



ECHOES

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Flourishing at Smithville Christian

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

This year's spiritual life theme at Smithville Christian High School is "Thrive" – and its meaning for students is joyfully captured in the lyrics of the song by the contemporary Christian rock band, Casting Crowns: "we were made to thrive."

That's why it's more than a happy coincidence that as our renovation and addition were completed and we moved back into the whole school, the most talked about feature of the \$1.2 million project is a piece of art called "Flourish." The new offices, hallways and learning spaces are great, but the thing that grabs everyone's attention is the gleaming sculpture towering over our bright and beautiful new atrium.

Commissioned by the school and created by Beamsville artist Floyd Elzinga, "it's magnificent," said principal Ted Harris. "It is a permanent indication to all of our hope and prayer for every student in our school, that he or she will flourish while attending our school and beyond."

Students had a hand in creating the sculpture, as Elzinga and a team from his studio spent a day at school this fall, working with each student to create his or her contribution to the sculpture. Guests at the open house and renovation celebration in November were also invited to create a leaf, and their work will also be incorporated into the piece.

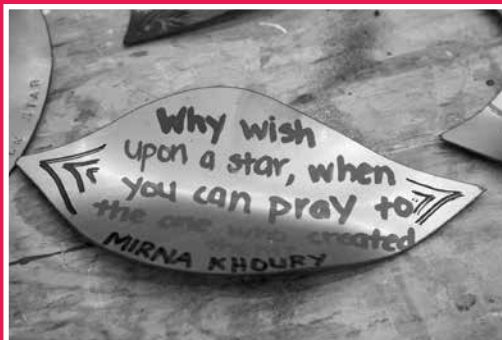
As a high school in the province of Ontario, Smithville Christian ensures that the education that students receive meets the

Continued on page 2 ...



...continued from page 1

requirements of Ontario Ministry of Education. But as a Christian high school, Smithville Christian also wants to bless every student with the atmosphere, tools and experiences to truly flourish as a citizen of the kingdom of God. What a blessing to know that there is a place where students learn and experience that they were created to thrive. Read on for more stories and pictures of student flourishing. Visit the school's Youtube channel to see the video of students working on their leaves, or click on the link from the bulletin board on the school website www.smithvillechristian.ca.



A place where God's name is

A PRAYER OF BLESSING FOR THE REDEDICATION OF SMITHVILLE CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

BY WAYNE SCHILSTRA, *IN MOTION* CAMPAIGN CHAIR

At the November 16 event held to celebrate the completion and opening of the renovated section of the school, Wayne Schilstra, chair of the *In Motion* Campaign and former board, read Kings 8:27-30 – the words spoken by King Solomon at the dedication of the newly built temple in Jerusalem.

Schilstra then prayed a prayer of dedication:

This is a place of which you, Oh God, have said 'My name shall be there.'

In 1980 this ground was dedicated to your glory, and a new school was established.

In 1999 the gym and renovations were added.

In 2006 the debt was eliminated and a new vision was cast.

Today we stand in a building that looks very different from the one built in 1980, but you, oh God, our Father, remain the same. You have been faithful in providing the teachers and staff to pour into the lives of the students here for two generations. You have called thousands of young people to be educated, molded and sent out to the world to work and serve, and you have placed it in the hearts of thousands of parents, grandparents and supporters to provide the funds to sustain this school – all for your glory! Thank you God for your provision over Smithville Christian High for 35 years. Thank you God for your Holy Spirit which moves and dwells in this place and takes up residence in the hearts of teachers, staff, students and supporters.

This is a place of which you have said 'My name shall be there.'

With Solomon we confess that the heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you; how much less this school we have built and rebuilt! Yet, it is here where we gather as your covenant people knowing that you are in our presence, knowing that you delight in the prayers of your people and believing the promise that where two or three are gathered in your name you are there also. We ask you to bless the new offices, the chapel and this beautiful new atrium. May this atrium welcome ten thousand more students to be educated and molded for service in your kingdom.

Heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this school that we have built! Yet have regard to the prayers of your servants and to our pleas, O Lord our God, listening to the cries and to the prayers that your servants pray before you this day, that your eyes may be open night and day toward this school, the place of which you have said, 'My name shall be there,' In Jesus precious name we pray, Amen.



What does our building say about those who support us?

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

I have been blessed in so many ways by the recent renovation at Smithville Christian High School. Many have asked if I am enjoying my new office. My answer: of course I am. But it is so much more than that. I have been blessed to be in the conversation from the very beginning. It started with initial questions like “Should we strive to make our building more beautiful and welcoming?” “Will our supporters resonate with our ideas?” and “Are people willing to give to support these plans?” During our feasibility phase, now two years ago, the answer to these questions was a clear ‘yes.’

After the feasibility phase, the other canvassers and I visited with many donors. What a wonderful learning experience! One learns quickly what is in the hearts of donors when asking them to support a major building program. Here are a few things I have learned:

Our supporters really do consider their possessions as gifts from God to be used to bless others. We are so grateful that our students, both present and future, are the beneficiaries of this perspective.

Our supporters care deeply about the reputation and well-being of our school. They routinely grill us with questions about the most effective ways to extend the blessing of Christian education to more families. They make it clear that there is much more to it than simply having a nice building.

Our supporters are excited about investing in young people. This includes making sure they are blessed with the right program, but is also includes (the previous comment notwithstanding) giving them a beautiful building in which to spend their days.

Sometimes I get nervous before visiting with a donor, but almost without exception I leave feeling excited about how we as a community can partner with one another to “tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord” (Psalm 78:4).

It has clearly been worth it. The students are clearly excited about the new spaces after a full seven school months in a building in which four hallways ran into dead ends. These same hallways now open up to the outside or to other bright new spaces. The atrium always seems to have lots of students in it, and they all seem to know where their leaves are on the “Flourish” tree there. They may not see all of the behind-the-scenes campaign work that brings about a renovation, but it is easy to tell that they are very pleased that a community of supporters has made their school more beautiful.

Staff members are enjoying a beautifully renovated staff area, some of them have nice new offices, and they are excited about the impact the renovation has on our culture of learning.

On behalf of the staff and students of Smithville Christian High School, thank you to all those who gave of themselves so that the school we love could be better positioned to receive the next generation of Christian high school supporters. We are truly grateful.



Derek Brouwer, Brouwer Construction site supervisor



Fore!

- 1 day of golf plus 1 tremendous tournament organizer (Dan Huinink)

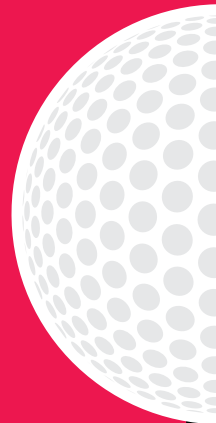
- 6 members of the planning committee

- 35 sponsors

- 100 golfers

- \$29,000 raised for Christian education in Niagara – Shared evenly between the Niagara Association for Christian Education and Smithville Christian High School.

Thank you to all the people who make this event a success, and it was especially wonderful to welcome to all the alumni who come back to golf.



Working as partners: nine months with Brouwer Construction

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

Though there were certainly challenges to working in a construction zone for most of last year, it is good to acknowledge that it was a blessing to work with both Brouwer Architecture and Brouwer Construction. Working as partners in an atmosphere of mutual trust is a privilege. Every time Fred Breukelman and I met with Al, Jason and Derek Brouwer, it was clear that we were serving the Lord together in our various capacities and that the best interests of the school and the kingdom were clearly at the forefront. Smithville Christian High School would like to thank our partners in this project for their integrity, their attention to detail, their concern for our budget, and their patience with the many questions and concerns brought forward from our staff during this process. We were very well served!



Leadership: how to be effective and inspiring

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

People often say to educators that they have it so good with all that time off in the summer and Christmas and so on. Some teachers come back with a defensive response. Not me. I tell them that we indeed do have it very good and that they made a big mistake not going into education.

I certainly don't get all of July and August off, but there are nice stretches for reflection and learning that come during the summer time. I would like to share one summer growth experience that has been a particular blessing for me.

I have begun to attend the Global Leadership Summit as often as I can in early August each year. The Summit happens at Willow Creek Church in Chicago and is experienced by many thousands around the globe via satellite. Here are some things I was able to consider as I was challenged by excellent speakers, all of whom are Christians, during this year's Summit:

From Bill Hybels, founder of Willow Creek Ministries, I learned that there are five intangibles that help leaders to be effective. Leaders who have grit, self-awareness, resourcefulness, self-sacrificing love and a sense of meaning are more likely to inspire others toward greatness and to build great

organizations

Listening to Jim Collins (author, consultant, professor) I was reminded that leaders inspire others to follow a cause, not to follow them. I learned that failure can and should be reframed as growth. It was thought-provoking to consider that all leaders have a small unit over which they exert influence and which they can build into a pocket of greatness. We should focus on our unit, not on our career. Life is people, says Collins; how can we be useful in blessing the lives of others?

From Horst Schultze, C.E.O. of Ritz Carlton, I learned various ways in which an organization can encourage loyalty from those it serves. Everyone wants a good product, timeliness and someone to be nice to them. As we serve others, we should be attentive to how we greet and regard them, we should give them what they seek



(as much as possible), and we should leave them with a warm farewell after each interaction.

From Liz Wiseman, I learned the importance of admitting what you don't know, of leading your team into the unknown, and of putting yourself at the bottom of a learning curve to be reminded of the humility and growth potential that this brings.

There were other speakers and many other concepts to think about. Life can get crazy. Taking some time to reflect and learn brings so many things back into focus, and it's great to connect with leaders who are serving Christ worldwide. If you are interested in the Global Leadership Summit next August, let me know. I'll be getting a group together.

Calling all Beacon Christian Secondary Alumni: *we love you!*

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

Q. If you are a graduate of Beacon Christian Secondary School, who is taking care of you?

A. Effective immediately, it's Smithville Christian High School.

Following the August 2012 closing of Beacon Secondary in St. Catharines and the merger of the student body with Smithville Christian, the boards of directors of Beacon Christian School and Smithville Christian High School are pleased to announce that alumni services for ALL graduates of a Christian secondary school in Niagara are available through Smithville Christian.

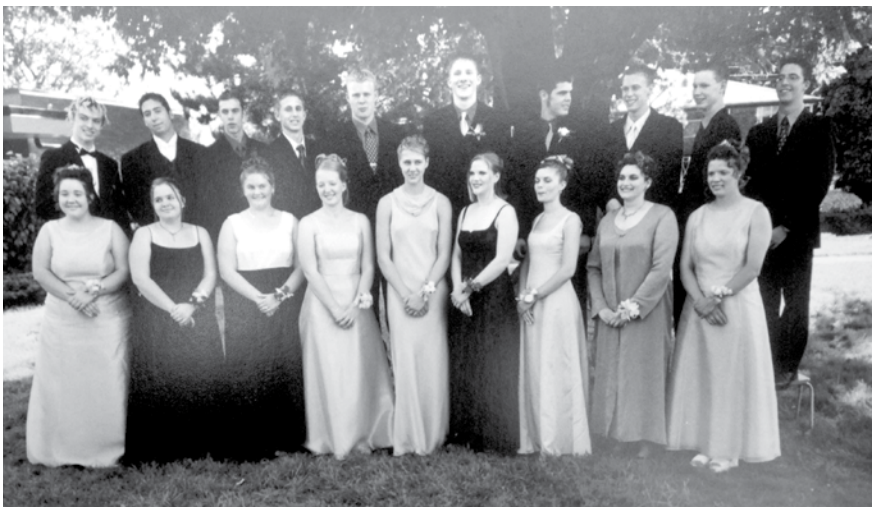
Want to plan a class reunion? Contact us for advertising, free use of space (in Smithville or St. Catharines), a free cake and party favours.

Want to attend a homecoming or alumni event? You're in!

Want to join draws for future prizes or keep informed about alumni opportunities? Send us your contact information.

If you are a graduate of Beacon Christian High School, or you attended that school sometime between 1969 and 2011, Smithville Christian High School cares about you too! Smithville is partnering with Beacon Christian School to provide support services to all Christian high school alumni in Niagara, including graduates of both Beacon and Smithville Christian High Schools.

If you are part of a Beacon graduating class and you would like to host a reunion, you are eligible for the cake, favours and meeting space of the alumni relations program. For more information, contact alumni@smithvillechristian.ca



Beacon Christian Secondary School Class of 2000, Front row: Mandy Lof, Emily Vreken, Michelle VanSpronsen, Anna Lensink, Karin Hoogendam, Joya Gerritsma, Amanda Dykstra, Maresa Bouwman, Stephanie Kaesekamp Back row, left to right: Jonathan VanArragon, Craig Rohoman, Jeff Teeuwesen, Jason VanderVeen, James VanBerkel (deceased, 2005), Kevin Stienstra, Shane Ritzema, Matthew VanStaalduinen, Eric VanderKloet, Michael Vanoostveen

Welcome Grade 9



Jared Attema



Christine Awad



Emily Bezuyen



Jake Boekestyn



Julieanne Buist



Aaron Cook



Gillian Crinson



Shannon Damm



Jeremy DeBoer



Adam Denee



Clay Elzinga



Micaela Felvus



Lucas Gerrits



Tyler Glasbergen



Jacob Hamill



Welly Hanenberg



Kate Hong



Mackenzie Langendoen



John Lee



Faith Ludwig

Class of 2019



Saira Maloney



Ashley Mans



Kristen Oudman



Emily Pot



Fay Prins



Haley Ra



Danny Ra



Shasta Ricker



Mark Sharobim



Samantha Snyder



Samuel Teeuwssen



Eric van den Boogaard



Keturah van der Wier



Olivia VanderBeeck



Lori VanderHeide



Marlee Vanderlee



Grace VanMarion



Hannah VanRyn



Olivia Vermeer



Rebecca Wagter



Rachel Wagter

Introducing new teachers

In addition to the new art teacher, Amanda LeBlanc, Smithville Christian High School has welcomed several new teachers in the past year. Get to know Marg Horvath, who teaches English as a Second Language and accounting, Scott Antonides, who teaches math, science and physics and Amanda LeBlanc.

Amanda LeBlanc

1. Where did you grow-up, and/or where have you lived? *I grew up in Scarborough for the first 12 years, then I lived in Georgetown.*

2. Family of origin? *I was adopted into a family of nine children – I am the oldest.*

3. Education – *Bachelor of Arts from Redeemer University College with a major in Fine Art and a minor in English and a Bachelor of Education from Redeemer.*

Art teacher Amanda LeBlanc plans the placement of student art in the new student services offices



Amanda LeBlanc



Margaret Horvath



Scott Antonides

4. Personal accomplishments – *My personal art career as a fine artist with an exhibit at the Flagship Gallery in downtown Hamilton*

5. Pet Peeve – *Last-minute interruptions, scrambles and flat tires*

6. Favourite colour – *Purple*, Favourite food – *Ice cream*

7. Hobbies or pastimes – *Art, hiking, reading*

8. Currently reading – *“Playing God” by Andy Crouch and re-reading “Pilgrim’s Progress” by John Bunyan*

9. What is your impression of Smithville Christian High School? – *I really appreciate the environment, it’s healthy. You can tell the students feel welcome here and as a new staff person, I feel welcome here too.*

Margaret Horvath

1. Where did you grow-up, and/or where have you lived? *I grew up in Fort Erie. Over the last 25 years we have raised our family in Niagara Falls, Grimsby and St. Catharines.*

2. Your family of origin? *I grew up in a very loving, Christian home with my*

parents and my twin brother (who’s much taller than me). My father and all four of my grandparents were immigrants from Hungary who became proud Canadian-Hungarians.

3. Education – *Honours BA in Psychology from the University of Western Ontario, BEd from University of Toronto, and many additional teaching qualifications*

4. Personal accomplishments – *Fulfilling my calling to be devoted to God, my family, and friends & being a life-long learner*

5. Pet Peeve – *Impatient drivers*

6. Favourite foods – *Chocolate and Hungarian pastries!*

7. Hobbies or pastimes – *Baking, gardening, enjoying nature & reading*

8. Currently reading – *“Soul Friends,” by Dr. Leslie Parrott*

9. What is your impression of Smithville Christian High School? – *I love the amazing, positive energy of the staff and students at our school. It really is a place where you can feel God’s Spirit working every day!*



Science teacher Scott Antonides (left) demonstrating a hovercraft to visiting Grade 8 students.

Scott Antonides

1. Where did you grow-up, and/or where have you live? *I was born in Mississauga but we moved to a pig farm near London when I was just two years old. My parents are still on the farm but since then I've lived in Ancaster, St. Catharines, Beijing, Doha and Smithville.*

2. Your family of origin? *I'm the youngest of three boys. We're all quite different. A real estate appraiser, carpenter and a teacher.*

3. Education – *I went to Redeemer College for my Bachelors degree, Brock for my education degree and Endicott College for my Masters (but I learned more by travelling).*

4. Personal accomplishments – *My marriage to Mrs. A is my greatest personal accomplishment. Success!*

5. Pet Peeve – *People who clear their throat too much. Ahem... and littering*

6. Favourite colour – *Green*

7. Hobbies or pastimes – *I love fixing things... especially things that seem beyond hope.*

8. Currently reading – *"The Adventurist: My Life in Dangerous Places," by Robert Pelton*

9. What is your impression of Smithville Christian? – *It's a friendly, vibrant school.*



ESL teacher Marg Horvath (front row, left) with members of the Culture Club on a visit to the Royal Winter Fair.



Unity

BY HAILEE BOKS, STUDENT COUNCIL

This year our Student Council theme is unity and being united. But what does it mean to be united? Our theme verse is Ephesians 4:3, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace."

Unity through the bond of peace: God calls each and every one of us to live our lives for him. As Christians we were all created differently, with different strengths and weaknesses. God calls us to lay aside all of our pride and selfishness to work toward a unity that honours him.

There is a quote that I heard that properly describes our goal for this year through this theme. "Christ creates unity in the midst of diversity."

We all have very different lives: different interests, different

passions, and different activities that we participate in. We are all different. God created us all to be different and that is a good thing! If we were all the same person life would be boring! But because we are all different in a lot of ways, sometimes there are things about each other that we don't always like and a lot of the time it can be hard to find unity when we are still arguing about each other's differences. We need to look beyond what sets us apart from each other and look to who calls us together.

Nobody is perfect and we've all made mistakes. I'm sure that everyone can think of a few people in your life that can annoy you sometimes or maybe people to whom you're not so nice.

I want all of you to think right now of somebody that maybe gets under your skin, or somebody that you're not kind to. Maybe it's more than one person, but I want you to think of them. Maybe they are at school, or they're at home, or your workplace, but I want you to think about that person. I'm pretty sure that we don't want to admit it, but I believe there is somebody like that for all of us. Keep that person in your mind.

I have a challenge for you. The rest of this week, try to be kind to that person. Instead of ignoring them or getting angry with them, try to be kind to them. You don't need to make it obvious. It may be hard but try to look beyond what annoys you. Maybe find what is good about that person and hold on to that. If we all are more kind to people, imagine what the world would be like?

Our prayer is that we all come before God recognizing that we are surrounded by people who are all different from us. We need God to give us the help and strength to work together despite our differences, that God would bind us together in unity and peace.

Our hope is that God will use each one of us to work together. And, when we fall short, that we will remember to keep "the bond of peace." God will help us to bloom where we are planted and he calls us to be here right now – at Smithville Christian High School. A place where we can overcome our struggles, where we can learn to be kind to one another and, when we go out to do different things in our life, that God will continue to grant us unity through the bond of peace.

New office, new name, and new resources!

BY LINDA BOOY-KORVEMAKER, HEAD OF STUDENT SERVICES

This year got off to a challenging start as the ongoing renovations meant Student Services continued to be located in a corner of the library. Being at the hub of student activity was not a bad transitional space for my colleague Dave Wonder, and myself, but we are very glad to finally be in our new office space – just off the new entrance and atrium.

We are now visible to anyone entering the school, yet private enough for our various services. Our individual offices have space to meet with students that is visible yet confidential. The outer office has a larger meeting area for small groups and a laptop bar for students to “plug in.”

We have decided to call our new space the “Student Services Office.” The name Student Services includes functions that may not actually be located in the new offices – such as Student Success, Co-op, Resource and other support programs for our students – but they are part of our program and we hope the new space will create a central point of access for students to the various departments with whom we work in close relationship.

Creating Pathways for Success, The Ontario Ministry of Education’s 2013 policy document, requires Ontario guidance programs to:

- *ensure that students develop the knowledge and skills they need to make informed education and career/life choices through the effective application of a four-step inquiry process;*
- *provide opportunities for this*

learning both in and outside the classroom; and

- *engage parents and the broader community in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the program, to support students in their learning.*

That is what we aim to achieve as guidance counsellors and we believe the new space will make this more accessible for everyone.

We hope that students use this area to meet with college and university representatives, to meet in small groups and workshops related to their educational plan and/or post-secondary planning, to participate in peer tutoring and more. The laptop bar, which can be used to do homework or online courses, also has a large screen iMac with touch screen for student access, parent access and guest access to our exciting new online educational and career planning resource, My Blueprint.

It was great to welcome many guests to our recent open house, but please stop by at any time and see what the new Student Services Office at Smithville Christian has to offer!



Foundation event inspires members to think big and tell good stories

Members of the Christian School Foundation got top expertise from a fundraising leader at a recent development event.

Principal Ted Harris joined a dozen other member schools at the invitation-only roundtable, which featured advice from Henry Contant, the recently retired executive director of the Society of Christian Schools of British Columbia.

After decades of work as a fundraiser and fundraising consultant for Christian schools around the world, Contant said Christian schools have a great story to tell.

"Raising funds should grow out of vision and mission," said Contant, who has led 19 successful capital campaigns during the past 21 years. A good campaign rekindles the mission and vision of a school.

Participants at the event said it was excellent.

Even though Smithville Christian has just wrapped up its successful In Motion fundraising campaign, it's still important to keep informed about best practices, said Harris.

"Connecting with supporters and donors and sharing the story of Christian education

will always be vitally important to Smithville Christian," he said. "Contant emphasized how crucial it is that people understand the important things that are happening at school and how lives are being shaped for God's kingdom."

It's good to hear from other schools," agreed Ralph Pot, principal at Beacon Christian School in St. Catharines, "what they are doing, what is successful, what is not successful, do you do it in-house, do you hire a consultant? An event like this forces us to raise some good questions."

"Some of the ideas that were shared were very helpful," agreed Tony Kamphuis, executive director of NACE, another member. "We will be implementing some of them in our fall drive."

After Contant's presentation, Foundation interim CEO Michael VanPelt led participants in a discussion on what has worked for them and what didn't.

Making expert advice and resources available to Beacon and other member schools is one of the main tasks of the Christian School Foundation.

The event also served as a way for member schools to tell the Foundation what they are looking for as they seek to meet their



financial goals, said VanPelt. "Help us think through these things and we will put them to work tomorrow."

People who support the cause of Christian education will feel joy, Contant said, "when they know how our Christian school is changing the lives of children for the kingdom and for eternity."



Jared Attema competing in cross-country at OFSAA. Attema came in 5th in midget boys at SOSSA and 41st out of 260 at OFSAA.

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