

# Torch

*a publication of the Kalamazoo Christian Schools*

Fall 2018



Summer Mission Trip Experiences



## GROWING IN GOD'S WORD

Marc Verkaik



What was the last verse you memorized? How many verses could you recite if you had to? I will admit that this is not one of my strengths. I read Scripture, but I can't always remember where that particular verse is located when I need it. I am always amazed by

people who can draw upon their knowledge of Scripture when they talk with others or are faced with issues in their life.

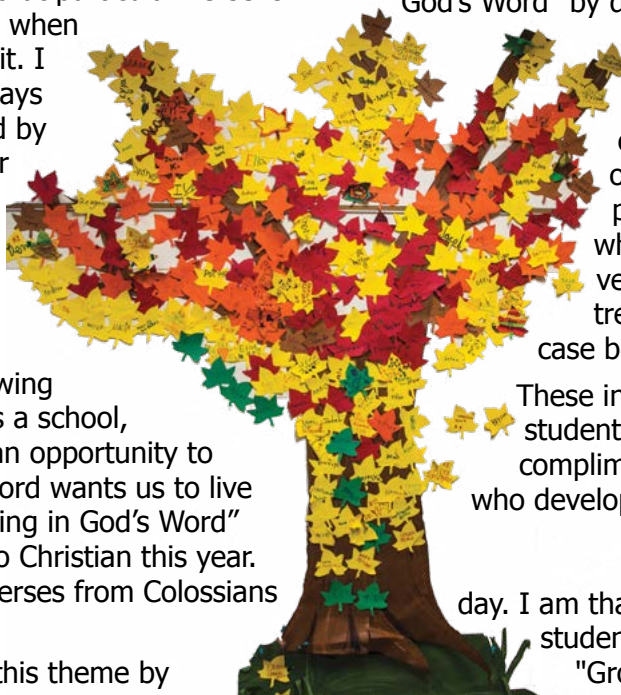
However, spending time in the word is important in giving us a foundation to grow on and knowing the basis for our hope in life. As a school, being grounded in the word is an opportunity to instill in our students how the Lord wants us to live our life. We have chosen "Growing in God's Word" as our theme around Kalamazoo Christian this year. The theme is centered on the verses from Colossians 1:9b-10.

We have been intentional with this theme by inviting Lee Strobel to be our 6th speaker in our

Think Big Series. Our students in grades 5-12 read his book *The Case for Christ* which looks at Lee's research in understanding Christ's existence here on earth. These students had the opportunity to hear him talk and engage him in a question and answer session.

Our elementary students have been "Growing in God's Word" by documenting the number of verses they have learned this year. At the beginning of the year, they placed their name on a leaf when they memorized our theme verse. Now, they are placing a rock in a glass case when they have memorized a verse. It is amazing to see the tree fill up with leaves and the case become full of rocks.

These intentional events to help our students "Grow in God's Word" are complimented by Christian teachers who develop within each of our students the fruits of the spirit to live out Scripture each day. I am thankful for your support of our students and school as we continue "Growing in God's Word".



We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way; bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

Colossians 1:9b-10

## Welcome New Staff!



**Front Row** (L to R): Claudia Ferreyra (Spanish Immersion 4th Grade), Lori Gavan (Elementary Art), Brooke Mulder (6th Grade), Christine Webb (7th Grade), Sheryl Earley (12th Street Office), Joy Zylstra (Preschool at Haven)

**Back Row** (L to R): Lucy Ann Cabrera (Spanish Immersion Preschool & K), Deb Modderman (Preschool), Joni Klosterman (Association Office), Lori Halberda (Association Office), Chris Bierenga (2nd Grade), Dirk Walhout (HS Principal)

**Not pictured:** Siliva Fernandez (SI Teacher's Aide), Radeana Walhout (English Teacher's Aide), Dave Williams (High School Custodian)

# WELCOME NEW STUDENTS

Sue VanHamersveld



## International Students

After graduating six international students this past May, I am thankful to God for bringing three new students to add to our returning four international students.

### We welcome the following new students:

Zhile Yu is from China. She is in the 10th grade and has asked that we call her Lucy. Lucy lives with her aunt and attends the Kalamazoo Chinese Christian Church. Lucy loves music, sang a beautiful solo in our fall concert and has joined the campus choir at Western Michigan University

Mike Ravn is from Denmark. Mike is in the 11th grade and he experienced high school in the United States last year at LaLumiere School in Indiana. Mike lives with the Fox family and attends Third Christian Reformed Church. Mike's favorite sport is football and he has been practicing with our United players.

Yue Wang is from China. He is in the 11th grade and attended high school at Otsego last year. Yue lives with his aunt and attends

the Kalamazoo Chinese Christian Church. Yue likes electronics and video games.

### We also welcome back our returning students:

Sunny Huang is from China and is in the 11th grade. Sunny lives with the Verkaik family.

Leo Luo is from China and is in the 10th grade. Leo lives with his aunt.

Billy Zhang is from China and is in the 11th grade. Billy lives with the Kurti family.

Liuxun Zhou is from China and is in the 11th grade. Liuxun lives with his aunt.

Please pray for these students as they have so many adjustments to make. Pray that they can overcome the language barriers, cultural differences, new living arrangements, the fast pace of difficult courses, loneliness and so much more. Join me in praying that they will meet Jesus in a very real way during their years here at Kalamazoo Christian.

## New Students

### 9th Grade:

Ethan Bouma: Ethan is the son of Lon and Michelle Bouma and he comes to us from Parchment schools.

Alex Cramer: Alex is the son of Daniel and Tara Cramer and he comes to us from Homeschool.

Ethan Johnson: Ethan is the son of Billy Johnson and Shantel Waldemar and he also comes to us from Homeschool.

Lincoln Norris: Lincoln is the son of Steve and Melodie Norris and he joins us from East Martin Christian.

Xander Penny: Xander is the son of Bobby and Janice Glasser and he comes to us from Paramount.

Jaden Rivera: Jaden is the son of Emily and Jeremy Bogard and he joins us from the Potter's House.

Madison VanBeck: Madison is the daughter of Micah and Julie VanBeck and she comes to us from Mattawan schools.

### 10th Grade:

Aaliyah Smith: Aaliyah is the daughter of Ann Smith and she comes to us from Kalamazoo Central.

### 11th Grade:

Mariah Chilcott: Mariah is the daughter of Mark and Janet Chilcott and she has joined us from Portage Northern.

Anneke Zeyl: (photo inset) Anneke is the daughter of Rev. Derek and Sonia Zeyl. She joins us from Whitinsville, MA Christian High School.

Welcome all new students! We hope and pray you find a home at Kalamazoo Christian!



# AFRICA MISSION TRIP

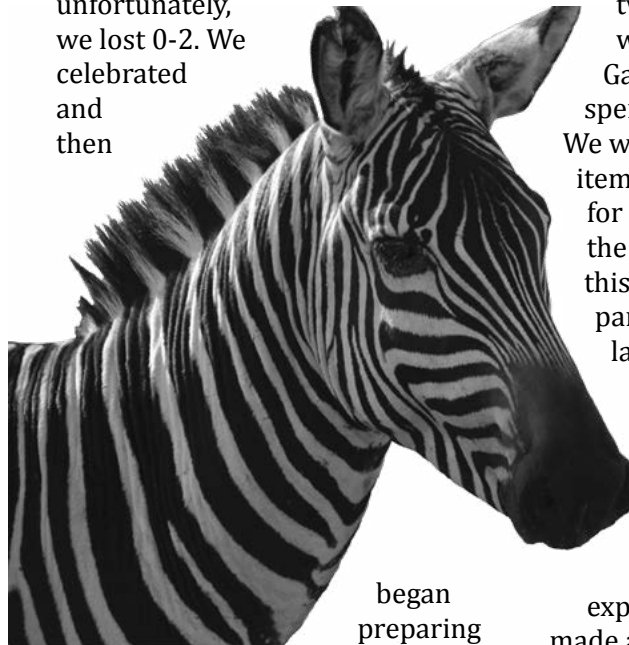
Sydney Duong, Josh Hoogenboom,  
Jayme Koning

This past summer on July 13, 2018, a group of students and our four chaperones left Kalamazoo Christian High School and headed to the Detroit airport. After an eight hour flight to Frankfurt, Germany, we spent the day enjoying a nice river boat cruise down the Rhine River. We took a tour of the Heidelberg Castle, which featured a lot of neat architecture, statues and history, and was also the place where the Heidelberg Catechism was created.

The next day we had another long flight but we all arrived safely into the Nairobi airport. We got our luggage and met our drivers that would stay with us for the rest of our trip. We were all very excited to arrive at the Mennonite House. July 16 was our first morning in Africa, and we were able to go on a small safari in Nairobi National Park where we saw rhinos and lots of other animals. We even had our Cheez-Its stolen right from the van by a baboon! The next day we drove to the cheetah camp where Mary Wykstra runs Action for Cheetahs in Kenya (<http://www.actionforcheetahs.org/>). We went to the Kiima Kiu secondary school to meet the students and get into our groups that we would be with for the next couple days. Our next two days consisted of early mornings where we split up into two different groups, one group heading out to count the number of game that was seen, and the second group going out to look for different animal tracks. The next day the groups switched tasks. We also went back to the school and compared the effect of climate change in America to Kenya, and

we learned about the effects of plastic in Kenya and made posters to educate others about how plastic is harming the earth. On July 20, we were able to visit Kiima Kiu's primary school to hand out school supplies, play with the kids, and sing with them. Then we came back to camp and went on a night safari and took count of more of the animals we saw.

On Saturday, July 21, we spent a whole day at the secondary school. We played a soccer game against the school, and unfortunately, we lost 0-2. We celebrated and then



began preparing lunch together. The whole meal took about four hours to make, but we were all so happy to be able to share a meal together. After lunch, the girls handed out colorful headbands to the students. On Sunday morning, we went to the school to have a worship service with the whole secondary school. It was all student led and we thought that it was an experience like none other. The two hour praise and worship service came to an end and we had to say our goodbyes. This was the hardest part of the day but we were so happy to have experienced our time together. Back at camp we had a goat barbeque for dinner and packed up our tents and said our goodbyes to

cheetah camp.

The morning of July 23 we headed to the Masai Mara National Park. We were able to stop at the Great Rift Valley along the way of our seven hour drive. After lunch we took a short safari in Masai Mara, where we bought bracelets and statues from some of the Masai women. The next day we took a long safari to see as much of the wildlife as we could. We saw many animals like elephants, lions, a leopard, hyenas, warthogs, giraffes and zebras. After those two days in Siana Springs we headed back to Amani Gardens. The next day we spent our time at an orphanage. We were able to donate many items, provide them with fluoride for their teeth, and play with the kids. Most students said that this was one of their favorite parts of the trip. This was our last day in Kenya, but we were starting to get anxious to be back home. The plane rides went quickly and most of us were excited to see our parents again.

The trip was an amazing experience and we really made a lot of new friendships along the way. Mary Wykstra is an inspiration in the work that she does and it was neat to see her passion and willingness to sacrifice so much to help conserve the cheetahs. The students we met became immediate friends and we look forward to staying in contact with them. Our drivers were amazing people that we got to know so well. They provided us with safety, a lot of fun times, and even some pretty deep discussions on being a Christian. We are all so thankful that the Lord provided us with the opportunity to serve and to grow.

Thank you to all who supported us and made this once-in-a-lifetime experience possible!

The high school Spanish Club had an incredible opportunity to travel to Costa Rica this past summer in June. The group included fifteen students and two high school teachers.

We did a lot of things, including white water rafting, visiting an orphanage, staying with families in a homestay, attending a fiesta, hiking, and bargaining for souvenirs at a market in San José. The entire trip we had a guide, Diego, and driver, Johnny, who were super awesome and made sure that we were safe and had lots of fun.



For the first day of the trip, we visited an orphanage and brought donations with us from home. We played games with the kids for a few hours before having to say goodbye. It really helped us practice our Spanish because the kids were young so we asked them simple questions. It was incredibly difficult to say goodbye because we had so much fun with them, especially when one little girl asked us if we were coming back.

Next we traveled to our homestays and met our families. We were all in groups of two or three and we stayed with amazing families. Our moms were fantastic cooks and some of us had siblings that were really fun. It was challenging at times because they didn't know any English so the language barrier was hard to overcome but it really helped us improve our speaking. We went on a hike through the mountains near the village and saw a wild sloth in addition to Costa Rica's most active volcano, which is constantly erupting. We had a fiesta where our moms and siblings danced for us and we all performed a talent. It was hard to say goodbye to our families because they were so kind and welcoming.

## Costa Rican Memories

Rachel Pease

On our next stop we visited an organic coffee plantation. Costa Rican coffee is amazing. After that we traveled to the start of our next trip, white water rafting to an ecolodge where we spent the remainder of the trip. We rafted for a few hours, taking a few breaks to go on little hikes or swim or jump off huge rocks into the river, before we made it to the ecolodge

where we then had to hike up to the main space. The lodge was gorgeous, with beautiful wood, plants and animals everywhere, and no electricity. The main space had a kitchen, tables, and lots of chairs and space to hang out. We played tons of cards, told stories, and laughed a lot. At the lodge, we hiked to a waterfall that we could jump off into a swimming area, we ziplined through the jungle and over the river, and we went on a tarzan swing, which is like a huge pendulum that you are clipped to with a harness then released to swing back and forth. Clare Dirksen, one of the juniors on the trip, says that the tarzan swing was the highlight of the trip. "I had never done anything like it before and frankly, I was scared. I said "puerta" (the release word for the swing) and fell straight down into the jungle, but the line caught me

and I was flying. The view while swinging across the Pacuare River was amazing and I'll never regret that." After our stay at the ecolodge, we rafted back out to where Johnny was waiting with the bus and we went back to San José for our final night in Costa Rica.





# HIGH SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Dirk Walhout

## CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

This year, the high school faculty and staff are making deliberate, overt efforts to build a stronger sense of community and deepen a culture of caring, kindness and encouragement in the high school. This is happening in a variety of ways. Each morning you will see a number of teachers standing on the front porch saying "Good morning!" to students and welcoming them into the building. Each afternoon, a couple of teachers are posted at the front porch to wish students a fond farewell. Additionally, each teacher has been challenged to hand out at least 50 encouragement cards to their students during the first semester. When teachers see students doing good or something notable, teachers jot down a note of encouragement on a pre-printed postcard. Also, at the beginning of the school year, each high-school teacher was asked to contact (by phone) about 15 sets of parents and welcome them and their student(s) back to KCHS. Both faculty & students are working together to make Kalamazoo Christian High School a great place to learn!

## DAR Good Citizens Award

Congratulations to Rachel Pease, Class of 2019. She is the recipient of the Daughters of the American Revolution Good Citizens Award. Rachel was selected by the faculty for the following:



**Dependability** (includes truthfulness, loyalty, and punctuality); **Service** (includes cooperation, courtesy, and consideration of others); **Leadership** (includes personality, self-control, and ability to assume responsibility); **Patriotism** (includes unselfish interest in family, school, community and nation).

She is the daughter of Todd and Connie Pease. Congratulations Rachel!

## CHAPLAINS

To work towards meeting two of the school's core values of "Educating the Entire Child: Body, Spirit, Mind" and "Providing a Caring Community for all Students," this September both Joey DeKoekKoek and Bryan Keeley began giving their time to the high school by providing emotional and mental health support to KCHS students (Joey and Bryan are local youth pastors). Joey and Bryan's services are not a substitute for

counseling or psychotherapy services conducted by licensed professionals. Rather, the interactions Joey and Bryan have with students serve as a preventative, first-step approach to addressing students' emotional or mental health concerns. Should an issue reach a point beyond Joey or Bryan's capability, they will refer the student and/or alert school personnel, parents, and licensed mental health professionals. These

services are also not a substitute for our teachers building relationships with their students. The addition of Joey and Bryan is simply an opportunity to give our students more resources to navigate the sometimes murky and rough waters of adolescence. We will also be looking for a female to serve as a chaplain in the future. In the meantime, students and parents can reach out to Ms. Patti Landstra for a female perspective.



# HIGH SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Dirk Walhout



Stop the Silence. Help End the Violence.



**A CONFIDENTIAL WAY** for students  
**TO REPORT** anything that threatens  
their safety or the safety of others.

## OK2SAY

STOP THE SILENCE. HELP END THE VIOLENCE.

OK2SAY is a student safety program that allows students to confidentially report tips on potential harm or criminal activities directed at students, school employees, and schools. It uses a comprehensive communication system to facilitate tip sharing among students, parents, school personnel, community mental health service programs, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services,

and law enforcement officials about harmful behaviors that threaten to disrupt the learning environment. On October 1, 2018, an OK-2-Say representative was on the high school campus to give a safety presentation to our high school students. To learn more about the OK2SAY program visit [www.ok2say.com](http://www.ok2say.com) or download the app for iPhone or Android. To report a threat text 652729.

## GUATEMALAN STUDENTS

Sue VanHamersveld

In October, KCHS began hosting two boys from Guatemala, who came to us through the agency, Faces and Our Cultures. The FACES Program is an eight week cultural exchange program from Guatemala, currently working with 85 schools in the US, providing participants with tools to grow as individuals within an educational environment. Pedro Camposeco is 16 and in the 10th grade, and is living with Jack Szczesny and his family. Hiroshi Lacayo is 17 and in the 11th grade, and is living with Noah Hartwell and his family. Thank you to these families for opening their homes!

It has been fun to watch these boys be embraced by the students in the high school. The cultural and language barriers have brought about fun conversations and interactions that have served as a bonding experience between

the boys and our students.

The boys attend classes with our students, do the homework, and take the tests, but they

do not receive grades because this is strictly for an educational experience. They have been assigned five projects that they must present during their visit. They have a display in the hallway about Guatemala, they have cooked and shared a dish native to their country, and they are making a couple of visits to the elementary campus to make their presentations to the Spanish

Immersion classes. They have been a wonderful addition to our student body and we will miss them when they return home in December!



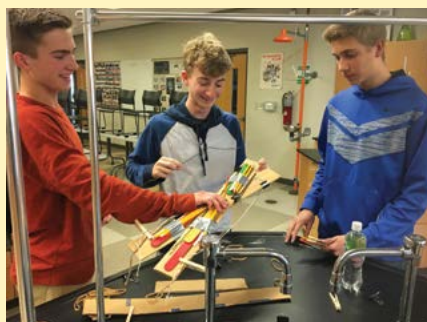


## INTERIM 2019

Dirk Walhout

Next March, students and staff at KCHS will have the opportunity to step away from their usual daily classroom schedules to spend four days exploring interests outside of the traditional curriculum. Students will be offered the chance to engage with new ideas, experience new places, and develop new skills.

For Interim 2019, students staying on campus will have the opportunity to study in areas of Biblical prophecies, literature, music, food, and film, and to learn about careers in a number of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) related



areas. Students will also be traveling (both locally and internationally) to study the history of Israel, to visit zoos in Ohio, to go rock climbing in Kentucky, to explore museums, and to serve senior citizens in our local

community.

By the end of interim week, KCHS students will have learned new skills, studied art, music, or literature in a unique way and will have visited new places that open their eyes to other cultures and ideas. It is our sincere prayer that students will also have encountered their Creator in new ways through these experiences. We hope that these unique opportunities will continue to strengthen relationships and enhance our community as we seek to nurture hearts, challenge minds, and invite our students to be agents of renewal in the world.

## GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

Kevin Dykema

The Comet volleyball team had a very exciting and successful season this fall. Playing with just two seniors, Jayme Koning and Emma Bertrand, they battled hard all season and grew as a team. They finished the season 40-9-2, falling to #3 state ranked Schoolcraft in the district finals, and finished second in the Valley division at 5-1.

There were numerous highlights of the season. After losing to Schoolcraft in the regular season, the Comets faced them again in the championship match of the league tournament. After a huge first set comeback fueled by a long Carley Broekhuizen service run, and a loss in the second set, the Comets won the third and the league tournament title.

Earlier in the season, the Comets finished runner-up at the highly competitive Hanover-Horton Invitational. They beat several state ranked teams throughout the day, before falling to a much larger school in the finals. The Comets also dominated the competition and won the Muskegon Catholic Central tournament. An individual highlight was Carley Broekhuizen earning her 1000th career kill.

The Lady Comets now turn to offseason work in anticipation of the 2019 volleyball season. Juniors Lindsey Dykema, Carley Broekhuizen, Sarah Wenke, Karina Deering, Sarah Miller, Audrey Batts, and Zoey Williams will return next season as will sophomores Avery Ekkens and Nyla deJong.



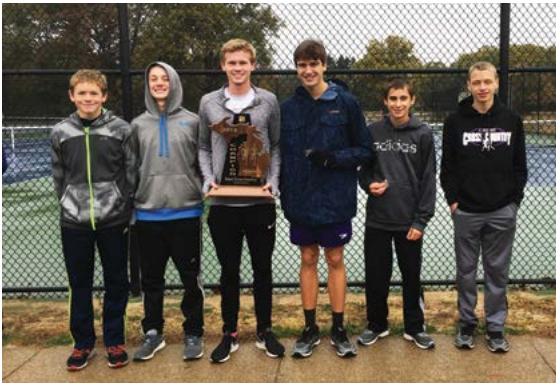


## ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENTS

### CROSS COUNTRY

Jeff Offringa

The men's and women's cross country teams had a successful season this fall. The men's team consisting of Anders Bogard, Kyle Miedema, Isaac Bos, Nathan Koetje, Sam Offringa, and Josh Bouma won the regional championship and ran at the state finals on November 3. For the women's team, Lily Offringa and Kari Mejeur qualified individually for the state finals.



### JV BOYS TENNIS

Joey DeKoekkoek



The JV boys tennis program has another fantastic season. We were led by returning starters Ben Hart, Paul Sportel, and Aiden VanLoo. These three were joined by the very gifted freshman Jake McClure, Sam Meyers, Tyler Zichterman, and Collin Durian. We were also blessed to have two varsity players join us for some matches - Noah Brown and Taylor Roberts. We had

### Boys Tennis

Bryan Keeley



This season was one for the books for the Boys Varsity tennis program. After missing qualifying for the State tournament the past two years, and with seven seniors on the roster, this team was determined to make it happen!

Our postseason started off with our conference tournament. Of the 8 flights, 5 of them were victorious. As a team we edged out Kalamazoo Hackett for the team conference title, who we tied 4-4 in the regular season. Leading the charge in this upset victory was JJ Gasaway who won the Number 1 singles match against Hackett in a close 3-set match, which had to finish the following day due to lack of daylight.

Regionals was the next challenge for the Comets tennis team, which had to score 10 points to qualify for the state meet. We were placed in a new regional this year and had to contend with Holland Christian, Allegan, and Hackett all vying for state qualifying spots as well. We found ourselves stuck at 9 points with only two matches left to play. Fittingly, our fate laid in the hands of our seniors Jackson Schut, Michael Moralez and Ethan Plemmons. Jackson and Michael lost, but Ethan Plemmons won his flight at regionals and clinched the state qualifying spot for the team! This was the single biggest match and win we had this season.

The State tournament was held in Kalamazoo at K-College's Stowe stadium. Every flight had opportunity to win their first round match, we ended the tournament in 13th place, out of 31 teams, a pretty good showing! Congrats on a great season, and a special thanks to our seniors- JJ Gasaway, Tanner Rynd, Ethan Plemmons, Andrew Tysen, Jackson Schut, Michael Moralez and Noah Brown. You will be missed.

six matches during our season and went 3-3 and were unable to play several more matches due to weather. Our quality victories were vs. Hackett, Vicksburg, and Paw Paw. Our rough and tough losses were against Allegan and Mattawan. Coach Andrew Long and I want to thank our incredible athletes who always brought energy and fun to the team every day!

## KALAMAZOO UNITED VARSITY FOOTBALL

Aaron and Kim Hoogenboom

This fall, the Kalamazoo United football team, which is the combined team of Kalamazoo Christian and Hackett Catholic Prep, had its best season since forming in 2014. Neither school had enough players to field their own teams that year, so they made the historic decision to join forces as Kalamazoo United. The team had an undefeated regular season with a record of 9-0, won the Division 5 District Championship and went to the Regional Finals where they lost to Hudsonville Unity Christian, ending the season with a record

of 11-1. A total of ten players received All-Conference honors this year, the largest number on a single team in the SAC Conference this season. First-Team All-Conference honors were given

to Kalamazoo Christian's Senior Receiver and Cornerback, Aaron Verkaik, and Senior Lineman Josh Hoogenboom was named Honorable Mention. Both boys were also voted captains for

the team. United's quarterback, Eric Wenzel, set a new state record for most passing touchdowns in a single season, ending with 56 touchdowns. It was an exciting year of football. Thank you to all our boys, families and supporters. We had a wonderful time watching this year's team. Go United!



## COMMUNITY IN PRAYER

Kristin Slater and Joanne Netz



Community in Prayer began as a group of moms from KCSA who realized there wasn't an opportunity in the school community specifically set aside to pray. We realized how powerful it is to be praying over the school, teachers and our children on a regular basis. We

would love the whole community, parents, grandparents, alumni, and any supporters, to come and pray! We decided to meet the first full week of every month, meeting at different times to accommodate peoples' schedules. There are two groups meeting at the high school, a group meeting at Second Impressions, and two groups meeting at the 12th street campus. (See the schedule) We have the entire staff split between the days so all the staff members are being prayed for and have an opportunity to share prayer concerns. Anyone can come to any of the locations which fit your schedule, even if you don't have a child at that location, and pray for our community! It truly has been an amazing experience to

pray together.

### Community in Prayer Schedule (First full week of every month)

Monday 8:05AM in High School room 102

Tuesday at 1:30PM at Second Impressions

Wednesday at 1:30PM in High School room 102

Thursday at 8:05AM in the Elementary teacher's lounge

Friday at 8:05AM in the Middle School conference room

### KCSA Mission Statement:

*The Kalamazoo Christian Schools, in partnership with Christian families and churches, prepare students to serve God responsibly in His world by equipping them with knowledge, skills and a biblical vision for life, for the advancement of His kingdom.*



# HOW CAN YOU RELAX IN TIMES LIKE THESE?

Aaron Potter

“How can you relax in times like these?” Though this question, asked in Act 2 of KCHS’s fall play *You Can’t Take It With You*, was penned all the way back in 1936, it still sounds remarkably relevant today. How can we find hope, or even relax a bit, in such troubled and divisive times as these? Also, how can we justify a light-hearted comedy about a quirky family that collects snakes, dances ballet in their living room, and blows up fireworks in their basement when our country and our world seem so broken and damaged?

Though I have been involved in theatre for many years and helped out with last spring’s musical, this is my first time ever directing a show. I wanted my directorial debut to be something fairly simple and something fun that both actors and audiences would really enjoy. This brought me to George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart’s Pulitzer Prize winning classic *You Can’t Take It With You*. What initially drew me to the show was that it is an ensemble show with no one main part and in which even the smaller roles are delightfully funny and interesting. This allowed seventeen different students to showcase their gifts and talents rather than just three or four, and showcase them they did.

For all its excellence, however, I had not expected this 1930s comedy to be terribly relevant to our own times. As I rehearsed and re-read the play, though, I realized that it was. I also realized that beneath its veneer of light hearted humor and quirkiness, it had the serious undertones and important lessons that truly great comedy usually possesses. The story is set in 1936 and though it is primarily focused on the normal (or not so normal) everyday lives of the Sycamore family, the chaotic events of the wider world are mentioned, including the ongoing Great Depression and the rise to power of the brutal dictator Joseph Stalin in Russia, which forced two of the play’s characters into exile as refugees. Also, though the characters and writers were unaware of it at the time, World War II was brewing just off stage. This was a time, much like our own, of much fear and uncertainty, dealing with financial difficulties

and political divisions at home and potential conflicts with hostile foreign powers abroad. It is against this backdrop that the characters ask, much as we do today, “How can we relax in times like these?”

So, how can we? I will admit I do not find everything that character Grandpa Vanderhof says in response to this question entirely satisfying. He fails to acknowledge, as we Christians ought to, that our only comfort in life and in death, in economic depression and in political strife, is that we are not our own but belong body and soul, in life and in death, to our faithful savior, Jesus Christ. However, the play, which is a secular piece rather than a directly Christian one, does at least point in the right direction.

The main thrust of Grandpa’s response is that we have to spend our life on the things that matter and with the people that matter. That is what the Sycamore family does and you will not find a happier or more loving family anywhere, even if they do at times seem a bit mad. They recognize that in a broken and insane world, love is the only thing that is left that really matters. Certainly it matters more than money or pointless possessions (none of which you can take with you), and it is this love that, after many twists and turns, brings about the happy ending of this play. It is this love and recognizing what is really important that brings two extremely different families together at the end of the play and makes this story perfect for our deeply divided and often unloving world. It also makes this story perfect for a Christian school, in which we strive to teach this prioritization of love to our students both in class and in extracurricular activities like the play. Though the play leaves out the essential final step that ultimately our only hope is in Christ, it does hint at Christ’s saving love. I hope that in a small way my actors experienced some of Christ’s love through me and through each other in this show and that they saw it expressed in the characters they played. I know I saw this love in them because they were a blessing to work with.



# A Middle School Medical Missionary

Jim Palmer and Heather VanDyke

Landon Palmer is an 8th grader at Kalamazoo Christian Middle School. Since kindergarten, he has been a member of the inaugural class in the Spanish Immersion program. Over the past few years, he has begun traveling with his parents to the Dominican Republic as part of a medical mission team performing eye surgeries. This year, the trip was in early October. About half-way through the trip, the 8th grade teachers received an email update from his father, Dr. Jim Palmer. [Email reproduced with kind permission from the Palmer family]

"I wanted to give you all an update



on what Landon has been up to in the Dominican Republic, as we have been thrown a bit of a curve ball. Typically, there are about three total translators for the group of 15-20 team members that go on these medical mission trips. Three are needed as performing surgeries on 20+ patients a day requires three ORs [operating rooms] and a busy preprocedure room. To our surprise, Landon is the ONLY translator! So needless to say, Landon has been extremely busy bouncing between ORs and on his feet for 11-12 hours a day attending to everyone's translation needs.

I talked to him after the first 12 hour day, and he had mixed feelings of immense pride as his role is paramount to a successful trip, but he was also concerned about getting all his homework done in the evenings.

This is part of the intent of emailing his teachers. I just want to let you know that he is doing the best he can finishing his studies in the evenings, but I told him to not stress too much about it, as he was doing God's work and it should all work out in the end.

Señor Acosta, I just wanted to let you know that my heart is filled with pride when I wrote to you, recounting that Landon got a standing ovation by the entire team after the first day. The lack of translators was a huge blow, but Landon's aptitude and acumen in Spanish speaking literally saved the day. It is such a wonderful testament to all you have done over the years.

Thank you so very much!

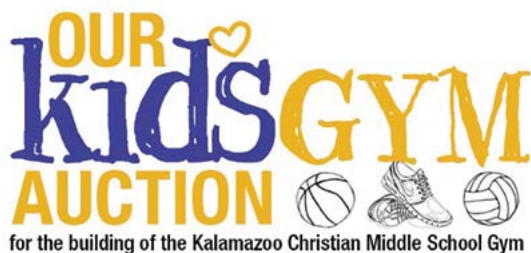


Please pray for Landon that he knows God's love and feels peace even during challenging times. He remains in good spirits, but clearly feels immense responsibility. Will keep you all informed and appreciate your understanding.

Written with tears of joy,

Jim Palmer"

As a staff, we are very proud of Landon and the work he was able to do in the Dominican Republic through using the Spanish he has been learning here at Kalamazoo Christian. It is amazing to see how God is already providing ways for students to use their gifts to build the kingdom of God!



Saturday, March 23, 2019

5 PM

Kalamazoo Christian High School gym

Tickets on sale in January, 2019

Catering by Gull Lake Country Club

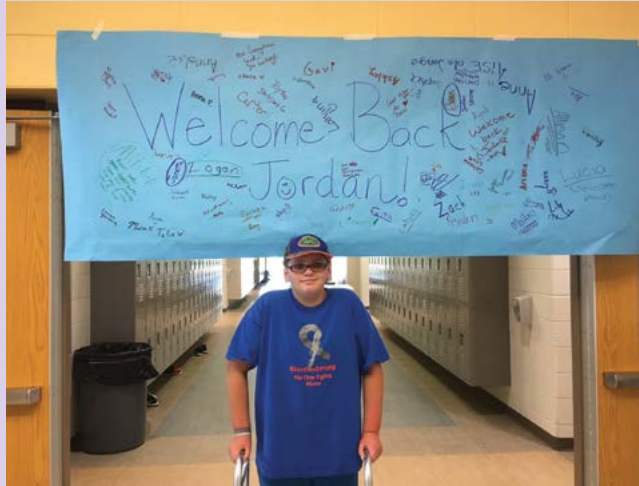
We are now accepting auction item donations and program advertising space. Please contact Mary Denison at [mdenison@kcsa.org](mailto:mdenison@kcsa.org) or Kaitlin Feddema at [kfeddema@kcsa.org](mailto:kfeddema@kcsa.org).



## JORDAN SHARK

Kim Meyer

Why would 100 Kalamazoo Christian Middle School students spend their break singing "Jordan Shark" for a cheer up video or teachers and staff spend a Saturday evening making and serving spaghetti? Jordan Canfield is why. Jordan has always been a sweet, affectionate, and fun loving kid, but this summer this sixth grader didn't have a typical summer vacation. It was in July when Jordan began to feel dizzy and see double. It was soon learned that he had a germinoma brain tumor. Since that time Jordan has had a shunt put in his head, numerous blood tests, MRIs, CAT scans and three rounds of chemotherapy. The tumor is shrinking, Praise God, and he may be able to finish off with radiation soon.



The outpouring of love from the student body has been wonderful, including "welcome back" signs, notes, and cards, to helpers to carry his books during the weeks he needed a walker. The outpouring of generosity has been tremendous, from Bronson Hospital and Second Impressions, to Franco's and Boonzaaijer

Bakery that helped supply food for the #jordanstrong benefit spaghetti supper which raised over \$2,000.

We have seen God's hand throughout Jordan's journey in numerous ways. His family attributes a lot of their strength to the many prayers offered and ask that we continue to pray for Jordan in this process. Jordan has had an amazingly positive attitude in all this. He is a Christ-

like example for those treating him and all of us. Jordan's parents have a Facebook page named *Jordan's Journey* under the groups on Facebook to follow and get updates on him, and a GoFundMe page that his parents started to help with unexpected expenses, <https://www.gofundme.com/r8bjt7-jordan039s-journey>.

## ART PRIZE 2018: IT NEVER GETS OLD

Anne Brouwer



This September both the 7th and 8th grade classes went to Grand Rapids for a day to visit Art Prize. With the help of parents, teachers, and bus drivers, over 90 kids were able to explore, discuss and learn a lot about art, and also Gerald R. Ford. Despite some rain, students viewed a lot of unusual and beautiful art in a variety of venues. Learning to appreciate art and the messages was enlightening. And, the Gerald R. Ford Museum was packed full of history that the kids had to record and later discuss. Next year, Art Prize 2019 will be phased to a smaller amount of more dynamic venues and exhibits, as Project 1 begins. We look forward to future Art Prize biennial visits.



## SOMETHING'S FISHY IN 6TH GRADE SCIENCE!

Brooke Mulder



All students in 6th grade are participating in a DNR sponsored

program called *Salmon in the Classroom*. Through the program students learn about the salmon life cycle, invasive species, Great Lakes Fisheries and aquarium maintenance. On November 9th we received 150 Chinook salmon eggs from Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery. In late April/early May we will release the salmon that we've raised so they can make their way out to Lake Michigan. Each week, different students are in charge of checking on the fish and taking daily water quality samples. Through this project, students will get an

up close look at how a tiny egg develops into a 3-5 inch fingerling in a matter of months. Life is one of God's amazing gifts and this project lets students see first hand just how amazing that precious gift is!



## SERVING IN PUERTO RICO

Justin Mitchell



On September 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria struck the US island territory of Puerto Rico, leaving an estimated \$90

billion in damages and 2,975 dead in its wake. When my son Alex Mitchell (4th) and I arrived 10 months later, in July of 2018, large parts of the island still did not have access to stable power or clean water and thousands of blue tarps still obscured much of the island's natural beauty.

Loving and supporting missions

has always been one of our family's core values. For Alex, this was his first mission trip, his first trip to a Spanish speaking country and his first time translating for more than a sentence or two.

While there, we served alongside



a local church in Guayama and a youth group from Hadley, Michigan. Our group rebuilt the roofs of two homes, delivered water filters to families, put on a church service for



the community and showed the love of Jesus in countless other ways.

Watching Alex translate was easily my favorite part of the trip. He represented his school and his Lord well. It has been a true blessing to watch how the KCSA Spanish Immersion program is having a lasting impact on our family and around the globe!



## 7TH GRADE KALAMAZOO HOUSE OF PRAYER

Kyle Weener



On October 4, 2018 the 7th graders from Tree of Life and Kalamazoo Christian joined together to visit the *Kalamazoo House of Prayer* at Vanguard North to learn about the power of prayer and how to use this gift amongst the lost and broken.

Upon arriving at Vanguard North, Tami Flick, a worship leader at the church, led a time of teaching from Matthew 16 and 18 - relaying to the students the power they have to change and cultivate our city. She then provided the students with tools that they could use during our time of street ministry and evangelism.

The students were divided into groups, each of which was led by a teacher and a KHOP staff member. Each group went a different direction from the church and spent time

praying over the neighborhood, specific homes, and people they saw. Some groups directly interacted with community members, talking with them and praying for them. Here are a few stories from the students:

"We approached two men with a "Happy Thursday" and they began to share what they were doing outside. Our "KHOPer" asked them if they were in need of any prayer. Their response was immediate. Both men, and one man's fiancé, shared they had been homeless from March to the beginning of September. They asked us to pray a prayer of provision over them, along with a prayer for his fiancé, who is disabled and struggles with severe multiple sclerosis (MS)."

"Shania was a middle aged woman waiting for a ride. One of the kids immediately said, "We should talk to her". We said, "Happy Thursday" and she immediately began talking as if we had all known each other for years. We asked if we could pray for her and the students took off (praying for provision over her family, 5 kids, 3 grandkids, transportation, and a good job). Upon the last prayer

being lifted, we looked up and saw Shania sobbing. She told us this was just what she needed in order to get through some very challenging times. Shania told us how thankful she was that we took the time to speak truth into her life. She said she knew "Jesus truly loves me" and that when things were falling apart in her life, "us kids" were here to help - an answer to a desperate prayer. "

On the bus, every student began sharing the stories of their experiences during the prayer walk and street ministry. We had students praying protection over Lincoln Academy and the Northside neighborhood. There were groups praying over disabled and the elderly. Other students were meeting people in the street and proclaiming Jesus' name. The common thread was that all the students wanted to stay longer. We proclaimed that there was no difference in race, age, or socioeconomic status that would separate the love that Jesus has for each of us. This was certainly a day of Kingdom building in Kalamazoo.

## CULTURAL FIELD TRIP TO DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

Emily VanDis



Students in Maestra Sebastiani's 5th and 6th grade classes were able to step out of the classroom and apply their knowledge of the Spanish language in an authentic setting during a recent cultural

field trip to Detroit. Both Spanish Immersion classes traveled to the Detroit Institute of Arts to participate in the *Shaping Identity with Art of the Spanish Speaking World* guided tour. Students were broken into grade level groups and guided through several well known exhibits that highlighted Spanish artists from around the world. Noted artists such as Diego Rivera and Pablo Picasso were focal points for the museum tour, highlighting their achievements and contributions to the Spanish speaking world. Both tours were given in Spanish by museum guides

who were thoroughly impressed with the levels of proficiency and comprehension the students possessed as they toured the DIA in Spanish.

After the DIA tour, students traveled to a local restaurant *Asty Time* to enjoy authentic Dominican cuisine. Their lunch consisted of rice, beans, and cooked plantains. The students enjoyed the food and had a chance to experience just a small piece of the Dominican culture through the food and language of our hosts.

## 8TH GRADE JUSTICE PROJECT

Neorah Oommen and Heather VanDyke



The 8th grade Bible curriculum is focused on helping young adolescents as they begin taking a deeper look at how the Word of God applies to their lives, and how that in turn affects how they live. Early in the year, the whole 8th grade examined the concept of biblical justice in all of their subject areas. As a culminating project for this unit, each 8th grader was asked

to research an area of injustice and then go beyond just talking about it to classmates and actually do something about this issue. Neorah Oommen is one 8th grader who was willing to write an article for the Torch to share about her justice project.

"For my justice project I sold merchandise for an organization called Women at Risk, or for short, WAR. WAR rescues girls all over the world that are being trafficked

and exploited, and teaches them a trade, like making jewelry. I chose to help WAR for my project because I love the general idea for this organization. First of all, they are saving girls who are in desperate need of love and healing. It's really inspiring, and honestly, reassuring to know there is a way to deal with such a big problem. Then there is the fact that, in the whole healing process, they manage to teach them how to make things and start a business!! This hobby could be an outlet or just something fun to do for them, and make them money. It's amazing!

Then there's the actual project... to be honest, the whole process of trying to figure out how to sell the merchandise was really stressful. I have no experience in raising funds whatsoever, so I had no idea what I was doing. Thankfully my grandpa and mom were there. They helped... a lot. They were the ones who actually made this work. The whole project ended up being really fun. It was a bit hectic, but then again, the best things are."

## WHAT'S ALL THE BUZZ?

Heather VanDyke

Early in the school year, the whole 8th grade examined the concept of biblical justice in all of their subject areas. In science class, we have explored various issues over the years, such as ethical treatment of animals, endangered species, recycling, plastic trash in water, and others. However, many issues have felt too far away from the daily lives of students here in Kalamazoo, Michigan. In addition, the various topics didn't seem well-connected to everything else we are studying during the year.



This year, I decided to go out of my comfort zone and design our justice

work as a long-term, multi-year project: Raising Honey Bees. Everyone is familiar with what bees are. We live in an area that produces huge amounts of fruit crops, many of which rely on bees for pollination. What students were surprised to learn is that the population is declining. The possible causes of the honey bee decline

are many, but the consequences for honey bees and their role in food production could be severe. As 8th grade science is heavily focused on biology, especially learning about invertebrates, the topic of how to help restore this portion of God's creation seemed to BEE an obvious connection!

As a class, we researched honey bees, Colony Collapse Disorder, hive location requirements, safety concerns, beekeeping equipment, and much more. We surveyed our campus for possible locations for honey bee hives. I was impressed with how seriously all of the 8th graders have been taking this. As we looked at various sites, they needed no prompting to consider the safety of students, especially younger students or families/pets that visit our campus for football and soccer games. Lori Halberda came over from the KCSA office to teach a lesson in grant-writing, and the 8th graders all took part in writing grants for money to set up honey bee hives. I combined their efforts into two grant applications, and just this past week, we received notification that we have been awarded \$1384 for our project from the Michigan

Association of Environmental Professionals (MAEP)! The classes are all really excited - and I am too!

We have a lot of work to do before we actually place hives on campus. We will be putting a locked fence around the hives to discourage curious kids and animals from getting dangerously close to the hives, and any time any hive work is being done, there will always be at least two adults present. The site of the hives has yet to be finalized and approved, but since we are now in winter, we have plenty of time to prepare for the spring. As a part of this project, I will BEE taking beekeeping classes at KVCC during the late winter, and I have been making connections with local beekeepers to have a good network of support.

The 8th grade will BEE keeping everyone informed about how this long term justice project progresses. The rewards will hopefully someday BEE sweet!





## Insect Day

Consuelo Enriquez

This fall, first graders at Kalamazoo Christian Elementary School participated in Insect Day to complete their science study of insects. Students learned about the characteristics and the life cycle of these amazing creatures. Students were able to learn first hand by observing caterpillars in the classroom, all the way through the metamorphosis process, into the final life stage as beautiful butterflies. These captive butterflies were later released in the middle school garden to continue the life cycle. During our celebration, students dressed up as their favorite insect, did activities surrounding this theme, and applied their knowledge by creating their own edible insect out of Rice Krispie Treats. It was wonderful for the students to observe nature first hand and learn more about the things God has created for us to admire and enjoy in His world!



## Preschool Basketball Buddies

Kathy Bartels

We've set a date for our Basketball Buddy event! Please mark your calendars for Friday, Dec. 7, at 5:15. In our effort to help our Preschool students feel special and to help our Preschool families feel part of KCSA, we host them for a free evening of basketball. This is for 3's, 4's and Young 5's current students and their families. They are given free admission to attend a Comet basketball game.

Each student is given a Basketball Buddies t-shirt, pom-pom, snack for the game and they'll have their picture taken with our cheerleading squad. The students' names will be announced prior to the girls' game at 6 PM and they will join our basketball team players on the court during the singing of the National Anthem.



## KALAMAZOO LOAVES AND FISHES



The students at Kalamazoo Christian Elementary School are collecting donations for Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes every month during the school year. This month all the students brought in jam and jelly to donate, totaling 703 pounds! WAY TO GO!

## Preschool Information Night

Kristina Schrik

Kalamazoo Christian Schools will hold a Kindergarten and Preschool Information night for the 2019-2020 school year on Monday, January 28, 2019 at 6:30PM at our 12th street campus (3800 S 12th Street). We would love to have you join us to hear about our school and programs we offer! You will be able to hear about our Christ-centered programs- both English and Spanish Immersion, meet the teachers, visit the classrooms and ask questions. For the 2019-2020 school year, we will offer 3's and 4's preschool, Young 5's and 3 day and 5 day Kindergarten.

## THINK BIG: LEE STROBEL

Mary Denison



You could have heard a pin drop as best-selling author Lee Strobel told the audience of 750 at Valley Family Church about the lowest point of his life as an avowed atheist. When Lee would arrive home, his four-year-old daughter would pick up her toys and retreat to the safety of her bedroom to shut the door and protect herself from whatever drunken, angry state her father would be in that day. But after Lee's conversion, she watched and listened for about five months as God changed her dad in front of her eyes. As Lee recalled, "She came up to my wife Leslie one day and said, "I want God to do for me what

he's done for daddy," and at age five, she came to faith.

Lee's visit to Kalamazoo on November 8, 2018 came exactly 37 years after that Sunday afternoon when Lee became convicted that God is real and turned his life over to following Jesus. Lee first spoke to 200 donors and guests at the fundraising dinner held at the Kalamazoo Country Club, then moved to Valley Family Church where he shared his journey of how he came to write *The Case for Christ*. Lee answered questions posed by Lead Administrator, Marc Verkaik, discussing the making the movie *The Case for Christ* and the continued relationship with Alfie, the friend who brought Lee's wife to faith.

On Friday morning, all 509 middle school and high students gathered with staff to hear Lee speak at chapel where he helped equip them with the four E's of the evidence of the resurrection: *Execution* (Jesus was executed); *Early Accounts* of Jesus' resurrection; *Empty Tomb*; and *Eye Witnesses* who saw Jesus alive after the crucifixion. Defending our faith with the evidence of Jesus resurrection was the basis for Lee's talk to the students which culminated in their

six- week study of his *The Case for Christ Student Edition*. Middle school principal Joel Netz had been collecting questions submitted by the students since September and ended the chapel with asking some of them.

Immediately after chapel, Lee moved downstairs at Second Reformed Church to a Pastors Brunch where he passionately spoke to 36 local pastors and guests. Lee walked the pastors through a 6-step process of evaluating how they personally are leading their congregation in evangelism. Lee was energized as he gave example after example of how to lead others to Christ through our daily walk and encounters.

The two days of events were supported by a very generous group of donors who underwrote the cost of student books and the speaker. Anonymous donors gave tickets for teachers and guests to attend the dinner and others paid for the food and gift devotionals at the Pastors Brunch. Remaining donors supported Kalamazoo Christian Schools and debt reduction by their attendance which raised over \$90,000.





# THE ALUMNI *connection*

## A NOTE FROM CONNIE *alumni director*



It's always good to connect with fellow alumni. In September, I had the honor of attending my husband's 45th class reunion celebration (Class of 1973.) It was a lot of fun reconnecting with those we hadn't seen since graduation and those we see once in a while. It's really fun to hear the crazy stories from high school, and to look around the room and see how people have changed and grown up since our high school days. The common theme from the morning was the foundation of Kalamazoo Christian Schools - through both the Christian teachers and fellow students - and how it prepared us for life after high school. I encourage you to reunite with fellow alumni, and hope it will be a blessing for you as it was for me on that beautiful day in September!

- Connie Van Der Slik

## ALUMNI EVENTS *two thousand eighteen - two thousand nineteen*

### FALL

#### *kcsa football tailgate*

Thank you to all who came out for the inaugural KCSA Tailgate at Mayor's Riverfront Park. We enjoyed a fun night of food, fellowship, and Kalamazoo United spirit, as our Titans defeated the Falcons of Constantine.



### WINTER

#### *homecoming*



Homecoming is scheduled for February 1, 2019. Join us for a home basketball game honoring:

**Class of 1959**  
**Class of 1969**  
**Class of 1994**  
**Class of 2009**

### SPRING

#### *young alumni reception*

We're preparing a special reception for our newest alumni! Classes of 2003-2018, keep an eye out for more information coming your way in the Spring of 2019.

Details to follow.



### SUMMER

#### *tiger bus trip*



The Tiger Bus Trip is a highly anticipated event for all alumni, families, and friends of Kalamazoo Christian. Join us for a trip to Detroit for an afternoon of Tiger baseball! Details to come.

Alumni of Kalamazoo Christian! We are in the process of putting together an alumni directory for 2020. Beginning in 2019, please expect a call from Publishing Concepts Inc. (PCI) asking you for updated contact information and career/family updates. Any questions? Contact Connie VanderSlik at 269.381.2044 or at [cvanderslik@kcsa.org](mailto:cvanderslik@kcsa.org).

## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS *don and vicki devries*



**Our faith is who we are; it's our identity. Our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior is what drives us, what gets us out of bed in the morning. God has blessed us abundantly, allowing us to be a part of the Christian community in Kalamazoo.**

Don and Vicki DeVries were born in the same city 13 days apart. A few months later they were baptized on the same day at Second Christian Reformed Church, and then spent 13 years in the same class at Kalamazoo Christian Schools. One could argue that God's plan for them couldn't have been more clear. After they were

married in 1975, the DeVries' started a family and began a chapter of life filled with challenges and blessings as they sent their two boys, Tim and Tom, to Kalamazoo Christian Schools. But one thing remained - God's faithfulness.

"It was never in our thoughts not to send our kids to a Christian school," Don said. "We'd have given up anything to keep our kids in the schools."

Vicki shared the family's commitment to their sons' education. "Don worked overtime almost every day," she said. "He would work Saturdays when possible, and that was the whole time our boys were in the Christian schools."

Don worked at AT&T for nearly 43 years (at one time with his father, brother, and both sons simultaneously) and currently works as a contractor for the company. He also serves on the schools' Facilities and Transportation Committee. Vicki took on the full time role as mother and grandmother, and volunteered for the schools' hot lunch program, concessions stands, and several fundraising events, including the Country Fair and 'Trash for Cash' program. She now volunteers for the schools in the TRIP program.

The DeVries family is beginning their fifth generation of Kalamazoo Christian students, and couldn't be more proud of their family's legacy.

"When our boys were in school, our house was the safe haven where all the kids could spend time after school and on weekends," Vicki said. "Now we see that with our grandkids and their friends. It's so good to have that community of kids and families rooted in Christ."

"We've never regretted the decision to send our kids to the Kalamazoo Christian Schools," Don said.

Both of Don and Vicki's sons live in Kalamazoo with their families. The DeVries' enjoy spending Sunday dinners together, babysitting, watching their grandchildren's athletic events, and taking an annual family vacation to Florida over Spring Break. They also cherish their church community at Second Christian Reformed Church, a congregation they've been a part of since their collective baptism.

"God has blessed us," said Vicki. "Everything wasn't easy, but our health has been good, our children are here, and our grandkids are such blessings. God has provided for us, and it was all we ever needed."



### Alicia Driesenga (2010)

Driesenga attended Calvin College, where she studied Elementary Education. Before graduating, she enrolled in a program called 'Youth Works,' which gave her the opportunity to mentor children in Lame Deer, Montana.

In 2014, she moved there to teach full time at Lame Deer Public Schools. Driesenga now teaches English to 7th and 8th graders, and coaches jr. high volleyball and basketball. The community has a rich heritage of Native

American culture, but 40% of the population currently lives below the national poverty line. The move proved to be a big transition from her hometown of Southwest Michigan.

"Like a lot of my experience out here, there has been a lot of trust involved - there's no way to do this if you don't have trust that God is going to provide. He has always been very faithful. It's always been evident that He is here."

Driesenga's favorite part about her life in Lame Deer? The kids.

"Watching them as they grow up and what they go through, I love to be able to love them and be able to support them and be a part of their life. It's so incredible to watch them grow up and become the people that they are."

Driesenga plans to continue her career at Lame Deer until the Lord calls her elsewhere.



### Steve Dyk (1996)

When he's not hunting, fishing, or spending time outdoors, Steve Dyk can be found teaching a variety of science classes at Kalamazoo Christian High School. A Calvin College graduate with a degree in Biology and minor in Latin, Dyk wasn't planning on a teaching career in Kalamazoo. But after following God's call in the wake of his brother's passing, Dyk has been inspiring students' love of learning and living things at Kalamazoo Christian since 2007.

"From alumni to faculty to current



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS *Luke Jones*



**I truly believe that God has purposed each one of us to make an impact in our sphere of influence. I hope to help people find that sphere and**

### **live their full potential in Christ.**

Luke Jones graduated in 2010 from Kalamazoo Christian High School. The son of two pastors, Jones grew up with a strong foundation of faith, and an understanding that the church would always be a part of his life. But little did he know, God had some big plans for his life in the church - plans that would call him and his wife to the other side of the globe.

After spending time at both Spring Arbor University and Western Michigan University, Jones graduated with a bachelors in Business Marketing. He then was

married to wife Kelsey Wilson and made the decision to move to Australia to pursue higher education in pastoral ministry in Bible school at Hillsong Church.

"We felt like we had to start over in a sense," Jones said. "From meeting new people, to establishing new normals, we felt like we were growing up all over again. Moving was a great experience for us and has taught us so much about trusting God and doing what we love. We miss family and friends, but know we're right where we're supposed to be for this time."

Keeping the Jones family

grounded amongst so much transition is a rock solid faith, and an understanding that God has big plans for their future. Jones credits his family and community for helping him to develop this strong sense of faith and dependence on the Lord. "Being surrounded with a community that believes in you and cares about you is so important. Kalamazoo Christian was my school community that believed in me and pushed me to learn and grow. The environment created by the faculty and students helped me to stay the path and keep the main thing the main thing. I'm thankful for my time at Kalamazoo Christian."

## *40th Reunion- Kalamazoo Christian Class of 1978 August 18, 2018*



students, Kalamazoo Christian is still a part of my larger family," he said. "It's really cool to see all the generations work together for the school."

Since moving back to Kalamazoo, Dyk and wife Stephanie started a family of their own, and now have four kids: Elijah, Isaiah, Liesel, and Titus.

"Our biggest responsibility is to raise good kids," Dyk said. "That includes my students as well. It's important to teach kids responsibility and to love God's creation."

Dyk's desire to foster this love of creation is manifested in several ways, including a 'class petting zoo' of several exotic animals, and a semi-annual student trip to Kenya.

"A teacher's life isn't flashy. It's not about the money, it's not about the results; it's about doing God's work. There are a lot of people who are working hard every single

day without big titles or paychecks. They're furthering God's kingdom, and that's why I do it."



### **Alison Stewart (2003)**

Stewart graduated from Hope College with a degree in Biology. After obtaining her Masters in Public Health from the University of Michigan, she moved to Texas to work with the Houston Health department on bioterrorism agents. She was put in charge of shelter surveillance and emergency

response in the wake of Hurricane Ike. She then relocated to Cambodia where she worked at the Centers for Disease Control. In the Fall of 2014, Stewart was recruited by the International Medical Core to West Africa to aid in the Ebola relief efforts. There she spent five months working and planning a wedding to her then-fiance Eric Stewart. The two were married, started a family, and moved back to Texas 5 years later.

At the core of Stewart's work is her mission. "What I do matters. Infectious disease and climate change will continue to be a huge problem, and we are globally connected."

Now Stewart works for the Half Helen Foundation, which provides hearing and vision screening in Title I schools. She is the Director of Process Improvement and Analytics. In the future, she hopes to have more children, become a foster family, and live an 'internationally nomadic' life, offering her children "exposure to broad ranges of cultures, values, and experiences."

## ○ ALUMNI UPDATES *two thousand eighteen*

### WEDDINGS



**Ben and Hannah '15 (Rozeveld) Sutton**  
May 26, 2018



**Jack and Jenny '11 (DeNooyer) VanderSluis**  
June 25, 2018

**A Nate '13 and Katie Modderman**  
August 24, 2018

**B Kevin '06 and Alex Westrate**  
August 4, 2018

**Brad '06 and Amanda Walvort**  
September 1, 2018

**C Eric and Jessica '13 (Nagle) Stelzer**  
September 7, 2018

**D Trevor and Megan '11 (Visser) Roode**  
September 8, 2018

**Brandon '10 and Jenna Cook**  
September 8, 2018

**Shane and Emily '10 (Corning) Huisken**  
September 29, 2018

**Trino and Ashley '13 (Balkema) Schincariol**  
October 13, 2018



### BABIES

**A Emma Grace Hiller 2.18.2018**  
Tim & Michelle (DeNooyer) Hiller

**B Landon Ahlberg 5.5.2018**  
Tory & Katey '06 (VanDonselaar) Ahlberg

**Andee Mulder 5.14.2018**  
David '08 & Brooke Mulder

**Jacob Ryan DeVries 5.9.2018**  
Ryan '08 & Meghan DeVries

**Adalyn Meschke 5.15.2018**  
Colin '07 & Laura '05 (Cook) Meschke

**Nora Drenth 6.19.2018**  
Steve & Josie '09 (Alphenaar) Drenth

**Micah Bach 7.7.2018**  
Jeremy and Elizabeth '97 (Smit) Bach

**C Murphy William Donald Ulrich 7.12.2018**  
Heinz & Saryn '06 (Hettinger) Ulrich

**Lauren Elizabeth Huizenga 7.19.2018**  
Dave '02 & Jen Huizenga

**D Jack & Klaire DeKorne 7.19.2018**  
Dan and Karyn '02 (Bartels) DeKorne

**Corbin Vlietstra 8.8.2018**  
Jay '99 & Marie Vlietstra

**Oliver Smith 8.8.2018**  
Noah & Renae '02 (Mejeur) Smith

**Shae Modderman 8.19.2018**  
Kurt '10 & Rachel Modderman

**E Cameron & Tessa Veenstra 9.4.2018**  
Jason '03 & Lynda '03 (DeKoekkoek) Veenstra

**F Drake David Visser 9.4.2018**  
Michael '10 & Chelsea '10 (Buren) Visser

**Emalyn Rose Klooster 9.24.2018**  
Nathan '05 & Allyson '06 (Smilanich) Klooster

**Lana Marie Nieboer 9.25.2018**  
Andrew '07 and Anna '07 (Mulder) Nieboer

**Weston John Kloosterman 9.25.2018**  
Benjamin '05 and Jess Kloosterman

**Juniper Grace Gentile 10.3.2018**  
James and Rachel '06 (Hesselink) Gentile

**Avery Lynn VanderMeer 10.10.2018**  
Scott '03 and Jessica VanderMeer

**G Amelia Joy Asma 10.23.2018**  
Nate '05 and Amy '05 (Kool) Asma

**Jacob Alexander Heeres 10.23.2018**  
Christopher '99 and Jennifer Heeres

**Levi David Ausema 10.24.2018**  
David '05 and Allison Ausema



**SHARE YOUR ADVENTURES WITH US!**

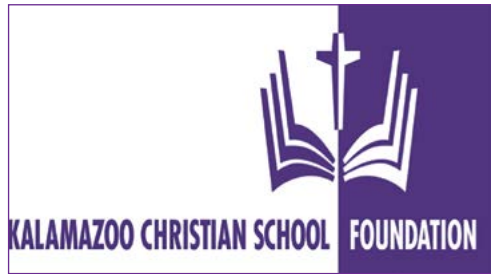
Do you have a life update you'd like to share? Or an alumni who deserves a shout out?  
Contact Connie VanDerSlik at [cvanderslik@kcsa.org](mailto:cvanderslik@kcsa.org) to be featured in our next TORCH newsletter!



# KALAMAZOO CHRISTIAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION UPDATE

Larry Stehouwer

Every year each of our families and students benefit from distributions from the KCS Foundation. This year our expected aggregate distribution is \$198,200 in annual grants and scholarships. Thanks to new donations and market growth, we now manage \$4.3 million in investments held for the benefit of KCSA families and students. Generally these assets are in endowed funds, so we make annual distributions from earnings and growth, not the donated principal. Unique in the past two years are the increased amount of donations received by the Foundation and the growing number of constituents that have notified us of donations they expect to make through their will. When people inform us in advance that they are making a gift in their will, we include them now as members of our 1877 Society, those who are leaving a legacy in support of KCSA. Please contact us with any questions, or if you have a desire to help sustain Christ centered education for the future: Larry Stehouwer [lstehouwer@kcsa.org](mailto:lstehouwer@kcsa.org), 269-760-4711, or Kaitlin Feddema [kfeddema@kcsa.org](mailto:kfeddema@kcsa.org), 269-343-5772.



## 2018/19 Planned Disbursements from Foundation:

Tuition reduction	\$97,000.00
Samaritan Fund	\$57,000.00
Financial need	\$17,500.00
Special education	\$10,200.00
College scholarships	\$7,000.00
Staff development	\$5,000.00
Science	\$2,400.00
Arts	\$1,500.00
Sports	\$600.00
Annual total	\$198,200.00

Save the Date educational events sponsored by the Kalamazoo Christian School Foundation:

- Wills, Trusts and More for Young Persons/Families - January 17, 2019 at KC Middle School
- Understanding Estate Planning for Retirement - October 10, 2019 location to be determined



## SCHOOL SAFETY GRANT

Lori Halberda

The Michigan State Police (MSP) recently awarded a school safety grant in the amount of \$41,110 to Kalamazoo Christian Schools. This funding is part of a \$25 million allocation from the State of Michigan, administered by the Michigan State Police, to purchase equipment and technology for school security. Of the 407 applications submitted (totaling \$69 million in requests), MSP awarded 188 grants, with 42 of those awards going to non-public schools.

This school safety grant will provide the high school with a new public address/intercom system and an access control system. The new public address/intercom system will allow two-way communication between the school office

and individual classrooms. The system will also include the locker rooms and the association office, which currently have no paging system. The new access control system will provide high school faculty and staff with a more modern and secure key card entry system.

This grant is time-sensitive, so all work on these projects will be completed by the beginning of the 2019-20 school year next fall. While it is unfortunate that our current culture requires such security measures in our schools, KCSA is grateful that the State of Michigan has provided this funding to help ensure the safety of our students, faculty and staff.



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## SAVE THE DATES

### ANNUAL MEETING

Kalamazoo Christian School Association's

Annual Meeting will be on

Monday, April 15, 2019.

The meeting will be at 7 PM

at the 12th Street Campus

Middle School Commons.

If you are interested in serving

on the Association Board

or one of the School Councils,

please email

board@kcsa.org.

## UNITED IN PURPOSE

Featuring

### Lou Holtz

Legendary Football  
Coach

ESPN Analyst

and man of faith

Hosted by Kalamazoo  
Christian Schools and  
the Catholic Schools  
of the Diocese of  
Kalamazoo



Miller Auditorium | October 21, 2019

Details to follow

For information on sponsorships, please  
contact Kaitlin Feddema, Development  
Coordinator, at [kfeddema@kcsa.org](mailto:kfeddema@kcsa.org) or  
269.343.5772.