



ECHOES

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A New Vision for Christian High School Education in Niagara

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

Working with Beacon towards an exciting future

The school year has ended but a new partnership is beginning. Beacon Christian Schools has closed its secondary school and has begun a formal partnership with Smithville Christian High School.

For over five years our schools have been talking about the possibility of working together to operate one high school; now it is a reality. Though many Beacon students will be coming to Smithville this fall, the partnership is not simply the case of a larger school taking in the students of a smaller school. It needs to be understood that we need each other, as both high schools have experienced enrolment decline due to challenging demographic trends and a settling feeder school base.

We are grateful that Beacon's board and administration have had the vision to endorse a transition for their students from Beacon to Smithville Christian. This endorsement will enable our student body to grow well beyond what we expected for the fall. Even though these students and their families come from an emotional situation, it is our hope and prayer that the transition will be a plus for students from both schools as we work with them to make their learning situation more vibrant and exciting.

It is important for supporters of both schools to understand that this is a partnership, involving investment from both organizations for mutual, long-term benefit. For Beacon's part, they have worked hard to advocate for our school as the natural choice for families to continue the education begun at Beacon. But it also important to realize that the Beacon community needs support in facing a change brought about in mid-June, leaving pressing questions about tuition, transportation and staffing. Here are the details regarding that support during the upcoming transition year:

We will be providing a bus at no expense to Beacon users for the first year.

We will provide a one-time bursary of \$4,000 for all families paying tuition at both Beacon and Smithville Christian High

Continued on page 2 ...

... continued from page 1

School next year. This figure allows Beacon families to carry forward with a tuition plan which is comparable to what they would have faced for next year. It needs to be noted that the Beacon transition bursary will be funded by increased efficiencies of additional students rather than by bursary funds previously gathered by our longstanding supporters.

We agreed that any additional staff appointments made as a result of the influx of students will be drawn from the pool of Beacon teachers being let go, so we are delighted to announce that Math teacher Karen Greenham and Science teacher Mary Anna Ouwehand have agreed to join Smithville Christian's staff.

All of these have been put in place to foster a long-term partnership with a community which shares the Smithville Christian passion for Christ-centred education, and which, I believe, will yield greater vibrancy and long-term educational health for Christian school students across Niagara.

These are the initial details. There is much more work to be done to make sure that our students and support communities gel as we work together to bless the next generation of Christian high school students, and as we work together to offer a gift to those new to Christian high school education in our area. May God bless us through and beyond the first year of this exciting new partnership.



The Student Council Executive of 2010-2011

From left: Daniel Vandersteen, Nygel Washington-Purser, Mrs. L. Booy-Korvemaker, Robyn DeKlerk, Honour Giesbrecht, Dorothy DeBoer and Tallia Bezemer.

Looking forward, looking back

BY ROBYN DEKLERK, STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT

How were we UNSTOPPABLE?

The 2010-2011 school year has come to a close and it is time to reflect on the past year and look forward to the next.

We want to welcome a number of students from the Beacon community into our community. To help you with your transition, this year's Student Council has recommended a transition plan that calls for a representative from the Beacon community to be elected into next year's Student Council Executive. This would mean that for one year our executive would have seven members. It is our hope and prayer that you all feel welcome and become very comfortable here at Smithville Christian.

Our theme, UNSTOPPABLE, has kept the staff and students motivated at Smithville Christian to make a difference in our community. Together we have raised over \$7,000 for organizations in our community through our Cash for Change program. We also put on a great community concert for our 30-Hour Famine for World Vision and also took time to fill boxes for Rose City Kids at Christmas time. Now, the challenge for our former, current, and new students is to continue to be UNSTOPPABLE. Continue to shine and to be Christ-like examples to everyone we meet!

Why are we UNSTOPPABLE?

Philippians 3:13,14 "...forgetting what is behind and straining to what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Transitions

BY LINDA BOOY-KORVEMAKER,
HEAD OF STUDENT SERVICES

Many of us resist change because it is challenging and we are comfortable where we are. But the reality is that most of us also experience a number of significant changes in our lifetimes. Some of these changes we look forward to: like graduation, marriage, the birth of a child ... but some changes we anticipate with fear of the unknown.

At Smithville Christian we are anticipating the arrival of a large group of students who will be making a change or a transition to our school in September. Students will be coming from various elementary schools to start high school in grade Nine, students will be coming from other countries, and students will be coming from other schools.

It is my hope that through a number of intentional strategies we can ease these transitions for all of these students. As head of student services and the staff advisor of Student Council I am committed to making the 2011-12 school year positive for all our students, new and old. I have some ideas of how to enable this, but I also challenge you to think of ways that we can build this new community at our school together: a community that doesn't just strive to include everyone, but a community that **does** include everyone. I guess it all boils down to empathy – how would I feel if I were in this person's shoes? If I was in a new school how would I want to be treated? So this challenge is not just for the new students and parents, but this challenge is for the current students and parents as well.

If we work at this together – being a community that represents Christ in education, service, athletics, and all other aspects of high school life – we will continue to be a place where students truly Belong, Believe and Succeed!

INTRODUCING THE SMITHVILLE CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL FOR 2011-2012



Tallia Bezemer



Morgan Schilstra



Veronica Slappendel



Isaac Stansfield



Devon VanHoffen

Plus, a Grade 9
representative, to be
elected in September

Plus, a Beacon
representative, to be
elected in September



NICARAGUA 2011

Being a student at Smithville Christian High School means you are learning to be the "salt and light" that Jesus calls us to be (Matthew 5: 13,14).

Sometimes this means being a Christ-like friend or daring to resist teenage temptation. For other students, it's taking what they learned in civics class and having a positive impact in their local community, or being a leader during Spiritual Emphasis Week. But for 16 students this year, being salt and light meant learning a new language, raising money, and spending six weeks in Nicaragua – worshipping with other Christians, making new friends, and putting their language and teaching skills to work as they became teachers in Nicaraguan schools.

Afterwards, the students were asked to reflect on what they experienced. Here are some excerpts from what they had to say.

"During my time in Nicaragua I have grown both spiritually and mentally."

"I can see God shining through each and every person that I met in Nicaragua. I also was able to see God in creation and its beauty. I could sense God in the rumbling of a volcano, in the sounds of the monkeys, and in the peacefulness of the

seas. He was all around us. I felt I was able to open up to him and truly feel like he was there. He was actually walking beside me on my walks up and down the beaches. This feeling and sense of safety was one that I have never felt before, and one that I will never forget."

"A highlight from the trip was the relationships we built; the relationships with each other and with the Nicaraguans."

"I find it kind of sad that we need all of these material items to feel blessed. In reality all we really need is the love of God"

"God seems bigger now that I have traveled and seen more of what he created. The time alone was great for me. I felt closer to God because I actually talked to Him and waited quietly for His reply."

"God seems so much more real to me now that I have had to trust him outside of the comfort of my home. I have a greater understanding of His greatness and love and protection over His children."

"Nicaraguan culture is rather carefree. The people care more about relationships

and family than about getting to places on time and keeping to a schedule."

"Creation reminded me, yet again, how big God really is, and how big God must be in my life."

"My relationship with God has grown dramatically. I am letting him in and he is showing me his glory through everything I see around me. Words cannot describe how thankful I am."

"I can make a difference. I now realize that the little things we do, both good and bad, make a big difference to others."

"I learned to let go of things that I have no control over and to place them in God's hands. I know that God has a plan for me."

"If I were to do anything different about this trip I would have made it longer."

"I am no longer scared to talk in front of people."

"It was a highlight of my high school career."

"I realized that I have more than I need. We live in a self-centred society: does being blessed really have to do with how much we have?"

"I learned that more is not always better."

"I learned that God puts people in your life so that you can learn from them, so that they can bless you and so you can

hopefully bless them."

"I am thankful for all the prayers and well-wishes we received."

"I hope we were as much a blessing in the Nicaraguans' lives as they were in ours."

"A highlight for me was teaching my grade 5 class. We had this class three times a week, so we really grew to love them."

"God really opened my eyes over the six weeks. He opened my eyes to a new culture, to the love others have for me, and He gave me a whole new perspective on life."

"We experienced such a different type of worship but it showed that though there are different cultures and customs, God is never changing."

"One thing I learned on this trip was to be content with what I have and to not always want more. Another thing I learned was to keep my eyes open to new things. So my only question is: When do we go back?"

LEFT: The Nicaragua team

Front row, from left: Melinda Bouwers, Kelsey Visser, Diana Slappendel, Bethany Stuive; **Second row:** Guide, Alanna Pot, Kaleb Antonides, Cassandra DeBoer, Mr. Giesbrecht; **Third row:** John Kamphuis, Shannon Vanderhout, Crystal Elmers, Jocelyn Klompemaker, Emily Monster, Julia Smit, Taryn Vermeer; **Back row:** James DeVisser, Marg Vandezande

Read more about Nicaragua on the 'Live it! Learn it!' blog at www.sdch.on.ca

Why you should Like Smithville Christian

 ... on Facebook

 and follow us on Twitter

 and subscribe to our channel on YouTube

 and follow our Blog.

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

With its website, its bi-weekly Forecast and bi-monthly Echoes, Smithville Christian works hard to keep its community connected and informed.

But it's time to do more. It's time to turn the communication into a conversation.

That's why Smithville Christian now has a YouTube channel (SmithvilleCHSchool), a Twitter account (SmthvllChrstn), a blog (SmithvilleChristian.blogspot.com) and a Facebook page (Smithville Christian High School).

But what do these social media have to do with teaching calculus to high school students, fielding a soccer team, or studying Shakespeare?

All of these online tools are effective ways to communicate and converse. With their different focuses, each one of these mediums can be used in different ways to tell our story, to build our brand

and to engage our community.

At a social media breakout session at the recent Christian Schools International Leadership Conference in Baltimore, MD, Tim Ellens, Director of Communications and Marketing at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI, said savvy organizations use these tools to share their values.

It's a way to communicate what we are doing "so that people will say 'I want to be a part of that,'" Ellens said, using Starbucks or FedEx as examples of companies who have successfully communicated their brands and turned their "customers into citizens."

The internet allows organizations to tell "values-driven stories," and allows them to communicate an organization's

culture to a wide audience, Ellens said.

For Smithville Christian High School, it's communicating that we are a place where students belong, where their faith is nurtured and challenged, and where caring, Christian teachers will do everything they can to make sure that students succeed.

Because these tools permit two-way conversation, they allow feedback and response from anyone who has something to say, Ellens said. Sometimes that will mean negative things are made visible for the whole world to see. But that's also an opportunity for an organization to be honest and authentic, to confront criticism and to continue to communicate its values, he said.

The more viewers, fans, members, followers and subscribers an organization has, the better its online presence. That's why it's important for Smithville Christian's students, staff, parents and supporters to all take advantage of the tools we have to create our online community. Let's show the world what our Christian community looks like!



Want to know how to use these tools to be in conversation with Smithville Christian High School? Contact Marlene Bergsma at mbergsma@sdch.on.ca.



Mr. Lammers and Grade 10 science students with some of the litter they picked up from the neighbourhood.

PUTTING FAITH INTO ACTION

BY MARLENE BERGSMA

Students at Smithville Christian aren't just talking about serving their community – they're doing it!



From left: Evelina Spyker, Victoria Traver, Samantha Sonneveld, Caleb Abraham and Alex Voortman pick up litter from a neighbour's hedge after a windstorm toppled garbage and recycling bins in Smithville.

When a big wind storm swept through Smithville on April 28, it was garbage day in our neighbourhood. As the wind knocked over trees and power lines and tore shingles from rooftops, it also played havoc with our neighbours' garbage and recycling bins – sending paper and cardboard whirling through the air.

The next morning, Mr. Will Lammers' Grade 10 science students sprang into action, taking the morning to serve our neighbours by picking up the garbage that had collected in parks and boulevards and along curbs, hedges and fences.

Many neighbours thanked the students for their act of service, and the Township of West Lincoln was also grateful, saying that township staff were kept busy in the days following the windstorm and wouldn't have been able to do what the students did.

Grandparents' and Friends' Day

A few snapshots from our annual Grandparents' and Friends' Day, held in March. We love hosting our visitors, especially because we know they love us!

*The 2012 edition will be held on March 23, 2012.
Mark your calendars!*





Grandparents' & Friends' Day



Giving teenagers the world

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

It might be tempting to think of a Christian school as a safe place to park your kids and protect them from the world. But at Smithville Christian, we are firmly committed to connecting with our community and engaging our culture. That's why it's wonderful to see students and graduates dive into experiences that expose them to God's world and to great learning opportunities.



For three Smithville Christian students, it wasn't enough to study the French language in the classroom, they wanted to live it.

Ian Attema, Chris Dekker and Kelly Harris are all spending five weeks this summer living and studying in Quebec.

Ian is at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Chris is at the Centre linguistique du Collège de Jonquière and Kelly is at Université de Montréal.

All three were encouraged to participate in the government-funded Explore immersion program by Smithville Christian High School's French teacher, Bob Andree, who said all three students

"A highlight for me was meeting all sorts of different people. There are people from every province and people from all sorts of different backgrounds and cultures. I would recommend this program to anyone who has a desire to learn French. It's free, and you have the potential to learn so much."

had a real aptitude for languages.

"It's a great way to hone their skills in a second language," said Andree, because the students live and study in a French-language environment.

Kelly, a graduate, who is heading to Calvin College in September, said she wants to be a French teacher herself,

and knew that it would help her gain a strong foundation in the language.

"It's an opportunity to make friends from all over Canada while being immersed in the French language," she said. I really wanted to improve my French skills before university and this was a fun way to experience the French culture while learning too."

Chris, who will be in Grade 12 in September, said he was looking for "a good experience to get to know new people and to improve my French skills."

Chris said he expected to gain a better ability to speak French and "a better understanding of Quebec culture." He also expects to capitalize on the experience afterwards.

"I am hoping this will make me a better candidate for universities, scholarships, and jobs," he said.

Ian, also a graduate, who will be heading to Queen's University's International Study Centre in England, said he gained a lot of skill in speaking and understanding French.

"Being in an environment where you only hear and speak French gives you the potential to improve so much," Ian said. "A highlight for me was meeting all

sorts of different people. There are people from every province and people from all sorts of different backgrounds and cultures. I would recommend this program to anyone who has a desire to learn French. It's free, and you have the potential to learn so much."

All three students are grateful for the experience, which gives Kelly and Ian an extra university credit and is almost completely funded by a bursary. They are responsible only for paying their travel costs and for spending money.

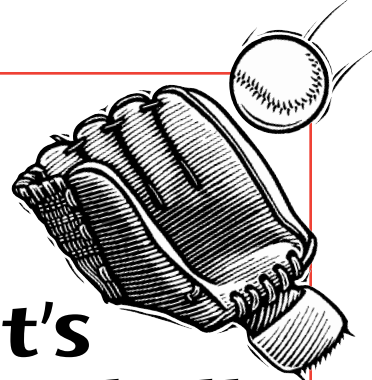
"Old Montreal or Vieux Montreal has been one of my favourite parts," said Kelly. "The buildings are beautiful and

some of the architecture just leaves you speechless.

Ian said he would recommend the program. "It seems like the five weeks went by so fast...in a good way that is. It is definitely worth it."

Kelly agrees.

"I feel like I am overusing the word 'opportunity,' but when I really think about it, this is an opportunity that is so completely useful in so many areas," she said. "Take this opportunity. Experience this opportunity. Use this opportunity. Become a part of this opportunity. Share this opportunity. Thank God for this opportunity."



Let's play ball!

Saturday August 20th

Registration: \$250

Smithville Christian High School is looking forward to hosting the school's annual baseball tournament. In order for this to be a success, we need your team there. Will your team be the one to win the trophy this year?

The date has been set for Saturday, August 20 (raindate, Sept. 17), the team registration fee is \$250, and the registration deadline is soon! Don't wait to register, we'd love to see you there!

For more information or to register your team, please call

Sherry DeRo

905-788-9930 or

Bonnie VanGeytenbeek

905-386-6483

SCHOOL FOOD IS GOOD FOR YOU!

BY MARLENE BERGSMA

The staff and students of Smithville Christian High School are blessed to have the services of their own in-house caterer. Alice Spyker prepares and serves delicious and nutritious fresh-made food two days a week. However Alice is also available to cater your event or function – especially if you're holding it at school.

If you are booking one of the school's rooms or activity areas for a function, consider hiring Alice to take care of your hospitality needs. You and your guests will be impressed!

As part of the school's ministry to our neighbourhood, we are pleased to be able to offer the use of our facility to many community events and groups. It's one way that we can welcome visitors into our building so they can get a sense of what we're all about. At this spring's West Lincoln Chamber of Commerce Home and Garden Show, one exhibitor – himself an educator – commented on the cleanliness and beauty of the facility and said he could tell there was something different about our school. Praise the Lord for this opportunity to have an impact.

Contact Alice at imaginecakes@live.ca



*Top: Peter Spyker bundles up to barbecue hamburgers for students' lunches;
Bottom: Alice Spyker with some students from the Food and Nutrition class.*



From Cow Country to a Castle

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

As graduates leave Smithville Christian High School to venture into the world of work or post-secondary education, there's no danger that coming from a town that is surrounded by cow pastures or that celebrates an annual festival dedicated to chickens is a hindrance. Consider as proof the two members of the Class of 2011 who have left cow country for a castle!

Ian Attema and Ryan Veldman are headed to Hailsham, East Sussex, England, enrolled in Queen's University's Arts and Sciences program at the Bader International Study Centre. Although they will live in a relatively modern building, all their classes and their cafeteria are located in Herstmonceax Castle, built in 1441. Having served as the private residence of Sir Roger Fiennes, Treasurer to the household of King Henry VI and as the Royal Greenwich Observatory, the centre was purchased and donated to Queen's University in 1993 by a successful Queen's alumnus, and now serves as the site of a prestigious international study centre, which features interactive and small group learning.

A big component of enrolment in the International Study Centre is the program's field studies, featuring travel to places such as Stonehenge, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, the site of the Battle of Hastings and France.

Both Ryan and Ian say they were drawn to the program by the chance to study in a castle, to travel and to experience life in another country. At \$32,000 per year, it's considerably more

expensive than Ontario post-secondary education, but they both benefited from scholarships.

In addition to top high school marks, Queen's was also looking for applicants who had been involved in extra-curricular activities while in high school, and there is an expectation that Ryan and Ian will continue to be involved in the extra-curricular activities of the community at Herstmonceaux.

Both want to be lawyers or politicians, they say, work that is strongly influenced by one's sense of integrity and ethics. Both want to live and work from a Christian perspective of right and wrong. In the practice of law and order, this orientation is important, particularly in serving those who are wrongly convicted, poor, or oppressed.



Partnering with our community

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
AND ADMISSIONS



When Mr. Neale Robb's Grade 10 Civics class made community safety a class project earlier this year, little did he know that the students' efforts would lead to another opportunity for Smithville Christian to form a partnership in the community.

Shortly after the students' January petition and presentation for a safe pedestrian walkway to the Leisureplex was referred to Township of West Lincoln staff for a report, the school was contacted by township staff, who asked if Smithville Christian would be willing to partner on a Healthy Communities Grant application to the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport.

Principal Ted Harris agreed, and, in May, the township learned that the grant application had been successful! Because of the support of community partners such as Smithville Christian High School and Preserve Publicly Owned Parks for People, the Township was awarded a \$42,000 grant by Health Promotion Minister Margaret Best. The

Civic engagement – especially from a Christian perspective – is a gift that our students can both give and receive. As a Christian school, it is an honour and a privilege to be able to participate in our community and to equip our students in this way.

township will use the money to hire a consultant to draft a Trails and Corridors Master Plan for Smithville, identifying safe ways to travel by walking or biking. The plan will eventually help township council set spending priorities and make Smithville a safer place to work, study and live.

"I congratulate the Township of West Lincoln for its contribution to health promotion," wrote Best in her letter to Mayor Doug Joyner. "By working together to foster a culture of health and well-being, we are laying an important foundation for healthy future generations."

As a result of the healthy communities partnership with the township, the school has also been invited to join the Active Transportation Network of Niagara, an invitation which we have

gladly accepted. Our membership means we will be able to provide valuable input to the network and that students will have first-hand exposure to how public policy is made and implemented. This will be useful to history, geography, phys ed and civics students, and to students who are interested in leadership, politics or law.

The example and the experience of our participation in these important community initiatives will also serve all Smithville Christian students in the future as they graduate and become contributing members of their communities. Civic engagement – especially from a Christian perspective – is a gift that our students can both give and receive. As a Christian school, it is an honour and a privilege to be able to participate in our community and to equip our students in this way.

Want to get involved? Check out what we've been up to!

YouTube (SmithvilleCHSchool) | **Twitter** (SmthvllChrstn) | **Blog** (SmithvilleChristian.blogspot.com)

Facebook (Smithville Christian High School) | **www.sdch.on.ca**

YOU CAN CHANGE THE WORLD!

Want to have the chance to shape the next generation of kingdom citizens? Want the privilege of setting direction for a world-changing institution? Want to serve God with interesting people with an exciting vision for the future?

Consider being part of the Smithville Christian High School board of directors. The board is currently accepting nominations for several upcoming vacancies and would love to hear from you. If you or someone you know would like to serve in this exciting and rewarding way, please contact board secretary Pauline Smit at pauline.smit@hotmail.com



FOUNDATION
for Niagara & Hamilton area Christian Schools

Big or Small, Long-Range Thinking = Long-Term Blessing

BY HENRY KOORNNEEF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SMITHVILLE CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL FOUNDATION

Despite the recent challenges faced by Beacon Christian Schools it is my privilege to share some good news with you. Earlier this year, a long-time Beacon supporter made a significant gift of appreciated securities* through that school's Foundation. The net proceeds from this transfer of securities are expected to total \$300,000 and have been designated by the donor to be held in a separate, named Donor Advised Fund. This means 100% of the annual earnings generated by this permanent fund will go to Beacon every year. For this donor, a direct in-kind transfer of these securities completely evaporated the significant capital gains liability. The donor will also be benefiting from a current \$300,000 donation receipt to further reduce income taxes this year and in future years. It's also a chance for this donor to "send some ahead" and witness the benefits during the donor's lifetime.

I'm not suggesting that only significant gifts are special and worthy of announcement. One of the founding objectives of our schools' Foundation is to promote planned giving. In fact,

many of the Christian school supporters who have included charitable bequests in their wills are of modest means. We all have the opportunity to leave a legacy for Christian education, each according to the means we've been blessed with. It also shows good stewardship to arrange a gift in the most tax-efficient way possible.

For more information on how you can bless Christian education in the future while reaping the tax benefits today, please do not hesitate to contact our Foundation.

Contact Executive Director,
Henry J. Koornneef CFP, CPCA
phone: (905) 957-8172
toll free: (877) 340-9555 or
email: office@schoolfoundation.ca

Please visit us online:
www.schoolfoundation.ca or on
facebook: www.facebook.com/FNHCS

*Eligible donations include (non-registered) securities such as shares, bonds, T-bill, warrants, and futures that are listed on a prescribed stock exchange. Most Segregated Funds and Mutual Fund units also qualify as appreciated securities.

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