



THE TORCH

a Kalamazoo Christian Schools Publication

WINTER 2022



Image Reflecting

The TORCH is published twice a year with the purpose of fostering strong ties between the school, alumni, and friends in support of 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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A Note From the Head of School

The beginning of the year always brings a level of excitement around school. Students are looking forward to seeing their classmates again after a summer of activity. Teachers are eager to get into their classrooms. This year brought another level of excitement as we welcomed 120 new students and 31 new faculty. We also completed two large building projects, the middle school gymnasium and two middle school classrooms (page 16), in addition to remodeling the high school office.

Kalamazoo Christian School has seen tremendous growth over the past three years (page 4). At the end of 2019 we had 880 students in PreK - 12th grade. At the beginning of 2022 we had over 1130 students in PreK - 12th grade. We have been blessed!

As we have talked with families about their reasons for choosing Kalamazoo Christian, faith-based education is the first response we receive. Our theme for the year - Image Reflecting - reminds us that we are created in God's image and as Christians we reflect that image in all that we do (see next page). Image reflecting is one of our nine faithlines that we intentionally talk about with our students. This intentionality of helping our students understand God's story and the role they play has brought Christian families to our school to continue our partnership in Christian education.

We are excited about this school year and the opportunities to invest in the lives of our students and their families. Thank you for your prayer support as we make disciples who transform the world.

Marc V

- Marc Verkaik, Head of School





Image Reflecting

What do mirrors, crowns, and jumping jacks all have to do with each other? These are all ways that we have been connecting students to the 2022-23 KCS theme of Image Reflecting! During our opening staff worship before the school year started, the teachers, aides, office staff, and principals all heard a message from Rev. Audrey Edewaard, from Third CRC, who shared these words, "Rest in the knowledge that it's true - YOU are made in the IMAGE of God." She spoke from Ephesians on our theme verse: "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." We were given the call to IDENTIFY as God's handiwork and to DO God's work on earth. This is the call that our teachers are living out each day: to reflect God's image, His love and care, and to see our students as reflections of God, as well as teach them to do God's work on this earth.

It is so awesome to see this theme woven into our students' experiences. From using mirrors and crowns in art class to make self portraits with words about what God says about us as his sons and daughters, to having younger and older buddies at our K12 Chapel time mirror each other with jumping jacks, and then talk together about how we can choose to reflect the image of God to each other. In preschool, students made a shared "masterpiece" artwork and then helped each other think about ways that AS PEOPLE they are God's masterpiece, including their strengths, such as being a good artist, a listener, or a kind friend. In 4th grade, students will participate in a Ruby Bridges "Walk to School" time and connect that to our Image Reflecting theme of "valuing and respecting ourselves and others because we are all made in the image of God."

This theme is giving our teachers and students so many opportunities to consider who God is and how we can reflect God's image in our own lives. It is great to see how Image Reflecting connects to stories we're reading in language arts, our devotions time each morning, finding resolution to disagreement on the playground, our chapel speakers, and much more! Teachers are helping students connect their gifts and talents to God's image - and we invite parents, grandparents, pastors, and our school community to have those conversations with your students too!

- Meghan VanLente, Curriculum Coordinator & Instructional Coach



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Theme Verse: Ephesians 2:10
"For we are God's workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus
to do good works, which God
prepared in advance for us to
do."



Abundant Enrollment

The recent growth we are experiencing has ignited a new energy to invest into Christian education, influencing and equipping students to carry out the mission of being image reflectors. Kalamazoo Christian Schools have been blessed beyond measure with a 28% overall student growth since 2019. These past few years have been difficult on so many levels; but the demands challenged families to reprioritize values, and choose to invest and partner with a school that puts God first.

This growth has forced Kalamazoo Christian to make future-focused decisions supporting students in the short term and well into the future. For example, we are currently renting from Heritage CRC for additional preschool space. Even with all of that, we still have some grades that are full with a waiting list. We are grateful for leadership that is visionary, as we look to see what the future holds and how we can welcome and accommodate future families.

How awesome it is that we have the privilege to empower our students who will be our future leaders.

- **Jaime Ekkens**, Recruitment & Retention Specialist & **Mindy Koetje**, Tuition & Enrollment Specialist



| Year | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | Total |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| 2019-2020 | 61 | 61 | 75 | 66 | 54 | 70 | 50 | 75 | 51 | 63 | 64 | 58 | 56 | 804 |
| 2020-2021 | 88 | 67 | 75 | 79 | 69 | 61 | 74 | 51 | 84 | 54 | 66 | 63 | 57 | 888 |
| 2021-2022 | 81 | 90 | 70 | 84 | 83 | 77 | 72 | 86 | 51 | 92 | 53 | 66 | 63 | 968 |
| 2022-2023 | 92 | 76 | 93 | 73 | 87 | 86 | 76 | 77 | 87 | 52 | 89 | 50 | 63 | 1001 |

BEGINNING OF YEAR ENROLLMENT NUMBERS



31 New Staff Members



TAKEN AT THE AUGUST NEW STAFF ORIENTATION. RIGHT TO LEFT: SCOTT PEASE, KIRA NORDQUIST, NATALIE WAGAMAN, ALYSSA ZAMORA, ABIGAIL CHENOWETH, JOEY DEKOEKOEK, CARLA GILES, JORDAN DEBOER, LUIS SUSSMAN, ARELI ARCIGA, MISSY NASH, ELIZABETH NIEDBALA, SIERRA KANE, AMANDA HERDER, CINDY BROEKHUIZEN, HEATHER ESHUIS, MARCI WARK, TYLER VANSCHEPEN, STEPH DYK, TIFFANY LOCKETT, CHRISTINE AUGUSTINE, KRISTEN SCHNEIDENBACH, BETH BOWMAN, NICHOLE ANGEL, MARISSA HOLT. (NOT ALL NEW STAFF IS PICTURED)

Raving Reviews From Our Community



We can't even begin to tell you how HAPPY all of us are that we are part of Kalamazoo Christian! The kids are so happy and positive - from the time they get up in the morning, they are eager to go to school and have so many good things to say when I pick them up at the end of the day. I love hearing about their busy days...days that seem filled with caring teachers and staff, activities that nourish their bodies and souls, and learning interesting/fun things!



Our first week was fantastic! The kids love their teachers and new school already. The biggest eye opener for us so far is realizing what we've been missing out on by not joining sooner. Better late than never however, and we look forward to being part of the KCSA system for the rest of our kiddos school years.

Thanks again for helping us navigate a challenging time with a very blessed outcome.



Second Impressions Turns 20!



What started as a great idea 20+ years ago has turned into a miraculous blessing for both the Kalamazoo Community and the families of the Kalamazoo Christian Schools. This past fall, Second Impressions celebrated its 20th birthday with a multi-generational party at the Middle School. Current and former volunteers were joined by parents, students and staff for a night of sweets. There were homemade pies, make-your-own-sundaes, cookies & cupcakes. The party continued at the store for our customers with more sweets and special discounts.



Another big milestone this year (and reason for celebration!) was the last payment on the store's mortgage loan, providing an asset worth over a million dollars.



For 20 years, our dedicated supporters have generously donated their time and goods to give people in our community an affordable and unique shopping option, while also enabling us to show our support to families who want their kids to have a Christian education. The donations that people give us are often their most loved possessions that they want to pass on for others to enjoy. Our awesome volunteers treat them with respect as they clean, price and display them.



We are so thankful to God for providing us with this ministry and for enabling us to raise over \$9 million for the next generation of kingdom builders.

- Patty Gruizinga,
General Manager



Comet Tailgate



On October 7th, the Association Office had a blast hosting an all-school tailgate prior to a Kalamazoo United Football game. Over 1,000 people from our school community came and enjoyed food trucks, hot cider, comet gear, games, and one another! The yummy food trucks were courtesy of Kazoopy's Pizza & Grinders, Skinny Kenny's BBQ, and Schultz's Treat Street. They even gave portions of all proceeds to the Annual Fund - how cool!



To build excitement, we had a class competition for PreK-8th grade to see which class would have the most attendees. Ms. Penninga's 4th grade class won and enjoyed a pizza party to celebrate! This beautiful Fall night together was a wonderful way to build friendships, school spirit, and community.



PHOTOS BY
KRISTI CORWIN

Thank you to all who came out!



KCHS In Africa - Su

Written by Ethan V, Lily D, Annika S,
Thomas B, Bryce B, Dust

This past July a group of 20 students and three chaperones left Kalamazoo Christian High School on a long journey to Nairobi we stayed at Amani Gardens, a hotel for missionaries. We also saw many animals at the animal orphanage, try lots of different foods like chapati, goat, chicken, and ugali.

The next morning we woke up super early and spent a grueling 12 hours in vans to drive to our camps. On this drive from street vendors. The camp we stayed at in Samburu was in the middle of the desert, with the nearest city being giant porcupines, cute bush babies, hyrax, dik-diks and hyenas. The food was wonderful and we were truly blessed morning. Most nights we climbed a small mountain to gaze at the stars and we even saw the entire Milky Way. One back to camp we spotted a cheetah, less than 100 meters from camp, sitting with a killed goat. Another day the res us had been acclimated to the weather. So about 30 minutes into our trip one of our students (Ethan was embarrassed that our local guides took us on was supposed to be a game count along a dry riverbed, but it turned out to be a re water turned into a seven hour desperate fight for survival. In reality we should have never listened to a nomadic go

In the afternoons while in Samburu we made the drive to go visit the primary and secondary schools in the nearby t moist garden contains a tarp placed underneath the plants to help keep the water in one area. We also planted tree garden. We also created shade to stop evaporation. Later in the week we participated in a friendly futbol (soccer) m we ended up losing 2-1. We also learned how to create a traditional Kenyan meal of goat, chapati, and rice. Overall lifelong friends.

After all the amazing and great times that we had at the school, we took a six hour journey to the Sopa Lodge in the straight out into the bush to find some animals. Some of the animals we saw were baboons, impala, ostriches, wart go down and hang out around the swimming pool. It was a little strange to be swimming during the middle of a drou trip leading to a ton of drenched towels. A couple of days later we moved on to the next safari lodge in Ol Pejeta Co more! We even got to see another cheetah! During the stay Eli, Thomas and Dustin were very intimidated by a herd and then getting to see the last two northern white rhinos left on the planet.

On our final day in Kenya, we made our way to the Heritage Orphanage in Nairobi. We enjoyed listening to the kids them. Some of the kids even braided the girls' hair. The rest of the afternoon was spent playing games and hanging vans got hit, but our drivers once again stepped in and figured things out.

When we got to Germany we were exhausted. We had not slept all night, but it didn't matter because we started the hotel which provided us with some much needed sleep. We also went to a fancy restaurant, which had the best cre towards the bus in his patented slides and socks. He was fortunate that we decided to stop and get him.

The trip was an amazing experience, and we really made a lot of new friendships along the way. Mary Wykstra, a K to see her passion and willingness to sacrifice so much to help conserve the cheetah. The students we met became got to know so well. Our drivers' names were Hamisi, Joe, Joseph, and Sammy. One of our favorite memories with With Joe the senior girls would always chant his name, and sing American songs in his van and sometimes he would many people would wave back at them and after an eight-hour drive their total was around 400 people. Sammy wa and even some pretty deep discussions on being a Christian. We are all so thankful that the Lord provided us with

Thanks again for all of your support,

Kenya Team 2022



Summary of Their Trip

Drew V, Connor T, Eli D, Jonathon S,
Lin G, Isaac B and Mr. Dyk



to Kenya, Africa. We left from Chicago with a layover in Germany, arriving in Nairobi the next day. Our first day in Nairobi was at a place where they housed animals that cannot go back in the wild. Dinner that night was a Kenyan buffet where we got to

see the sunrise, waved to the locals, stopped at a trout farm for lunch, and bought knives and other souvenirs about two hours away. Every night we gathered around the campfire for dinner, stories, and visits from animals like a goat. We had a cook named Merci. She made so many fantastic meals like fish and chips, goat, and tasty breakfasts every night. One night we were surprised by a scorpion who was unhappy one of us sat on it... and got stung. One day on our way to a research site, the researchers at our camp took us out to set up trail cameras on an elephant path. It was a very hot day and not many of us wanted to go (one of us didn't want us sharing his name) was overcome by the heat and passed out. One of the other adventures was a search for an elephant carcass. What started as a two hour easy stroll without much of a herd when he said, "it's just over the next hill!"

At Loloque Mixed Secondary School, we worked together with the students to help create a moist garden to better make use of their limited water. A game that served as a smelly deterrent for the elephants who visit the school daily to drink their water and destroy their crops. The Kalamazoo team fought hard, and it only took 17 (instead of 11) players on the field before we scored, but it was a wonderful week at Loloque Mixed Secondary School, where we ate together, danced together and made

at Samburu National Reserve, where we spent two nights. As soon as we got there, we dropped off our stuff and went to see the animals. We saw hogs, oryx, a family of lions, and even a sweet leopard in a small tree eating an antelope. During the day we loved to go hunting in the desert. Konraad loved to do fantastic cannonballs in the pool and soak Meagan and the other girls on the conservancy. This was a fantastic place with a ton of wildlife. Here we saw a lot of rhinos, elephants, zebras, and much more. One sad spot was visiting the rhino graveyard where a cape buffalo 30 yards away with only a slim little wire between us. One sad spot was visiting the rhino graveyard

where we sang, perform a skit, and show us around their home. We also enjoyed eating mandazis and drinking chai tea with the locals. We went out with the kids at the orphanage before heading to the airport for our flight to Germany. On the way one of our

the trip off with a beautiful boat ride down the Rhine River viewing the German countryside. The night was spent at a place where we had some brulee we have ever tasted. In the morning, we were driving to the airport when Ethan saw Jonathon running

Our CSA alumna and founder of Action for Cheetahs in Kenya, is an inspiration in the work that she does and it was neat to meet her. We became immediate friends and we look forward to staying in contact with them. Our drivers were amazing people that we met. One of them, Hamisi, is that whenever our van would get stuck (which it did quite often) he would just casually say "Adventure"!! and sing along with them. In Joseph's van the sophomore boys had a waving game where they were trying to see how long they could stay in the van as a very knowledgeable driver and gave us cool facts about animals. They provided us with safety, a lot of fun times, and the opportunity to serve and to grow.





FALL ATHLETIC RECAP

BOYS CROSS COUNTRY - 2ND IN SAC LEAGUE, 3RD @ REGIONALS, 18TH @ STATE FINALS.

GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY - 1ST IN SAC LEAGUE, 2ND @ REGIONALS, 13TH @ STATE FINALS.

VARSITY FOOTBALL - 5-5

JV FOOTBALL - 5-4

GIRLS VARSITY GOLF - 1ST IN LEAGUE STANDINGS & REGIONAL CHAMPIONS, 4TH @ STATE FINALS

GIRLS JV GOLF HAD THREE OFFICIAL OUTINGS. THEY HOSTED & PLACED 1ST IN ONE.

BOYS SOCCER - RECORDS WERE NOT AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF PUBLICATION.

BOYS VARSITY TENNIS - 7-2 IN SEASON & 4TH AT REGIONALS. THE #2 DOUBLES (BRYCE BROEKHUIZEN AND ELI KLINE) CAME IN 1ST IN FLIGHT AT REGIONALS.

BOYS JV TENNIS - SEASON RECORDS WERE NOT AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF PUBLICATION.

VARSITY VOLLEYBALL - SAC DIVISIONAL CHAMPIONS, DISTRICT CHAMPION, REGIONAL CHAMPION, STATE RUNNER UP!

JV VOLLEYBALL - SEASON RECORDS WERE NOT AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF PUBLICATION.

FRESHMAN VOLLEYBALL - 39-5-2 & 1ST IN SAC FRESHMAN TOURNAMENT.



Fall 2022 Championships

KVA Champions



Girls Golf

MHSAA State Qualifiers



Boys Cross Country

MHSAA Division 3 State Runner Up



MHSAA Regional Champions

SAC Champions



Girls Cross Country

District Champions



Volleyball



Volleyball



Boys Tennis - 2 Doubles



Girls Golf

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage month is celebrated from September 15th to October 15th. It recognizes the contributions and influences of Hispanic individuals to the history of the United States. The ancestry of these individuals can be traced to over 20 countries in Latin America, including Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

As a school that promotes Spanish language, it is essential to promote in our students awareness, appreciation and sensitivity for other cultures, particularly Hispanic culture. We do this in different ways: by celebrating our very own teachers who have left their countries to share their passion and love with our children and by learning the beauty and individuality of each of these countries to appreciate the differences among us.

Culture is now a part of the Spanish Immersion program. Here students not only have an opportunity to practice their language fluency, but they also research and learn fun and interesting facts about countries around the world.

Our Spanish Immersion team does an excellent job in using their background as a teaching tool to make students' learning experiences more fun and adventurous.

At the end of the Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations, middle school students who took the "Cultura class" prepared a fun event where they shared what they've learned about this topic. Students prepared Latin and Hispanic music, food, art and games.

I hope some of this excitement was shared at home. I look forward to continuing this learning journey with all my students.

¡Gracias!
- Maestra Angel



THE ALUMNI connection

Alumni Babies & Weddings



Levi Warrne 9/27/2022
Stephanie (Herder) '11 & Nick Byma



Beatrice Karsten 3/13/2022
Megan & James Karsten



Grace Lynn Sportel 5/26/2022
Jolie & Kevin '11 Sportel



Riley Mae 9/13/2022
Erica (Corstange) '11 & Derek Thompson



Aliyah (Lemmer) '17 & Travis Pease '18
8/6/2022



Lee '10 & Kaley Wright
10/2/2022

Save The Date

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Pastor's Chapel | February 24 |
| Homecoming | February 27 |
| High School Musical - The Music Man | March 9, 10, & 11 |
| PreK & K Spring Program | April 28 |
| High School Choir Concert | May 8 |
| Grandfriends Day | May 12 |
| High School Band Concert | May 16 |
| High School Graduation | May 25 |



Maggie (Niewoonder) '17 & Alex Visser '17
11/12/22

Alumni Stories & Reunions



The ring pictured here is a Kalamazoo Christian High School class ring from 1933. 89 years ago! At that time Kalamazoo Christian only went through the 9th grade. Margaret VanderWheele Luteyn 'graduated' from 9th grade and then went on to public school. Margaret ended up sending her children to Kalamazoo Christian, and her grandkids have attended as well. Over 89 years of legacy!



Your 50th class reunion. How can that be? I think we all feel that we just celebrated 25 years. But, the class of 1972 gathered as former classmates and long-ago friends on June 18th to celebrate 50 years. Classmates plus spouses totaled 78 gathered at Heritage Golf Club.

We enjoyed a wonderful dinner with a great time of fellowship and lots of laughs. Some enjoyed a tour of the high school and some enjoyed a round of golf. Dave DeVisser made a trivia game for all to enjoy as well.

“What a great time celebrating “50” years with former classmates. Such fun playing jeopardy and reminiscing on years gone by. God is so good! Hope we can get together again before the nursing home years.” - Mari Michaels

By Vicki DeVries, Class of 1972



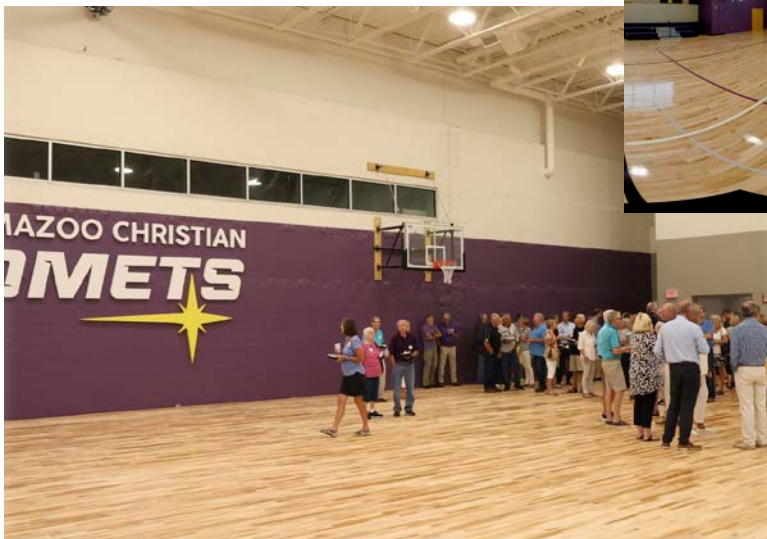
Building Space, Building Community

The Kalamazoo Christian Schools are growing! Construction on the KCMS gym and two classrooms have finally been completed. Enrollment has increased over the past 3 years at a healthy clip. New programs like Outdoor Education, middle school reading academic support, coding & drones (MS), code (HS) and others are adding depth and breadth to the offerings and education of our students.

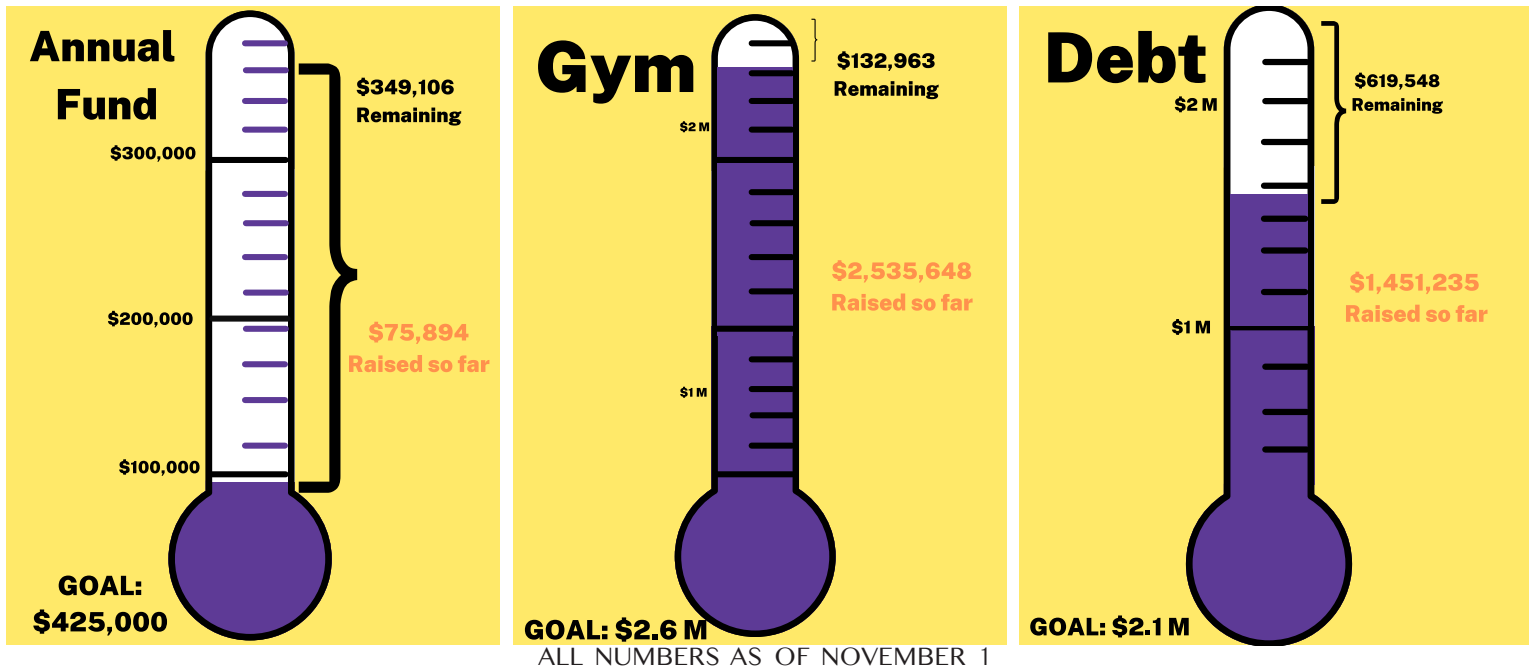
God has blessed us with a wonderful opportunity as we welcome new families and students into our Kalamazoo Christian School Community. The new gym space will allow more school practices to occur concurrently and invite Kalamazoo Christian High School students back to campus to finish their volleyball, basketball or other sports practices nearer to dinner time. It will also allow our younger students who participate in YMCA basketball, Courthouse teams, Indoor Soccer teams, etc to use the space after school.

But these spaces also allow us to practice Christian hospitality to the greater Kalamazoo Community. They provide the opportunity to put our best foot forward when, in the future, we host a volleyball tournament or basketball tournament, or when a robotics club after school builds and programs their machines. We have the opportunity to host these events and shine for Jesus at the same time! Praise God for all He has done for the Kalamazoo Christian Schools and all He will do on our campuses!

- Joel Netz, Middle School Principal



Development Update



As you celebrate the holiday season with family and friends, be on the lookout for our Year End Financial Appeal. This year we are focusing our appeal on raising funds to provide tuition assistance to families in need through the Kalamazoo Christian Schools Annual Fund. Your gift ensures that those who may not be able to obtain a quality Christian Education without assistance have the opportunity to experience all that our schools have to offer.

Did you know that 27% of our current families receive needs-based financial assistance?

Did you know that every student at Kalamazoo Christian Schools is eligible for some form of financial assistance? Drawing upon resources available to us through the Kalamazoo Christian Schools Foundation, the Second Impressions Grant program, and needs-based financial aid through the Annual Fund, we desire that all interested families can send their kids to KCS.

Did you know that it costs approximately \$3,000 per student, above the price of tuition, to cover the yearly costs of educating each child in our school family?

It is because of donations to the Annual Fund from donors like you that we can help bridge that gap. Maybe you've invested in Kalamazoo Christian Schools for years, or maybe this year you will make your first donation to the Annual Fund. Either way, we couldn't do it without you. We are grateful for those who are choosing to leave a legacy behind by investing in Christian education, and helping make it accessible to those who might not be here without a "little help from our friends."

1 Timothy 6:18

"Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share" (NKJV)

We are thankful for:

- 1001 students attending our K-12 schools this year
- A new middle school gymnasium
- Two new middle school classrooms
- A full complement of quality staff members and educators
- Generous donors who invest in the legacy of Christian education

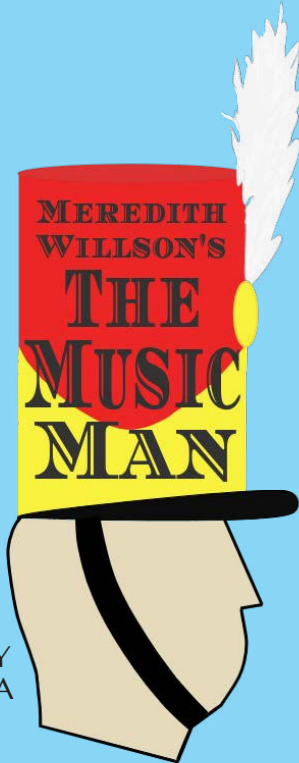
Pease
- Scott Pease,
Development
Director



Scan here to give! 15



KALAMAZOO
CHRISTIAN



LOGO BY
MAKENNA
EKKENS

March 9, 10, & 11
Comstock Community Auditorium
7:30 PM
Tickets On Sale Starting February 1
Adults \$13, Students \$10



Tickets



Save The Date

HOMECOMING 2023

Friday, January 27

Alumni Festivities Start @ 4 pm

KCHS Gym

KALAMAZOO CHRISTIAN

COMETS

