



ECHOES

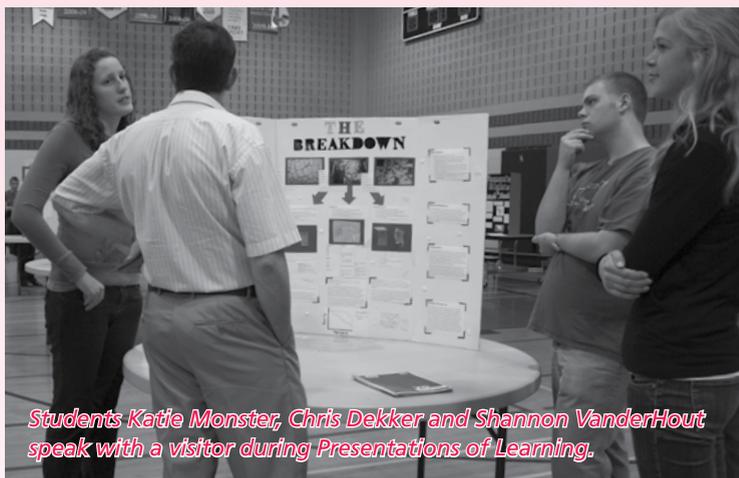
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Students Katie Monster, Chris Dekker and Shannon VanderHout speak with a visitor during Presentations of Learning.

Christian High School: A Fishbowl or a Launching Pad?

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

Christian high schools are occasionally criticised for being fish bowls: trying to keep our young people separated from a threatening world that could damage or destroy them.

While there are certainly things from which we clearly want to protect our young people, I prefer to look at the Christian high school

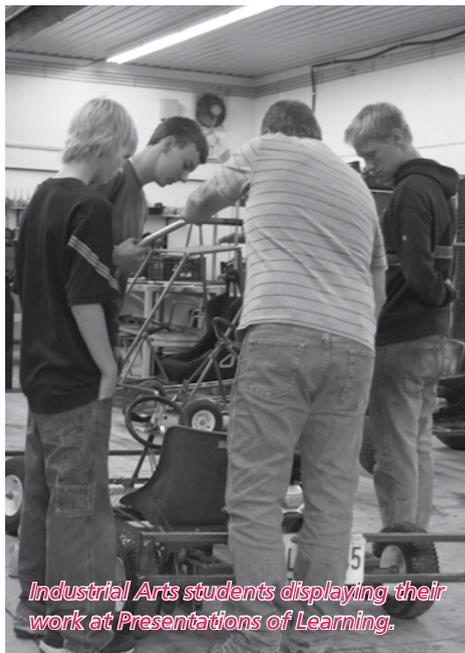
as a launching pad. When a rocket ship is made ready for take-off, there is much attention paid to keeping everything and everyone

safe, but there is also much attention paid to appropriate and timely propulsion.

There is no question that we take steps as a school to keep certain things out, but that does not mean that we lock out the world around us. Our students must learn to discern and to serve. That is why students at Smithville Christian spend much time reflecting and forming a Biblical perspective on all the challenges that confront the world. This is best done on the launching pad, where there is stability and nurture. But our education ought not to stop there; our students need to extend their learning beyond the school walls, beyond their familiar community, beyond the "pad."

Getting beyond the pad can mean going to another part of the world. In this issue you will see students learning in different places. However, we also want to make sure that our learning

Continued on page 2 ...



Industrial Arts students displaying their work at Presentations of Learning.



in school has extensions: opportunities to share and demonstrate our learning with others who can stretch it, and opportunities to serve in our learning.

There are many ways we help our students to launch. One thing you will be seeing more of at our school is evenings set aside to give our students an audience for their learning, to give them added dialogue about their learning, and to bless them with critique of what they produce. These evenings will be our Presentation of Learning (P.O.L.) evenings. Our first such event was held in June, and those who joined us saw an organized and extensive display of a great number of student projects. In most cases the students were there to

talk about their projects. What did our guests see? Film projects from Media class, 'Sciencepalooza' projects, product investigations from Business class, Prezi's from Computer class, special presentations from ESL students, Social Justice presentations from our grade 12 students and much more.

We have a lot of work to do as we improve how well we launch our young people in a new educational era. We invite you to stay in the conversation and to be part of a community that launches young people into lives of engagement in the world and bold service to their Creator.

SPRING DRIVE PASSES GOAL – AGAIN!

BY TED HARRIS,
ADMINISTRATOR

Thank you so much to all those who contributed to our Spring Drive this year.

The drive once again eclipsed our goal of \$130,000, a number we have passed four of the last five years. As an administrator, it is so exciting and amazing to be able to say to families who need help with tuition that it is there for them. We are in a better position to help families make this blessing a reality than we have ever been!

To those families who think a Christian high school education is not economically feasible, we want to tell you loud and clear that there is help available. Come and talk to us.

The drive once again eclipsed our goal of \$130,000.



Celebrating Diversity

BY LINDA BOOY-KORVEMAKER, HEAD OF STUDENT SERVICES



I am excited by this increasing diversity. I believe it is not only good for us, but it is what God calls us to be.



Some of us try to fit in and some of us try to cope by covering our uniqueness with “shoulds” and “how-tos” in order to be accepted. When we do this, we lose ourselves and we lose the beauty of what God intended us to be.

But if we are able to celebrate the diversity

Smithville Christian High School is not the same today as it was 25 years ago. When I first joined its staff, I was the only full-time female faculty member. Even though many elements of my ethnic and denominational background were the same as the staff and students at that time, there was an unspoken understanding of the right ways to think, talk and behave. If you wanted to fit in, you had to learn the code and follow it. You had to become “one of us.”

Today our school is more diverse. We have had the occasional international student for some time, but in the last three years that diversity has grown exponentially.

I am excited by this increasing diversity. I believe it is not only good for us, but it is what God calls us to be.

In my role as guidance counselor I have the privilege of getting to know many students personally. As I am invited into their struggles and dreams I have learned that no matter what we appear to have in common, we are all unique.

Unfortunately, sometimes that uniqueness is not celebrated and we can be hurt.

and the uniqueness of each student, teacher, and parent, there can be huge benefits. Perhaps our fear of judgment by others and the expectations of “how to be” will disappear. Perhaps it will be safe to share our differences. Then we will be free in Christ and free to share Christian education because we will be able to accept everyone.

One of my favourite passages is from Galatians 3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Continued on page 4 ...

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Becoming “one” does not mean becoming the same. But rather, “Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.” (1 Corinthians 12:12). This is the truth of God’s world and this is why celebrating diversity honours our creator.

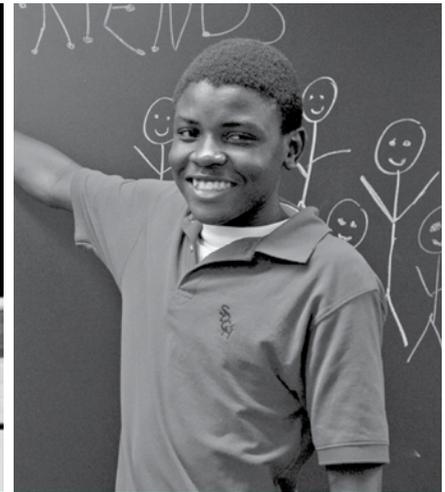
We often talk about “being the hands and feet of Jesus” here at Smithville Christian.

But if our school is a place that accepts only a certain type of student, teacher, or parent, then we have limited the access to Christian education. Perhaps we have even limited or blocked someone’s faith or access to the gospel. If we open our hearts and minds, if we open our classrooms and homes to the potential of this diversity we may see that God has put diversity in our path to grow our own faith. We may even be the instruments of God’s power to grow someone else’s faith.

This could be a revolution that makes believers out of nations, that creates a community that truly accepts and truly strives to have everyone belong, believe and succeed.

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12



WELCOME ORIFHA AND SHAUN

BY MARLENE BERGSMA,
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

Our school is blessed to have a number of international students from around the globe.

We have a number of students from China who come to Canada to improve their English language skills and to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma so they can apply to North American colleges and universities. Others come as part of a program known as Education First, which allows students to experience a Canadian school without the pressure of earning credits or a diploma.

Two of our newest international students come from South Africa, as guests of our South Africa team. Orifha Mudau and Shaun Baloyi are students at Theocentric Christian School in Limpopo, South Africa. Over the past decade, four teams of students from Smithville Christian have been warmly received by the staff and students of Theocentric, but now it’s our chance to welcome return visitors to Canada. Orifha and Shaun’s Canadian experience is made possible through the kindness of host families and through the fundraising efforts of our various South Africa teams. It is our prayer that their time here will be a blessing to them, and to the staff and students of both Smithville Christian and Theocentric Christian.

South Africa 2012

BY MARLENE BERGSMA,
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

On the next few pages, you will see images from the South Africa experience of 2012. A team of 15 Smithville Christian students and four adult chaperones spent 10 days over March Break at Theocentric Christian School in Limpopo, South Africa.

At a chapel in April, members of the South Africa team shared some of the experiences and highlights of the trip. They were awed by the distance they covered, by the wildlife they viewed, by the welcome they received from the Theocentric students, by the worship they experienced, by the stretching outside of their comfort zones they endured, by the growth they enjoyed, by the hugs they were given, by the testimonies they shared and by the spiritual growth with which they were blessed. We praise God for the opportunity to give and receive in this amazing way.

"This trip was an amazing experience and I thank God for giving me the opportunity to go. I hope that someday I will have the blessing of being able to go back to South Africa."

– TALLIA BEZEMER, GRADE 12

"It was awesome to be in a big room with 200 people belting out these worship songs."

– THOMAS VANDERLINDE

"We could be ourselves and talk about God so freely. God's presence was awesome."

– VERONICA SLAPPENDEL

"It was the best trip of my life.

I asked God to reveal what his will is for me, and I feel God pulling me towards being a missionary to another country."

–KURTIS DEVRIES

MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICA TEAM

David Aantjes
Tallia Bezemer
Katherine Buist
Emily DeHaan
Kurtis DeVries
Selena Elgersma
Jazmine Hogeveen
Josh Scholman
Idalene Shrimmer
Veronica Slappendel
Thomas Vanderlinde
Devon Van Hoffen
Matthew Veldman
Rachel Vermeer
Christina Vos

CHAPERONES

Wilma DeHaan
Cathy Park
Gord Park
John van den Boogaard



See the Smithville Christian High School blog at <http://smithvillechristian.blogspot.ca/2012/03/south-africa-2012.html> for another account of the experience written by students Tallia Bezemer and Devon Van Hoffen.



SOUTH 2012 AFRICA

*"It was our prayer that we would grow in faith and love for each other and for God. I am thankful and honoured to have been a part of that."
– Wilma DeHaan, Chaperone*





*"The people there were amazing.
We are all brothers and sisters in Christ."*

– Katherine Buist





What does the Spirit say to you?

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

If you had the good fortune to see this spring's production of "Spirit," you were part of the biggest audience our annual school play has ever drawn. It was also one of the biggest casts that has ever taken to the stage, and it was one of the most ambitious dramatic projects we've tackled.

In addition to featuring the work of a student technical director, Justin Van Hoffen, "Spirit" also featured one of the most powerful messages that can ever be communicated.

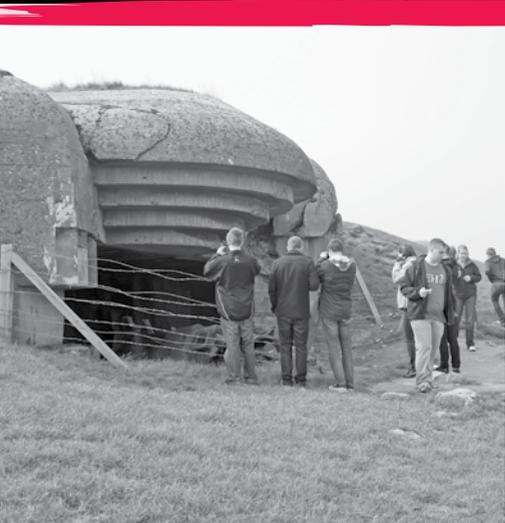
At a chapel in April, members of the cast and crew described some of the challenges they faced in mounting such a demanding project. But they also shared their certainty that God was using them to communicate a story with life-changing impact.

"I am acting something that is real," said Caleb DeBoer, who played the role of Stephen. "It's the story of how 3,000 people were saved and I have a chance to send that out to my community today."





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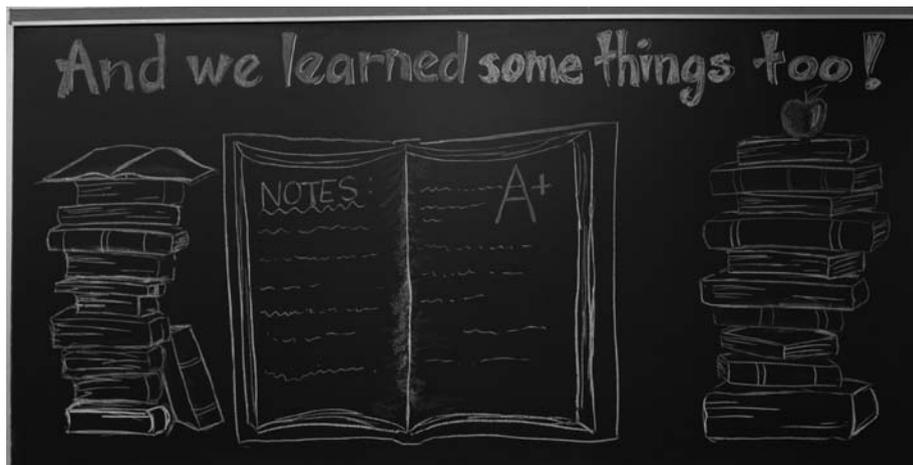


France
2012



Turning the tables: evaluating the evaluators

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS



At a high school, tests, assignments, exams, marks and evaluation are part of the regular learning experience. But what happens when the tables are turned and it's the teachers and other staff who are being evaluated?

That's what will be happening at Smithville Christian High School over the next year, as we participate in an evaluation exercise called Progressive Assessment Framework for Secondary Schools.

"The PAFSS process gives us lots of meaningful feedback about the effectiveness of all aspects of our operation," said principal Ted Harris. It will evaluate things like program, teachers, facilities, finances, governance, vision,

administration, and communications and admissions, he said. "It gives us impetus for change in the coming years, and it gives us direction toward our goal of instructional excellence in the context of 21st - century learning."

Christian high schools that are members of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools are evaluated on a six-year cycle, and the cost of the evaluation is included in OACS membership, Harris said. "Doing it gives us meaningful feedback on what

we are striving to do as a school, and the process prior to the evaluation visit gives us opportunity and holds us accountable for getting our house in order in many respects," Harris said.

"It won't cost us any money, but it will cost us much time, which is why we have scaled back our strategic planning process for this year," he said.

Former administrative assistant Nellie DeHaan has offered to return to school on a part-time volunteer basis to allow the current administrative assistant Lorraine VanderHeide to work on PAFSS preparation, he said.

This year's in-house approach to strategic planning "brings closure to good plans that have not yet been fully accomplished," Harris said. "We will also be making progress on some important initiatives that involve our stakeholders."

We want to solidify our relationship with the Christian Reformed Church, we will be doing a location study because we want to ensure that we are accessible to those who do not have their kids here yet, and we will be preparing for a major capital campaign because we want to position ourselves for the continued success in a facility that meets our needs.

Want to keep in touch? Check out what we've been up to!

YouTube (SmithvilleCHSchool) | **Twitter** (SmithvilleChrstn) | **Blog** (SmithvilleChristian.blogspot.com)
Facebook (Smithville Christian High School) | **www.sdch.on.ca**

Smithville Christian alumni are the best!

MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

How can we say this? One reason is because our school was tops in the province of Ontario in having graduates fill out the online Cardus Education Survey.

We had more graduates fill out the survey than any other Christian high school.

Why is this something to celebrate? For one thing, it shows that our alumni are connected and engaged. Of course, it's something we'd like to do more, but our ability to have nearly 100 graduates take the time to fill out the survey means we will be getting excellent feedback from the researchers on what our graduates think about their high school experiences.

So far the Cardus Education Survey has revealed that overall graduates of independent Christian schools in North

America are more likely to read the Bible, to be leaders in a church, to feel prepared for relationships and to want jobs that both fulfill their spiritual calling and are helpful to others.

Now, our graduates' responses will be analyzed and compared to those of students from other Christian schools, public schools, Catholic schools and private schools. Because we had such a high participation rate, our school will receive a customized report that provides detailed analysis of our alumni – a valuable tool for the future.

Our participation in the Cardus Education Survey will give us meaningful ways to measure and talk about our successes as an independent Christian school, said Tony Kamphuis, who serves as a liaison between the Cardus think-tank and Christian schools. It will also provide us with feedback on things we could improve, Kamphuis said.

The results will be released later this year.

So our thanks goes out to our alumni who participated in the survey. If you sent the school a follow-up email, your thank-you gifts are still coming.



Athletic Awards

Smithville Christian High School's annual athletics banquet, held in June, is an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments and successes of student athletes. This year's athletes of the year are Alanna Pot (senior girl), Matthew Veldman (senior boy), Morgan Schilstra (junior girl) and Mitch Harris (junior boy).

OTHER AWARD WINNERS ARE:

CROSS COUNTRY: Katherine Buist, Quintin Attema;

BASKETBALL: Morgan Schilstra, Nico DeBruyne, Alanna Pot, Nathan Snippe;

VOLLEYBALL: Morgan Schilstra, Mark Khoury, Jocelyn Klompmaker, Matthew Veldman;

SOCCER: Alanna Pot, John Kamphuis;

BADMINTON: Matthew Veldman, Aydan Schat, Lauren VanGeytenbeek, Travis Feddema;

TRACK AND FIELD: Simon Folkerts





Members of Smithville Christian High School's OFSAA old-medal winning soccer team.

From left: Ashley Buist, Alydia VanderKlippe, Morgan Schilstra, Crystal Elmers, Shannon Bezemer, Natalie Dykstra, Kirsten Klompmaker, Veronica Slappendel, Kristen Antonides, Sarah Duck, Alanna Pot, Tallia Bezemer, Emily DeHaan, Cassandra DeBoer, Micah Vermeer, Ariana VandenDool, Caitlyn Duck and Monika Couperus. Front row: Jocelyn Klompmaker.

Winning gold and winning respect

BY MARLENE BERGSMA,
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

It's fun when members of a school team win a game, it's great when they win a championship and it's awesome when they win provincial gold – as our girls' soccer team did at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations tournament in June.

But even better than the gold medal earned by the girls is the respect they earned both on and off the field. After their gold medal game, the referee came over to speak to coach David Wonder and to members of the team, telling them how impressed he was with the athletes' conduct.

A day later, he followed up with a message for principal Ted Harris.

This is what he had to say:

Hello Ted.

My name is Paul Dobson, and I had the honour of officiating the Gold Medal game at the recent OFSSA tournament in which Smithville Christian High School won the Gold medal.

I would like to take this time to share with you a few thoughts in hopes that

you will share these with the staff and students of your fine school.

During the tournament I officiated the semi final and Gold medal games both of which your Smithville girls played in. I was extremely pleased with and impressed by the way they presented themselves both on and off the field. During the pregame, the game, after each game and any time between games

You should all be extremely proud of each and every one of these young ladies as well as the coaching staff for both the accomplishments on the field and how they represented you and your school during their time in the Elgin/Portland area.

that I observed your team players, they were what I would call a true team. They were the most cordial winners I can recall seeing in any tournament (either school or club) in my 30 years as a referee. I truly enjoyed every minute of the games I officiated that they were involved in. They showed respect to the game, to the referees, their opponents and most importantly to themselves.

You should all be extremely proud of each and every one of these young ladies as well as the coaching staff for both the accomplishments on the field and how they represented you and your school during their time in the Elgin/Portland area.

I wish continued success to your school and especially to these fine young ladies in their pursuit of their goals in life.

*Respectfully Yours,
Paul Dobson*

*Referee and Vice President
of the Eastern Ontario District
Soccer Association*

Way to go girls! A gold medal is a moment or a few days of glory, but your conduct is a lifetime of being the kind of people God wants you to be. This is what really matters!

You've made us proud, and may God continue to use you as his ambassadors in all that you do.

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Looking forward to next year's sports season?

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You can sign up to get our tweets sent to your cell phone or mobile device, or just click on the Twitter icon on the school's homepage to read what's happening.

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a slow pace at first.*

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