



# ECHOES

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## Best job ever

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

If you know a student who attends Smithville Christian High School, if you've watched this year's Three-Minute Yearbook, or if you have the good fortune to spend some time wandering the hallways or classrooms of this school, you know that students are happy to be here. (Read more about the Three-Minute Yearbook on page 10).

But what about the teachers? What do they think about life at Smithville Christian?

For the answer, we talk to Mr. Stuart Bender, the newest addition to our staff, who teaches PhysEd, English, and Individuals & Families in a Diverse Society.



Before arriving at Smithville Christian just over two years ago, Bender didn't know much about Christian schools, he was pretty sure he didn't like Christian schools, and he certainly didn't want to TEACH

at a Christian school. But after God led him to Smithville Christian you could say Bender experienced a bit of a conversion. You can read what changed his mind starting on page 2.

And, speaking of Mr. Bender, you can also read about an innovative challenge he placed before the students in his Grade 12 Individuals & Families in a Diverse Society course, why he did it, and what both the students and their teacher learned. Read about the blessing project on pages 4 and 5.

## WHAT DO STUDENTS AT SMITHVILLE CHRISTIAN REALLY THINK ABOUT THEIR SCHOOL?

Here are just a few of the answers they gave when they were asked that question for this year's Three-Minute Yearbook project. Read more about the Three-Minute Yearbook on page 10.

You meet amazing friends • You get taught by cool teachers • It has placed loving friends around me • *There's acceptance no matter who you are* • The teachers are awesome • I love the Christian atmosphere • There are awesome extra-curriculars • The teachers here are willing to help you and make you strive to the best of your ability • *It gives me the opportunity to be myself and get out of my comfort zone* • I love this school: I am so glad I came here instead of anywhere else!

# Best job ever: teaching about sex in a way that matters

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

Mr. Stuart Bender was first hired at Smithville Christian in May 2011, temporarily filling in for a teacher on sick leave.

His first assignment? Teaching human sexuality to Grade 9 PhysEd students.

"I was like, 'thanks Lord,'" recalls Bender with a laugh, as he remembers being fresh out of Redeemer's teacher's college and being handed the lesson plans for his first day on the job.

But Bender realized immediately that teaching sexuality at a Christian high school was very different from what he had experienced as a high school student growing up in Durham, Ontario.

"The quality of what I was teaching was FAR better than what I had received in a public school," Bender said, remembering his own high school lessons that focused solely on contraception and on how things worked. "At Smithville there was

so much more. The students were learning about emotions and the importance of abstinence," he said.

That's when Bender first realized "there is so much that the public school is missing, because here, we are allowed to teach Christianity in every subject."

Since then, Bender has become convinced of the importance of Christian education, and the potential it has for life-changing and world-changing impact.



Mr. Bender (right) and students from his Grade 12 Leadership class.



*Mr. Bender and students in his Grade 10 Phys Ed class.*

"I get to teach the Grade 12 Individuals & Families in a Diverse Society, which is kind of the capstone course," he said. "It's been incredible because in that course you are teaching how to live in your society. How does a Christian live, how does a Christian date? How do you develop meaningful friendships? It's all through looking at what Christ has done.

"I have grown so much teaching that course and that has helped the kids: we are growing together," Bender said. "With a course like that there's so much richness and depth. So much potential."

Bender said his bias against Christian education was the result of not knowing much about it. He thought Christian schools cultivated a holier-than-thou attitude or isolated students in sheltered bubbles.

Now he wishes he had been able to attend a Christian high school himself especially because he saw the detrimental effect of negative pressure on some of his high school friends who ended up making dangerous and destructive choices.

**There is so much that the public school is missing, because here, we are allowed to teach Christianity in every subject.**

"I just think how much I would have been blessed, and those friends would have been blessed, if they had had that experience of Christian education," he said. "I had a lot of friends, some Christian, some not, who got into alcohol, they ended up in the party scene, they didn't have a lot of positive influences on them. School just didn't have much meaning for them. I am not saying Christian education solves all that, but I can now see the benefits, see the potential."

Bender says he loves his job and he loves the students. He said that's another thing that sets Christian school apart: how much the teachers care.

He has taught in other schools, and notices a difference.

"The teachers here really care," he said. "I have been in five schools and I have never seen a staff room like ours, where, if there is a concern about a student, there's prayer involved, there is genuine care. It's not gossip, it's care. I've been in situations where there has been gossip or even hatred towards a student, or dislike, and that's never been the case here. It's just genuine care for the kids."

Bender said it's the students who benefit.

"The kids know it, they know they are cared about and it makes a big difference."

But it's not just the students who are happy to come to school each day.

"The students love it here, but so do the teachers," he said. "My favourite time in school is in between classes when I just interact with the kids," Bender said. "I love teaching them, but literally, when kids come up to you and want to talk to you, that's the best. I love that."

# The Blessing Project

**The course:** Grade 12 Individuals & Families in a Diverse Society

**The teacher:** Mr. Stuart Bender

**The pupils:** 28 students wrapping up their high school careers

**The assignment:** Take a shiny, new \$20 bill and use it, in a personal way, to bless someone you do not know.

**Evaluation:** Write an essay as part of the final exam on your response to this assignment. Explain how you felt about the assignment, what you did with the money, whether you prayed about it and how you felt before, during and after.

But why? Stuart Bender created the assignment as his personal response to a recent experience in which he felt he had missed an opportunity, presented by God, to bless someone else. Disappointed in his own failure to respond to a need, he wanted to give his students a chance to experience the blessing of blessing others.

Here's what happened, taken from what the students wrote on their exams.

## How they felt:

Scared • Excited • **Overwhelmed** • **So sick I wanted to throw up** • So scared I could barely breathe • **Way out of my comfort zone** • Weird • Scared and excited • I thought you were crazy • **Scared out of my mind** • **Nervous** • In shock • Lost • Scared • So uncomfortable Confused • **My excuses grew** • **It was heavy on my heart** • It was a scary opportunity • I didn't even want to touch the money • I was wowed: **this was the first time I noticed the greatness of God and I was scared by the power of God.**

## How they prayed:

- Please show us who we should bless.
- I wanted to pray but I was too scared. I felt like I was pulling a Moses, saying I'm not good with words and I'll just embarrass myself. It kept me up at night.
- I prayed and prayed for God to give me open eyes.
- I prayed with my mother over the \$20 and what I should do with it.
- I thought of taking the easy way out and saying I wasn't able to do it, but I prayed to God and asked him to call me to the person the money belongs with.
- I prayed about the conversation and God came through.
- I asked God to help me not be afraid because I have a very hard time approaching people I do not know.
- I prayed about it and trusted that God would help me find someone. The Lord will lead me to the person who really needs it.
- I viewed the money as God's money, so I prayed and prayed for someone to give the money to.

## The impact:

- He had a huge smile on his face and he hugged me. I had such a spiritual high that I cried. I decided to start doing deeds like this more often.
- You have changed my life. You have changed the way I look at my faith and the people around me. We can see God working through you. I can't thank you enough.
- I was praying a blessing on (the recipient) and his family. I think it was a wonderful thing we did, and I am glad I got pushed out of my comfort zone.
- I will convert it to Chinese currency and when I go back home I will give it to six homeless people; it will buy six good lunches.
- It was not as easy as I thought it would be, but knowing that it will change someone's life makes me feel good. Thank you for being my teacher. You have been a big role model in my life.
- I realized that God has a plan for me and he will use me in the way he desires. I will keep my eyes and ears open for a sign from him.
- It felt so great, I just wanted to keep on giving.
- I am still waiting but I won't give up. I have never been so challenged in my life, but I will keep searching until I find that person.
- When I go back to China this summer I will buy them a new scooter and bless them. I will tell them about my project and the journey I've been through. I feel excited and scared at the same time, because I've never done anything to help the poor. I feel excited to see how the kids will be blessed.

- The biggest smiles I have ever seen appeared on their faces. Thank you for the great experience. I will do it again soon.
- Still having the money scares me: if it is God's will it might even sit in my phone case my whole life and make me think constantly of what I am doing and being aware of my surroundings.
- This has been one of the most positive experiences of my life, because I finally started living my life for Christ.
- I will continue to pray for the little boy. You just have to leap out in faith sometimes. Thank you for the inspiration. This class has taught me more about my faith than you will ever know.
- After I gave her the money, I prayed for her. I felt really good about it. In the future, I will buy gift cards from Tims and give them out.
- I am confident God will put me in a situation where I will be able to complete the task. Thank you, Mr. Bender. It has made me realize that I want to give more than anything else.
- It brought tears to my eyes and his.
- God wasn't holding out on me, but I was supposed to hold on to myself, because the person to whom I am supposed to give the money I haven't met yet. Although I am scared at how this might turn out, I feel called that this is the course of action I should take.
- I told him God will always forgive those who ask for it. Talking to that guy really opened my eyes and made me realize that sometimes just talking to someone is the best blessing from God.

## IT'S CLEAR THE BLESSING PROJECT HAD A POWERFUL IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF STUDENTS, BUT IT WASN'T JUST THEM. HERE'S WHAT MR. BENDER HAD TO SAY:

"Looking back I still cannot believe everything that happened. The Lord had told me to give the students money for this assignment: little did I know it was just as much for me as it was for them. I shared an incredible spiritual experience in class with these 28 students on the day that the assignment was given out, and it had a major impact on me and them. One of the main reasons teenagers and young adults fall away from the church is because they have not had a real encounter with God and the Holy Spirit. I believe that a lot of my students felt Christ and His spirit – either on the day that the assignment was given or during their journey with the \$20 challenge. I would totally do it again."



# Do your text messages matter?

BY MICHELLE SLUMP-HOUWER, RESOURCE TEACHER

Students and staff at Smithville Christian High School are blessed by daily devotions and weekly chapels — sometimes led by visitors and sometimes led by our own students and teachers.

*A Smithville Christian High School teacher (who has also been a chapel speaker) was the keynote speaker at the June graduation ceremony of Dunnville Christian School. Here are some excerpts from what Michelle Slump-Houwer shared at grad. To read about Slump-Houwer's own chapel message about teamwork, visit the Smithville Christian High School blog at <http://smithvillechristian.blogspot.ca/2012/05/whos-on-your-team.html>. While you are on the blog, you can also read other chapel talks, and see what a blessing it is to attend a Christian school.*

Choosing to do things in a whole-hearted way takes effort. Going above and beyond the call of duty takes discipline. Colossians 3:23-24 says “whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” We are called to strive for excellence in order to be the best testimony, the best witness for the Lord that we can be. People are watching to see what kind of a difference Jesus is making in your life. Are you diligent and trustworthy in all you do?

A recent chapel speaker at Smithville Christian challenged us to start each day by saying “In the beginning, God...” so that the entire focus of your day is on God. Today's society would have us believe differently: our iPhones, iPads and iPods can encourage us to focus on ourselves. Another chapel speaker said a high percentage of our text messages are unnecessary frivolous or worthless. He challenged us to stop wasting our time and to instead spend time talking to God and having a relationship with him. We can text God through prayer or we can spend time connecting with God by reading the Bible on our phone or tablet. We can spend time connecting with God's world and those who face social injustice. As Christians, all of life is about God.

Whatever you do, whatever you become, God wants you to strive to use your talents to the fullest — always. You are called by God to be a light to your co-workers or friends, to help a friend or family member in trouble, or to support kingdom workers around the world. Whatever you do, do it for the Lord, serving God daily with your whole heart — and with your text messages.

*Smithville Christian High School teacher Michelle Slump-Houwer delivers the keynote address at the June graduation of Dunnville Christian School.*

*Photo credit: Brenda Wagter.*



# Athletes displaying the significance of God

BY JOHN VAN DEN BOOGAARD, STAFF SPONSOR FOR ATHLETICS COUNCIL

As a school we have been blessed in athletics this past year. We have not only done well competitively, but our athletes have been able to live out their faith in how they relate to each other, how they compete on the floor, and in their sportsmanship. They have set an example of sharing God's love that other coaches and teams have noticed.

We celebrated our athletes and the joy of sport at the annual athletics banquet, held in June. Before dinner, athletics council chair and female athlete of the year, Veronica Slappendel, led us in devotions. Here is the meditation she shared based on I Cor. 12.

## A TEAM'S UNITY & DIVERSITY

Indeed, a team consists of many athletes, but together they make up the team. Consider a softball team. If the left fielder said, "I do not belong to the team because I am not a catcher," would that make her any less a part of the team? And if a batter towards the bottom of the line-up said, "I do not belong to this team because I am not the lead-off hitter," would that make her any less a part of the team? If your entire team was filled with pitchers, who would catch or field a ball? As it is, there are many positions, yet one team. Can you imagine the pitcher telling the catcher, "Get lost; I don't need you!"? Or the infielders telling the outfielders, "You can go home now;

your positions are no longer needed!"? One cannot play without the other. Every position depends on the other positions. If one team member loses, the entire team loses with her. And if the team wins, everyone celebrates.

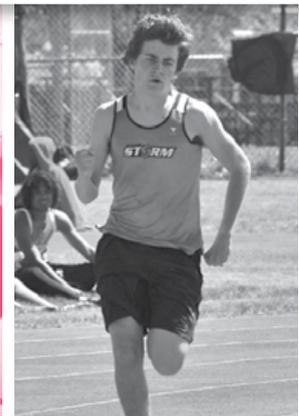
Now if you are a follower of Jesus, you are a member of a greater Team. And each person is an important part of it. I need you and you need me. When you and I fulfill our roles on this Team, we declare and display God's significance together as one team.



*Veronica Slappendel*



*Athletes of the year: Wes Schilstra, Kirsten Klompmaker, Mitchell Harris and Veronica Slappendel.*



Smithville Christian  
**STORM**





# Three-Minute Yearbook: Telling our story with humour — and haste

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

Trying to capture 10 months in the lives of 220 teenagers and 25 teachers in three minutes is a daunting task but, for the second year in a row, Smithville Christian High School succeeded in meeting that goal.



This year's Three-Minute Yearbook stuck with the hand-written theme begun last year, but switched the chalkboard to a white board and allowed students to write and illustrate their own answers to the question: What do you like about Smithville Christian High School? Some of their answers were goofy and quirky, but that only goes to show that students know this is a place where they can be creative and have fun, even while they are learning said principal Ted Harris.

The video is fast-paced but it's not about individual students, said Grimsby professional photographer Elma Regnerus,

who is the mother of students at the school and who collaborated on the project. To stick to the three-minute time limit, to include every student and to capture the essence of an entire school year meant it had to move fast, she said. The video got favorable coverage in several local newspapers, and even inspired a copycat video: editors at The St. Catharines Standard liked the concept so much, they used it to illustrate two news stories about local high schools.

And it turns out it's not just the students who are happy at Smithville Christian. Here are some images that ended up on the

cutting room floor, illustrating what some of the teachers said they liked.

To see the Three-Minute Yearbook on YouTube, visit the school website at [www.smithvillechristian.ca](http://www.smithvillechristian.ca) and click on the link on the Bulletin Board or click on the YouTube icon. The website Bulletin Board also has links to newspaper articles about the video.

Speaking of what students say about their school, here's what one student posted on Facebook, and an excerpt from what another student shared as part of her testimony when she made profession of faith:

From a student's testimony:

**Amanda Regnerus:**

*"I have attended Christian schools my entire life, which helped me get to where I am today: a Christian. God really showed himself to me at school during Spiritual Emphasis Week. It was the first time I really felt the presence of God and the Holy Spirit. It was an incredible experience and I will remember it for the rest of my life. I know God is my true and only Saviour and I can't wait to see what he has planned for me for the rest of my life. I can go forward with joy and confidence."*

From Facebook:  
**Isaac Stansfield:**

*"I just want to say that high school was a blast for me. I am not looking forward to saying goodbye. The teachers are amazing and I love them all with my whole heart. I feel truly blessed to have spent my high school years at Smithville Christian High. Peace out!"*

## Breathing Life

LINDA BOOY-KORVEMAKER, GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR

School has a lasting impact on our lives. Whether it is the teachers, the classmates, the curriculum or the current trends in education, our education, just like our whole life experience, is shaped by the people, ideas and events around us.

Similarly, we shape the experiences of those around us, and one of the choices we have in life is whether we will breathe life or breathe death into the people we meet.

Breathing life into people means to encourage. I do not know of a person who does not grow when encouraged. Yet, even though we all know this, sometimes we forget to "breathe life" into each other. Or sometimes we ourselves get caught up in the troubles of our world and we struggle.

It is at these times in our lives where we may need those surrounding us to help us. Breathing life into someone is like CPR and yet sometimes we forget this and expect people to breathe life into themselves. If we keep with the CPR metaphor, it is impossible when you stop breathing, to resuscitate yourself.

This is where Christians can be the instruments of God – whether students, teachers, parents, friends, acquaintances or just the person who stands in line with us at the checkout. A Samaritan woman, a tax

collector, a thief on the cross – aren't these the people sought out by Jesus?

When I get discouraged, I remind myself how blessed I am to be a teacher and guidance counsellor where I have the daily opportunity to breathe life into the people who cross my path. Being at a Christian school, I am amazed at how both staff and students work hard at resuscitation and often breathe life into me. As students enjoy a break from school or we enjoy a break from work, may we never take a break from breathing life into one another.



*Guidance counsellor Linda Booy-Korvemaker with some of the students at Smithville Christian High School.*

# Students join in enhancing Smithville's 'green' features

BY MICHELLE STRUTZENBERGER, AXIOM NEWS

Grade 9 student Andy Jeong says he felt a keen sense that leadership and diligence would be required when he and his peers were invited to design a new walking trail for Smithville.

He says he and his friends encouraged each other to focus and stay on task.

"It was exciting working with my friends to affect our community and the environment — and to know (the trail) is actually getting built," he says.

Last fall Township of West Lincoln planner Rachelle Larocque invited Smithville Christian High School's Grade 9 Geography class to design a 700-metre trail the Town of Smithville is building along 20 Mile Creek. Given a budget of \$120,000, the students proposed materials to be used in forming the trail, identified the location of amenities such as benches and garbage cans, and recommended other features to ensure the trail is safe and usable at all times.

Six groups of students each created a proposal, using a geographic information system (GIS), as well as built a three-dimensional model. Each group also developed a Powerpoint presentation to defend its decision-making that was then delivered to a group of experts, including Larocque.

Final decisions on the trail's location and features are now being made.

"It was cool that they trusted teenagers with this, and that they decided to partner with us," says student Christine Vermeer.

A big challenge was determining the elements needed while staying within budget, Vermeer says. "There was lots of money, but it was quickly used up."

Geography teacher Gina VandenDool says she was excited by the connections students

made with experts, including urban planners, conservation authorities and GIS professionals.

"I'm just so grateful for the partnerships and for the experts who jumped on board. They never hesitated to spend time with my students," she says.

The learning opportunity for her students was incredible, VandenDool says. How many students join in planning an urban community, learn the importance of being sensitive to the concerns of a diversity of populations and work with a real budget?

"Ultimately what's cool down the road, 20 to 30 years, is that these students will come back and can show their friends and their children and say, 'Look, I was a part of this and I made a positive change in my community,' " says VandenDool.

The invitation to work on this project arose from a 2010 Grade 10 Civics class study, petition and presentation to township council, calling for a more walkable community and safer pedestrian routes. The Civics presentation led to a successful joint grant application from the township and the school, and a new project for the 2011 Grade 9 Geography class: to survey 800 Smithville students in Grades 6 – 12 about their experiences with the safety and efficiency of the town's walking facilities.



As a result of that project, a Kitchener-Waterloo urban planning company called GSP Group created a trails and corridors master plan for Smithville, which was approved by township council.

VandenDool said the students' commitment and reliable work on the survey, as well as the positive relationships formed with the town, led to the trail design project.

VandenDool's Geography class for second semester was then invited to undertake another project that involves analyzing the features of two town parks to recommend where native species of trees can be planted.

# What we learned

Smithville Christian High School's trails and corridors project is having a positive impact on the community. But what's it doing for students? Here's what some Grade 9 students wrote on their final exam, in response to questions about the challenges they faced, the significance of the learning experience and what they learned about themselves and God through the project:

I like how we were doing something that isn't ordinary, and it will actually benefit people.

- Jessica Scholman

I am proud that I can tell people that I was involved in creating the trail by 20 Mile Creek. At the beginning of this project I didn't think it was possible that we could do something like this. But when people are willing to compromise and work together, anything can be accomplished. This project was a very unique, once-in-a-lifetime experience.

- Alana Hewson

Throughout this group project, we learned many new things, taught each other lessons, got to know each other, and had the chance to grow closer to God as we explored His Creation.

I grew to be a more patient person. I became better at encouraging, persevering and working in groups. I liked budgeting and working with money. These things were cool to learn and to share with others.

- Savannah VanHerwynen

We learned how to work together, and also learned about future job opportunities. I think I learned more in this project than in normal class work.

- Alex Boekstyn

This project was a significant learning experience because it allowed us to discover and explore new technology (GIS) and preserve the land that God has given us. This is something I want to look into for a future career.

- Ethan Vanderlee

This project gave us the opportunity to use very new mapping software and to connect with experts in a way that normal classroom work never would.

- Corey Oudman



I love the outdoors, and everything about this project was about nature! However, when I worked alone, it was hard to plan with only my ideas. As we talked more as a group, our ideas became better and better! This is a big project that is going to impact a lot of people.

- Dale VandenDool

I learned how to work with people with different personalities. I also learned how much work goes into such large community projects. I can appreciate how much time the government puts into planning for parks and recreation activities.

- Curtis Potac

God made the whole universe! All I've done is help make a small trail, which, in itself, was a great achievement and an amazing learning experience.

- Christine Vermeer

I learned how to do urban planning and designing and that it takes a lot of time, effort and organization. I could not imagine doing this project on my own. I really liked working with my group.

- Marisa vanRensburg

This project was exciting and fun because our design and plan of the trail could actually be used in real life! I learned a lot about God. He is the Creator of everything, including Smithville and this trail. He also cares about his creation, and uses us Grade 9 students to bless the town of Smithville.

- Andy Jeong

# If the walls could talk

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

## What's in a poster?

If you have been around Smithville Christian High School lately, you may have noticed a new poster on the walls of every classroom and office and one near each entrance. The poster was generated over a period of several months with input from staff and teachers along the way. When we put them up, we challenged the teachers and students to talk about them and refer to them often.

But why? For a few years, we have made it our goal that no one could walk out the doors of our school without knowing that we hold three things very dear: belonging, believing and succeeding. But we need to make it clear what we're after when we talk about these things. The poster is our effort to reflect and direct. We want what's on this poster to tell others and remind ourselves what kind of learning community we are. We also want the posters to stimulate us to continue to grow as a Christian high school that honours God and enables young people.

Here is what's on the poster, followed by what it means to me:

### Smithville Christian High School: A place where students ...

#### *Belong*

**accept others and celebrate their uniqueness** - we will strive to bring diversity to the student body, we will teach and model acceptance, we will structure our classes so that uniqueness is embraced, we will employ strategies which allow different learning styles to thrive, and we will be intolerant of behaviours that limit acceptance.

**collaborate with other learners** - we will structure learning situations where success is dependent on meaningful collaboration.

**extend the gift of hospitality** - we will train students to receive guests in our school with bright engagement, and we will model this as teachers and staff on all occasions.

#### *Believe*

**yearn for wisdom** - we will strive to integrate Biblical perspective in all subject areas and require our students to articulate or demonstrate understanding of that perspective.

**learn Christian discipleship** - we will hold our students accountable to a high standard of conduct in school and at all school events, and we will employ restorative means for addressing contrary behaviours.

**worship meaningfully** - we will plan chapel and devotional experiences which give students much opportunity to lead and join in vibrant worship.

**discern the value of cultural trends** - we will train our students to have one foot in scripture and one foot in the world.

**demonstrate integrity** - we will teach and reinforce the value of speaking the truth in love and walking the talk.

#### *Succeed*

**greet learning opportunities with curiosity and awe** - we will structure learning activities which entice vibrant learning, and we will not tolerate lack of engagement in our learners.

**lead and follow with a servant's heart** - we will structure learning that engages the needs of the world and reinforce our instruction with meaningful opportunities to lead and to serve inside and outside the school.



**shape culture** - we will encourage learning which ignites passion and which yields quality products of lasting significance.

**plan for post-secondary success** - we will structure a program which allows for a diversity of paths, and we will provide a strong Guidance program which engages students in frequent conversation and exploration of post-secondary possibilities.

**seek God's calling** - we will seek to know all students well, to engage them in an exploration of their God-given talents and passions, and to mentor them in discerning God's calling in their lives.

It is my sincere hope that when parents and students look at this poster, they will remember that we are a Christian high school that takes very seriously what we set out to do in the lives of our students. When teachers look at it (hopefully often), I am certain they will be reminded of every

conversation we have had about the kind of school we intend to be and the kind of learning we intend to have happen here.

Next time you come in, have a good, close look at the poster. We welcome you to join the conversation about belonging, believing and succeeding; and we hope you are better equipped to share the story and the character of our school with others.



**FOUNDATION**  
for Niagara & Hamilton area Christian Schools

## Working smarter together: SMITHVILLE CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL FOUNDATION\* Pursuing merger talks

BY HENRY KOORNNEEF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our vision includes helping ensure the long-term financial sustainability of our school and helping ensure accessibility (the reduction of tuition barriers) for parents. Building on this, our vision is also fueling discussions with at least two other similarly-minded regional Christian school foundations in our province with a goal to formally amalgamate in the very near future. This is an exciting venture! We look forward to working collectively with other individuals from across the province who are also passionate about Christian education with the long view in mind.

This opportunity didn't just develop overnight; rather, it represents the culmination of many discussions over the course of several years with like-minded school supporters having a similar vision. Currently "under construction" is a coming together of foundations as equal partners, with a view to continue growing this movement as required and/or requested. It's about an opportunity to work smarter together, gaining further efficiency as a result. In an effort to be transparent about this development, we invite you to read the

detailed Case for Support at: [go.cardus.ca/movement](http://go.cardus.ca/movement) (a hard-copy booklet version is available upon request).

The Foundation Steering Committee (jointly formed and driven by the other two participating regional foundations and our own) is meeting regularly to develop a governance model and work through the logistics (including the stepped approval process) as required by this joint vision. We also covet your prayers as we work towards a formal launch in late 2013/early 2014, D.V. May God be glorified in all that we do.

Any questions, comments or suggestions are welcome and may be forwarded directly to our **Executive Director, Henry J. Koornneef** CFP, CPCA at (905) 957-8172, TF (877) 340-9555 or via **email**: [office@schoolfoundation.ca](mailto:office@schoolfoundation.ca) Planned giving and related information is also available **online** at: [www.schoolfoundation.ca/resources2.html](http://www.schoolfoundation.ca/resources2.html)

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