



ECHOES

IN THIS ISSUE

- PAGE 1 LEARNING TO SEE GOD EVERYWHERE
- PAGE 4 CLASS OF 2014
- PAGE 6 CHALLENGED TO BE RADICALS
- PAGE 8 CAMPAIGN UPDATE
- PAGE 9 SOLAR PROJECT UPDATE
- PAGE 10 BRINGING TECHNOLOGY TO STUDENTS
- PAGE 11 DO YOU BELONG?
- PAGE 12 TRANSFORMING THE LIBRARY
- PAGE 13 BEING AGENTS OF TRANSFORMATION
- PAGE 14 GETTING READY FOR AN INVASION
- PAGE 16 WHAT ARE THEY SAYING ABOUT US?

AUG 2014

VOLUME 34, ISSUE V
6488 SMITHVILLE RD.
P.O. BOX 40,
SMITHVILLE, ON
L0R 2A0
PH. 905.957.3255
FAX 905.957.3431
smithvillechristian.ca

CONTACT:
MARLENE BERGSMAN
mbergsm@
smithvillechristian.ca

Learning to see God everywhere

BY DEVON VAN HOFFEN, CLASS OF 2012

In March 2012 I had the opportunity to go to South Africa with the Smithville Christian High School team. I had felt for a long time that God was calling me to do something in Africa, and when I was there in 2012, God really reassured me that that was what he was calling me to do. It was truly a life-changing experience.

In September 2013, I had the privilege of returning to Africa for a year. I am currently volunteering with an organization called Hands at Work in Africa. They work in eight different countries across the continent: South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Nigeria, Swaziland, Zambia, Malawi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Hands at Work is committed to reaching the poorest of the poor across Africa, as well as supporting churches

and local people in these communities to effectively care for those in need. I have had the privilege of walking alongside local volunteers, called care workers, in three of these countries. The care workers are local volunteers who have seen the need of their people and who have felt God's call to care for the poor in their communities. It's really amazing and humbling to see people who are poor themselves giving everything they



Continued on page 2 ...



have, even themselves to help other people.

I am currently living in Zambia. I have two main roles. One is general maintenance and construction at the growing community Hands at Work is building in Zambia -- a place where international volunteers and local African leaders live together. My other role is working with Mateo, a local Zambian, to assess and repair homes.

Mateo and I go into the community where we will be fixing homes and we talk to the care workers. We explain the community home repair program looks like and then the care workers identify homes that are in need of repairs. Next we go with the care workers to assess the homes. Then we make a plan and a budget, and buy all of the supplies needed.

Finally when an international short-term team arrives to partner with this community, the team, care workers, and Mateo and I repair the home together. It is a tough role because we visit so many homes that are in desperate situations and we cannot fix them all. As much as we would love to help everyone, we must prioritize the most vulnerable situations.

Being at Smithville Christian High school prepared me for where I am now. At Smithville Christian, I learned to see God in everything. It's not that I remember anyone actually saying that you can see God everywhere, but no matter what class I was in, everything would always lead back to God. Who would think you can see God in math? But I remember Mr. T (also known as John van den Boogaard)



A visit from brother Mitchell Van Hoffen

giving us a lesson on how you can. So if you take that into your everyday life, why can you not find God in everything that you are doing?

It comes down to being expectant of God. If you do not look for him you will not find him unless something super obvious happens. But the truth is, God is there — you just have to look. I think my many classes at Smithville Christian taught me how to look for God.

In Swaziland, I met a girl who was 16. She had just lost both

of her parents. She was taking care of two brothers and one sister, and her own daughter. She had no source of income, and had to walk four kilometers to get water every day. But she was smiling. She was smiling because she has hope in Jesus Christ. It is amazing even in that situation she could find God. You can find him, anywhere, in any situation.

After this year, I am hoping to come back to Hands at Work for a longer period of time. It has been an amazing experience and I think God has more plans for me here.



There are many stories on our website, and I would encourage you to read the stories there and pray for the people that you read about at www.handsatwork.org or find us on Facebook. There are many people that can use your prayers. Thank you for your support!



Graduating Class of 2014



Kristen Antonides



Jonathan Attema



Marissa Benjamin



Ryan Bootsma



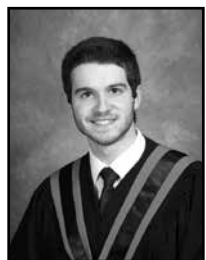
Samantha Bowman



Ashley Buist



Marcus Buist



Dacri Burdan



Monika Couperus



Caleb DeBoer



Nico DeBruyne



Jason DeHaan



Gregory DeKlerk



Andrea DeVries



Caitlyn Duck



Emma Dykstra



Mitchell Harris



Katie Horvath



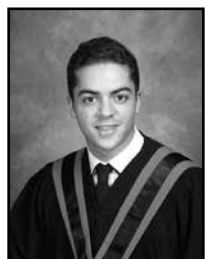
Brianne Huizinga



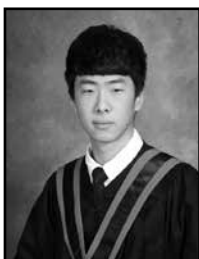
Monica Jackson



Aliona Kavelevich



Mark Khoury



Mingheng Li



Nick Li



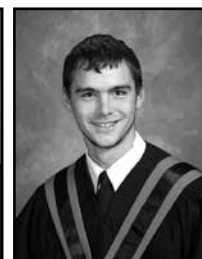
Devin Lunshof



Chantal Masselink



Matthew Muysson



Dean Oudman



Jordan Pols



Chantal Rauwerda



Morgan Schilstra



Jodi Scholman



Chandler Shi



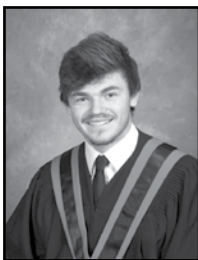
Matthew
Stephenson



Aaron Teeuwse



Nicole Thiessen



Owen Van Grieken



Jaco
van Rensburg



Adam
VandenDool



Benjamin
VanderHeide



Caleb VanderHeide



Rachel VanGeest



Lauren
VanGeytenbeek



Lucas Van Hoffen



Nicholas VanRyn



Sara Veenhof



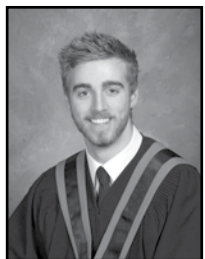
Nick Vermeer



Shaelyn Vlaar



Esther Zantingh



Joseph Zantingh



Vanessa Zhang



Patrick Ziong

Congratulations Graduates!
God Bless You

Challenged to be radicals

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

Students of the Class of 2014 are God's poetry, said graduation speaker Heidi Kooiman VanderKwaak, and their purpose is to point back to the magnificence of the poet.

Kooiman VanderKwaak (Class of 1998) told the graduates and their guests about the sense of optimism she felt when she graduated from Smithville Christian High School. But she also described the next decade of coming face-to-face with the brokenness of the world.

A learning tour to South Africa exposed her to injustice, colonialism and the devastation wreaked by HIV/AIDS. She was a welfare case worker and saw the effects of poverty, homelessness, addiction, mental illness, abuse, broken relationships and crime. She studied in the Middle East and was exposed to other religions and worldviews, and was challenged to speak boldly about her own faith. She saw the devastating effects of consumerism and human exploitation of the planet's limited resources and decided to spend a year with her husband and children cycling across North America "with no ability to consume or purchase."

Kooiman VanderKwaak's experiences and life lessons "brought me to my knees in humility," she told the graduates. "I saw Jesus in places I never imagined, and, when I went back and re-read the gospel, I realized he was there all along, getting his hands dirty and living

a radically different life than the people in his culture."

Jesus' interactions with prostitutes, lepers, tax collectors and the impoverished "opened my eyes to the purpose of my life, why God wrote my poem, my life, the masterpiece God created me to be," Kooiman Vanderkwaak said.

As she immersed herself in God's word and in Christian community, Kooiman VanderKwaak "realized the power of the Gospel" and wanted to "be a part of bringing God's kingdom here on earth."

"My life, my gifts, my poem, needed to point back to the Poet and not to me," she said. "Through my actions, my words, my generosity and my friendship, others could be touched by the Poet too."

Kooiman VanderKwaak challenged the Smithville Christian High School graduates to be radicals.



"Use your gifts in ways that are radically generous and counter-cultural, like Jesus," she said. Live so that "the only answer as to why you are so kind, so generous and so humble is because of your Maker, your Poet.

"Your actions, your deeds, your choices, your career, your speech, your generosity: let your light shine through all these things so you glorify your Creator who gave these good works to you," she said, paraphrasing the Class of 2014's scripture verse from Ephesians 2:10.

Kooiman VanderKwaak said none of us has successfully graduated from this task, none of us has got it all figured out or has arrived at the destination.

But in our work, in our interactions with others, and in our exploration of the beauty and brokenness in the world, we will always need to come back to the question: "Are you using your gifts, are you living a life, that points back to your Creator?"

"Is your poem an illustration of the Poet who crafted you?"

THEME VERSE CHOSEN BY THE CLASS OF 2014

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

"Handiwork" from the Greek, Poiema, which gives us the English word Poem



In memory of their former classmate, Michael VandenDool (1996-2008), grads of the Class of 2014 carried orange flowers into the ceremony and placed them in vases on the stage. To see more photos of grad, visit the school's Facebook page.



Graduates awaiting the processional



Valedictorians Nico DeBruyne and Katie Horvath.

MEMORIES OF SMITHVILLE CHRISTIAN

"So many pivotal memories were formed for me in the walls of Smithville Christian High School. Smithville was a safe place, where teachers genuinely cared about my life, my goals, my aspirations. It was a place where I tried new things and discovered the inkling of the gifts I had and the weaknesses I would need to work to overcome. I left the walls of Smithville Christian with an optimism that could not be matched — I was confident, hopeful, and felt ready for whatever came my way."

- HEIDI KOOIMAN VANDERKWAAK

In Motion Campaign – preparing for the final phase

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

Capital campaigns are intense learning experiences. Though this campaign has been a busy time for a lot of people, myself included, it is a joy to witness the wonderful commitment that so many people have for Christian education.

I have had several visits where I have asked for a significant financial commitment and have received substantially more than requested. I just finished connecting with a family who were processing their mother's estate and were keen to see the amount bequeathed to the school given to the campaign. They felt sure that she would have wanted this. I have also been motivated by the enthusiasm of volunteers to accomplish the visits. I think that my character is developed as I witness the kingdom-focused character of others. Even though I am glad that campaigns come and go in their seasons, I praise God for the experiences.

Summertime certainly slows things down, but the campaign is, nevertheless, still "in motion." As the calendar moves through August, visits continue and plans are well underway for the closing stretch of the campaign, scheduled for September to December 2014. At our graduation in June we announced our progress to date. It had been our goal to raise 60% of our goal by that time but we are grateful to God that we were well beyond that mark. Over the next few months we intend to keep everyone posted on our progress toward and beyond our goal.

CAMPAIGN STATUS AS OF AUG 1

Current total: **\$1,244,187** from **102** gifts

Visits assigned and in progress: **110**

Visits yet to be assigned but being planned for: **105**

Supporters to be contacted during late autumn phone campaign: **478**

Volunteers working on the campaign, including cabinet members and canvassers: **35**

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT THE IN MOTION CAMPAIGN?

- Pray for those conducting visits and those being visited in the coming weeks
- Offer to be a canvasser for the purpose of doing 5-10 visits
- Call us if you have not been visited and would like the opportunity to be involved
- Plan to attend our community campaign kick-off on September 9

In Motion
CAMPAIGN

COMMUNITY KICK-OFF

**SEPTEMBER 9, 2014
7:30 P.M.**

**SMITHVILLE CHRISTIAN
HIGH SCHOOL**

Come join us to:

- **CELEBRATE** God's goodness to our school in our In Motion campaign
- **DEDICATE** the final phase of the campaign in a time of prayer and praise
- **ENJOY** a time of refreshments and fellowship at the start of the school year
- **ENJOY** a roof-top tour of our completed and operational solar project.



Solar project nearing completion

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINSTRATOR

This summer we have had the privilege of watching our Solar FIT (Feed-In Tariff) contract come to fruition as the project has entered the construction phase. By June the paperwork was completed, the plans drawn up, the financing secured, the roof resurfaced, and the gas lines rerouted. Now the brackets have been put in place, the panels installed and the inverters connected.

Lord willing, by early September our solar project will be fully operational. We have been blessed with a wonderful opportunity to introduce a new revenue stream which will help us to pursue excellence in our program and to bless our students.

We intend to keep our membership informed about the project and its impact, including a monitoring system with a display in our foyer. Let's start that effort with a look at our solar project by the Numbers:

996 – The number of solar panels on the roofs of our school and on the back wall of the gym

15 – The number of inverters installed on our roof (which change direct currents into alternating currents prior to input into the energy grid)

\$759,000 – The total bill for the project (not including reroofing costs)

\$1,000,000 – The maximum amount to be financed for the project (including reroofing costs)

71.3 cents - The contracted amount of money we will earn per kWh generated by our project

20 – number of years in our contract for the above rate

25-35 – the life expectancy range in years for each solar panel

150 – the size of our solar project in kilowatts AC (though the yield is expected to be considerably higher)

7 – the number of degrees of southward tilt of each panel on the flat roof

\$156,971 – the estimated annual gross income of our project

September 1, 2014 – date by which we hope to connect to the grid



Bringing technology to the students

BY ROBERT GERRYTS, TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR

Summer has always been a time of exciting change in the area of technology at Smithville Christian High School, and this summer has been no exception.

So far, upgrades have been made to our wireless network, our internet connection speed has been increased, computers have been added to our new ESL room, and the computers in the Resource room have been replaced.

But probably the most exciting change comes in the form of our new mobile computer lab; a complete class set of 30 laptops in their very own charging cart.

This lab will reverse the normal pattern of technology use; instead of classes going to the

computer lab, they will now have the option of having the computer lab come to them.

Planning for this change started in the fall of 2013. As the computer committee began its planning for the next school year the members were aware that our Room 105 computer lab was up for replacement. Questions were raised about whether now was the time to move away from traditional desktops towards a more mobile solution. The costs had come down, and the wireless infrastructure of the school had been improved and could now support a mobile solution. After some discussion, a decision was made to get feedback from the teaching staff before a plan was finalized for the following year.

The staff then spent some time at a professional development meeting defining what mobile

learning would look like at Smithville Christian High. Split into four groups, they were asked to dream about technology, connect that dream with learning, connect that dream with the realities of their software needs, and then decide on a mobile solution that would allow students to use technology effectively for learning.

Four distinct options came forward:

- 1) require students to purchase their own laptops,
- 2) buy a set of Chromebooks (a less costly laptop useful for Google docs),
- 3) buy a school set of iPads, or
- 4) purchase a class set of laptops.

The computer committee settled on option four: buying a mobile cart with 30 laptops. This option best provided a new way of learning, while at the same time allowing all of our existing educational software to run.

These laptops, outfitted to be identical to our two permanent labs, will allow teachers to bring technological learning closer to the students, in the comfort of their own classrooms, and to explore learning in new ways.

Students: be prepared to take your learning to new heights!

Advantages of a Mobile Lab:

- Students can now use technology in the comfort of their own classrooms. Individual learning activities such as creative writing and language learning can now be done in a more constructive environment.
- A class can sign out only the number of computers needed. With our permanent labs, whether a class needed 20 or 30 computers they would still use the entire classroom. A mobile lab will allow a class to sign out 20 computers and leave 10 computers for another class to use.
- Allows for a better flow of learning, i.e. a class can do regular class work using all their normal classroom resources, switch to a computer-based activity, and seamlessly switch back to regular work.
- Allows for whole class projects to become more dynamic in the planning stages as students use tools like Google Docs to collaborate.
- Frees up a classroom for other uses.

The Tech Details:

Number of Computers: **30**
Processor: **Core i3**
Cost per Unit: **\$599**
Memory: **4 Gigabytes**
OS: **Windows 7 Professional**
Storage: **MobiLab charging cart**
Expected Battery Life: **4.5 hours**
Charge Time: **80% in 1 hour,**
Fully charged in 2 hours

Do you belong?

Actions and feelings

BY LINDA BOOY-KORVEMAKER, HEAD OF STUDENT SERVICES

As the summer stretches towards September, students are thinking about the idea of belonging at our school. It's something that guidance counselors also think about, and, let's face it, it's important to all school stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, administrators, support staff and the board.

I often reflect on the word "belong" in our mission statement, *Belong. Believe. Succeed.* It is my hope that all students at our school BELONG – but the question is do they? How can we ensure that someone "belongs" in any community?

The idea of community is beautiful and valuable, but it is not something we can merely talk about – it is something we must create. If our words say "belong" but our actions say something else – then there is a problem. It is very important that our words and actions match.

"Belonging" is also a feeling. It's a word we use in our mission statement when we promote our school and describe what makes

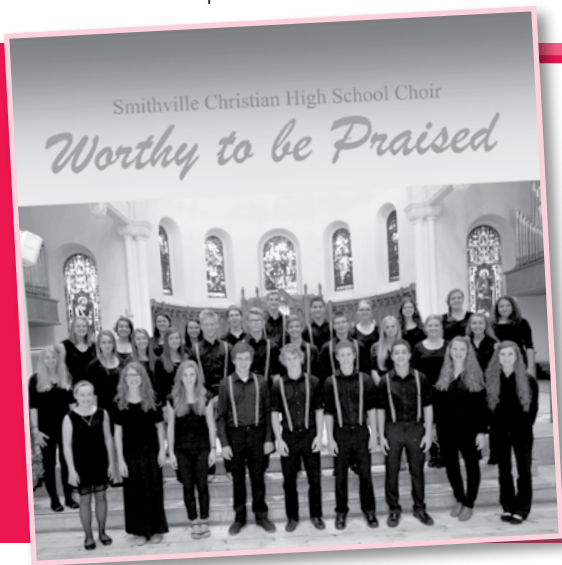
us different from other schools. But for every student and staff member walking the halls of Smithville Christian High School, belonging is also a feeling, and we can't control peoples' feelings. If a person says "I feel like..." we cannot argue that they do not feel that way – that is their feeling and it comes from their experiences.

We can also make the mistake of assuming things rather than really knowing. We can assume that people feel like they belong, but it won't be true simply because we say it is so. Perhaps you even know someone who would like to belong at our school.

Finally, if feelings come from experiences, how can we ensure that every student and staff member feels like they belong at Smithville Christian High School? This is a challenge for me as a guidance counselor and perhaps it is a challenge for you as well. I know that I cannot guarantee that feeling, but we can put our words into actions. How? By being Christ-followers.

If we claim the name Christian we must read the New Testament to learn about the life of Christ and how he lived. And the fact is Jesus Christ included everyone. There were no limits to his love: he included tax collectors, prostitutes, lepers, women and men, adults and children, locals and foreigners, wealthy and poor.

If we all do our part in following Christ's example – from our conversations and actions in the hallways to those in classrooms, from the students to the staff and parents, from the nationals to the internationals – perhaps the word belong will continue to be an action that is felt by everyone at Smithville Christian High School.



Worthy to Be Praised

SMITHVILLE CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR CD

A limited number of copies of the Smithville Christian High School choir CD are still available. This is an excellent recording of an excellent choir. Recorded in the acoustically dynamic St. Thomas Anglican Church in St. Catharines by a professional recording engineer, this album is sure to inspire.

To hear a sample track from the disc, visit the school's YouTube channel from the school website at www.smithvillechristian.ca. To order your copy, contact the school office at (905) 957-3255 or office@smithvillechristian.ca

Transforming the library mezzanine

BY LINDA BOOY-KORVEMAKER, STUDENT COUNCIL STAFF SPONSOR

Each year, members of student council executive go on a retreat – the elected members and their staff sponsor. The purpose of the retreat is for the student leaders to plan the year and focus on their vision.

Some of the year's events are planned and a calendar is created, a budget is set (based on requests from all the sponsors of extra-curricular athletics and activities) and a theme is selected that drives the events and activities of the entire year.

For 2013-2014, student council chose the theme “transformers” based on Romans 12:1-2. This theme drove their decisions and devotions as a group as well as how they managed the annual budget.

One of the items on the retreat agenda was dealing with a surplus of student council funds. A surplus is something that builds over the years when various extra-curricular activities do not use their full budgets. In the past, student council has used this surplus to help fund some big school projects that benefit students such as a new gym floor or the creation of the fitness centre, known as the Pumpatorium.

This year, student council was dealing with a surplus that had become quite significant. The student leaders had a vision to create something for all students to enjoy – merging their theme and fiscal responsibility to the student body.

Student council created a proposal and presented it to vice-principal, Fred Breukelman, who is in charge of the facility. He liked the proposal and offered to have the school partner with the student council to make it happen.

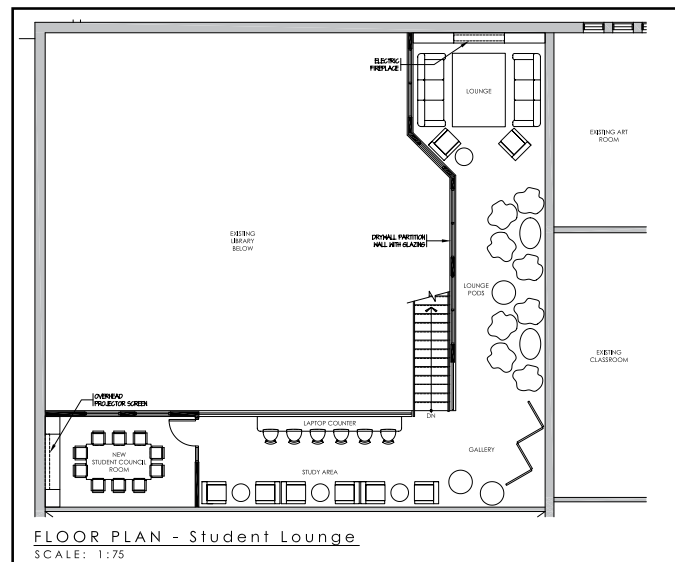
That's why the library mezzanine is currently being transformed into a new student lounge – a place for students, built by students!

Ron Eyk, of Oak Construction, has been working all summer to make a comfortable and functional student space in one of the brightest and most popular rooms in the school. It will be a place for students to work, meet or relax. Members of student council executive are shopping for furniture and the plan is to have everything ready to greet new and returning students on September 2!

Prepare for the effects of transformation!



Ron Eyk of Oak Construction installs glass panels in the mezzanine.



ROMANS 12: 2

“THEREFORE, I URGE YOU, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, TO GOD—THIS IS YOUR TRUE AND PROPER WORSHIP OF YOUR MIND. THEN YOU WILL BE ABLE TO TEST A

Being agents of transformation

BY SAMANTHA BOWMAN,
2013-2014 STUDENT
COUNCIL PRESIDENT



Romans 12:2 was our student council theme verse this year. We chose this verse at our annual retreat in September: we wanted something meaningful and something we could remember even after this year is over.

As students, we want to be transformers. We want to set ourselves apart from the crowd and live for Christ! This is difficult, but it's what God calls us to do. This world is going to tempt us to do things that we know are wrong, but we need to fight that temptation and stand strong in who God has made us.

People can think of teenagers or high school students with a negative stereotype. As student leaders, we want to help students conquer this negative image. This is difficult to do at times, especially in this technology and media saturated world. Many of us have felt out of place at some point in our lives. We have felt like the odd one out; the misfit. We try our hardest to fit in, whether this is by going against our morals, or pretending to be something we aren't.

But this verse reminds us that we don't need to struggle to go with the flow. If we let Him, God will enter our hearts and transform us. He has created us in His image, therefore we should be confident in who we are!

Yet, this is easier said than done. My prayer is that every student of Smithville Christian remembers that we all have insecurities, but God looks at our hearts and loves us unconditionally. Many of us have and will go through dark times, but if we cling to God's promises and trust Him to carry us, He will give us peace that surpasses understanding. Sometimes we will struggle with letting go and letting God. I know I do! I like feeling like I am in control. God humbles me and shows me that without Him, I am nothing. He is with us everywhere and always. Even if we feel completely alone and in the dark, Christ's light is shining on us. He will transform us and lead us out of the valley. When that happens, then we can help others by shining Christ's light through us. We want to show Christ's love to everyone around us, even as teenagers!

Introducing Student Council 2014-2015

Joseph Falzone

Danielle Veldman

Alex Boekestyn

Sophia Bradbury

Sean DeBoer

Sydney Vermeer

Plus one Grade 9 student to be
elected in September.

IN VIEW OF GOD'S MERCY, TO OFFER YOUR BODIES AS A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY AND PLEASING. DO NOT CONFORM TO THE PATTERN OF THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING AND APPROVE WHAT GOD'S WILL IS—HIS GOOD, PLEASING AND PERFECT WILL."



Getting ready for an invasion

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
AND ADMISSIONS

Normally August is the time of year when Smithville Christian High School is getting ready for a September invasion of students, but this year we're expecting an invasion of a whole different kind.

Canada's Department of National Defence is using our school as part of a major training exercise, known as Exercise Stalwart Guardian 14.

Three armoured reconnaissance squadrons will be using our campus as their base for close to two weeks, as hundreds of Canadian soldiers and army reservists are deployed across Niagara on various training exercises, said vice-principal Fred Breukelman.

The soldiers will be coming to Niagara from all across the province, said Captain Michael O'Leary, acting public affairs officer for 31 Canadian Brigade Group Headquarters, in London. Usually, these training exercises are held on Canadian military bases, but holding the exercise off-base allows the DND to simulate real combat situations, where soldiers are having to move among

and interact with civilians, he said.

The purpose is to make sure Canada's soldiers are ready for on-the-ground combat, he said.

During the exercises, soldiers will be engaged in mock combat at various locations across Niagara. Those locations are being kept secret until the actual missions, but will include various private properties, industrial sites and municipal sites. Rifle-fire will be heard, but all weapons will be firing blanks, he said.

"This will be new terrain for us, adding complexity," he said. When training on base "it's easy to forget how complex an environment it is, where other people are living and working and moving about."

Although the training exercises will be happening across Niagara, "the most

important stuff" will be happening at Smithville Christian High School, O'Leary said. "This is the command force, in the tents, monitoring and talking to the deployed forces."

Visitors are welcome to drop in to the school, where they can see the armoured vehicles and tents that will form the army base, O'Leary said. Visitors should avoid periods when soldiers are busy, he advised. "Evenings will be quieter in general and caution should be used around any military vehicle.

"All of the soldiers are instructed to be nice to the civilians, to speak to them to let them see what you are doing," O'Leary said. "They will be open to answering questions."

TIMELINE

- Aug. 13 or 14 Advance party arrives at school
- Aug. 16 Main body of troops arrives
- Aug. 20 or 21 Training exercises conclude

WHAT YOU'LL FIND:

- 15 Coyote Armoured Vehicles
- 5 Armoured LAV III Vehicles
- 45 G-Wagons
- Tents
- 30 to 40 people living in tents at school
- 1,600 to 2,100 soldiers deployed across Niagara, 90% will be reservists
- 17-50 age-range of army personnel
- Smithville Christian High School as base of operations for the armoured reconnaissance unit

What are they saying about us?

MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

When students are singing and laughing in the hallways and succeeding at their work, it's easy for an insider to see that Smithville Christian High School is a great place for teenagers. But what do other people notice about this school?

The Piano Tuner (as told by principal Ted Harris):

I had a visit from our piano tuner this morning. After he had finished his tinkering, he came and talked to me about the incredible difference he sees in our students compared to students from other schools. He says that our students look good, they are welcoming and warm, and they are ready to help at a moment's notice. (From a January 2014 internal memo to staff)

The Air Canada Centre usher (as told by Mr. Harris):

Mr. Bender and I enjoyed taking a crowd of students and supporters from our school to a Blue Jays game (in June). As we entered the stadium, a rather serious usher pulled me aside and reviewed a long list of expectations for our students. I assured him that he would find our students exceptional and that if he didn't he could talk to me. Soon after, he was so relaxed that he was leading our group in

starting the wave for the whole Rogers Centre. Thanks, students, for always representing our school so well! (From the June 3 Forecast)

The European Traveller (as told by French teacher, Bob Andree)

We were on our way to Europe in March with about 20 students and we were waiting in the Pearson airport departure lounge. There was another passenger staring at us. She was watching us and staring and staring, so finally I sat down beside her and she asked "Who are you?" I explained that we were a group of students from a Christian school travelling to France and she said she had never seen a group of students so well-behaved, being so genuine and having so much fun. "They've all got smiles on their faces, and they are so genuinely having fun with each other and interacting with each other," she said. "You have a very unique group of people here."

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Agent

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