000 left to raise in order to fully fund the middle school gymnasium project.

Construction on the gym began last fall and students and staff alike eagerly watch the daily progress even during these winter months. Middle school students can't wait to use their brand new gym next fall, and the elementary school students are equally grateful to have an entire gym that they can call their own. A huge thank you to those who have generously donated to our Finishline campaign!

The Kids Auction on Saturday, April 30 will raise funds for tuition assistance through our Annual Fund, which keeps the cost of Christian education affordable for our families. Without the \$400,000 we seek to raise each year, many families would be unable to send their kids to KCS. If you haven't yet given to the Annual Fund this academic year, we ask you to prayerfully consider giving. Your gift will make a huge and lasting impact on our students and families.



IN MEMORIAM

Farewell Faithful Friends

MEMORIAL DONORS JANUARY 1, 2021 - DECEMBER 31, 2021

The Kalamazoo Christian School Association, Kalamazoo Christian School Foundation, and Kalamazoo Christian Booster Club received memorial contributions on behalf of the following individuals who passed away during 2021:

Ruth Baas (Class of 1942)	Johanna Mejeur (Parent and Grandparent of Alumni)
Edgar Bosch (Parent & Grandparent of Alumni; Ed taught at KCS for 43 years)	Nancy (Triemstra) Miersma (Class of 1973)
Charlotte Burchett (Grandparent of current student)	Richard Modderman (Class of 1953, Parent and Grandparent of Alumni)
Mary Burnham (Grandparent of current student)	William Newhouse (Class of 1947)
Garret Doorlag (Parent of Alumni)	John Oosterbaan (Class of 1959, Parent of Alumni)
Richard Doorlag	Jerry Rozema (Parent and Grandparent of Alumni)
Cheryl (Izenbaard) Heerlyn (Class of 1967, Parent of Alumni)	Betty Schaap (Parent and Grandparent of Alumni)
Robert Herder (Class of 1949, Parent and Grandparent of Alumni)	Phil Siegfried (Parent of Alumni)
Paul Hoogenboom (Class of 1958, Parent and Grandparent of Alumni)	William Sootsman, Jr. (Parent of Alumni)
Pauline "Ruth" Jepkema (Parent of Alumni)	Carol (Engberts) Sopjes (Class of 1953, Parent of Alumni)
John Kloosterman (Class of 1949, Parent of Alumni)	John Thomasma (Parent of Alumni)
Nellie Kroeze (Parent and Grandparent of Alumni)	Randy Vandermay (Class of 1978)
James Lemmer (Parent and Grandparent of Alumni)	John VanderPloeg (Class of 1952, Parent and Grandparent of Alumni)
Helen Linders (Class of 1945)	Norma Veldkamp (Parent of Alumni and Grandparent of Alumni)
Dawson Lute (Class of 2023)	Evelyn (Mulder) Wenke (Class of 1964, Parent and Grandparent of Alumni)
Garrett Mejeur (Parent of Alumni and Grandparent of Alumni)	Shirley Westra (Parent of Alumni and Grandparent of Alumni)

SECOND IMPRESSIONS Appreciation Picnic

On Wednesday, September 22 at the Oshtemo Township Park, the "Touch O' Dutch" and "The Lunch Box" food trucks served over 100 volunteers a delicious picnic lunch. In an effort to recognize the extra hard work and dedication that has gone into the last year and a half, the Second Impressions Board of Directors decided to hold a Volunteer Appreciation Picnic. Even though we hadn't been able to get together for a large event in a while, we wanted to celebrate our volunteers, who are the reason that we have been able to stay open for business this year. Thank You, Volunteers!

Submitted by Patti Gruizinga



THE ALUMNI connection

Alumni Babies



Emerson Wilder
1/3/2021
George Hines '04 & Stephanie



Cecilia (Lia) Joy
2/20/2021
Joe Cullen & Bethany Stripp '08



Shiloh Elizabeth
4/17/2021
Ty Monroe & Summer Bouma '01



Juliet Jo
5/19/2021
Greg Livingston & Sylvia Schering '11



Josephine Banks
5/24/2021
Taylor West & Maria Havenaar '00



Ayla Mae
6/5/2021
John Carl Gustafson &
Kalee Youngblood '08



Hudson James
8/15/2021
Doug Pittman & Johanna Dykhuis '06



Simon Ray
8/21/2021
Doug VanderHulst & Jessa Valk '09



Zara Ketina
9/2/2021
Lloyd Masarira & Kelly Haseman '08



Madison Elaine
9/17/2021
Jake Webb '13 &
Stephanie VanderLugt '13



Reuben Henry
10/23/2021
Matt Proos & Janelle Ausema '02



Milovan Sava Martin
11/1/2021
Milan Simic & Helen Karsten '01

Alumni Weddings



Kelsey VanderPloeg '11
James McHenry
Married 10-10-2020



Chelsea Muller-Westra '04
Jared Scripture '08
Married 2-1-2021



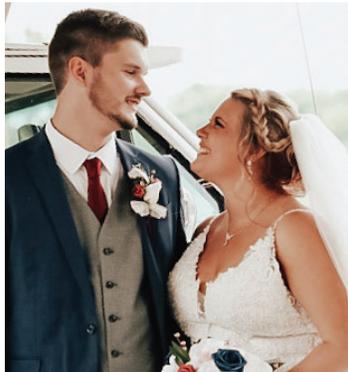
Hilary Muller '07
Chase Hoekwater
Married 2-7-2021



Ben Brouwer '10
Emily Sykes
Married 5-15-2021



Kaitlin Feddema '10
Austin Sandin
Married 5-22-2021



Lexi VanDyke '19
Jake Disselkoe
Married 6-19-2021



Michelle Lilek '12
Andrew McCulloch
Married 6-2021



Samantha Beebe '15
Sam Mast
Married 7-23-2021



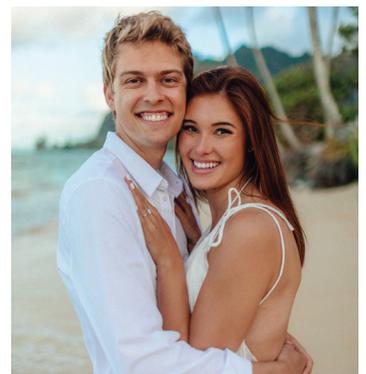
Morgan Locker '14
Tyler Pierson
Married 9-4-2021



Hannah Hendriksen '13
Josh Moote '12
Married 9-18-2021



Meagan Laaksonen '17
Kyle Schreur
Married 10-9-2021



Ailina Plemmons '16
Ryan Wunderly '16
Engaged/Wedding in Summer 2022

THE ALUMNI spotlight



**“The LORD longs to be gracious to you; therefore He will rise up to show you compassion. For the LORD is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for Him!”
Isaiah 30:18 (NLT)**



Conservation and Creation Caring with Cole VanOosten

Cole VanOosten ('15) says no two days are ever really the same as a DNR conservation officer in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Some of his job duties include fisheries and wildlife enforcement; marine, ORV, and snowmobile enforcement; and general law enforcement. Cole also assists people in various emergency situations: search and rescues, active drownings, plane crashes, and medical emergencies. Last May Cole and another Conservation Officer (CO) helped rescue a lost angler and just two months later assisted with the rescue of two boaters on Lake Huron.

While he may not have a “typical day” on the job, he definitely practices creation caring principles on a daily basis. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources’ mission statement reflects these principles, stating it is “committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state’s natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.”

Reflecting on his formative years at KCS, Cole shares, “I feel like every teacher influenced me positively in one way or another.” He says that high school science teachers Steve Dyk and Jeff Offringa had the greatest impact on him in the area of creation caring. “Not only did they teach me a lot about the sciences and how the natural processes work together, but they also did it from a biblical point of view, which I am still grateful for to this day.”

One of Cole’s favorite memories at KCHS was “executing possibly the greatest senior prank in Kalamazoo Christian history.” He and his buddies bought a car off of Craig’s List and put it on the roof of the high school, along with an 18-foot statue of then principal, B.J. Huizinga. He also has fond memories of the trip to Kenya with THE Mr. Steve Dyk.

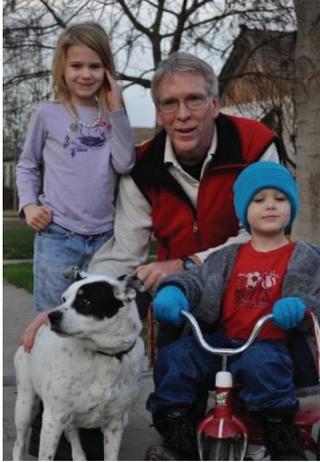
Following graduation in 2015, Cole studied Fisheries and Wildlife Management at Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie. He was accepted into the Conservation Officer Academy at the end of his junior year. At the Academy, Cole completed a year-long training to become a CO. His class started with 32 recruits and ended with only 23 officers. While the training was rigorous, Cole shares that a high standard is important, as COs often work alone. But he is also grateful for the great officers he works with who assist with enforcement and emergency situations.

Cole says that the year-long CO training and probationary period was the most challenging but also one of the most rewarding experiences of his life. The most enjoyable aspects of his job are being able to help others and also help protect the natural resources that are threatened by overuse and illegal activity. He also enjoys being outdoors pretty much every day, having a flexible schedule so that he can spend time with his wife Ashley (Miller, '14) married in April 2019.

Cole’s career lives out the creation-caring theme at KCS. “As a CO, you really get to see the negative impacts that improper use of natural resources can cause. We are fortunate enough to have the opportunity to protect resources that can’t protect themselves, and it is an honor to do so.”

THE ALUMNI spotlight

Habitat for Humanity Retiree Dirk Holkeboer



Dirk Holkeboer ('73) retired from his 33-year career with Habitat for Humanity on June 30, 2021. During his time with Habitat, Dirk served as the executive director of three local chapters (Miami, FL, Holland, MI, Visalia, CA) and worked for Habitat for Humanity International as the Assistant Director of Habitat's annual Jimmy Carter Work Projects and as an affiliate consultant.

After graduation from KCHS, Dirk attended Calvin College ('77) and received a J.D. degree from Wayne State University. Before joining Habitat for Humanity at its headquarters in

Georgia, Dirk worked for a federal judge and for the law firm of Miller Canfield.

"I did not start out with a sense of calling for affordable housing when I joined Habitat in 1988 but came to realize the importance of a 'decent place to live' to developing the stability and strength of low-income families and to the health of our communities."

A May 18, 2021 article in The Sentinel of Hanford, CA noted, "Holkeboer's leadership was put to the test during COVID-19, where social distancing measures had to be taken in order to work effectively. Starting in June 2020, they were building under the new guidelines. This meant coordinating 75 volunteers building a house from the ground up while ensuring all were masked, standing apart when possible, and having the necessary sanitation stations in place at all times."

Dirk and his wife, Betsy Murphy, live in Visalia, California. When they moved to Visalia in 2002, Dirk was surprised to find that one of his favorite high school teachers, Rev. Herman Minnema, also had made the move to California where his son Murray lived. They enjoyed a couple of delightful visits before Rev. Minnema passed away several years ago.

Thank you Dirk for your faithful service, and best wishes for a happy retirement!

Class of 65

The Class of 65 had their reunion on September 13, 2021



Class of 51

Eight members of the Kalamazoo Christian High School class of 1951 gathered for a 70-year reunion luncheon on September 15, 2021, at Four Roses Café in Plainwell. Class members shared past memories and updates on their lives. They also recognized class members who have passed on. The meeting closed with the singing of the class song, "O Jesus I Have Promised."

Calling All Alumni

We know you love looking at the babies and happy wedding days as much as the Torch team enjoys gathering them.

We invite you to join us in creating more smiles. Please reach out to the association office to share any new alumni news.

Please contact us at: alumni@kcsa.org

Babies
Marriages
In Memory Of
Lifetime Achievements
Mission Trips
Alumni Reunions
Change of Address



**KALAMAZOO
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**

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OUR [♥] kids
AUCTION 2022

for tuition assistance at Kalamazoo Christian Schools

When: Saturday, April 30th @ 5 PM

Where: High School Gymnasium

\$30 For Each Ticket.

Dinner catered by Maggie's Catering.

Buy your tickets at kcsa.org/auction

**You can contact Mary Denison at mdenison@kcsa.org to donate,
or Tricia Williams at 5triciawilliams@gmail.com to volunteer.**



KALAMAZOO CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Undeniably Christian. Academically Excellent.

Save The Date

Annual Meeting

Monday, April 11th

7 PM - 9 PM

High School Gym

Current families and constituents who have given in the past year are invited to attend the Annual Meeting.