



ECHOES

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We're heading to California

BY TED HARRIS,
ADMINISTRATOR

Say what? You're sending six staff members to San Diego ?! In January?!?! When the rest of us are in the cold and snow ??!?!?

Yes, we are sending six staff members to San Diego at the end of January. Actually, the group is larger than six; the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) will be sending over twenty high school teachers and



High Tech High in San Diego, California

administrators to High Tech High in San Diego, California. Though it is nice and warm there at that time of year, there will be no opportunity for walking barefoot on the beach. The team will be participating in the High Tech High Residency Program, a program which gives guests the opportunity to thoroughly investigate what is going on at this model high school.

So what is interesting about High Tech High (HTH)?

HTH is a public school which admits students by lot from its catchment area. It does not have streams for learning (like our Academic/Applied or University/College), its students learn primarily through a project-based approach, it has very high academic success rates without

Continued on page 2 ...



The UN Classroom at HTH

having academic strength as an admissions criterion, and its teacher training programs attract teachers (like ours) from around the world.

Our goal for this visit will be to add fuel to a conversation happening among teachers at our school and through OACS high schools. We want to deliver Christian education that gives students authentic, world-engaging learning opportunities. 21st century learners are called to learn so much more than “stuff”; they need to learn how to find information, how to engage, how to work with a team, how to present information to different audiences, and how to use technology to gather and share information. They also need to learn how to serve their communities, how to shine the light of Christ in a world veiled in darkness.

Teachers are currently confronted with a pressing need to learn. I am certain that there was never a time when there was so much to sift through, to read up on, to research and to talk about. There are new technologies, responses to brain research, teaching methodologies, and staff growth protocols. In addition to the implementation of weekly staff Research and Development sessions, we have established a pursuit of excellence fund. This fund has already been used to purchase new technology and equipment for use in the classroom and to allow training and even travel for teachers who are eager to master new instructional approaches.

So when will you get a chance to see how education is changing? For starters, stay tuned to our web site and our blog. In addition, there will



The Great Room at HTH in San Diego, California

be opportunities for all supporters of our school to enjoy our Presentations of Learning, which will happen at least once per semester. The Presentation of Learning evening for the current semester will be Tuesday evening, January 15, 2013. Please put this date on your calendar; we would love to draw you into conversations about learning with our students and teachers that evening.

This is an exciting time to serve in the area of Christian education. Some aspects of our work do not change much; others are in such upheaval that we strain to see around the curve. We train young people for jobs that don't even exist yet. We build the bridge while we walk on it. Yet we move ahead in faith and in service to an unchanging God whose kingdom has been firmly established but is not yet complete. Engaging and developing culture for the sake of Christ will be exciting work in the 21st century.

See More Evidence of Project-Based Learning

on pages 4 and 5, and on pages 6 and 7

Come and see what God has done, his awesome deeds for all humankind!

PSALM 66:5

**AUTHENTIC. INTERACTIVE.
DYNAMIC.**

**Everyone is invited to our first
semester Open House and
Presentations of Learning**

When Is It? Tuesday, January 15, 7:00-
9:30 p.m.

Continued on page 3 ...



Grade 11 English students Chantal Masselink, left, and Samantha Bowman, right, describe their class newspaper project to guests at a recent school membership meeting. The class wrote, edited and designed an online newspaper — an example of project-based learning. The newspaper can be read by clicking on the link from the school's website homepage www.smithvillechristian.ca

Why Are We Doing It?

- To draw new parents and students into conversation about Christian high school education
- To give our students a chance to share and talk about their learning
- To make the learning of our students more authentic
- To enable many guests to know more about what's happening at our school

How Will It Be Structured?

- 7:00 browse art displays and enjoy delicious food prepared by our school caterer, Mrs. Spyker.
- 7:30 worship and reflection. Choir presentation.
- 8:00 visit either a 30-minute program for prospective students and parents, or the presentations of learning on display at various locations.
- 8:30 and 9:00, more presentations, scheduled by subject discipline, in various locations.

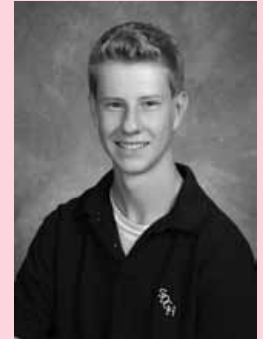
Will It Work to Do All of This in One Night?

We sincerely hope so, but our heart is telling us that we have to try it. We are working hard to make sure any visit you make to our school will give you reason to celebrate Christian education. This will be your next opportunity. It will give you a sense of how learning is shifting in the direction of a project orientation, how new programs are flourishing, and how new technologies are being employed in student learning. Come and join the discussion about learning; your presence will make the experience of our students better.

A Student's Prayer

BY BEN VANDERHEIDE

When students from neighbouring elementary schools visited Smithville Christian High School for a recent Grade 8 Day, members of student council helped host the event, including offering personal testimonies of life at Smithville Christian and leading in morning devotions. Here is the prayer offered by student Ben VanderHeide.



Dear God,

You are all-powerful; you created the world and everything is in your hands.

We admit that we are not perfect. We fail to meet your standards every day, and every day you forgive us for our shortcomings and give us another chance.

Thank you that everyone could make it here safely this morning. Thank you for the praise team and their musical abilities, and thank you for the opportunity to worship you without being worried about persecution.

Please be with the Grade 8s today as they visit this school and its programs. Please help them make the right choices and explore their options in this school and for their future. Please let us guide these students and show them what it is to be an agent of faith, and to put that faith into action today. Let us help them see what your plan is for them, and help us show them that they belong here. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



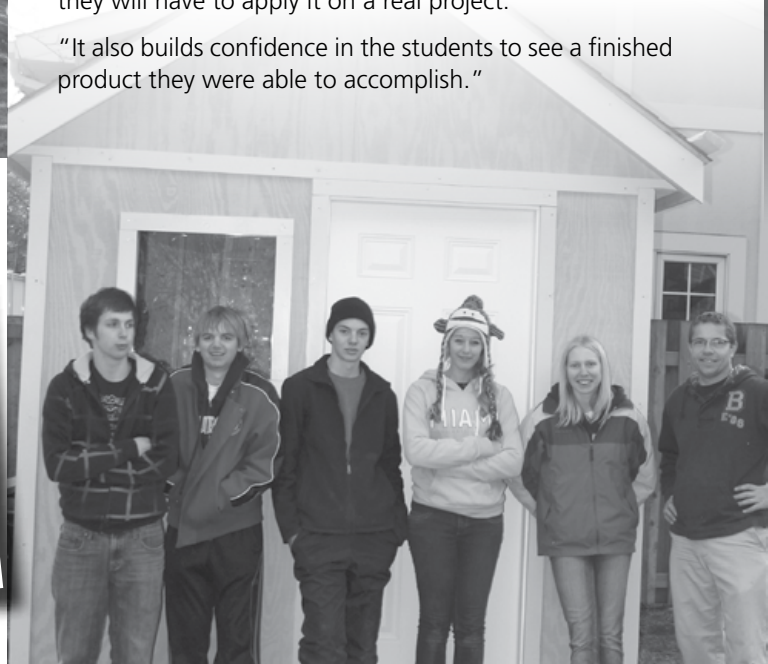
Project-based learning

Students at Smithville Christian High School are blessed by the presence of two shops — a wood shop and a metal and welding shop — permitting many opportunities for project-based learning. Here are photos of students from the Grade 11 construction technology class, building four sheds. One shed was installed on campus to store track-and-field equipment. Three others were delivered and installed in the backyards of some happy customers.

Shop teacher John van den Boogaard said shed building is an excellent example of project-based learning.

"If we built walls for no purpose but to practice and then took them apart, students would not invest in them the same way," van den Boogaard said. "With the shed, students know they are building something someone wants and is paying for. They learn it better, knowing they will have to apply it on a real project.

"It also builds confidence in the students to see a finished product they were able to accomplish."





A living laboratory in our backyard

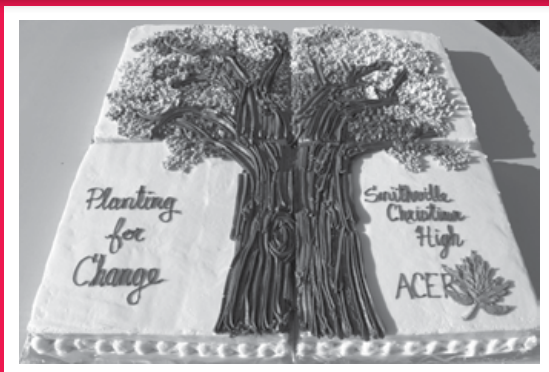
MORE PROJECT-BASED LEARNING



Students in Grade 10 science have planted a living laboratory at Smithville Christian High School, as part of a national research project into the effects of climate change.

Partnering with the Association for Canadian Educational Resources (ACER) and Climate Action Niagara, the students planted 15 trees, 45 shrubs and 100 wildflowers in a miniature research lab on the southeast corner of the school property. Successive classes of Grade 9 and 10 science students will collect data on the health and yearly growth of the plants and trees, and submit their findings to the ACER data base. The health and growth of the Smithville trees will be monitored and compared to findings across the country — giving scientists valuable information on the effects of climate change.

The entire school and local officials, including West Lincoln Mayor Doug Joyner, were invited to celebrate the planting project with cake!



CLASS OF 2016

Smithville Christian High School
Grade 9 Class 2012/2013



Brandon B.



Katryna Bezuyen



Alex Boekestyn



Noah Boks



Sophia Bradbury



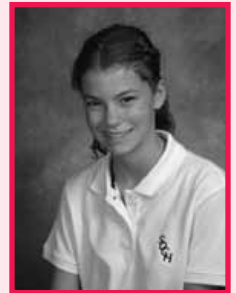
Caleb Buys



Sara DeJong



Thomas DeKlerk



Rachel Groothedde



Alana Hewson



Andy Jeong



Keeshia Kamping



Keri Ludwig



Elaina Maloney



Tayte McHugh



Hannah Meinders



Kristin Mellema



Joseph Mergl



Selena Norris



Corey Oudman



Benjamin Payson



Curtis Potac



Ava Pozojevic



Sarah Rahm



Amber Rauwerda



Quinton Regnerus



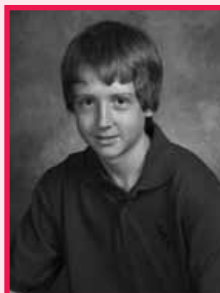
Jessica Scholman



Kimberly Scholman



Sydney Shirton



Daniel Teeuwsen



Bailey Van Hoorn



Marisa van Rensburg



Emma VandenBurg



Dale VandenDool



Ethan Vanderlee



Sabrina Vanderwal



Kurtis VanderWier



Tyler VanderWier



Savannah VanHerwynen



Noah VanSoelen



Paige Veenhof



Christine Vermeer



Mitchell Visser



Braden Voortman



Jacob Zantingh

A Parent's Testimony

BY JEN SHIRTON

With each day that passes, it seems I am taken aback by another report of the happenings at school. WOW! I am in awe of the faith-building opportunities that are available to the students at Smithville Christian High School.

I can't articulate what a blessing it is to have our kids bouncing in the door, anxious and excited to share their day. Their heartfelt prayers of praise and thanksgiving tell the story!

At our church service on Sunday, we had a time of testimonies. We were invited to share how God had recently blessed us. I could not just sit there -- I was compelled to stand and praise

I was compelled
to stand and praise
God for his absolute
blessing . . .

God for his absolute blessing, and the joy in my heart, to be able to send our kids to Christian educators.

The love of Christ, the most pure love, that is given and received in this community is overwhelming to this mom. I anticipate great things for our kids being immersed daily in this Christian culture!

Each new encounter just increases my gratitude for the opportunity to be in the Smithville Christian community. Thank you again for making high school such an enjoyable experience for our family.



Grade 9 Bike Trip



A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats

BY MARLENE BERGSMÄ

Q. Are people who send their kids to Christian schools religious kooks who are trying to hide their kids away from the real world?

A. No.

And for the first time in North American history we have credible, reliable, verifiable data that shows that Christian school graduates are engaged, responsible citizens who are making positive contributions to the world around them.

The results of the Cardus Education Survey, released in October, unequivocally show that Christian education makes a difference in the lives of students — a big one.

The Canadian data show that graduates of Christian schools are faithful, committed and contributing members of their communities. Compared to graduates of public schools and Catholic schools, they are more faithful in church attendance, they enjoy more stable family lives, they vote, they give more time and money to charitable causes and their faith continues to be an important part of their daily lives.

Smithville Christian alumni also participated in the survey in record numbers, but our school's results, along with the results of other OACS schools, will be the subject of a further report. Stay tuned for more information on how our graduates compare.

"A rising tide lifts all boats" is the title given to the Canadian report by the authors of the Cardus Education Survey. Their research shows that Christian school graduates are kingdom citizens who are blessing the communities in which they live.

"We conclude that non-government schools produce graduates who embody commonly desired excellences and characteristics in generally even higher proportions than do government-run public schools. Canada's government-run schools perform very well in international rankings, but by many measures, Canada's non-government schools perform at even higher levels." — from the Cardus Education Survey. For a complete copy of the report and survey findings, visit www.cardus.ca

FOR THE RECORD

Congratulations to Shannon Vanderhout — winner of the Class of 2012 Royal Canadian Legion Branch 393 Bursary. Incorrect information appeared in a previous issue of Echoes.



Developing Leaders, Building Community

BY MARLENE BERGSMÄ, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

Grade 12 students at Smithville Christian High School started their school year by heading north and spending three days at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp.

They enjoyed good food, free time and water sports, and they had lots of fun, but one of the most important things they learned was how great it was to spend time together.

"For me, the highlight was before lights-out, when everyone was in the main cabin and we were playing card games and board games and ping-pong and music," said student Micah Vermeer. "It was cool because we had so much freedom and everybody was in that room and everybody was playing."

Vermeer said the relaxed atmosphere with no demands allowed students to get to know people they didn't already know that well, and especially to meet some of the new Grade 12 students who had just arrived.

"By Grade 12 you have mostly formed your friendship circle, but the retreat made me interact with a lot more of my classmates," Vermeer said.

The September Grade 12 Retreat is a new initiative, now in its second year, which replaces a popular end-of-year trip to Quebec City. It's no secret that some students were unhappy with the switch, but opinion is shifting.

"I really liked it," said Grade 12 student Isaac Stansfield. "I went into it trying to hate it, but I ended up really liking it."

"I liked the fact that we could chill as a whole class and hang out in the same place," Stansfield said. "I was skeptical. I thought we would be babied, but we weren't."

Encouraging that level of mature responsibility is one of the goals behind the retreat, said Spiritual Life Director Gord Park, who was one of the chaperones on the trip.

"We put real focus on the values of respecting, listening to and honestly communicating with one another as a means of building a solid, Christian community," Park said. The retreat also seeks to help the senior students recognize their role as leaders in the school.

"I am glad we had it at the start of the year instead of at the end of the year, when we would never see each other again," Vermeer said. "For the most part, it was one big bonding time."





Storm Success

BY STUART BENDER, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

The fall teams once again represented our school well and experienced success. Though we will mention success in regard to how competitive they were, let's start with other indications of success.

First, our teams clearly have fun participating. Why would we participate in sports if it were not enjoyable?! It is enjoyable to be around our students and teams when they are competing. Another indication of success is how well our students represent their school and their creator when they compete. We repeatedly get feedback from coaches, referees and opposing fans about how well behaved, positive,



competitive and fun loving our young people are. Regardless of scores, records or standings, these are always good indications of the success of an athletics program.

Our Cross Country team, after several preliminary meets, sent almost the entire crew to the SOSSA (Southern Ontario Secondary Schools Association) finals, including the junior boys who competed as a team there.

All four of our fall term sports teams finished their regular seasons in



first place. The junior girls basketball team made it to the Zone final before losing a close game to Laura Secord. The senior girls basketball team also battled their way to the Zone playoff final before losing a close one to West Park. The junior boys volleyball team could not repeat as Zone champions, dropping a tense five-set semi-final match to St. Francis. The senior boys volleyball team captured the Zone IV crown. They then came within one



See more school photos on Facebook, read more school stories on our blog, see school videos on YouTube or follow us on Twitter.

Visit our website for links www.smithvillechristian.ca





match of repeating as SOSSA champions but had to settle for silver.

We are so proud of what our students are able to accomplish. Well done Storm! One more banner for the gym wall, but a successful year and a host of great experiences. We wish all of our winter teams a great season.



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