

THE HERALD

a publication of *Eastern Christian School*
Volume 60, Issue 1



STRIVE FOR
EXCELLENCE

BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION

SPRING 2019



EXCELLENCE AS AN OFFERING

Striving for excellence is one of the core values of Eastern Christian School and a key biblical teaching that drives our school on a daily basis.

Proverbs 3:9 instructs us to “Honor the Lord with...the first fruits...” of our work. We believe that this Old Testament, agrarian teaching about offering the best crops and animals as acceptable offerings has a direct application to life in the New York Metropolitan area in the 21st century.

We are admonished to offer our very best efforts to the Lord in every sphere of our lives. Indeed, our lives and our work are the offering of our “first fruits”, our very best, to the God who created us. Second best is not good enough!

This issue of ***The Herald*** profiles the application of this key teaching in the daily life of Eastern Christian School. From the joy-filled learning about cranberries and water in our preschool classroom, to research about pharmaceutical development in our chemistry classroom and running a race to God’s glory on the track, the members of our school community are striving to give their very best, each and every day.

We hope that you enjoy this issue of ***The Herald*** as we tell the story of the way in which Eastern Christian School strives for excellence as an offering!

Thomas G. Dykhous ’76
Executive Director & Head of School

About the cover
EC high school students Jaylyn Ocasio, Emily Steen,
Jax Revfi, Marco de la Cruz and Nate Wehrle, along
with robots created by the Robotics club



EASTERN CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL

THE HERALD

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PAGE 42 Above: Girls Cross Country team takes time to pray before their run.

The Herald is a bi-annual publication of The Foundation for Eastern Christian School. The purpose of this publication is to share the story of Eastern Christian School and to strengthen the bonds among our extended school community in support of Christian education. ***The Herald* is mailed free of charge to over 6,500 alumni, families, and friends of the school.**

Our address database is always being updated. If you would like to update your contact information or if you know of someone who would like to receive *The Herald*, please contact The Foundation for Eastern Christian School Association office and we will be very happy to update our database accordingly.

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EC ANNOUNCES MAJOR PROGRAM CHANGE

Move optimizes space and expands potential for learning

At a parent meeting in early January, Head of School **Tom Dykhous**e announced a major change to impact the elementary school and middle school campuses.



Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, fourth and fifth graders will be housed together in a wing of the Wyckoff campus to form an upper elementary program; the EC middle school, which will remain at the Wyckoff campus, will now feature the more traditional configuration of sixth through eighth graders. Veteran middle school vice principal, **Mary Faber**, will serve as the upper elementary school director, providing dedicated administrative support to the students and faculty.

“We are delighted about the opportunities for all of our students as a result of this move,” says Chief Educational Officer **Ruth Kuder**. “Chapels, small group discipleship and service learning will be targeted to the developmental needs of fourth and fifth graders. The Wyckoff campus provides access to a larger gym, media center, playground equipment and fields. Upper elementary students

will have access to lab space for science and STEAM-related hands-on activities.”

She adds, “The move will *also* provide our Midland Park campus with the space to accommodate our growing early childhood and lower elementary student body.” The change comes after the school underwent a facility utilization study designed to optimize space at all three campuses. Experts discovered that the Wyckoff campus had the greatest potential for increased usage.

Dykhous adds, “The facility utilization study completed early last year had the unanticipated conclusion of highlighting an opportunity to expand the use of our Wyckoff campus. This information led our educational leadership team to consider multiple ways in which we could enhance our already strong program on both the Midland Park and Wyckoff campuses in ways that

are absolutely consistent with our core value of striving for excellence.”

Leadership realized the timing of the study coincided with another trend—that of continued enrollment growth at the youngest grade levels. This year, school administrators expanded the kindergarten program from two classrooms to three; next year, the school is planning on an additional first grade section, and anticipates the possibility of an additional pre-school section. After detailed analysis by a panel of teachers, administrators and a leading school scheduling expert, the team proposed relocating fourth graders to Wyckoff and the plan was unanimously approved by EC’s board of directors.

In addition to advantages for fourth and fifth graders, EC administrators have recognized that the move also benefits the middle school program, and in particular, those new to the school. Recent enrollment data shows that 20 percent of EC sixth graders are recent transfers, and middle school will now begin in sixth grade, ushered in with a new experiential learning program (for more, see page 11).

Kuder adds, “The planning team of teachers and administrators is enthusiastic about exploring additional exciting possibilities that an upper elementary program provides for *all* of our students.”

NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES

Exploring this year's spiritual theme

Rewind to September.

It is the start of the school year and there's much to do. Setting up classrooms, organizing grade books, crafting lesson plans—more than likely, the same scenario is simultaneously playing out at campuses across the state.

Yet something is different at EC. It's 7:50 a.m., the first week of school, and faculty members gather together in the faculty room—or lounge—as they prefer to call it. Soon, the conversation turns away from typical office chatter and toward the Lord.

God is Jehovah—I AM WHO I AM—wholly independent, wholly complete.

God is Jehovah-M-Kaddesh—the God who sanctifies.

God is Jehovah-nissi—God our banner, our victory.

The list, compiled by discipleship ministry The Navigators, and printed out now by HS Principal **David Intlekofer**, spans several pages and includes 30 names, definitions and Bible references. As the school year begins, teachers are invited to ponder about the importance of a name, and what it means to lift high the name of God.

This year's school-wide theme is Name Above All Names. Beginning from the first week of school, the biblical concept is explored in a variety of ways and using a number of methods. Content is customized and tailored to be age-relevant, but the overall concept is the same, derived from Philippians 2: 9-11: "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Jesus. The Light of the World. Prince of Peace. True Vine. Messiah.



Jaylyn Ocasio, Isabelle Lazor and Yereimiya Wright use their vocals to lead the high school in worship, flanked by musicians Luciano Catizone, Melanie Careri, and Chan Jung.

The school's spiritual theme is not something chosen lightly. Every spring, the task is bestowed upon a cross-campus team comprised of Bible teachers, chapel coordinators and principals. The group also requests student input from the Bible and Worship class at the high school. "We look at a list of past themes, consider what our community is experiencing, and spend time in prayer asking for God's direction on our focus," explains team member and high school chapel coordinator, **Rebekah Sankey**.

Ruth Kuder, chief education officer, adds, "We are looking for a key biblical concept that will have substantial breadth and depth for a year-long focus. We try to identify something that is as meaningful to a 3-year-old as to an 83-year-old."

Throughout the year, the theme is intentionally woven through the fabric of the campus in a variety of ways, including chapels, the arts, and academics. "Like all faith integration at EC, the theme touches every aspect of our community and curriculum," explains Sankey.

Kuder says, "There are several reasons that we believe it is important to focus on a spiritual theme. It provides the school community the opportunity to explore and investigate God's word together. We are able to spend a year focused on the key concept in scripture that we can explore in music, visual arts and words."

ECHS STUDENTS BRING TECH SUPPORT TO HOLLAND HOME

Project merges service, technology and education



A small team of technologically inclined students, led by Robert, started to visit the Holland Home in 2016. Although the original thought was that Robert would present computer concepts to seniors, it quickly became apparent that it would be more helpful to answer individual questions and resolve specific problems. This year, the team travels to the Holland Home once a month offering technology support. Robert's vision is that this service will continue even after he leaves EC.

“My grandma likes me calling her,” says high school senior Robert DeJulia.

DeJulia lives near the border of New York and New Jersey. His grandparents, however, live a plane ride away in Florida. The separation is a reality for many families in the Northeast, and a pain that can be assuaged through technology.

“Technology is a form of communication,” he says, sharing that the inability to connect can exacerbate feelings of loneliness.

Robert's fondness for his family served as unexpected inspiration as he considered what his capstone STEAM project might be at Eastern Christian High School. An honors science, technology and art academic track, the STEAM program requires students to begin work on an extensive research or design-build project their sophomore years, that will conclude in their senior years.

Robert decided to focus his work on seniors and technology, utilizing his computer skills to create a tech help web site, as well as adding a component to serve seniors locally. “From the beginning, [Robert] knew his mission was to find a way to help seniors with technology. That's been his desire from the beginning. He's done a lot of thinking about accessibility with technology,” comments **Tim Steen**, technology teacher and Robbie's STEAM mentor.

Robert hopes to unveil the second part of his mission—a tech help site for seniors—before he graduates in the spring. He says this opportunity has taught him many skills, including improving his coding ability, learning database creation, and ensuring Internet security.

After graduating, he hopes to major in computer science and eventually pursue a career in the field. It's an area in which he remains passionate. “I think technology has a lot of benefits to it...There's a whole community aspect of it and it's also fun to use,” he shares. “That's really something that anyone would benefit from.”



Top left: Robert DeJulia on location at the Holland Christian Home.
Above: Cassidy Vander Eems and Jordan Lester work with a Holland Christian Home resident.

A CLUB FOR ASPIRING WRITERS

ECMS writing club continues to strengthen

By Emma Robinson

Eastern Christian Middle School hosts an after-school writing group run by **Laura Kuehlke**, where **21 seventh and eighth grade students** meet to work on different types of writing, such as essays, fictional work, poetry, and other literary genres.

“The after-school writing group meets from 3-4 p.m. on Tuesday afternoons, and students work on a variety of independent projects—essays, fiction, or poetry. It’s also a time for sharing and collaboration, and in the spring all of the students in the group compete in the ECMS contest. This is judged by other published authors, editors of literary journals, or other educators I know personally,” says Kuehlke.

While there are some aspects of the group that will stay the same throughout the academic year, Kuehlke says there is also some variation, specifically with contests. “We began with a Stranger Sagas contest [this year]. Students who entered were challenged to respond to a prompt by writing a complete story of no longer than one hundred words.” Ten entries from Eastern Christian were chosen for publication and have advanced to a second round; winners will be chosen in April.

Currently, “Students are participating in NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) and have challenged themselves with impressive word count goals to reach by the end of the month.”

Kuehlke’s love for writing started at a very young age—quite a few years younger than the students she currently teaches. “I’ve been writing for as long as I can remember. When I was in elementary school, I read the Little House series of books by Laura Ingalls Wilder. She became an instant role model and hero to me, and all I wanted to be was a writer and a teacher.”

And, while teaching is her main job, Kuehlke is also a published author as well: “I’ve always wanted to write, to publish, and to tell stories. One day, I got an idea



The writing club meets once a week. Here, many of its members take a break to pose for a photo.

for a story that was based on the Armor of God passage in Ephesians 6. It began as one book, then became two, and the story was finally finished after book four. It’s definitely not an easy process, but it is certainly a rewarding one.” Her 4-book series, called Pursuit, has multiple publishers—Yorkshire Publishing, Light Switch Press, and Outskirts Press, Inc.

Since Kuehlke loved writing since such a young age, she finds it really rewarding to cultivate that same love for writing in her students through this group. “It’s a safe, fun, and encouraging place for students to work, get feedback, celebrate writing successes, and develop their craft. There’s nothing more exciting or heartwarming for a writing teacher than to watch a student find his or her voice.”

When asked, Kuehlke said she loves spending time on this group. “It’s a privilege to be able to work with these students who have such a passion for writing. One day, we’ll be reading books, articles, and other works by these talented, aspiring authors.”

A SYSTEM OF MERITS

Cultivating character among MS students

A middle school student hops into the car at the end of the day, beaming with pride.

“How was your day?” His mom asks.

Although the question was heard, he ignores the normal pleasantries and gets straight to the point.

“I got a merit,” he exclaims.

No other explanation is needed. Of course it was a good day. A merit was involved.

At its surface, a merit doesn’t look like anything too amazing: It’s a small piece of paper, with blank space for names, and the school’s core values printed toward the bottom: Seeking truth, embracing community, exhibiting compassion, developing responsibility, striving for excellence, and serving others. Yet it is a highly esteemed honor at the middle school designed to cultivate true community and create an environment that maximizes learning.

It is just one more way the school’s staff makes the most of the responsibility they are entrusted with. “Middle school is a time of ups and downs,” shares **Mary Faber**, dean of students. “It is a time when there is much spiritual, emotional, social, and physical development. There is the desire to influence and teach so that students grow into young Christian men and women. As our mission statement says, we want students to develop so that they can ‘act as Christ’s transforming agents in a global society.’”



Merits, according to the student/parent handbook, are “gained for character or behavior deserving special recognition or approval. It cannot be requested, nor can a student act with the intention of receiving a merit. An individual teacher awards a merit when he or she observes evidence of character or behavior that is above and beyond, thus deserving special recognition or approval.”

Students have earned merits for various reasons, says Faber, such as helping out classmates before being asked to do so, sharing lunch with a classmate who forgot his or her lunch, or proactively asking a teacher if they can help. Faber estimates that in any given month, there are at least five students who have collected more than three.

And three is a big number.

For every three merits earned in a month, students will receive a note and a candy treat in their locker. No matter how many are earned, every merit gets dropped into

*Brynn Bohuny, Sami Barna, Mariah Ramdath, and Grace Dalessandro.
Inset: Merits have had a significant impact on middle school culture.*

one of three bottles in the main hallway. At the end of the quarter, two merits are pulled at random from each bottle and recipients receive a gift card. Merits also count as points toward an internal, year-long competition aimed at team-building, called house teams.

This is the seventh year the merit program has been in place, and Faber believes the initiative is unique among middle schools. She has seen many benefits, including watching students knowing and living out the school values, and seeing students take ownership of building a supporting atmosphere.

“Positive feedback, such as the merits we use, helps to provide clarity as to the type of behaviors we want to encourage. It gives students an idea of what types of behaviors we want to see, and acknowledges them when they begin practicing them,” explains Faber.

COACHING IN A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

A conversation with two long-time coaches to discover distinctions

In his many seasons of coaching, a few of his teams stand out: There was the time his girls soccer team beat the odds in three successive games to win the county tournament in 2000, or the 2003 softball season where little EC battled the 22-0 Clifton softball team and came out victorious in the county semi-final.

But there are other memories—of a completely different kind—that remain emblazoned in long-time coach **Barry Veenstra**'s mind as well. He remembers the year he lost his dad, and how the team rallied behind him and gave him an especially touching card. He recalls moments where players rose above their individual needs and came alongside each other. Those times are special to him too.

"A team at their best can be another family," he adds. Similarly, coach **Joel Apol**, who has been with Eastern Christian School for 33 years, recalls the season of 2013, where his girls track team won the state championships.

He can remember the times his teams have brought home county titles in cross-country and track. And although these awards alone are cause for celebration, it's not those stories that give him the most joy. It's actually stories like this: the story of a sixth runner on a county championship team. Because she was the sixth runner on the team, she didn't ordinarily count toward the final score. Yet in the last 100 yards of that Passaic County meet, she mustered all her energy and passed four runners.

Apol recalls the day: "I thought we'd lost to [Wayne Hills]. I told my girls to tell Wayne Hills that they had done well. I had my kids go up and hug them." What he didn't realize at the time was that the first five runners on both teams had tied. EC's runner #6, the one who gave her all just to give her all, was the tie-breaker. EC was county champion.

Eastern Christian School operates with six athletic pillars: Glorify God, Strive for Excellence, Exemplify Christian Character, Run the Race to Win, Compete as One and Be Committed. Although the objective is to win, both coaches share that their desire for the kids they coach goes beyond the win.

"The culture teaches win at all costs. That might include cutting corners, intimidation, breaking rules if you can get away with it—we try to be counter-cultural," says Veenstra.

"Success in sports is not success unless it's success for the right reason. If you run for the fear of losing, you are not getting anything out of it. Shaming students, 'guilting' them into doing their best, saying they owe



Nestled among many others, this photo of a 2000 county championship team still graces the wall of Barry Veenstra's office. Barry officially retired from coaching this year, although he still serves as the school's Athletic Director.

it to you as a coach, taking credit for their wins, this is the opposite of good coaching," says Apol.

So what does make Christian coaching distinctive? In many ways, say Apol and Veenstra, it is similar to Christian teaching: being able to step back from the daily rhythm and see a bigger perspective.

Veenstra explains: "You owe it to your opponent to try to win. Winning is often a function of talent and schedule, but we are also growing kids God's way. We are helping parents develop young men and women of faith. Athletics offers a lot of opportunities in that regards...grace in defeat, humility in success," says Veenstra.

"If your athletes graduate from your teams better equipped to face life, to be able to keep a good perspective on what is important and what is not, then you are a successful coach," Apol adds. "I think in many, many schools, that isn't even in the picture. To develop our kids into well balanced adults who have the right priorities—I think that's the main goal of the school."

ECSCA AND CHCC FORM PARTNERSHIP

Move brings increased mental health services to school

By Emily Steen

In 2013, the US Centers for Disease Control released its first report on children's mental health, declaring it "an important public health issue." Culling together various studies and data, the agency estimates that 13-20 percent of children aged 3-17—up to 1 out of 5—experience a mental disorder in any given year.

Ongoing data and state laws highlighting the rise of mental health challenges in young people led to the need to reassess how Eastern Christian School could best nurture the spirits of the most vulnerable within the school's population.

"The importance of school-based mental health services has increasingly been recognized by educators and mental health professionals as integral in providing a safe and secure environment for students," explains **Ruth Kuder**, chief educational officer. "As we started to think about how to best serve our students and their families, it made sense to talk with the Christian Health Care Center (CHCC) about working together."

As a result of summer talks, the two institutions partnered to pilot a program primarily centered at the elementary and middle schools. The agreement resulted



Sara (Sonderfan) Heerema '94

in an on-site counselor at these campuses, **Sara Heerema**, who will work in tandem with existing high school counselor, **Paige Visser**. The CHCC agreement also enables increased access to specialized mental health services as-needed, including mental health first aid training for faculty and staff, support groups for students, and student and parent education.

This year, nearly 30 students have been referred for counseling as a result of the partnership, which has included both students who seek short-term assistance and students needing ongoing help. Although every individual is unique and cases are confidential, Heerema says in a school setting issues often revolve around anxiety.

Heerema, a licensed clinical social worker possessing a master's in social work, has been an employee of CHCC since 2003 and is also an EC alumna. "Good mental health is not simply the lack of mental illness, but it's having social, emotional and behavioral skills that help one cope with struggles in life," she shares. "I truly believe that good mental health is crucial to student success in school and in life."

“

I TRULY BELIEVE THAT GOOD MENTAL HEALTH IS CRUCIAL TO

STUDENT SUCCESS IN SCHOOL AND IN LIFE.”

—Sara Heerema



An aerial view of the Christian Health Care Center campus

Strive for Excellence

21ST CENTURY SKILLS THE CHANGING FACE OF EDUCATION

Within educational circles, the phrase, “21st century skills,” is an increasingly important one. It hints at a rapidly changing society—an information revolution that has catapulted our world into a post-industrial age—and the need to reform learning to match. This cultural shift has led Eastern Christian to continually innovate in its curriculum and course offerings. Following are a few examples:

New on the Horizon

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PILOTS PROGRAM IN GRADES 1-4



The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that STEM-related employment will grow 6.5 percent by 2024. New Jersey, however, will likely grow faster, at a projected 9.2 percent employment growth, according to the NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development. And while elementary school parents are probably not thinking about their child’s future workforce preparedness, it’s never too early to begin building a good foundation.

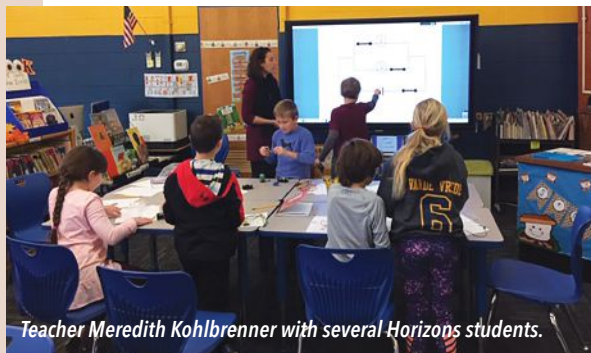
This year, the elementary campus is piloting a pullout program titled Horizons. Taught by **Meredith Kohlbrenner**, the small group of students meets once a week for extra challenge related to science and engineering.

“A lot of our activities are project-oriented and hands-on. We have very lively discussions. Students

share their ideas excitedly, jot ideas in design journals, and ask lots of questions—most of which we explore together or have to research further after class,” Kohlbrenner explains. “I am thrilled to be their coach as I provide them with new and challenging concepts, and then watch them take the direction and go the depth that suits their interests and abilities.”

Projects this semester have varied, dependent on grade level. First graders, for example, have been introduced to coding levels and layers using the software programs, Lightbot and Scratch Jr. On the older end of the spectrum, meanwhile, fourth graders are working with robotics, which includes assembling and writing programs for Lego Mindstorms EV3 robots.

In its second year, students were chosen based on teacher recommendations and advanced test scores. The hope next year is to expand the program further by providing extra time for Horizons classes and extra challenge for students in the mainstream classrooms as well. “The program’s goal is to provide the students with meaningful and challenging learning activities in order to promote self-understanding, cognitive growth, and talent development,” says Kohlbrenner.



Robotics Recap

INTEREST IN ROBOTICS CONTINUES TO GROW

The lights rise. As the anthem finishes, there is a low buzz in the crowd, and the competitors take to the arena. The announcer steps up to the microphone, calling the teams to line up. The countdown flashes, and...

“GO!”

They take off, pushing, breaking and lifting. Months of preparation have led to this crucial competition. The buzzer rings out to end the match. Sweating and anxious, the drivers put their controllers down and wait for their robot's final scores.

It sounds and feels like athletics, and although it's certainly competitive and stirs the crowd in much the same way, Robot Fight Night champions brains over brawn. It's the culminating event for the high school's robotics class. Yet for those who have a thirst for academic competitions, it is only a launch point.

“There's something engaging about being involved in a competition that is all about your ability to problem solve and think,” shares **Tim Steen**, teacher

and club leader. “It really motivates them to do better; the way to do better isn't to work out more or practice more on the field. It is to figure out how to code and build something better.”

For those who desire more than a semester of robotics, the Eastern Christian Robotics Team is an after-school club with a groundbreaking 28-person student membership this year. Led by Steen and fellow teacher **Kristen Rudd**, the team is also bolstered by three EC alumni, including NJIT students **Ryan Onove '15** and **Corey Abma '15**; and **Mike Silbernagel '08**, currently an engineer for the Picatinny Arsenal.

EC participates in FIRST Tech Challenge, which changes design and build rules every year. This year's theme is Rover Ruckus, inspired by the Mars Rover design. Competing against many different schools, EC's team is divided into two groups and will enter two different robots in the various competitions. Students

are assigned roles as builders, coders or in business, which includes initiatives like writing business plans and creating tutorials.

The program is new at EC, but the future is promising. According

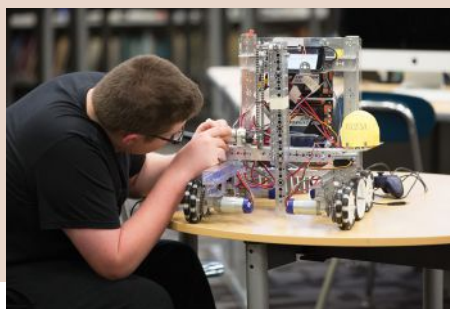
1. Tyler Onove and Oluwagbohunmi (David) Odusanya; 2. Adam Dalton; 3. JunSeo Lee

to Steen, “We started this to give kids an opportunity to compete more academically than physically, and I'm excited to see what we can do with this many kids this year and into the future.”



“THERE’S SOMETHING ENGAGING ABOUT BEING INVOLVED IN A COMPETITION THAT IS ALL ABOUT YOUR ABILITY TO PROBLEM SOLVE AND THINK...”

– Tim Steen



A Fresh Way of Learning

MIDDLE SCHOOL LAUNCHES OUTDOOR PROGRAM

By Emma Robinson

It ranks in the top 5 percent of public schools in Michigan. Yet despite the success, some would argue its best teachers are a bunch of monkeys.

This is a hyperbole, of course, but not as far off as some might think. Physically located at the John Ball Zoo in Grand Rapids, the Zoo School provides gifted and talented sixth graders with a full, hands-on curriculum, in addition to special units studying subjects such as zoology and physics.

Middle school teacher **Jamie Van Buiten** had the opportunity to visit this alternative school when she was an education student at Calvin College. The experience, as it turned out, was life shaping. “[While a student] I became really interested in this idea of alternative education, and researched more of those opportunities that Grand Rapids public schools had,” she shares.

Last year, Van Buiten transferred back to New Jersey and took up a position at Eastern Christian School. During the school’s Eagles Perch contest, a contest that solicits innovative proposals from faculty and staff that will transform the institution, Van Buiten went back to her educational roots and pitched the idea for a middle school outdoor educational program.

Her vision is now beginning to take shape at Eastern Christian Middle School, where a new program for outdoor learning is being piloted for 6th grade social studies this year. “EC is trying out this program to expand and support its mission even further,” says Van Buiten. “This program will provide an excellent social studies curriculum and provide students with opportunities to learn skills beyond ‘normal’ classroom learning, while they are also learning about God’s world and how to connect to Him.”

Van Buiten explains how alternative education—in this case, an outdoor program—can revolutionize traditional curriculum. For example, sixth graders study adaptations within different Native American cultural groups. In a traditional

classroom, this can be taught using a textbook and notes. Instead, her class went outside and small groups were assigned different “environments” in the school: playground, soccer field, baseball field, basketball court and Gaga pit.

“The students needed to come up with a plan and create a poster to explain how their group would survive winter in their environment...they were able to trade with other groups and use what was in their environment. The group then created a poster and presented to the class about their adaptations. After this project, students moved into studying the different Native American Cultural groups and creating a museum for other classes,” she explains.

National surveys have demonstrated the value outdoor education curriculum has had in student learning and mental health. Although Van Buiten has only been teaching the program since September, she has already seen positive results. “The students seem to really be enjoying this type of learning. My hope is that students will continue to enjoy it as the program develops.” Van Buiten also has a strong hope for this program’s future and expansion as well: “After this year we are moving into a fuller rollout of the program in which experiential learning will be incorporated into all core subjects at least a portion of the units done. Each year of the program, we are hoping to incorporate more and more experiential learning.”



Teacher Jamie Van Buiten instructs students in her sixth grade social studies class.

In Career and Technical Education class, a mandatory class for incoming freshmen, the culture unit includes a panel discussion involving international students and American students who have spent time living as expatriates.

SPECIAL FEATURE

Global Competency

CULTIVATING STUDENTS WHO TRANSFORM THE WORLD

Although some sources believe the brand blunder stories are urban legends, they still make a point. There's the widely reported story of Gerber selling baby food into Africa with pictures of its iconic baby head, only later realizing that in some countries, images on food labels typically correspond to the item inside. Or the other about Pepsi's bad translation of its "Come Alive" slogan in China, which led people to believe Pepsi was promising to bring ancestors back from the dead with a sip of its soda. In a more recent example, there's Delta Airlines, whose marketing team tweeted a congratulatory note about the US versus Ghana soccer game, along with a giraffe image—even though there aren't giraffes in Ghana.

Whether true or false, these stories serve as a reminder that business has gone global, and along with globalization, comes the need for global competency, empathy and understanding. Increasingly, executives must learn to cast vision for, collaborate with, and sell into markets that are culturally different from what they are accustomed to in the United States. Globalization is a current buzzword in education circles too, and one that Eastern Christian School—with a mission to train up

Godly leaders—takes very seriously.

Curriculum Specialist

Rebekah Sankey explains:

"Global competence goes beyond understanding perspectives to being resourced to take well-informed positive actions. As a school, we are committed to raising leaders who are Christ's transforming agents in the world, bringing His Kingdom nearer in all we do. It is impossible to transform a world about which you are ignorant. History demonstrates that when we take transformational actions without cultural humility, we do more harm than good. We believe we will help our students grow in capacity and disposition so that they can participate fully in God's plan to redeem all of [life] as He leads them into their individual spheres of influence in the global community."

How is this accomplished in an educational setting? Eastern Christian School has intentionally set a seven-year goal of increasing the global competence of each student in the community. It is currently reviewing the K-12 social studies curriculum with this intention in mind. At the high school, literature choices have also widened to include more voices, and discussion is underway on how to better guide students in global perspectives as they shape their own worldview.

"Traditionally, the literature and history championed by a society represents the values and ideals of the majority. We miss the complexity, diversity and varied perspectives of all the voices in our communities

when we do not widen our curriculum to include the stories of the marginalized, minority or overlooked populations," says Sankey.

The school is also formulating a Core Values portfolio that traces development from kindergarten through 12th grade, which will include measurements of student growth in global competency. Finally, seniors are given a Global Competence Aptitude Assessment each year that evaluates internal and external readiness for global interactions, which identifies individual strengths and weaknesses, but will also inform future planning.

"As Christians, we want to hear the whole story that God is weaving through time through the people he has made," says Sankey. "A significant part of gaining global competence is understanding the beliefs and values of different global communities. We believe we are responsible to help students develop discernment so that they can be strategic, compassionate carriers of God's truth and love in a fallen world. Learning to discern between the perspectives and worldviews of others is foundational to preparing students to take transformative actions today and tomorrow."



Freshmen Joe Vivolo and Lia Callahan at H-Mart, a Korean grocery store.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR EXCELLENCE

The intentionality behind EC's preschool program

A visitor peeks into the vibrantly colored classroom and sees a couple of children standing around a child-sized table with a basin full of water and some cranberries. They are splashing around, talking to their teacher, and giggling a lot.

To a casual observer, it simply looks like a great time for the youngest of students at EC, but Preschool Director **Karyn Baitzel** explains what's going on behind the scenes:

"All of our classes are taught by certified teachers. As the teacher interacts and observes each child, she identifies what the child already knows, and with a rich understanding of child development, she recognizes the succeeding skills and with tremendous intentionality and care, crafts activities for children to practice and explore these concepts through play."

In the case of the cranberry and water table, for example, she encourages the late talker to use new vocabulary as he explains what he is doing. Simultaneously, the teacher corrals in the shy child to interact with her peers. And after a few minutes, she pulls out tongs and suggests the kids catch the cranberries and count them as they clink into a cup. Although it's still fun, the introduced activity also supports fine motor development and allows the children to practice rote counting.

"Fun and games are at the heart of an excellent preschool program. Fred Rodgers may have said it best when he said, 'Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning,'" says Baitzel.

Meredith Kohlbrenner enrolled her daughter, Hope, in the 3-year-old program last year. She shares, "I knew she would have fun, but I maintained an underlying assumption it would just be a glorified playtime...However, when I started seeing pictures on [the app] Brightwheel, I realized Hope was benefitting from an enriching, multi-sensory curriculum that was



Preschool teacher Sarah Vander Wall works with students as they play at a train table.

far more engaging and educational than I could have provided at home."

The pursuit of excellence starts early at Eastern Christian School—starting next fall, preschool classes begin as young as two and a half years old. Students enrolled at EC immediately begin to build an academic, physical, spiritual and emotional foundation that carries through to older years. It is in these early years that the building blocks of excellence are put into place, forming a foundation for strong listening comprehension, literacy, math, communication and motor skills that will be drawn upon in subsequent years. In addition, preschool teachers model for students' basic biblical tenants and spiritual disciplines that guide them on a lifelong path with the Lord.

"As a preschool, which is part of a school system that goes to grade 12, there are lots of opportunities for two-way collaboration between preschool and kindergarten teachers and beyond, ensuring that our students are prepared for the next step," shares Baitzel. In addition, "there are several professionals that work with both the preschool and elementary students including the physical education, music teachers, school nurse, counselor and special education teachers. Working with the same students across several years allows these professionals to know the students and their families more fully and better meet their needs."

CULTIVATING TALENTS

Our community living out EC core values in a variety of endeavors

Deep into the book of Exodus, readers are introduced to a lesser-known biblical character named Bezalel. What we know is distilled into a few sentences: “He was filled with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills—to make artistic designs (Exodus 31:3-4a).” Ultimately, his specific talents were employed to create the Ark of the Covenant.

In a world of standardized tests, Eastern Christian encourages a student environment where individuals are challenged to use their unique, God-given gifts in a way that honors the Lord. The school adheres to the following core values as it seeks to pursue the character of Christ: seek truth, serve others, embrace community, exhibit compassion, develop responsibility and strive for excellence. Here are several examples of students living out core values in a way that showcases their own uniqueness:

SEEK TRUTH

Guillaume Bignon

NASA’s website publishes stunning pictures of the universe, showing jaw-dropping creations ranging from spiral galaxies to supernovas. In addition to photographs, the Hubble telescope’s reach has also led to increased support that the universe has a beginning.

Though this introduction sounds like the start of a science lesson, the information is also relevant to Christian apologists, one of whom is EC parent and recent ECHS chapel speaker, Guillaume Bignon.

It’s part of what’s called the cosmological argument, which at its heart “claims that the beginning of the universe is best explained by the existence of a creator God. We do have strong scientific and philosophical reasons to believe that the universe was not eternal in the past; that it had a beginning at a finite point in the past. And the reason that’s important is that things that begin to exist have a

cause. Things don’t just pop into being uncaused out of absolutely nothing. So putting the two together, it follows logically that the universe had a cause,” Bignon explains.

Bignon shared these thoughts and more on his second trip to the high school. Chapel meets once a week and speakers are invited by a collection of students in the Bible and Worship class. This year, Bignon’s goal for ECHS was to “1. Challenge the students to engage intellectually with their faith, and 2. Equip them to do that in a way that doesn’t lead to pride.”

Although not an apologist by trade (he’s actually in information technology), Bignon holds a master’s in New Testament studies and a PhD in philosophical theology. His personal road from atheist to Christian involved grappling with deep questions in the faith, and consequently, he shares that he has a passion for “equipping Christians [who] wrestle with doubt and encouraging



Bignon family

them to be bold in their proclamation and defense of the gospel.”

This includes equipping students. In addition to ECHS, Bignon has traveled the country and Canada speaking on various campuses. “I think loving God with all one’s mind at least means deeply engaging intellectually with one’s faith: striving hard to know and understand God, thinking His thoughts after Him. The Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga said that philosophy is “thinking hard” about stuff. This is what I invited the students to do (or do more of): think hard, read, and educate your faith.”

BIGNON ENCOURAGES CHRISTIANS TO BE BOLD IN THEIR PROCLAMATION AND DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL.

EMBRACE COMMUNITY

Danny Buckles

In October, Eastern Christian School hosted 10 students from Van Lodenstein College in the Netherlands as part of a cultural exchange program and ministry opportunity. The international students—who despite the name are actually high school age—participated in school activities, and also had the opportunity to experience American life in the fall.

Prior to their arrival, students at Eastern Christian could volunteer to serve as student ambassadors. Though sophomore **Danny Buckles** didn't initially volunteer, he was specifically nominated by a teacher and approached about the opportunity. Once approached, he gladly accepted and jumped in with gusto, accompanying the international students on a tour to New York City, on an apple picking

trip, and to Camp Shiloh for hiking.

Buckles says that although at first, communication was a challenge, over time “we connected more.” He adds, “we went places, we interacted, we got to know each other pretty well to the point we were friends...they learned a lot about different American culture, and different American kids. We also learned about their culture quite a bit.”

Buckles was particularly delighted by their reactions to New York City. “They just loved it, especially all the souvenirs. Any time they'd pass a window of a shop, they'd say, “Let's go in!”



Danny Buckles [center] surrounded by students from both EC and the Netherlands during a teambuilding event at Shiloh Bible Retreat.

Although Buckles is Ukrainian by descent and didn't know much about Dutch culture, hosting was a responsibility he took to naturally, say several teachers who chaperoned. Buckles says he became especially close to a kid named Jan, who was both friendly and interested in culture.

When asked what made him an excellent host, he responded, “Probably one of the bigger things is being able to open yourself up to learn new cultures, involve them in your life, and be willing to get involved in their life.”

SERVE OTHERS

Jennifer, Elizabeth & Luis Gomez

This school year, the Gomez children—ECMS student Jennifer, as well as ECES students Elizabeth and Luis Jr.—will head to Guatemala, together with their parents, Luis and Jasmine. Although their father is originally from Guatemala and will meet family while there, their main purpose is not to vacation. It's to serve.

Service is part of the fabric of the Gomez family, who go out every Thursday to feed homeless in Paterson. And while the family has been instrumental in organizing mission trips for various church groups, this is the first time they leave the United States to spread the gospel. “I am originally from Guatemala and I didn't go back for 27 years. When I finally did go back, I was amazed how the country had grown incredibly



in terms of population, but it also grew in poverty, and people were forgotten,” explains Mr. Gomez.

The family will head to a small village called Cumbre Fria—which, when translated, means Cold Summit—located in the mountains. An impoverished village of 250 people with no electricity, no drinking water, and only one church, they will deliver much

needed supplies and food, as well as share the good news of Jesus Christ.

The kids, says Mr. Gomez, are counting down the days. “They have heard tons of stories about being a missionary and now it's their time to experience it by themselves,” he shares. “So far, what we have heard from our children is: Jennifer wants to be a missionary, Elizabeth wants to be a pastor, and Luis has a heart for people.”



EXHIBIT COMPASSION

Anneke Reitsma

Though the minimum age requirements have since changed, Anneke Reitsma was just 7 years old the first time she stepped onto a Relief Bus. Together with her father, **Mark '91**, the two traveled to Harlem and helped the area's homeless population in the mobile kitchen and outreach

center, serving homemade soup, sharing hygiene items, and praying with those who came by.

Now an 8th grader, her desire to exhibit compassion toward the needy has only grown. "All three of my daughters have been out on the bus at various points through the years, but my daughter Anneke has had the strongest passion for the ministry and typically serves with me at least three or four times per year," shares Mark.

"The staff jokes about how she's become so familiar with all the various roles that she's going to 'run the place' someday. We'll see what the future holds, but it has certainly made an impression on her since she is currently aspiring to pursue a career in social work and would love to work for New York City Relief someday."

Although helping the needy should resonate with us as a way to serve the "least of these brothers and sisters of mine," as mandated in Matthew 25, for the Reitsma family, the Relief Bus has also been a way to practice the

exhortation of Proverbs 22:6: "Train a child in the way they should go."

Reitsma shares, "In many ways, I see exhibiting compassion as an act of worship. I think it's a key component of living out our faith as followers of Jesus Christ and often times gets neglected because it forces us way out of our comfort zone," he shares.

The Reitsma family has partnered with the local church and with Eastern Christian in order to accomplish this Christ-centered training for their family. Mark credits Eastern Christian with doing a "great job of providing a Gospel-centered education and has strongly advocated for kids to put their faith into action."

Thankful for their Christian community, and for the Relief Bus opportunity, he adds, "My hope and prayer is for these experiences to give them a chance to hear God's calling and get outside of the bubble to see that the world is bigger, and respond as He would have us respond. I think that's sinking in."



DEVELOP RESPONSIBILITY

Madeline Dick

One Friday, a student belts out Bohemian Rhapsody during "karaoke day." On another day, in an especially unusual act, a teacher demonstrates the correct way to cut a whole chicken. And right before holiday break, a group of students perform Christmas-themed sacred music. Every week (usually on Fridays), students and

staff have a chance to showcase their talents to their peers during MC Live, a lunchtime event held in the high school media center.

The well-attended event—which often makes use of a theme—is a "marvelous outlet for building confidence and improving performance skills," shares senior Maddie Dick. What's more, it is now completely student-led.

MC Live was started about two and a half years ago by teacher **Ruth Rudd**, who also serves as director of the media center. She originally called the idea, Music in the Media Center, but as more students showed interest in performances beyond musical acts, the name was changed to MC Live. Although Rudd orchestrated it at first, this year she handed

[This event is a] marvelous outlet for building confidence and improving performance skills.

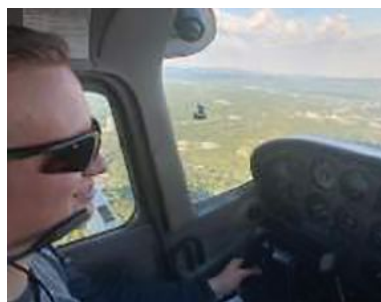
responsibility over to the MC Live Production Team. Maddie serves as its leader.

A frequent performer since her sophomore year, Maddie shares, “MC Live has been a really excellent way for me to build confidence and enjoy my Fridays, and I want other people to experience these opportunities as well.”

As a leader, she conducts weekly brainstorm and planning meetings, working with a team to orchestrate all aspects of the event, from theme, to advertising, to sound, to set-up.

It is a labor of love for Maddie, however. “Leading MC Live is a big task, which requires a team of creative and capable people. In my time leading this team, I’ve learned a lot about leadership through trial and error. We tried things, and then had to make hard decisions on what should change or improve if something was going wrong...Mrs. Rudd has been a huge help.”

She sees tremendous benefit in her MC Live experiences, adding, “I believe that along with developing responsibility, MC Live allows students to embrace community and strive for excellence.”



STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE

Nate Wehrle

For a good part of his high school career, Nate Wehrle went to school. Then, when the week was done for most of the student population, he did something unusual: he went to school again.

Although his second school didn’t teach him the concepts of Macbeth or the hypothesis’ of geometry, he was learning other valuable information. He learned about airports. He studied plane mechanics. He read maps and memorized flying rules.

Then, after hours and hours of work, although he wasn’t allowed by the state of NJ to get in a car and drive himself to school, he was able to do something most students can only dream of: fly a plane.

“I got my license this summer. With my license, I can fly single combustion engine planes VFR

(Visual Flight Rules). VFR means you fly in conditions where you can see out the windows. You fly mostly by looking outside and not at the instruments inside. You use ground landmarks to know where you are,” explains Nate.

The journey Nate took to get here was a long one, which included both on-the-ground and in-flight training. To pass his license test, “You have to have at least 50 hours of flight time and you must show proficiency in the airplane. This means an instructor goes up with you for the check ride and you show that you know what you are doing and that you can also recover from emergency situations, like stalls and loss of power. You also have to take a written or oral ground test. This will test your general knowledge,” he shares.

Eastern Christian School recognizes that every student is a unique, loved individual who has been endowed by the Lord with specific gifts, talents and passions. Nate says he has been interested in aviation “for as long as I can remember.” He adds, “You

know how most kids when they are really young want to be an astronaut, or a policeman, or a scientist, or something general like that? I was like that. When I got older, I was able to decide what I really liked, and I realized it was aviation.” He continues to fly most weekends, and aspires to be a pilot for a large commercial airline one day.

“Getting there will take a lot more training. There are many more different types of certifications and licenses I need to get. The final license will be an ATP (Airline Transport Pilot). With this license, I would be legally allowed to fly around paying customers.”

Nate sees his pursuit of an aviation career while still in high school as an example of the school’s core value of striving for excellence. “I am striving to do good in what I care about and have a passion for...even where it was hard,” shares Nate. “Striving for excellence means striving and working hard to do things the best you can with a good attitude. I think I am doing just that with my flying.”



STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE MEANS STRIVING AND WORKING HARD TO DO THINGS THE BEST YOU CAN WITH A GOOD ATTITUDE.”

—Nate Wehrle

LESSONS THAT INSPIRE

A look at three lesson plans with 21st century skills

The need to teach content is present at all levels of school curriculum, but there exists an opportunity for teachers to present materials in a way that will simultaneously encourage critical thinking, build in opportunities for collaboration, and provide authentic ways to problem solve and create. Following is a look at three lesson plans—an example from each campus—that naturally build in 21st century skills.



GERM ATTACK *Elementary School*

Under a microscope, it looks innocuous enough: a spherical ball with small tentacles, resembling a creation spun from that old Spirograph toy. Yet looks are deceiving. It's actually a magnified flu germ.

Elementary school health and physical education teacher **Debra Veenstra** is tasked with the challenge of explaining an invisible substance to third graders, in a way memorable enough that the lessons will be accompanied by action.

How can this abstract information possibly be conveyed to the youngest of students? For Veenstra, the answer is creative and kinesthetic: Cue the games.

"I agree with the author Nina Fiore, who wrote in the article, *The Benefits of Movement in Schools*, the things 'students understand deepest and retain longest are those lessons which incorporate movement,'" she shares. "Movement is one of the most beneficial ways for all children to engage with and retain the information they are being taught in school."

How do germs spread? What do they look like? And how can they be stopped? Rather than look at photos while sitting in a desk, students learn principles of overhand throwing, and then get a chance to throw symbolic balls of "soap" at germ targets. This activity transitions into another, even more memorable endeavor: the [nearly] legendary game, Germ Attack.

Involving two teams, balls and lots of symbolism, Germ Attack incorporates many health principles, ranging from immune systems, to antibiotics, to germs. As an added bonus, it also reinforces the physical education principles of overhand throwing.

AIR-POWERED CARS *Middle School*

The verbiage in Newton's Third Law of Motion is familiar to most: "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction."

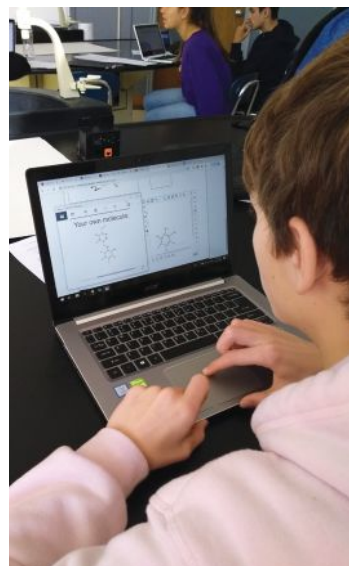
Middle school students in **Everett Henderson's** sixth grade class put this law to the test, building and racing cars powered by air released from a balloon.

In addition to incorporating the laws of physics, the exercise requires collaboration, problem solving and interpersonal communication. Students are put into small teams to plan and test a car under parameters

**THESE LESSON PLANS
ENCOURAGE CRITICAL THINKING,
BUILD IN OPPORTUNITIES FOR
COLLABORATION, AND PROVIDE
AUTHENTIC WAYS TO PROBLEM
SOLVE AND CREATE.**



Clockwise:
Elementary school
gym class; L to
R: Katie Reitsma,
Rachel DeRooy,
and Rebekah
Baker; student
analyzing protein;
Michael Mulder
and Alex Galupo



that allow for both fairness and creativity. Teams are given a list of rules, outlining specifics such as the minimum number of wheels on a vehicle, and materials allowed and not allowed in the making of the wheels, for example. Once students consult together on design, teams bring items to class from home. Henderson provides balloons to ensure everyone starts with an equal size.

Henderson challenges the class to build a car that will travel three meters. Every car is raced in the gym, and teams with cars that can reach this goal within three trials will receive an A on the project.

“I think students like using their hands to build things—especially if it moves. I also think they like the challenge to reach 3 meters. They are very excited when they do reach the mark. There is a lot of problem solving involved,” explains Henderson.

PHARMACEUTICAL DRUG DESIGN High School

Even on over-the-counter painkillers, the warning label is clear: many NSAIDs increase the risk of stomach bleeding. Most people comprehend this call for caution; however, few understand why it is there in the first place.

High school science teacher, **Petra van’t Slot**, explains that drugs are designed to block or activate specific proteins. In the case of aspirin, “it has the undesirable side effect of putting one at risk of bleeding...this is caused by the fact that aspirin binds well to two proteins: one that is involved in blood coagulation and one that is responsible for the sensation of pain.”

Inspired by a debate over animal testing that occurred in her classroom earlier this year, van’t Slot decided to take students through a pharmaceutical drug design workshop so they could properly understand the challenges of engineering drug molecules, as well as utilize important scientific disciplines as they participate in a simulation to create a painkiller. She explores dilemmas such as pharmacokinetics, competing drug binding properties, and the need to analyze and incorporate data from multiple sources.

The project is divided into phases: an introduction to basic protein biology, the use of a protein database, development and testing of drug candidates, and finally a poster presentation to reflect on the process. “The process will give them a somewhat authentic experience of what science, and in this case, drug design is like,” says van’t Slot.

A LEGACY OF SUPPORT

Continued support from special alumni

Richard “Dick” and Henrietta Vander Plaats were graduates of Eastern Academy—Dick in 1935 and Henrietta in 1936. After graduation, they stayed in the area and became lifelong supporters of Eastern Christian School. Supporting EC may have actually been an inherited trait—Dick’s mother was always a strong supporter of Christian education; his dad served on the Eastern Academy Board of Directors; and his grandfather was the President of the Board at Pine Street Christian School.

Over the years, Dick served Eastern Christian as a Board Member (80-82) and on various committees including Finance, Financial Development, Public Relations, and the Annual Fund Committee. Dick was committed to fundraising for EC and in a conversation before his death indicated that he had been fundraising for Eastern Christian School since the late 1930’s. In addition to serving at EC, Dick was the mayor of Fair Lawn, a state legislator, and served on the boards of directors of other local organizations.

A fellow board and committee member recalled Dick as the man who would “stir the pot”, never accepting



status quo and always working for the best interest of EC’s students and faculty. Dick was involved in establishing a sliding scale for tuition and spent countless hours working with the business office establishing procedures and helping to computerize EC’s records. Dick also worked with delinquent accounts, arranging special payment programs to help families keep their children enrolled.

Dick and Henrietta’s support was not restricted to serving. Over the years, they generously gave to Eastern Christian School. Following Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 6:3: But when you give to the needy, do not let your left

hand know what your right hand is doing the Vander Plaats quietly gave to the Annual Fund every year since our digital records began and certainly before that time. They also gave faithfully to The Endowment Fund, to special restricted funds, and to capital campaigns. Although they never had children of their own, Dick faithfully supported the children of the EC community with his time, talents and treasures.

In 1990 the Richard Vander Plaats Service Award was established. Each year since, a scholarship has been awarded to a single graduate who exemplifies service to the community after the example of





Bottom left: 1934 soccer team; Dick Vander Plaat is holding the ball. Above: 1982-1983 EC Board of Directors; Dick is standing, fourth from the left

Richard Vander Plaat. Dick passed away in 2000. Twelve years later Henrietta passed away. It was then that Eastern Christian learned the Vander Plaats had made arrangements to continue their support of Eastern Christian School and in 2018 Eastern Christian School received a significant bequest from the estate of Richard and Henrietta Vander Plaat.

The bequest has assured that the Vander Plaat's legacy of supporting EC will continue. Half of the bequest was directed to The Richard Vander Plaat Service Award. With the consent of the family, the award was amended to allow scholarships to be presented to current students who demonstrate a commitment to service and who have a financial need. Multiple scholarships will be awarded each year. This will mean that an EC education becomes accessible to more students in the future. The second half of the bequest was divided with about one third going to Campaign 125 and the balance going into The Endowment Fund.

Eastern Christian School is very grateful for the legacy of support that Dick and Henrietta have created with their generous bequest. EC is committed to stewarding their gift in a way that would be pleasing to them as well as keeping their legacy in place for generations to come.

“ALTHOUGH THEY NEVER HAD CHILDREN OF THEIR OWN, DICK FAITHFULLY SUPPORTED THE CHILDREN OF THE EC COMMUNITY WITH HIS TIME, TALENTS AND TREASURES.”

WHY I'M A FOODTOWN FAN

Foodtown and Nicholas Markets have been a good friend to Eastern Christian School over the years. And it makes sense since for some of us, Foodtown is almost our fourth campus. When was the last time you stopped by Foodtown and didn't run into another EC community member? Of course one reason we shop at Foodtown is convenience. Many of us drive by each day going to and from school. But convenience alone certainly wouldn't make me a loyal Foodtownie, I love the quality and the value. Here's my personal tip: try Nic's Pic Burgers and the Butcher Franks at your next BBQ. You won't find better and your guests will rave about them.

There is another reason I have become a loyal Foodtown fan: Foodtown is a great supporter of Eastern Christian School. Since our first annual HomeComing and EC5K, Foodtown has been a lead sponsor each year. Bob Greenway, Foodtown North Haledon General Manager, has also generously supplied the fruit and snacks for our runners each year. Foodtown has also catered our Heritage Dinner each year, wowing our guests with great food and service.

Now, our friends at Foodtown and Nicholas Markets have made a major donation to *ditto* of North Jersey. Some of you may be familiar with .99 Hut on Haledon Avenue. The Maniaci family, owners of Foodtown, were the landlords for .99 Hut. When the store closed up and the owner walked away leaving the inventory, David and Nick Maniaci called EC to ask if *ditto* would be interested in any or all of the inventory. Over the Christmas break, we put together a crew of former students and spent a day filling the *ditto* and EC vans and moving inventory to *ditto*. By the end of the day, we had moved several loads of clothing, display racks, and all kinds of miscellaneous items that will be sold at *ditto*. We were also able to share some of the inventory with New Hope Community Center and Star of Hope Mission. Kind of a "trickle down" blessing program.

We want to publicly thank the Maniaci family and our friends at Foodtown and Nicholas Markets for their generous support of Eastern Christian and *ditto* of North Jersey. What a blessing it is to build relationships with our friends in the community. Next time you're at Foodtown and you see Bob or Nick, be sure to thank them for their support and for their help in making an EC education accessible to more members of the community through their generosity.



Friday night saw the gathering of our Heritage Alumni for dinner at the high school while students and parents gathered at Willow Field for a double header men's and women's soccer matches against Hawthorne Christian Academy. There were 96 guests at the Heritage Alumni Dinner, including two from the class of 1943 celebrating their 75th reunion. It was a fun night with great food and we all enjoyed the slide show of our guests'

HOMECOMING WEEKEND

More opportunities than ever

October 19-20, 2018 marked Eastern Christian School's 4th HomeComing Celebration and it was a great weekend. This year we tweaked some events and added others, providing more opportunities for more alumni and friends to be involved than ever before.

We began the weekend with a new event: Alumni & Friends Golf Outing. Ten foursomes came out to play on a brisk but beautiful morning. By the time of the shotgun start at 10 AM, a few of the guys were wearing shorts and it was a great outing, followed by a delicious BBQ lunch in the clubhouse.



senior pictures. Meanwhile, over at Willow Field the Women's Soccer Team had a convincing win followed by the Men's Soccer Team with a dramatic come from behind last minute victory in front of a large and enthusiastic crowd.

Also on Friday night, the Class of 1968 celebrated their 50th reunion with a dinner at Portobello's in Oakland. 53 Classmates gathered from around the country to reminisce about their days at EC. On Saturday morning, they met for breakfast followed by a tour of the high school. Those who have been away for years saw some amazing changes in the building, but everyone felt the old connection that classmates never seem to lose.





HomeComing featured a variety of events from Friday afternoon through Saturday evening.

Saturday morning's clouds and cool temps had us concerned, but the weather stayed dry and the Betty Davis Memorial EC5K and Isaac Hennessy Fun Run were great successes. A new course record of 18.06.04 was set by **Jared Honko** and EC faculty member **Lindsay Pedersen** finished first for the women with a time of 22.32.41. Finishing in 5th place was middle schooler **Lucas Genuario** with a time of 20.42.07. Great job Lucas! The Fun Run began shortly after the 5K and our army of runners in bright yellow shirts quickly completed their course. Thanks to those who came out to run a check was presented to Parents Project Muscular Dystrophy in honor of **Isaac Hennessy** at the elementary school chapel on December 11, 2018.



Saturday afternoon the Alumni Soccer Game and the Family Fun Fair took place at the Eastern Christian Middle School. This year, the alumni teams were organized by graduation year, the odds vs the evens. The Odds, with **Seth Statlander** in goal were victorious! While the alumni were battling on the field, students and their families were having fun in the gym playing games, enjoying donuts and cider, and navigating the giant inflatable maze.



Later on Saturday, two new events took place at Eastern Christian High School. The 3 v 3 Basketball

Tournament drew 8 teams to a double elimination tournament. EC faculty members and coaches **Aaron Goldstein** and **Joseph Wilmot** expertly managed the event. At the end of the tournament, it was a team of EC alums that prevailed. Trophies were awarded to: **Jason Van Buiten '07**, **John Muzikowski '07**, and **Joe Veenstra '08**. While the tournament was advancing, the halls and surrounding rooms of the high school were filled with displays and activities by local ministries. The Monday SOAR organized an amazing ministry fair that included an Escape Room to raise funds for International Justice Mission.

HomeComing concluded with the ever popular HomeComing Dance at the High School, a semi-formal event organized and run by the student senate.

Thank you to our generous sponsors and to each person who participated and to all those fans who came to cheer on our athletes. HomeComing was a successful weekend with something for everyone.



Alumni love to catch up with their “underclassmen” friends as well as their favorite faculty members and it is always fun to watch the greetings and interactions. It is also great to see the alumni return to lead worship and to hear them share how their time at EC prepared them

for college and the challenges they have faced.

Although this event is aimed at young alumni, all are welcome. Think about joining us next year for an uplifting time of worship and praise and some good NJ comfort food the day before Thanksgiving. You are all welcome!

ALUMNI CHAPEL

Community worship

For the fourth year in a row, there has been a special chapel at Eastern Christian High School the day before Thanksgiving. Current students, faculty and alumni all look forward to what has now become a tradition: Thanksgiving Alumni Chapel.

This year, more than 70 alumni returned to ECHS to attend chapel, visit with friends and faculty, and enjoy coffee and another NJ tradition—Taylor Ham, egg and cheese on a bagel.

Young alumni visiting the school during their Thanksgiving break isn’t all that unusual. Four years ago the Chapel and Worship Team, along with the Alumni Relations Office, decided to take advantage of their visits and create a formal opportunity to engage those young alums. The Chapel and Worship Team arranges the chapel with alumni leading worship and sharing their testimonies while the Alumni Relations Office arranges the food and coffee.



UPCOMING FOUNDATION EVENTS

AUCTION GALA AT THE INDIAN TRAIL CLUB
April 25, 6:30PM

TOUCH A TRUCK AT ECMS
May 4, 10AM

GOLF OUTING AT WILD TURKEY IN VERNON
May 13, 11:30AM

BEEFSTEAK

2019 EC Community Beefsteak

Many of us remember the ad from years ago asking: **WHERE'S THE BEEF! On Wednesday night, January 30, 2019 members of the EC family found the beef and a whole lot more at The Brownstone in Paterson, NJ.**

The night was simply about being together as a community, enjoying a great meal, and having fun. We succeeded on all fronts. With attendance up by more than 50 guests, this year there were many new faces at an event that has been held since at least 1975.

MC Jeremy Mulder read from the May, 1975 Herald announcing the

first beefsteak for EC to be held at Terrace Lake. There were games, good food, and items to be auctioned.

44 years later our program sounded much the same. Only the venue and the price of the tickets were changed.

As The Brownstone staff delivered tray after tray of beef, our guest built bread sculptures, feverishly tried to un-wrap the saran-ball to claim prizes, and reviewed the electronics, fashion accessories, and event tickets that were available in the drawings and silent auction. It was clearly a good night as our



guests smiled, laughed and enjoyed dinner with friends.

But MC Mulder reminded everyone what this event was really about—we were there for Eastern Christian and donations were an important part of the evening as was good bidding on the silent auction items. Thank you to all who attended and made the 2019 EC Community Beefsteak a success.

I ALUMNI NEWS

Note: The Alumni News printed was received via a written note, e-mail, or from media sources. The editors reserve the right to edit submissions.

Celebrations

Jamie & **Joel Spoelstra '98** welcomed Skylar Lynn on 11/7/18.

Amar & **Julia (Belanus) Patel '99** welcomed Leya Ann on 9/1/18.

Ashley & **Joe Tanis '00** welcomed Aspen Brook on 12/10/18.

Andrea & **David Steenstra '02** welcomed Ethan Thomas on 10/29/18.

Philip '02 & Lindsey (Braunius) Tuit '02 welcomed Madison Elizabeth 11/17/18.

Dan & **Kristine (Belanus) Vande Vrede '02** welcomed Joseph Benjamin on 7/25/18.

Katie & **James Kuperus '03** welcomed Charlie James on 8/29/18.

Matthew & **Elizabeth (Scarpa) Costolo '05** welcomed Cora Grace on 7/7/18.

Carlos & **Annette (Kuperus) Franco '05** welcomed Peyton Marie on 9/26/18.

Webb & **Deanna (Cirino) Knudsen '06** welcomed Nora Marie and Miles Reed on 5/27/18.

Steve & **Stacy (Foschini) Battaglia '07** welcomed Dominic Angelo & Lorenzo John on 11/12/18.

Michael Bongiovanni '07 & Grace Martin were married on 7/14/18.

Greg & **Brooke (Veenstra) Hagedoorn '07** welcomed Brynn Janelle on 11/27/18.

Kenneth Visbeen '07 & Hannah Sura were married on 10/6/18.

Ian (Staff) & Melody (Lyman) Zacharias '07 welcomed Bennett Nelson and Emma Joanne on 8/1/18.

Francesca Gravinese '08 & Jacob Kramer were married on 9/22/18.

Laura & **Joe Pellegrino '08** welcomed Joseph Alan on 12/21/18.

Kristen & **Mark Tolsma '08** welcomed Theodore James on 11/15/18.



Miles and Nora Knudsen



Cora Costolo



Carter Paquin

Send us your baby announcement and receive an EC onesie!



Skylar Spoelstra



Joseph Vande Vrede



Leya Patel



Bennett and Emma Zacharias

Chelsea Vierling '08 & Christopher Rivera were married on 9/1/18.

Andrew Abadeer '09 & Olivia Bassily were married on 9/9/18.

Kurtis & **Lauren (Spoelstra) Paquin '09** welcomed Carter Aleida on 7/10/18.

Naomi Stadlander '09 & Alberto Troya were married on 9/8/18.

Eric Malnati '10 & Ivana Prokopova were married on 11/17/18.

Justin Westra '10 & Heather DeBel were married on 10/12/18.

Jake & **Emily (D'Amelio) Gorter '11** welcomed Weston Peter on 10/21/18.

Rachael Kemp '11 & Brian Miller were married on 10/13/18.

Luke Everson '12 & Emily Hodgkins were married on 10/19/18.

Julia Rivera '12 & William Harrison were married on 9/27/18.

Brooke Leentjes '13 & Karl Verna were married on 12/8/18.

Abigail Kuder '14 & Cliff Mathisen were married on 12/22/18.

REMEMBERING

*The Foundation Office has learned of the following deaths of these alumni and former faculty members since our last issue of **The Herald**.*

FORMER BOARD MEMBERS & STAFF

Frances Grimes, age 96, living in Clinton, NJ on 8/6/18. She served as Eastern Christian High School's Guidance Counselor from 1966 to 1972.

Elsie "Peter" Palmer, age 95, living in Norfolk, VA on 7/26/18. She taught French and Spanish at Eastern Christian High School from 1968 to 1987. After her retirement, she was an EC Board member from 1990 to 1993, serving on the Personnel and Education Committees.

Lillian (Petzinger) Fuller '42 of Frankfort, IN on 12/24/18. She taught science and biology at Eastern Academy from September 1948 to June 1950.

Roger Veenstra '48, of North Haledon, NJ on 8/15/18. He began teaching 7th grade in 1952, eventually moving to ECHS teaching US History and World History until 1991.

Antonia "Toni" (Peters) Philips '64, of Hawthorne, NJ on 9/4/18. She taught 4th grade at North 4th Street Christian School from 1968 to 1973.

Alumni

Ralph Veenema '38 of Cooperstown, NY on 12/14/18.

Clarice (Vande Kieft) Ribbens '39 of Blacksburg, VA on 5/16/2018.

William Kamp '41 of Wayne, NJ on 6/17/2018.

Geraldine (Woudenberg) Monsma '41 of Wyckoff, NJ on 10/18/18.

Ruth (Lamring) Kelley '44 of Vernon, NJ on 3/28/18.

Edward Van Vlaanderen '45 of New York, NY on 7/26/18.

Gertrude (Hartensveld) Troast '45 of Wyckoff, NJ on 8/12/18.

Carolyn (Vroon) Hagedorn '49 of Rockford, MI on 8/1/18.

Ruth (Botbyl) Groenewal De Vries '51 of North Haledon, NJ on 8/10/18.

Marie (Hamersma) Downs '52 of Lancaster, PA on 8/1/18.

Janice Hazen '52 of Midland Park, NJ on 10/2/18.

Harold Jellema '53 of Naples, FL on 10/12/18.

John Bushoven '54 of Forsyth, GA on 5/13/18.

Richard Brandes '55 of Fair Lawn, NJ on 10/29/18.

Marvin Bruxvoort '56 of Fort Collins, CO on 11/19/18.

Kenneth H Tanis '56 of Newtown Square, PA on 7/23/18.

Raymond Voorman '57 of Wyckoff, NJ on 7/14/18.

Ellen (Minnaard) Steensma '58 of Hawthorne, NJ on 10/19/18.

Magda (Ekkers) Buchmann '60 of Denville, NJ on 12/30/18.

Philip Hubschmitt '61 of North Haledon, NJ on 8/24/18.

David Woudenberg '64 of San Diego, CA on 10/30/18.

Ellie (Van De Weert) King '68 of Wyckoff, NJ on 8/17/18.

Robert Wisse '69 of Wood-Ridge, NJ on 10/5/18.

Bernard VanDerWeert '71 of Guilford, NY on 11/20/18.

Edward Goed '73 of Melville, NY on 7/12/18.

Beverly (Steenstra) Bylsma '75 of Littleton, CO on 11/16/18.

Glenn Wyder '75 of Kitty Hawk, NC on 11/25/18.

Valerie (Wondergem) Brain '84 of North Haledon, NJ on 9/25/18.

Craig Knyfd '88 of Oakland, NJ on 12/27/18.

Former ECHS foreign language teacher Elsie “Peter” Palmer died in the Lord on July 26.



With a twinkle in her eye and a delight in her students, she taught French and Spanish from 1968-87, and occasionally

also Bible and Latin.

“She was such an asset – always cheerful, cooperative and competent,” recalled Foreign Language Department Chair **Mary Chilton** on the occasion of Mrs. Palmer’s 80th birthday in 2002. Mrs. Palmer would go on to live to 95-1/2 years, passing away peacefully in her own bed in the home of her son, **Glenn Palmer '72**, surviving her husband Edwin H. Palmer by nearly 38 years. Foreign language was always in the home – Dr. Palmer coordinated the translation of the New International Version, and the two of them learned Dutch when he studied theology in Holland – and she would eventually succeed Miss Chilton as head of the language department.

Former students and faculty colleagues will remember her vivaciousness, curiosity, gentleness, wisdom, intelligence, indefatigability and laughter; her joy of life, love of Scripture, delight in her family, faithfulness to her church, nurturing of others, and passion for the Lord.

For a period she caused students’ and policemen’s heads to swivel when with her silver hair she would drive her son **Mark’s** ('70) red-and-black Mustang Mach One to Eastern Christian. Mark did an intra-family swap while he borrowed her older station wagon to use in his job.

For years she and some of her foreign language colleagues, along with former ECHS secretary **Marie Wispelwey**, would have weekly breakfasts at the King George Diner in Wayne.

Born in Brooklyn, she graduated in 1944 from Wellesley College, where she took on the nickname “Peter.” Describing herself later as “searching” during this period, she became a believer after meeting Edwin, whom she married in 1947. She helped him as he studied

in Philadelphia and Amsterdam, pastored three churches in Michigan, taught at Westminster Theological Seminary, worked on the NIV and preached in many Christian Reformed churches in New Jersey.

Mrs. Palmer used her gifts in many other ways. She wrote a Bible story book, taught Bible classes in her churches, and corrected Bible lessons of prisoners through Crossroads Bible Institute. She served on the boards of Eastern Christian, the Back to God Hour, and New Jersey Right to Life. In her ardor for the Truth, she wrote countless letters to the editor and to politicians. And, ever a linguist, even to her final days she would correct her grandchildren’s grammar!

She had 49 descendants, including those who married her children and grandchildren, and was laid to rest next to her husband in Post Mills, Vermont, on July 31. On her gravestone, she chose to have the words of Philippians 1:21 engraved: “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

REUNIONS

The following reunions recently took place. For additional information and pictures, please visit easternchristian.org/alumni/reunion-updates.

Class of 2008

10-Year Reunion || Members from the Class of 2008 gathered at The Brownstone on Saturday, November 24, 2018. Shaun Patterson reports that, "Everything went very well, we had a great time catching up and seeing one another."



Row 1: (L to R) Brianna Palazzi, Julie Ring, Emily Karr, Francesca (Gravinese) Kramer, Steven Horner, Brianna Campos, Evonne (De Jong) Malnati, Peter Okma, Rachel Flim, Gabe Kooreman, Michael Dykhouse.

Row 2: Shaun Patterson, Rebecca (Ydo) Steyling, Nicole MacWilliam, Joel Veenstra, Keanna Rawlins, Linley Thobourne, John Burch, Trevor Brennan, Doug Harrison, Jeremy Boling.

Class of 1968

50-Year Reunion || Friday, October 19, 2018, members of the Class of 1968 celebrated their 50 Year Reunion at Portobello's in Oakland, NJ. The reunion continued on Saturday, with a breakfast gathering and tour of EC's High School. Many wonderful memories were shared and friendships renewed.



Row 1: (L to R) Kathy (Eelman) Klaassen, Joanne (Hartog) Bishop, Gerry (Link) Windhorst, Nancy (Van Hoff) Reenders, Barbara (Liebig) Lakota, Doris (Wynbeek) Ridders, Jackie (Lokker) Taylor, Faythe (Bruinsma) Groot, Joyce (Haven) Priestner, Cheryl (Prins) Van Grouw, Jane (Okma) Wiegers. Row 2: Craig Hoogstra, Ralph Rypkema, Bill Eelman, Steve Peters, Bruce Algera, Barbara (De Noble) Ripston, Jackie (Dykstra) Wondergem, Pat (Borduin) Steyinga, Doug Steyling, Trina (Moezelaar) Swart, Beverly (Borduin) Vander Molen, Anne (Bouma) Borduin, John Borduin, Ken Knyfd, Diane (Faber) Marsden, Beatrice (Luyten) Santangelo, Bob Bosloper, Beverly (Hemkes) Boxman, Ed De Jong, Nella (Hartog) Hobson, Barbara (Wilkes) Dozhier. Rows 3 & 4: Paul Stam, Jim Hofstra, Jim Aupperlee, Ed Nyland, Ed Montalvo, Paul Heerema, Dean Steyling, Casey Lindemulder, George Schaver, John Van Spronsen, Dave Etterbeek, John Belanus, Bob Nienhouse, Ralph Fylstra, Jack Steyinga, Jim de Waal Malefyt, Ron Van Der Weert, Ray Huizinga, Rich Sybesma.

UPCOMING REUNIONS

Class of 2009 – 10 Year Reunion

Contact Amber (Fiedler) Dempsey at amberjyodempsey@gmail.com or visit Facebook group "ECHS Class of 2009" and join.

Please be sure to update your contact information on the link provided on Facebook page.

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Class of 1969 – 50 Year Reunion

A planning committee is starting to work out details. Watch your mail/email for updates!

ALUMNI

Please visit easternchristian.org and click on the Alumni tab in the upper left corner. Here you can submit news, update your address or email and also subscribe to our weekly email newsletter. Stay in-the-know about all things EC!

#alwaysaneagle

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN—PLUS TWO

Dr. Garry Vermaas, Class of 1990



Since graduating Eastern Christian 28 years ago, Garry Vermaas has earned a PhD at Columbia University, started and sold a 120-employee engineering business, designed a palace in Qatar, and currently heads a global management company called Base4, leading staff in India, Georgia, Dominican Republic and throughout the US. Yet despite all of those career accomplishments, that's not why EC originally contacted him.

It was actually to discuss his immediate family: All 14 of them.

Garry and his wife, Jodi, are proud parents of 12 children, ranging in age from 5 through 19: Ten of whom are

adopted, and six of whom were adopted very recently from the Philippines.

Regarding the recent adoption, “They are all siblings. They prayed every day that they could stay together and be adopted,” he shares.

Garry and Jodi, who has two PhDs in mental health counseling, have always had a passion to serve orphans, which included opening up a not-for-profit, aid-based organization called Priority One Worldwide, dedicated to supporting orphans and evangelists. They soon realized it was a natural fit to also pursue adoption in accomplishing the same goals.

“We located our children in our lifelong efforts to help orphans after searching for years on various lists of children who were considered and later rejected by others for adoption. Thus, we found our newest additions. We assume they were ‘unadoptable’ due to their sheer number—but in our blessings we were able to say “yes” to their joining our family!” shares Garry.

“ADOPTION
TEACHES
ME EVERY
DAY, MORE
AND MORE,
THE HEART OF GOD”

The couple worked with Gentle Hands Inc., a Christ-centered child welfare agency and orphanage that operates from the Philippines. Their other adopted children also were born internationally—from China and India.

Currently residing on a spacious parcel of land in Franklin, TN, Garry reflects on how adoption has impacted his faith: “God has saved us and blessed us in so many ways. By adopting 10 children, we are only giving back a little. Adoption teaches me every day, more and more, the heart of God,” he shares. “Adoption is not for everyone, but for me, it was perfect for solidifying my faith in Jesus.”

He is thankful to Eastern Christian School for introducing him to the faith to which he remains committed, and for providing a Christian foundation. “I attended EC for grades kindergarten through 12th grade. During that time I made awesome friends who helped shape the way I thought and the way I saw the world.”

And although it isn’t related to adoption, per se, he’s also thankful for one particular teacher. “I will never forget Spanish class, sitting in Mrs. [Jean] Dreisbach’s class and laughing.” He adds, “To this day—I still remember my Spanish.”

You can learn more about this adventurous family on their family Facebook page, #lookwhathappenedhere and in their upcoming book, due out later this year. Jodi adds, “Feel free to reach out and say hello!”

SERVING OTHERS IN HEALTHCARE

Pamela (Bandstra) Hagley, Class of 1969



On December 31, Pam Hagley retired from her role as Director of Clinical Resource Services at New Hanover Regional Medical Center in North Carolina, after faithfully serving in the nursing profession for 46 years.

Her decades-long career led to jobs with increasing responsibility, starting as a public health nurse in East Orange, NJ, working as nurse manager in Florida, Texas and Wisconsin, and then going on to lead divisions within health care, most recently managing operations for five departments in an 800-bed tertiary care hospital, and overseeing 100 RNs, social workers and support staff.

Despite all of her success, however, she shares, “I think more than the awards or certifications or promotions, I consider my ability to help people because of the knowledge I have gained over the many years in health care and case management to be my best contribution...Helping people is what nursing is all about, and it is a joy to know that I have succeeded in that regard.”

Nursing has been a lifelong passion for Hagley, who recalls being enthralled with it as a little girl, reading the Cherry Ames series of books. Although the series glamorized the profession, she says, it also set her

Working with patients and their families during episodes of illness, crisis, and at times, at the end of their life, has allowed me to carry out the love of Christ. ... I have been able to transfer that love to the staff I work with...

“**REACHING CHILDREN AT A YOUNG AGE, AS EC DID FOR ALL OF US THAT ATTENDED FROM EARLY ON, IS TRULY WHAT CHRIST TOLD US TO DO”**

on a path she never wavered from. In high school, she went on to join the Future Nurses Club, and also worked as a nurse aid at a local medical facility in her junior and senior year.

An EC “lifer,” Hagley says Eastern Christian School provided her with “a sense of belonging, of security, of love and family.” She attributes her strong faith to the foundations built at EC, adding, “I have always been grateful for the knowledge of the Bible that I gained from EC, all the way from kindergarten through high school; in the devotions, the chapel services, the role modeling of our teachers, as well as the formal classes.”

It is a lesson she continues to pass on, actively serving as a Sunday school and children’s church teacher.

“Reaching children at a young age, as EC did for all of us that attended from early on, is truly what Christ told us to do,” she adds.

Hagley’s faith has also played a key role in her professional life. “Working with patients and their families during episodes of illness, crisis, and at times, at the end of their life, has allowed me to carry out the love of Christ.” She adds, “Spending a lot of my time in leadership and not direct patient care, I have been able to transfer that love to the staff I work with, showing up in the early a.m. if they were scheduled for surgery to pray with them and their family, praying with them during time of crisis, etc.”

Hagley is excited by the prospect of having more time in the future. She plans on getting more involved in church activities, and looks forward to traveling with her husband to see her daughter and family in Wisconsin, and son and family in Virginia.

EC Camps

Eastern Christian School's extended learning office launches and sustains various programs designed to generate revenue supporting the core educational mission of the school, while simultaneously providing enhanced opportunities geared toward nurturing a child's heart and mind. Eagles Camps is one such opportunity, expected to bring close to 800 campers to the school every summer.

Registration is open for EC summer and spring break camps, offering a variety of opportunities and experiences for children ranging from preschool through 8th grade. Following is a preview:

EAGLES SPORTS CAMP

Eagles Sports Camp is a family run day camp that provides a safe environment for kids to enjoy some good old-fashioned summer fun. Organized but flexible, competitive yet relaxed, it's the perfect neighborhood to grow up in! If you're looking for a camp that still honors that Ma and Pop feeling and good ol' fashion summer fun, Eagles Sports Camp is a great fit for you!

A typical day includes a variety of sports, games and activities including kickball, baseball, soccer, basketball, battle ball, garbage ball, capture the flag, kick the can, manhunt and more!

AGES | For boys and girls entering 1st grade through 8th grade in the upcoming fall.

DATES | Every week from June 24 – August 2 (no camp on July 4); due to popularity, two camps will be offered at two locations for four of the six weeks.

COST | \$250 per week (Week 2 in Wyckoff is a 4-day, pro-rated week for \$200)

SPRING VACATION CAMP

Preschool & K (Elementary School campus)

EC is excited to ROLL out its first Spring Vacation Camp GEARED toward Preschool & K students! It's BIKE WEEK! The gym will be transformed into the ultimate bike riding playzone complete with a gas station and traffic signs. As children are introduced to common traffic signs, pre-readers and readers alike will discover shapes, letters, words, and symbols that are found in the world all around them. Each camper will need to bring a bike/trike, bike helmet, and water bottle. READY, SET, RIDE!

Grades 1-6 (Middle School campus)

Join us during Spring Break for a vacation day camp complete with inventive arts & crafts, high-energy activities, and all your favorite games!

DATES | March 25-29

COST | FREE DAY after registering for 2 FULL Days

DROP INS | \$60/day

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES CAMP

Each day the group sets out on a new adventure! Activities include experiences like zip lining and high/low ropes courses at Shiloh Retreat Center, kayaking the Monksville Reservoir, hiking Ramapo Mountain, picnicking and swimming at Lake Wawayanda, and exploring a botanical garden. Sprinkled with team building activities that nurture camper confidence and are rooted in teamwork, each alfresco experience is new and adventurous.

Come explore hills of greenery and pools of laughter with each new landscape adventure!

AGES | For students ages 9-13

DATES | July 8-12

COST | \$350

Director of Extended Learning Suzanne Kraai adds, "As Eagles Camps continue to develop, we will also be expanding Eagles Outdoor Adventure Camp, Culinary Camp, and adding Eagles STEM Camp for the first time this year. All camps are designed to provide a safe and exciting environment for students to explore, play, discover, and grow!"

For more information visit easternchristian.org/camps.



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FALL SEASON SUMMARIES 2018

Cross Country, Soccer, Tennis and Volleyball



Noah Troast



Amanda Faber

BOYS SOCCER

Coach Rudi Gesch's Varsity boys soccer team re-established a winning culture and tradition recording double-digit victories for the first time in several years in a way that we can all be proud of. Highlights included earning a home game in the county tournament and defeating our first round opponent Paterson Charter, drawing a huge homecoming crowd and then winning in dramatic come-from-behind last-minute fashion over rival HCA, and holding a skillful MKA team scoreless in the first half, in the state tournament behind the strong play of defenders **Rylan DeWaal Malefyt**, **Mark Foster**, **Ben Parker** and **GK Noah Troast**. **John Zuidema** led the team in scoring with 10 goals while senior captain **Aidan Miller** led the team in assists with 7.

The future looks bright for the program with coach Max Harvell's JV boys soccer team finishing at 7-3-2 and the Middle School boys team at 8-2, including a win

over Glen Rock. Fifteen different players combined to outscore their opponents 45-19 under their new coach, Karl Records.

GIRLS SOCCER

First-year head coach Seth Stadlander continued the winning ways of the Varsity girls soccer program posting an 11-8 record that included wins over league champion Rutherford, runner-up Pompton Lakes and a convincing win vs HCA on homecoming night. Senior captains **Madison Wynbeek** and **Christina Tartini** led a young team that featured junior **GK Emily Candela** (238 saves) and **Amanda Faber** (14 goals.) Coach Joey Wilmot and his Middle School girls soccer team played their best against the best, including a 2-1 loss to a very talented and skilled Glen Rock team and a 0-0 draw with a competitive Midland Park squad.

CROSS COUNTRY

In perhaps his last season as Varsity cross country coach, Joel Apol, and co-coach Lindsay Pedersen

once again pulled the best out of their runners and enjoyed another highly competitive season. Senior **Ben Postma** led the boys while classmate **Emily Byrnes** and sophomore **Kristen Ghinelli** paced the girls. Emily became just the 2nd runner in school history to win the NJIC championship meet! She also

Post-Season Honors

BOYS SOCCER

Benjamin Parker
2nd team All County

Aidan Miller, Noah Troast
Honorable Mention

GIRLS SOCCER

Madison Wynbeek,
Emily Candela
1st team All League

Christina Tartini,
Amanda Faber
2nd team All League

Nicole Foster
Honorable Mention All League

Madison Wynbeek,
Emily Candela
Honorable Mention All County



Cassidy Abma



Cara Shotmeyer



Emily Byrnes

GO.
SOAR.
EC!



Thomas De Block, Ben Postma and William Critchfield

finished 3rd in the county championships!! Aaron Goldsteins's Middle School cross country team also had some amazing individual accomplishments. **Alex Culp** (6th grader) was a consistent top 5 finisher in most meets and 7th grader **Lucas Genuario** had an undefeated regular season, finishing first in every meet! Lucas also finished 3rd in a field of 83 runners in the league championship meet at Garfield!

VOLLEYBALL

The never-give-up spirit preached by coach Steffanie Honore was never more evident than when the Varsity girls volleyball team came back from being down 15-23 in the 3rd game to rally for the win at MHA. The team also won the Manchester Regional Invitational for the first time, led by strong play from seniors **Gwen** and **Maddie Van Goor**, **Claudia Antoci** and **Anneliese Kuipers**. First-year JV volleyball coach Kendra Visbeen was pleased with the development of her team, including sophomores **Lizzie Thomas** and **Katie Liao**, who both earned varsity time as the season progressed.

TENNIS

Varsity girls tennis coach Amy Hulsebos described their season as one of the most challenging ever due in large part to the seemingly daily rain that limited practice time and progression. Despite the obstacles, lessons in perseverance and commitment produced strong performances, led by singles players **Cara Shotmeyer**, **Katie Kuiken** and **Melanie Careri**.

Post-Season Honors

GIRLS TENNIS

Cara Shotmeyer
2nd team singles All League

Angela Han,
Abrynn Dennison
2nd team doubles All
League

Melanie Careri
Honorable Mention

Cara Shotmeyer
2nd team All County

Melanie Careri,
Katie Kuiken
Honorable Mention

VOLLEYBALL

Molly Boonstra
2nd Team All League

Cassidy Abma
Honorable Mention
All League

Cassidy Abma,
Molly Boonstra
Honorable Mention
All County

CROSS COUNTRY

Emily Byrnes
NJIC XC Champion
and 1st team
All League

Kristen Ghinelli
1st Team All League

Elise Reitsma,
Benjamin Postma
Honorable Mention
All League

Emily Byrnes
1st team all county

Kristen Ghinelli
2nd team All County

Elise Reitsma,
Benjamin
Postma, William
Critchfield
Honorable Mention

CONGRATS
TO ALL!



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