

THE HERALD

a publication of *Eastern Christian School*
Volume 65, Issue 1



SPRING 2024

Love OF
LEARNING

+ **STEWARDSHIP REPORT**

Love of Learning



It's an exciting time to be part of Eastern Christian School as we undergo reaccreditation and strategic planning, a process spanning almost two years. This journey has allowed our school community valuable time for reflecting, celebrating, and envisioning the future.

In May 2023, students, staff, and parents contributed their insights through surveys covering all aspects of school life. The accreditation team analyzed survey data, poring over hundreds of pages from students, parents, staff, and board members. Following this, in September 2023, strategic planning consultants Bruce Hekman, former Eastern Christian superintendent, and Glenn Vos from Christian Schools International, engaged with more than a dozen focus groups to gather feedback on their aspirations for the future of Eastern Christian School.

Guided by our mission, core values, and graduate profile, the board has formulated a five-year plan detailing priorities aimed at reinforcing and enhancing the school's commitment to providing a distinctly Christian education, ensuring excellence across all areas, and embracing a growing and diverse school community. The unity of purpose was evident as feedback from all stakeholders highlighted three main priorities: faith, excellence, and community.

The board of directors, parents, staff, and administrators are steadfast in their commitment to a biblically based approach to education. We are dedicated to strengthening Eastern Christian's foundational commitment to a Christian worldview, faith formation, and discipleship. Excellence is a key focus, encompassing exceptional and innovative programs for all students, as well as facilities supporting our expanding enrollment. Embracing our growing and diverse school community is paramount, and we are fostering partnerships with parents, alumni, and supporters.

As you peruse this issue of the Herald, observe the interconnected themes of faith, excellence, and community. Explore features on our new Honors Academy, service-learning programs, Responsive Classroom, and the achievements of our student scholars and athletes. Dive into the nightstand reading of our intellectually curious staff. Join us in celebrating the faithful community that makes this transformative education possible through their generous contributions, whether through the 1892 society, annual fund giving, scholarship support, or the Athletic Booster Club.

Look forward to more details about our five-year strategic plan in the upcoming fall Herald. In this issue, I hope you enjoy seeing the evidence of our historic commitment to an excellent Christian education and that you can capture the vision of exciting new ways in which we are preparing students to be Christ's agents of renewal in our world.

Ruth Kuder '84
Executive Director and Head of School



EASTERN CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL

THE HERALD

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STEWARDSHIP REPORT



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Responsive classroom

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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Eastern Christian High School launches Honors Academy

Commitment to Christian scholarship

The ECHS Honors Academy started accepting applications in January ahead of an anticipated opening in fall 2024. Part of a larger proposal unanimously approved by the Eastern Christian School Board of Directors in November, the academy is a significant step toward furthering the school's commitment to Christian scholarship at the high school level.

The proposal, heavily informed by data drawn from accreditation surveys, outlines a five-year plan that also includes new electives, AP courses, additional programming, and an overall emphasis on 21st century learning, career exploration, and student

opportunities for local and national academic recognition.

"As a school, we're well known for community, warmth, spiritual formation and growth, but I'd like people to know we are making strides to assert ourselves in the academic arena as a high performing high school without sacrificing all the things that are previously mentioned," says **Dan Cirone**, high school principal at EC.

In year one of the five-year plan, Eastern Christian will implement an Honors Academy, advised by **Jesse Struck**, who currently serves as the

Academic and College Counseling director. To cultivate students who are well-rounded, program requirements will include maintaining standards in academics, service and experience. The school anticipates enrolling students in the new academy who perform in the 90th percentile or above in nationally normed tests and maintain a minimum GPA of 3.75 per semester.

“We want to intentionally serve our highest performing students by providing accountability, networking opportunities and mentorship. The other intention is to strengthen a culture of excellence and elevate the entire student body,” comments Cirone.

Future years will bring increasing opportunities for the entire student body and will include implementation of multiple courses and initiatives aimed at addressing a shift in education toward career exploration and preparation. Overarching all of these goals is a firm understanding of the

school's role in shepherding all students, as well as a commitment to excellent Christian education.

Dr. Ruth Kuder, head of school, adds, “Our graduate profile is clear: our intention is to prepare students for Christian vision and influence no matter their future career path. We are thrilled to partner alongside our parents, students and greater community, providing a strong academic foundation for future endeavors.”

“As a school, we’re well known for community, warmth, spiritual formation and growth, but I’d like people to know we are making strides to assert ourselves in the academic arena as a high performing high school without sacrificing all the things that are previously mentioned.”

– Dan Cirone

Left: The Academic and College Counseling office regularly hosts college visits.
Below: The ditto Student Commons was utilized for college application night, a seminar designed to educate EC parents on the college admissions process.



Service as pedagogy

Passion for service learning

Eastern Christian Upper Elementary and Middle School principal, Dr. Dan Lazor, is so passionate about service learning that he wrote a book about it.

His doctoral dissertation, titled, “A Survey of the Practice of Service-Learning in Christian Middle and High Schools,” was a first-of-its-kind and defines service learning as “a pedagogy, expressed in a program, that combines service to the community with classroom-based learning in which each aspect of the service and the learning enhances and supports its counterpart,” he says.

What does this look like in practice? Lazor is quick to assert that “service learning can take many forms.” What bonds them together, however, is an understanding that an individual is connected

to a greater community. In a Christian context, it means learning what it “means to be a Christian in the world, and especially so within communities that are broken.”

This year, for example, the sixth grade is studying water. For a period each week, students are delving deeply into the topic and challenges regarding clean water. In addition, the topic is integrated in various classes. In social studies, the students are learning about water geographically. In English, they are reading, *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park. Finally, the sixth graders took a trip to the Haworth Water Treatment Plant to see water treatment in action.

“We always look to connect with local partners who are serving the community related to the issue, and

to serve those partners in ways that the partner identifies as important. There is classroom learning (content/skills) related to the issue, and then service through which that learning can be put into practice,” Lazor explains.

Another component of service learning as a pedagogy is reflection. “It is in many ways the glue that holds the service and the learning together,” shares Lazor.

In the middle school’s annual Hands Dirty Day, after a day of serving at various non-profit locations, sixth through eighth grade students are tasked with connecting the work they just completed with the school core values: Serve others, embrace community, exhibit



Above and right: This year’s Hands Dirty Day provided the opportunity for sixth through eighth graders to work at various non-profit locations. Pictured, students serve at Christian Health.



“WE WANT THEM TO SEE THAT THEIR IDENTITY IS IN CHRIST, AND THAT THEY ARE CALLED TO BE A PART OF HIS KINGDOM WORK IN PRACTICAL WAYS, MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE AROUND THEM”

— Dr. Dan Lazor

compassion, develop responsibility, recognize perspective of self and others, contribute to the kingdom.

“This is where we challenge our students to make connections. At the end of the day, students have the opportunity to reflect in small groups on the work they did, the things they observed, what they

learned about themselves—and then they had time after processing the day with the small group to journal their reflections in a Google slideshow,” says Lazor.

“Students at the middle school age are coming into a time when they are learning who they are and the ways that God has gifted them. We want them to see that their identity is in Christ, and that they are called to be a part of his kingdom work in practical ways, making a difference in the lives of people around them,” he adds. “When we can partner with other organizations that are local, we can in many ways normalize the idea of serving. It becomes a normal practice of what we do as Christians—serve others—and it becomes an activity through which students can experience God’s presence and his grace—by giving of themselves for the sake of others.”

Responsive Classroom

The academic benefits of caring for the whole person

Social and emotional learning is exactly how it sounds: a holistic approach to education, it seeks to help students understand their emotions, their environments and their communities in a way that makes meaningful connections and develops empathy and awareness.

Aside from cultivating a kinder world, research is clear that it also boosts academic effectiveness. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), multiple studies following more than one million students

worldwide consistently demonstrate that an emphasis on social and emotional learning yields higher levels of school functioning, elevated core competencies, and a long-term increase in academic performance of “13 percentile points higher than students who didn’t participate.” The more emotionally safe and connected a student feels, the more ready they are to learn academically.

For several years, Eastern Christian School has championed the Responsive Classroom approach for teaching to our younger grade levels. A



A program that cultivates social and emotional learning, the Responsive Classroom approach is an evidence-based, student-centered approach to teaching and disciplining students aimed at building a classroom culture that maximizes learning and engagement.

program that cultivates social and emotional learning, the Responsive Classroom approach is an evidence-based, student-centered approach to teaching and disciplining students aimed at building a classroom culture that maximizes learning and engagement.

In the classroom, Responsive Classroom technique may look like morning meetings, where an entire class comes together as a community and learns about the day ahead. It may include inviting students to help make classroom rules or solve problems together, or intentionally using language and tone that promotes learning, for example, using specific feedback rather than general praise.

School-wide, it means making time to learn and grow as educators. For the past four years, EC educators have engaged in professional development around this method, regularly learning from and brainstorming with each other, formally and informally.

This year, during a fall in-service day, second grade teacher **Alyssa Westra** led a training for kindergarten through fifth grade teachers on ways to incorporate interactive learning activities into daily lessons. Part of the training included homework: All elementary and upper elementary teachers have been reading the book, “The Joyful Classroom: Practical Ways to Engage and Challenge Students K-6” this year.

As Westra explains, “The Joyful Classroom is all about creating engaging lessons and utilizing social groupings in order to get students actively learning. At our February in-service, I led a session on activities students love and give teachers time to plan engaging activities for an upcoming lesson.”

She adds, “Responsive Classroom fits naturally with EC’s mission and vision to educate the whole child. At EC, we care about more than just academic growth—we care about how our students grow spiritually, emotionally and socially as well...Responsive Classroom also encourages teachers to be very purposeful and careful with the language they use in the classroom—we want to empower our students by setting them up for success and believing that they will succeed.”

“RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM FITS NATURALLY WITH EC’S MISSION AND VISION TO EDUCATE THE WHOLE CHILD. AT EC, WE CARE ABOUT MORE THAN JUST ACADEMIC GROWTH—WE CARE ABOUT HOW OUR STUDENTS GROW SPIRITUALLY, EMOTIONALLY AND SOCIALLY AS WELL...” — Alyssa Westra



Responsive Classroom technique includes implementing morning meetings.

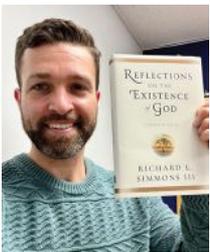
What's on your nightstand?

The best educators are also lifelong learners. We asked teachers and staff members to share what they have been reading this semester. Here is a selection from around the school:

BEN CARAPEZZA

Curriculum Coordinator, HS Dean

Reflections on the Existence of God, by Richard E. Simmons III



I was drawn to this book for a couple of reasons. Our spiritual theme this year at Eastern Christian is

“Seek Truth, Speak Truth.” This book, at its core, is a collection of apologetics-based essays. There is such a wide range of questions that are considered, each in a short essay that is very easy to read and digest. Each question and topic that is presented points towards a common enduring central question – Does God exist? I’m enjoying reviewing this book on a personal level, because it is important for each and every one of us to continually be seeking truth so that we are ready and able to speak truth when we are presented with opportunities throughout life. I am also enjoying this book as I consider the students I work with on a daily basis at Eastern Christian High School. From my reading thus far, I could easily see any of our high school students being able to pick out one of these essays based on the question it is answering. The resulting conversations that we could have with our students about their doubts in an effort to build their faith is awesome to think about. I’m eager to continue reviewing this book and consider the potential for it to be used as

a resource as we continually are walking with students to seek God’s enduring truth.

DAN CIRONE
HS Principal

A Compassionate Call to Counter Culture, by David Platt



In today’s cultural landscape, Christians may find themselves asking “how are we supposed to respond

to all of this?” Pastor/Author David Platt shows Christians how to actively take a stand on issues and challenges us to become passionate, unwavering voices for Christ. He draws on compelling personal accounts from around the world in order to challenge Christians to faithfully follow Christ into the cultural battlefield in ways that will prove both costly and rewarding. Through the reading of this text, I’m finding practical ways to talk with the students at EC that may find themselves needing answers. I’ve had the opportunity to use some of the content in my boy’s Bible study on Tuesday mornings.

COURTNEY DYKSEN
6th Grade Language Arts Teacher

Age of Opportunity, by Paul David Tripp

The Wyckoff campus is offering a book club this semester for *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide of*



Parenting Teens by Paul David Tripp. I’ve been enjoying reading through this book. My oldest turns

13 next month and my students are also approaching their teenage years. Parents are typically warned about these years, but this book challenges parents to look at this season as one of excitement, “the golden age of parenting when you begin to reap all the seeds you have sown in your child’s life, when you can help your teenager to internalize truth and prepare him or her for a productive, God-honoring life as an adult” (Tripp 18). The book provides thoughtful questions for discussion with our teens and practical advice on how to navigate situations and conversations.

LEAH GENUARIO
Publications Director; HS Bible & Worship Teacher

Captive in Iran, by Maryam Rostampour and Marziyeh Amirizadeh



As a former journalist, I am aware of the power of story. Personally, I am drawn toward books that

share testimonies from people around the world because it is an encouragement to my own

faith. One of my great privileges at EC is to help plan high school chapel. We have an opportunity to have the co-author of this book, Maryam Rostampour, speak at an upcoming ECHS chapel, which is why I purchased this book. Although that was my motive, I was really challenged by her boldness to preach Christ, knowing that it might cost her life. It has caused me to pray for boldness in my witness as well, and has also served as a call to pray for boldness in our students.

DAVID HANEY
HS Bible teacher

Positively Irritating, by Jon Ritner



The idea behind the book is to embrace a post-Christian world to form a more faithful and innovative

church. I have enjoyed Jon's thought-provoking ideas on how we can form our church into a different expression of itself to have a more significant impact on our lives and our communities. Jon gives practical ways we can rethink and redirect our churches into the community. In my other role as a pastor in Hoboken, I believe in and know the importance of the church gathering together as scripture calls us to do. In *Positively Irritating*, Jon gives the idea and concept of rethinking that gathering, decentralizing Sunday morning, and having the church be the church the rest of the week. He asserts that Sunday is important but it is not the most important part of the church. The most important part of the church is to be the church Sunday through Saturday in every aspect of our lives to bring the Gospel into the lives of those we live with, work with, and interact with on a regular basis.

JI SUNG RHYU
International Student Advisor

Heavenly Man, by Brother Yun



The first time I read this was back in 2009 during my summer in China. It left a lasting impression, particularly

because I had been invited to a few house church services. Upon learning that the eighth grade ESL Bible class is reading this book this year, I felt compelled to revisit this book. Brother Yun's testimony still challenges me to think about how to act out my faith just as it did almost 15 years ago. It has also been encouraging to peek into the class discussions led by ESL teacher Sharon DeMarco at the middle school. I really believe we are sowing seeds in the international students' faith journey and believe that Brother Yun's testimony will move their hearts as it did mine.

JESSICA TRURAN
Kindergarten Teacher

The 5 Minute Gratitude Journal, by Sophia Godkin



I keep this book on my nightstand as a daily reminder to stop and reflect on the good gifts that God provides.

When I am feeling overwhelmed, this journal reminds me of my Heavenly Father, who always meets my needs. As we have been teaching our students about gratitude in the month of November, this book truly helps me to "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise," as Psalm 100:4 claims.

ALISA ENGELHARD
HS Dean; WINGS Director

Be the Unicorn: 12 Data-Driven Habits that Separate the Best Leaders from the Rest, by William Vanderbloemen



In the WINGS program (Work Internship Network for Gaining Skills) we start each semester with a week noting the 10 qualities

of good employees in real-world job experiences. *Be the Unicorn* launches a conversation of the 12 qualities of Godly employees. The pastor author conducted 30,000 interviews and distilled the patterns of behaviors of the best. As part of WINGS, we are going to discuss what makes good Godly leaders regardless of the occupational context. I recommend this easy, practical read for anyone striving for excellence as a leader in any setting.

DAN LAZOR
UE/MS Principal

Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis



A classic on the basics of Christian beliefs. I enjoy going back to Lewis' works because

they challenge me to think deeply about my own faith. This is one that can be read through slowly! It helps me to see, like many of his other books, that the objections to Christianity are not new. The things we think about and struggle with today have been a part of the struggle of humanity for a long time, and yet Christian thinkers throughout history have addressed these objections and have shown how Christian doctrine, theology, etc. have answers to these objections.

Celebrating the team

Cultivating a culture of excellence

Business executive, Marshall Goldsmith, once shared: “long-term results are created by all of the great people doing the work.”

Although Eastern Christian School is an institution, it is only as good as its people. We wanted to take a few minutes and reflect on the good things God is doing in our community by celebrating those who work hard and cultivate a culture of excellence.

ACADEMIC

Our students have been hard at work challenging themselves in the academic arena.

Over the summer several students used their free time to pursue programs in areas they excel in. EC senior **Alexandra Spalt** completed medical-related coursework at Emory, UConn and Rutgers. Highlights included manufacturing protein in a lab and making surgical cuts on a cadaver. EC junior **Jessica Navarro** completed a Harvard Pre-College Program which included a public speaking course taught by a Harvard professor. And EC junior **Zarah Bethea** performed this summer with the Grammy Hall of Fame award winner, The Sugarhill Gang, during NJPAC’s 50th anniversary of hip hop.

In the fall, our students began to win academic awards. For example, EC senior **Natalie Vincenti** was named a Commended Student in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program, an award based on 2022 PSAT performance. EC senior **Jamie Kim** got accepted into Columbia University with a full ride scholarship. And at the Wyckoff campus, eighth grader **Verna Portuphy** and fourth grader **Ethan Fritzsche** placed in the Northern New Jersey Christian School Association Spelling Contest.

ATHLETIC

The fall season brought about recognition for two of our coaches. Coach Adam Culp led the girls soccer team to a 10-2 league record, and earned a place as Girls Tennis Colonial Division Coach of the Year. Coach D’Augustine-DeLaura led Eagles volleyball to a 17-7 record, earning Girls Volleyball Colonial Division Coach of the Year. Three fall sports teams advanced beyond the first round of the Non-Public B State Tournament. And in January, EC senior **Lucas Genuario** scored his 1,000th point at a boys varsity basketball game against Hawthorne High School.

STAFF

This year, Eastern Christian School has implemented Parent Pulse, a tool to survey parents. We have been encouraged at the overwhelming support and recognition for our excellent teachers and staff. Here are a few comments:

“The school is doing a great job developing students to be Christ-centered while providing quality education.”

– Mina Dimetry

“I love Eastern Christian for their amazing teachers who are so devoted to their students in helping them grow academically, as well as spiritually and emotionally...It is worth every penny to know that they are surrounded by teachers and peers who also love Jesus and will help them grow in their worldview centered on Christ.” – Brooke Hagedoorn

“Eastern Christian School has some of the most caring and dedicated teachers that I have ever met. Moreover, their commitment to academic and spiritual development has clearly been demonstrated during my daughter’s time at the school.” – Adrienne Harrison

1892 Society

Dorothy and Ed Jaasma, class of 1955

Although it's been nearly 70 years since Edward Jaasma sat in class at Eastern Christian School he remembers his teachers and their influence on him as a student. "I will never forget Sidney Bangma because I loved math and physics, and I recall Sidney Van Til, a dedicated English teacher, even though this was not one of my favorite subjects." He credits the EC faculty with helping him launch a successful career in Engineering and Telecommunications and planting the seeds for giving back.

After Ed graduated in 1955 he earned his bachelor's in Electrical Engineering from New York University and became a U.S. Army Signal Corps Lieutenant through ROTC. Afterwards, he was offered a job with Bell Labs, went to NYU graduate school at the AT&T Bell Labs campus in Murray Hill, New Jersey and graduated with a master's degree in 1962. One of his most thrilling roles was working on the development and testing of the Telstar Communications Satellite, the first satellite to transfer television programs internationally.

He met his wife, Dorothy (Dot), through a former EC classmate and dear friend, John Steen and his wife Candy. He and Dot recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary and have been devoted partners since the start.

Although she did not attend Eastern Christian, Dot taught fourth grade in Midland Park Christian School

from 1962 to 1966. Ed and Dot then moved to Colts Neck, New Jersey where Ed worked at the Bell Labs' Holmdel facility, before eventually moving to Texas in 2015 to be closer to family.

Ed, by then a department head, retired at age 52 as a result of an AT&T incentive program adding five years to age and service to retirement benefits, and consideration of health concerns and a desire to reduce the stress in his life. He has been retired for more than 30 years, and during this time they have traveled to approximately 80 countries. They have also volunteered with their church and the Christian Reformed Church "World Renew Program," which helps communities rebuild after hurricanes.

In addition to travel and volunteer work, the Jaasmas have a deep interest in Christian education. "We believe a Christian education is valuable in all aspects of life," shared Ed. Recalling his love of Eastern Christian, they named the school in their will and became members of the school's 1892 Society. They also wanted to give back to Calvin College where Dot had graduated and labored as a student in the cafeteria all four years. Based on her experience, they decided to set up a scholarship fund at Calvin College to help students finance their college education. This scholarship fund is presently benefiting a recent graduate of Eastern Christian. Ed and Dot then contacted the Foundation for EC to learn more about how to support Eastern Christian students through scholarships. Through their conversations with Maura Byrnes, executive director of the Foundation for EC, they landed on the option to establish an endowed scholarship fund with a gift of \$100,000. They decided to fund



this over five years so that they could continue supporting other organizations that are also close to their heart.

Once it is fully funded, the Dorothy and Edward G. Jaasma Scholarship Fund will award approximately \$5,000 annually to students based on their financial need. This will be a permanent fund, as only a portion of the interest will be spent on tuition assistance, allowing the principal to remain intact and grow as a hedge against inflation.

Maura Byrnes commented, "We are enormously grateful for Ed and Dot's incredible generosity. As we look around at our current students and the overwhelming need for tuition assistance, we cannot help but pray, hope and wonder about which students will continue to work hard and live sacrificially throughout their lives, so that in the future they can provide for students through a scholarship fund similar to the one the Jaasmas have created. We are deeply thankful for Ed and Dot's example and inspiration."

If you would like assistance getting started with a will or have any questions about creating a scholarship fund at EC, please email foundation@easternchristian.org.

Legacy Scholarship

The Albert and Janet Visbeen Legacy Scholarship

Many students and families of Eastern Christian School are blessed to have scholarship funds that were created by alumni and students' parents. One of these scholarships, the Albert and Janet Visbeen Legacy Scholarship, was created in 2021 by Al Visbeen in loving memory of his wife, Janet, to whom he was married for 69 years.

Al and Janet were both graduates of Eastern Academy, currently known as Eastern Christian High School. Albert graduated in 1949 and Janet in 1948, and they passed away in 2023 and 2021, respectively. While students, they were very involved in a variety of leadership roles. They loved Eastern Christian and both devoted decades to the school in several ways, on the Board of Directors and in the classroom.

In addition to being alumni, the Visbeens sent their children to EC from kindergarten through 12th grade. As a result, they personally understood the sacrifices required for a quality, Christ-centered education.

According to their son, **David Visbeen**, "The school was always close to their hearts. Dad often told me EC was his favorite charity. They sacrificed to send all five of their children to EC. It was especially a sacrifice when they had four in school at the same time but they never regretted it. They would tell you it was an investment, not a sacrifice."

"THE SCHOOL WAS ALWAYS CLOSE TO THEIR HEARTS. DAD OFTEN TOLD ME EC WAS HIS FAVORITE CHARITY. THEY SACRIFICED TO SEND ALL FIVE OF THEIR CHILDREN TO EC. IT WAS ESPECIALLY A SACRIFICE WHEN THEY HAD FOUR IN SCHOOL AT THE SAME TIME BUT THEY NEVER REGRETTED IT. THEY WOULD TELL YOU IT WAS AN INVESTMENT, NOT A SACRIFICE." — David Visbeen

It was Al's desire that the funds being donated be used to establish a scholarship to be awarded annually to a rising senior who has attended EC since kindergarten. The scholarship will be used to help a family pay for the final year of Eastern Christian. It was his preference that this award bless a family who has sacrificed for 12 years. He wanted the recipients to excel academically, be leaders in the area of community service and have financial need. David Visbeen shared, "They felt blessed to be assisting other families receiving a quality, Christ-centered education."

Al chose to establish this scholarship fund as a permanent one, where only a set amount of earned interest is used annually for the scholarship, leaving the principal untouched. This is known as an "endowed fund." It is a wonderful way to create an enduring legacy.

Al decided to fund this scholarship through a Charitable Gift Annuity, which involves a contract between a donor and charity, whereby the donor transfers assets, such as cash or stock, to the charity in exchange for a tax deduction and a lifetime stream of income from the charity. When the donor dies, the charity keeps any remaining assets.

Head of School **Ruth Kuder** shared, "After Al passed away on March 9, 2023, Eastern Christian received many gifts, in lieu of flowers, from his family and friends. These memorial contributions were directed toward their scholarship fund, so, even in death, he continued to bless our school and students abundantly. We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the Visbeens for their outstanding generosity and keen foresight."

For more information about how you can establish a scholarship fund, create a Charitable Gift Annuity, or include EC in your will, please reach out to foundation@easternchristian.org. Kindly use the words "Planned Giving" in the subject line.

Support EC Businesses

Foundation launches EC Business Directory

Do you own a business and want to reach thousands of potential customers but have a limited marketing budget? Or are you looking for an orthodontist for your child or need a painter for your home? The new EC Business Directory, which can be found on the School's website, is a free and easily accessible way to promote your business as well as find service providers that are connected to Eastern Christian School.

This initiative was the brainchild of the Foundation Board of Trustees who wanted to create a straightforward way for alumni and parents to learn about each other's businesses, so that if one were looking for a service provider it would be easy to patronize an EC-related business. Within eight weeks of launching, there are more than 50 businesses listed and more are being added regularly, which demonstrates how entrepreneurial the EC community is.

Foundation Board President **Ken Ritsma** shared, "We wanted to provide a useful service to our alumni and families that would empower businesses to advertise their company for no

charge, and, equally important, connect EC families with our community when they are seeking a service provider. It can be hard to get noticed with all the noise of social media, so this directory is a direct way to communicate with our more than 6,000 alumni and hundreds of families."

"There is a wide variety of businesses listed, from Advance Fireproof Doors to Zatarel Newborn Photography. You can check out the listings by searching by name or category," reported **Maura Byrnes**, executive director of the Foundation for EC. "We want to support their endeavors because EC thrives, in part, due to the generosity and faithfulness of an extensive network that includes parents, alumni, supporters, as well as churches and businesses."

To check out the EC Business Directory, you will find it on the school's website www.easternchristian.org/businessdirectory. If you want to submit a new listing, please use the sign-up form (click on the link) to enter the business information and contact details. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to foundation@easternchristian.org.

HomeComing

October 13-14, 2023

HomeComing kicked off on a beautiful fall Friday, perfect weather for EC's Alumni Golf Outing at Wallkill Golf Club. Later that day at the high school, the EC administration welcomed parents, donors, and student athletes to celebrate the new turf field and track at a dedication ribbon cutting ceremony.

Student athletes, seniors **Manny Lazor** and **Mackenzie Wynbeek**, reminisced that before the new turf field and track, they had to make do with

the old field, affectionately nicknamed "the swamp," which often flooded and became a mud pit. They thanked donors and sponsors who through the gift of this new field are helping them "strive for excellence, exemplify Christian character, compete as one, and glorify God in everything we do."

Maura Byrnes, executive director for the Foundation for Eastern Christian School, reported,

continued on p14



Heritage reunion breakfast

“This track and field dedication was a joyful culmination of the \$3.7 million capital campaign known as Campaign 125. We were thrilled to see so many of our donors return to campus so we could

celebrate with them and give thanks to our Lord for their faithful generosity.”

The celebration then moved inside for the ditto Student Commons reception where everyone was impressed by the cafeteria transformation. After remarks by Head of School **Ruth Kuder** and Head of School Emeritus **Tom Dykhouse**, guests enjoyed gourmet hors d’oeuvres and a time of fellowship in this new gathering area.

Next it was time to cheer on our varsity soccer teams for back-to-back matches under the lights on EC’s campus for the first time in school history. The girls varsity team lost a hard-fought match against Lakeland Regional High School, and the varsity boys team soared to victory over Manchester Regional.

The sense of community was strong Friday night. It was great to see so many families out supporting our teams and enjoying the blessing of our new field.

Although the rain on Saturday forced EC to cancel the Community Picnic, it didn’t stop more than 70 alumni from celebrating their 50 year or more high school graduation by gathering for the Heritage Reunion Breakfast in the ditto Student Commons. This group enjoyed fellowship, breakfast, hearing a “State of the School” address from Head of School Ruth Kuder and a performance by the high school choir followed by a tour of the high school campus.

The JV and varsity volleyball teams won both of their matches against Midland Park, and the alumni soccer players battled it out on the new turf field braving the cold, wet weather.

The 3v3 basketball tournament tipped off at the Wyckoff campus on Saturday afternoon. Nine teams made up of alumni, parents, high school and middle school athletes came together to compete. HomeComing weekend concluded with the student dance at the high school.

HomeComing weekend was a fantastic time of fun and fellowship, despite the rainy Saturday. We would like to thank all our wonderful volunteers and sponsors who helped make this spirited HomeComing a success!



HomeComing boys varsity soccer game

Relaunch of Booster Club

Re-birth of the Athletic Booster Club and beefsteak dinner

In August 2023, the EC Athletic Department successfully re-launched the Athletic Booster Club (ABC) with the purpose of directly supporting and bolstering all athletic programs at Eastern Christian School as we honor and glorify God in and around sports competition. The ABC exists to strengthen our commitment to all of our student-athletes and teams, as well as forge stronger partnerships with our beloved community and alumni.

ABC membership opened in the fall and has grown to more than 60 families. Since then, the ABC has supported our HomeComing events and community nights, as well as raised funds to support a variety of athletic initiatives. This year all senior athletes are being recognized with an individual banner hung around their field or court of play. If you've been around the school halls this year, you may have seen the return of the classic varsity jackets as the ABC is providing physical varsity letters for qualifying athletes. Technology upgrades have also been made through a video system, Hudl, which allows for live streaming of high school home games. This investment has been key in preparing our athletes for competition and elevating the athletic program as a whole, as athletes are now able to review game film and create highlights for college coaches to view.

Coming up this spring, the ABC is excited to announce the return of a community favorite event, the beefsteak dinner, which will honor this year's athletes and teams. The Athletic Awards Beefsteak will take place on Wednesday, May 29 at The Brownstone in Paterson. We invite you to join us as we recognize and celebrate our high school student-athletes, teams, outstanding athletic achievements, and the many ways God has blessed EC through athletics. The night will



HomeComing soccer fans

feature a delicious dinner, presentation of varsity letters, recognition of senior accomplishments, and more. Through donors and the generosity of our community, the EC Athletic Booster Club is committed to hosting EC high school student-athletes and their coaches at no cost to them. All members of the EC community including families, staff, alumni, and local supporters are encouraged to attend and celebrate our athletes. To purchase your Athletic Awards Beefsteak tickets and to sponsor the event and our athletes, please visit www.easternchristian.org/beefsteak.

We are blessed to have the opportunity for our student-athletes to glorify God with the talents and passions he has given them. We would love to have you join us in supporting our mission by becoming a member of the ABC.

For more information and to submit an application, visit www.easternchristian.org/abc.

What a joy it is to hear the cheers and chants, see the crowd in blue and gold, and feel the school spirit throughout the stands. Soar EC!

Spring Golf Outing 2024

Tickets are on sale now for the 2024 EC Golf Outing on Monday, May 20!

This annual event brings together 132 golfers in the EC community for a beautiful day of golf, fellowship, and friendly competition at Wild Turkey Golf Club in Hamburg, NJ.

The day includes lunch, a scramble format tournament, contests, raffles, and a delicious buffet dinner at the course to close out the festivities. Parents, alumni, and families enjoy coming together to support EC at this beautiful course.

This event is sure to sell out again so get your tickets early! You can sign up as an individual or as a foursome. A variety of sponsorships are available for this event as well and are a great way to showcase your business within our school community and to show your support.

A major fundraiser for EC, last year's golf outing brought in more than \$85,500. We hope to exceed that number this year as all proceeds continue to benefit all of Eastern Christian School.

To get your tickets and sponsorships and to learn more, visit www.easternchristian.org/golf.

GIVING TUESDAY November 2023

Eastern Christian School's Giving Tuesday event in November was truly an exhilarating example of generosity, kindness, and love within the EC community.

Generous donors came forward with matching gifts wanting to challenge and inspire our community to give, and not only did our parents, alumni, teachers, staff, business partners, and friends, come together to meet those challenges, each goal that EC set was continually blown out of the water and in record time.

Thanks to our amazing community, Giving Tuesday at EC raised a total of \$243,380 in cash and pledges. We are so grateful for our community, our prayer warriors, our supporters of rigorous Christian education, and our faithful friends who love Eastern Christian School. Thank you for blessing EC!

Praise God for his provision and for every member of this beloved community that he has brought together.

UPCOMING EVENTS

EC Spring Golf Outing

May 20, 2024

Athletic Awards Beefsteak

May 29, 2024

HomeComing Weekend

October 18-19, 2024

Auction Gala

May 1, 2025

Questions? Contact events@easternchristian.org

Trusting the God who directs paths

Diane Borst, 1972



The day before she was to begin seventh grade, Diane Borst, a student at Eastern Christian School's Junior High, suffered a devastating tragedy. Her father suddenly passed away due to a heart attack.

The year was 1966. With three kids at Eastern Christian, a fourth in college, and a fifth enrolled elsewhere due to her special needs, the community rallied to support her family. Eastern Christian's Angel Fund, a fund set up for families in crisis scenarios, did not yet exist. However, Borst shares, "I really

didn't know it at the time, but someone paid for our tuition. I assume it was people at Midland Park Christian Reformed Church."

Borst learned from an early age that the pathways we often envision for ourselves are not necessarily the pathways God leads us to and through. As she looks back at a life filled with unusual turns, she's most thankful for the ability to "just take one step at a time in trusting God to help me move through my life."

Through the generosity of others, Borst stayed at EC and graduated high school. Science teachers such as Sydney Bangma and Charles Adams cultivated a love of science. History teacher Roger Veenstra instilled a strong understanding of Reformed worldview. And she particularly loved sports, grateful for a strong mentor in Gloria Vander Veen, who paved a way for female athletes at EC.

Upon graduation, Borst wasn't sure of the path forward. She enrolled in the University of Delaware to study Biology "mainly because they offered me the most money." Leaving there, she transferred to the University of Connecticut to become a retail pharmacist.

Borst learned from an early age that the pathways we often envision for ourselves are not necessarily the pathways God leads us to and through.

However, "I started working in retail pharmacy and didn't really do well. In the late 1970s, the market was awful. I couldn't get a job in the hospital, so a coworker suggested I look into the military. I ended up in the Air Force. I figured I could do this for three years."

Three years turned to 20. Her career in the military included earning a PharmD and the rank of LtCol in the Air Force. At the height of her career, she served as the Head of Pharmacy for Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, Virginia, which included a hospital that served active duty military, families and retirees. She was deployed to England during Operation Desert Storm to set up a tertiary facility for wounded military personnel.

Upon retiring, "I didn't know what I was going to do," she shares. "I came back to Midland Park and I began to look for a job." Hired by Pfizer, she worked a number of different roles until she found herself back in senior leadership, this time working as the Director of Division Operations, then specializing in oncology medical information. "Then I retired from Pfizer too," she says.

Reflecting back on her life, she sees that she has changed through the years—most notably going from "painfully shy" to "not so shy"—but she is thankful for a God who doesn't change. Her advice for people just starting their journeys? "Well, be positive for one thing. Be open to different things and not worried about what your life is going to turn out like. Trust in God to direct your paths even though you might not know what to do next."

Alumni updates

1949: Betty (Lanting) Bowers shares her appreciation for her time at Pine Street Grammar School and Eastern Academy.

1967: Brant Tolsma recently released the 2nd edition of his book entitled *The Surrendered Christian Athlete*.

1969: John Sharp recently co-authored a book, published by Routledge, entitled *Making a Difference: Careers in Health Informatics*. John worked for 20

years in the health informatics field, with most of those years worked at Cleveland Clinic. He currently teaches in the Health Informatics Master's program at Kent State University.

1977: Ruth (De Boer) Harrell graduated from Ramapo College of New Jersey with a doctorate in nursing practice. Ruth is currently employed at University Hospital in Newark, NJ, as the director of education and professional development.

European Studies at the University of Valencia in Spain.

2018: Amy Snyder recently started a new position as Performance Management Analyst at BMW of North America, LLC.

2020: Jax Revfi is pursuing a Master of Science in Business Analytics at the Wake Forest University School of Business, and he will be a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the Mathematics and Statistical Sciences Departments at the university.

2021: James Blanco will be working as a 2024 Private Equity Summer Analyst at BlackRock. James will be working with the Private Equity Partners team in Princeton.

2021: Maddie Christy Solano has been accepted into Schreyer Honors College at Penn State. Schreyer Honors College is renowned for its commitment to academic rigor, interdisciplinary learning, and fostering leadership skills.

2022: Alicia Ulaikere was chosen to co-chair Rutgers University's largest, completely student-run career fair, featuring more than 60 companies, including Pfizer, DuPont and Lockheed Martin. Alicia is a second year electrical and computer engineering student at Rutgers.



Zoltan Kiraly swearing in

1985: Zoltan Kiraly and his wife, Kim, have lived in Ringwood, NJ since 2015. He was sworn in as a member of the Borough of Ringwood Council on Tuesday, January 2, 2024. Zoltan works for KPMG as an IT Storage Area Network (SAN) Network/Engineer.

2016: Bryan Lineweaver finished the Master's Program in International and

WE WANT YOUR NEWS!

Recognizing that more of our alumni now turn to social media for information on personal celebrations, Eastern Christian School will be following trends in higher education publications by increasingly shifting toward featuring updates on academics, ministry and career.

Please let us know about the milestones and big moments from your year, like professional accomplishments, church and ministry involvement, and advanced academic degrees. We would also like to hear stories of how the EC community has supported you in your professional and faith journey. Eastern Christian School reserves the right to edit and/or omit submissions.

Submissions can be sent to: Alumni@easternchristian.org



Alumni Soccer Participants, Homecoming 2023

In Memoriam

REMEMBERING OUR ALUMNI

ALUMNI

June 17, 2023 - January 15, 2024

Helen (Van Abbema) Borduin '45
9/17/23 North Haledon, NJ

Eleanor (Hamersma) Snyder '46
9/16/23 Wyckoff, NJ

Elroy Dyksen '48
11/8/23 North Haledon, NJ

Marie (Woudenberg) Kamp '49
12/15/23 Jenison, MI

Jacob Santhouse '50
11/13/23 Seminole, FL

Robert Hoogstra '51
6/28/23 Oostburg, WI

Wilma (Kuiphoff) Philips '51
9/3/23 Pompton Plains, NJ

Winifred (Nyhof) Byker '52
7/3/23 Alton, NH

Lenore (Bosland) Dykstra '52
10/24/23 Midland Park, NJ

Miriam (Dykstra) Popjes '52
8/16/23 Jenison, MI

David Reilly '54
7/23/23 Bermuda Run, NC

Richard H. Kuiken '56
11/3/23 Pompton Plains, NJ

Ronald Popjes '61
12/6/23 Waldwick, NJ

Donald Post '61
12/5/2023 Berryville, VA

Martin Kooistra '63
10/30/23 Hudsonville, MI

Karen (Schaaf) Weaver '64
7/23/23 Windsor, CO

Henry Abbink '63
7/17/23 Victor, NY

Dirk Bender '63
8/20/23 Byron Center, MI

Peter De Ritter '66
11/13/23 Comstock Park, MI

Gary Minkema '70
12/6/23 Tallahassee, FL

William Roosma '70
6/26/23 Pompton Plains, NJ

Glenn Visbeen '71
7/7/23 Franklin, TN

Emily (Fritz) Graves '72
6/17/23 Highland Lakes, NJ

Margaret Van Dam '73
10/12/23 Hawthorne, NJ

Donald Schuurman '75
7/27/23 Grand Rapids, MI

Jay Van Hook '76
8/20/23 Ovieda, FL

Beth (Huizing) Prol '78
10/22/23 Sparta, NJ

Drew Wisse '82
8/3/23 Little Falls, NJ

Mark Janecek '91
9/16/23 St. Catherine, Ontario

Amy (Bowers) Dill '96
11/28/23 Barton, FL

ditto Volunteer

Emma Sweetman
7/13/23 Wyckoff, NJ

From the Foundation

At EC, we believe that it takes a true partnership among family, church, and school in order to raise up students of faith, vision, and influence for God's glory.

The Foundation Office, the fundraising arm of Eastern Christian School, is so thankful to all those who have so thoughtfully and generously supported EC during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

The following pages acknowledge all donors who contributed between September 1, 2022 and August 31, 2023. Your donations encourage and empower our students to know and love the Lord, excel academically, and change the world for the better.

Thank you for your passion for Christian education, your devotion to the EC mission, and for your faithful investment in our precious students.

Warmly,



Maura Byrnes
Executive Director, Foundation for Eastern Christian School

School Profile

HISTORY



1892
YEAR ESTABLISHED



100%
INDEPENDENT
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL

COMMUNITY



954 STUDENTS
582 FAMILIES



200+
CHURCHES
REPRESENTED



107
COMMUNITIES
REPRESENTED

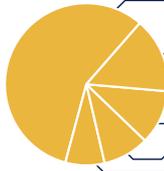


3
CAMPUSES
WITH SHUTTLE
BUS AVAILABLE



6 COUNTRIES
REPRESENTED

STUDENT
DIVERSITY



57% WHITE
15% ASIAN
13% HISPANIC or LATINO
8% BLACK
7% MULTIRACIAL

ACADEMICS



149
FACULTY
AND STAFF



95%
COLLEGE
PLACEMENT



11:1
STUDENT:TEACHER RATIO



37 COLLEGE CREDITS
AVAILABLE

EXTRACURRICULAR



33
ATHLETIC TEAMS
GRADES 6-12



20+
HIGH SCHOOL
CLUBS & ACTIVITIES

Celebrating our Dedicated Supporters

The Foundation is truly grateful to our faculty, staff, administration, and board leadership who supported EC in 2022-2023. Your contributions go above and beyond and we appreciate your dedication and commitment more than words can say!

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THE ANNUAL FUND EXPLAINED

The Annual Fund is a crucial account that pays for specific expenses not always covered by tuition or the school's budget. When you give an unrestricted gift to the Annual Fund, you are helping to equip our classrooms with the latest technology, provide chapel services with notable guest speakers, attract outstanding teachers, finance building improvements, and so much more.

See the following page for our list of annual donors.

ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS
2022-2023



2,191
GIFTS RECEIVED



910
UNIQUE DONORS
of which
470
WERE ALUMNI DONORS



\$626
Average gift among individual donors (not corporate or organizational)

Annual Fund Donors

Thank you so much to all the following Annual Fund donors. Because of you, in 2022-2023, EC was able to equip our classrooms with new Promethean boards, install projectors and screens for chapel services, add several new computer labs, replace all stairway lifts in the high school, and make renovations and building updates on all three campuses. Your support is invaluable.

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David and Maureen Hubschmitt
Ruth and Richard Huisman
Albert and Elizabeth Huizing
Annamae Hulsebos
Andrew and Amy Hulsebos
Steven and Beverly Hulsebos
Clifford and Jean Huntington
Ruth and John Husselman
Howard and Barbara Husselman
Joon and Eunbee Im
Giuseppe and Jana Incardona
Giovanni and Jihyun Lee Indomenico
Janet Jaarsma (Deceased)
Chang Hwan and Sunmin Jang
Theodore and Jo Jansma
Brian Jellema
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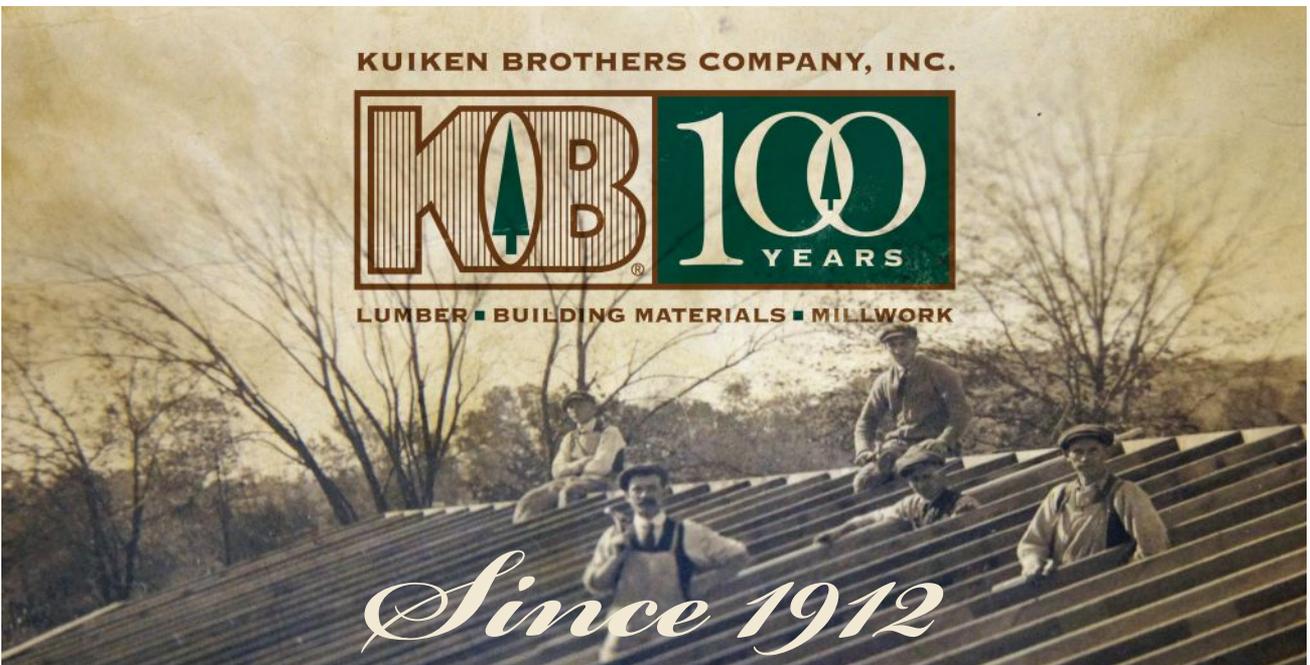
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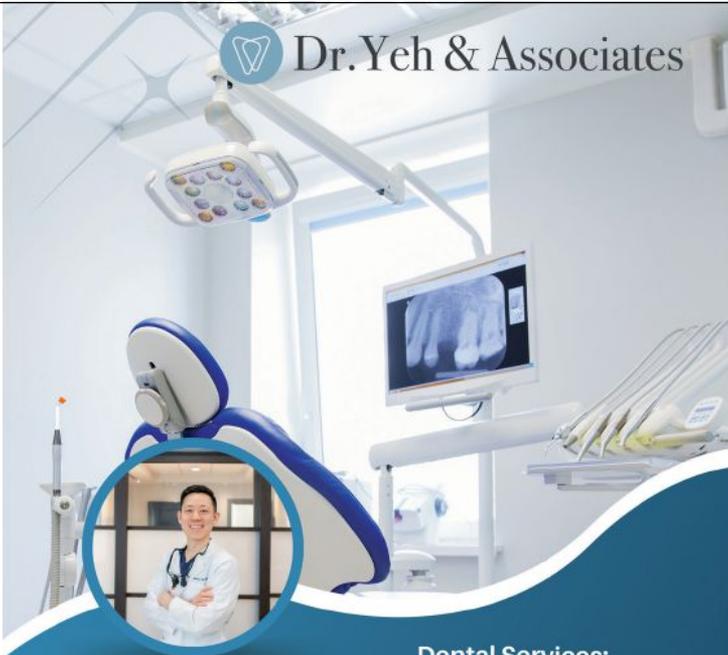


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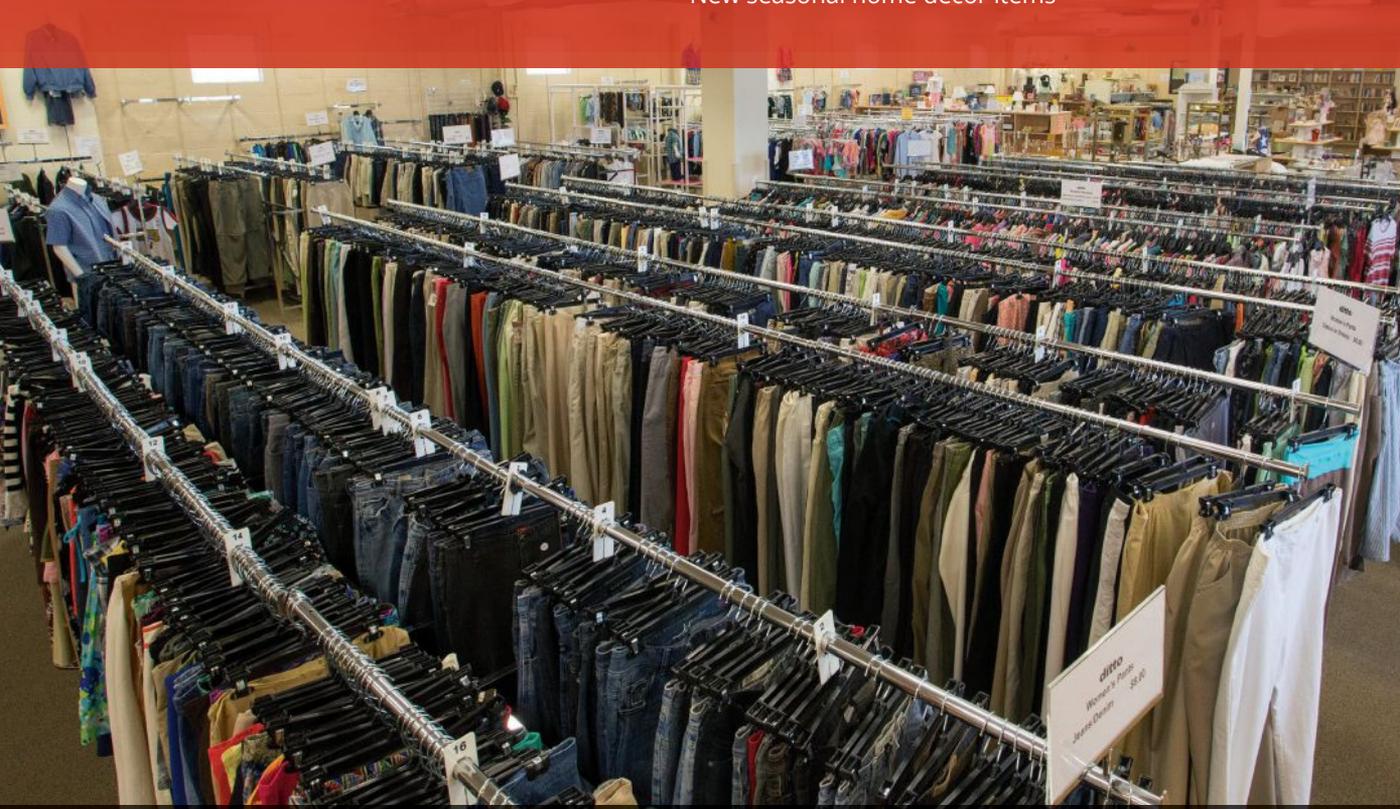
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Fall sports highlights

BOYS V SOCCER

The boys varsity soccer team proved that hard work in the off-season pays off, providing many memorable performances on our beautiful new turf field. When healthy and at full strength, this group played an attractive and effective brand of soccer as evidenced by the 5-game win streak in the middle of the season when they outscored opponents 22-6. Co-captains **Manny Lazor** (13 goals/12 assists) and **Lukas Faasse** (center defender) led the team to a 9-9 record while reaching the semi-finals of the state tournament. Freshman goalkeeper Joe Virga finished the season with 132 saves and came up big in our first-ever community nights under the lights, including the memorable 3-0 Homecoming win vs Manchester Regional and the wild 5-4 victory over Rutgers Prep in the state tournament. Though nine seniors are graduating, a solid group of underclassmen who received plenty of playing time return for the Eagles next season.

BOYS JV SOCCER

The boys JV soccer team wrapped up an exciting and promising season in 2023, finishing with a record of 7-6. Under the guidance of dedicated coaches and the strong leadership of captains **Andy Genuario** and **Lennox Cederholm**, the team demonstrated growth, teamwork and a passion for the game. The camaraderie and sportsmanship displayed by the players were truly commendable. With every match, they showcased their commitment to improvement and unity, building on their strengths and addressing their weaknesses. As the season comes to a close, it's clear that the future is bright for the EC boys soccer program.

GIRLS V SOCCER

The girls soccer program took a major step forward this year, raising the level of expectation for future seasons with an 11-8 record, finishing third in the league while also advancing to the county and the state sectional semi-finals. Captains **Gianna Angelucci** and **Mackenzie Wynbeek** provided exceptional leadership both on and off the field through the highs and lows of the four-month season. Junior **Kirsten Braunius** led the team with 28 goals and **Caroline Pringle** continued to make her mark as one of the best to play for the Eagles.



Kirsten Braunius

Hannah Leegwater held down the defense with a league-leading 151 saves. In a season of multiple highlights, the most memorable game came under the lights on Senior Night when the girls beat rival Pompton Lakes for the second time with Caroline's golden-goal in overtime.

GIRLS TENNIS

The girls tennis team continued to build on the success of the last several years by improving their standing in the Colonial Division. The team's 10-2 record in the league exceeded the winning percentage of any EC tennis team in recent decades. Led by a dedicated core of three outstanding seniors, the entire team elevated their level of play at key moments to secure a second place finish in the league, and a respectable showing at the county tournament. Highlights of the season included winning two suspenseful team matches against Pompton Lakes, and an upset of number 1 seed PCTI, by **Destiny Miller** and **Kendra Heerema** at second doubles. The team received compliments from several opposing coaches for striking a balance of fun, kindness, and competitiveness. The highest postseason honors went to senior first singles player, **Kathy Kim**, who earned first team all-league, and second team all-county. **Jamie Kim, Taline**



Taline Madalian

Madalian, and **Kayleigh Marshall** all earned second team honors in the league. **Sarena Lee** was also recognized as an honorable mention award winner.

GIRLS V VOLLEYBALL

With experience and improved skill working for them, the varsity volleyball team was able to flip the script from last year with a 17-7 record, finishing second in league standings and winning a home game in the state tournament. **Lillian Vogel** led the team with 165 kills and 54 blocks, maintaining a spot on the state leaderboard for blocks and aces all season. **Grace Ivanov** led the team with 192 assists while contributing 106 kills. The defense, led by digs from **Mariah Ramdath** (181) **Jayla Lee** (179) and **Charlotte Van Goor** (153) held their own against big schools including Fair Lawn and Rutgers Prep. Senior Captains **Charlotte Van Goor**, **Jayla Lee** and classmate **Sharyn-Nicole Thomas** helped build this team physically, mentally, and spiritually, creating a culture that will make this team stronger for years to come.

GIRLS JV VOLLEYBALL

With seven returning players, the girls JV volleyball team returned in a very strong fashion, battling in every game. The team finished with a .500 record, with notable wins over Elmwood Park and Paterson Charter. This year focused on understanding the system and rotations the varsity team uses to have a more seamless transition between the two levels. The team was able to grow in their knowledge



Lillian Vogel

of the game and take steps towards supporting varsity in future years. **Rachel Anokye** and **Skylar Kuiken** were both instrumental in the team's growth and leadership on and off the court.

HS CROSS COUNTRY

The boy's cross country team finished the year with five wins, finishing first in the EC Invitational and seventh at the state meet. **Alex Culp**

and **Caleb Kuperus** led the pack for the boys with strong performances at the league and state meets, registering times that put them among the top 25 on the EC XC history list of performances. Coach Apol gives thanks for the dedication and leadership of seniors **Stone Davis**, **Tim LaBianca** and **Dan Connolly** and looks forward to the progress of the returning underclassmen. **Kendra Heerema** and **Avery Peters** ran very well for the girls with times that placed them both in the top 35 on the EC XC history list and look forward to being joined on the team by some up-and-coming talent in the lower grades next year.



Alex Culp

GIRLS MS SOCCER

Girls MS soccer finished a strong season with a record of 6-3. Highlights included avenging an earlier loss to Midland Park with a 3-1 win in the rematch, and two strong performances on the new high school turf field including the convincing victory vs HCA in the

season finale. Throughout the season, **Zara Ronnau** anchored our defense while **Sophia Eftychiou** fought hard on offense as the top scorer this year. Growth was evidenced not only in playing ability but most importantly in understanding what it means to be a Christian athlete. With nine returning seventh graders next year, the team is looking forward to another season of competitive play!

BOYS MS SOCCER

With nine eighth graders leading the way the boys proved they were up to the challenge offered by a very competitive schedule. Most team members learned and played more than one position in the course of the season, creating a versatile lineup for Coach Veenstra. Highlights included a well-played 3-1 win vs Hawthorne, an excellent performance versus a strong Midland Park team in the hard-fought rematch, the demonstration of skill and teamwork versus Bergen Charter under the lights on the new high school field, and the compelling 4-1 win over HCA in the season finale.

GIRLS MS VOLLEYBALL

In its first season as a fall sport, the middle school volleyball program gave female athletes a third option for participation. Compared to previous seasons held in early spring, the longer schedule and increased time for preparation allowed the team to adapt to the new league and compete well, even bringing home several wins. Six eighth graders, two seventh graders, and five sixth graders demonstrated amazing individual and team growth, providing some exciting points and matches throughout the season. We look forward to seeing the eighth graders play for our high school next year and to the continued growth of our new fall program at the middle school.

MS CROSS COUNTRY

One of the great satisfactions of cross country is its emphasis on individual improvement and the camaraderie found in running as a team. This year's group came together to accomplish both while putting into practice the biblical ideal of "iron sharpens iron" (Proverbs 27:17). Twenty team members from sixth through eighth grade participated in our meets highlighted by the final championship meet where our boys finished eighth out of 13 strong teams. Our top five runners to score at that final meet were eighth graders **Ben S-Bennett** (15th out of 100 runners), **Josiah Hytrek**, **Matthew Blaize**, and **Christian Macy**, joined by standout sixth grader **Luke Hunter**. Coach Allen was encouraged by the overall improvement, courage, and gumption brought to life in the efforts of the team this year.

LEAGUE & COUNTY RECOGNITION

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County

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HM: Jamie Kim, Sarena Lee

League

1st: Kathy Kim
2nd: Taline Madalian, Kayleigh Marshall, Jamie Kim
HM: Sarena Lee
COY: Adam Culp

Girls Soccer

County

2nd: Caroline Pringle, Kirsten Braunius
HM: Mackenzie Wynbeek, Hannah Leegwater

League

1st: Caroline Pringle, Kirsten Braunius,
Mackenzie Wynbeek
HM: Gianna Angelucci

Volleyball

County

1st: Lillian Vogel
2nd: Grace Ivanov
HM: Charlotte Van Goor, Jayla Lee

League

1st: Lillian Vogel, Grace Ivanov
2nd: Charlotte Van Goor
HM: Jayla Lee
COY: Coach D'Agustine-DeLaura

Boys Soccer

County

2nd: Manny Lazor
HM: Jason Alicea, Lukas Faasse

League

1st: Manny Lazor
2nd: Jason Alicea
HM: Joseph Virga

Cross Country

County

2nd: Alex Culp
HM: Caleb Kuperus, Kendra Heerema,
Avery Peters

League

2nd: Alex Culp
HM: Caleb Kuperus, Avery Peters



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By providing an excellent academic curriculum, offering a variety of extra-curricular activities, and assembling a caring, culturally diverse community, we, with support of parents and local churches, empower students from Christian families to develop their gifts within the context of a Reformed Christian worldview so that they can act as Christ's transforming agents in a global society.



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