



ECHOES

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Open the doors

Dust is flying, the ground is shaking and the windows are rattling, but the most important ingredient in the success of our capital campaign and ongoing renovation is you.

Tell a friend.

Yep, that's all it takes. In order for the *In Motion* campaign to be truly successful, for the doors of our school to be truly considered open, we will need new people to actually walk through those new doors.



And the best way for that to happen is for the people who already know about us to tell a friend.

We have introduced a new entrance scholarship for students who are new to Christian education. With the help of our donors we have bolstered our bursary fund. Now we need to hear from the teenagers and families who are yearning for a different kind of high

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school, who want a Christ-centred education, who want to belong, believe and succeed.

On these next few pages you will read about the joy principal Ted Harris experiences when he can tell a family a financial obstacle has been removed, about how we are being blessed by sunshine, about how kind and generous our students are and about why it took us so long to finally raise tuition.

Tell a friend.

If you like what you read, if you love this school: tell a friend.

You'll be doing us — and them — a favour.



Starting the Conversation

Need some low-key ways to get a conversation going or to show your love?

- Like us on Facebook.
- Better yet, comment and share us on Facebook.
- Follow us on Twitter.
- Better yet, like and re-tweet us on Twitter.
- Follow us on Instagram.
- Drink coffee from a Smithville Christian travel mug — available in stainless steel or ceramic for **\$10**
- Borrow a student's zip hoodie, or buy a used one from our store **\$10**
- Give a friend a school branded lip balm or emery board **\$2**



How do we decide how much it costs?

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

Next year our tuition rates will go up for the first time in five years. Perhaps seeing tuition go up isn't a shock to anyone, but it is worthy of a conversation. So why is it going up? To answer, perhaps we should start with why tuition hasn't gone up for the past four years.

We have certainly had some years of bounty. The surpluses of the past years have been as follows:

2009-2010: **\$22,000**

2010-2011: **\$85,000**

2011-2012: **\$107,000**

2012-2013: **\$70,000**

2013-2014: **\$195,000**

These surpluses weren't brought about because we were charging too much tuition. They were achieved for two key reasons:

Enrolment: we have had more students than expected for each of the last five years. Though much of the revenue from increased enrolment is spent on additional teaching staff, there are efficiencies brought about when classes are filled close to capacity.

Frugal Spending: Though we are not ill-at-ease with spending our revenue to give our students an excellent experience, we have strived to be careful with our spending and have routinely spent less than expected in several significant budgets.

And what have we done with the surpluses? We have used the extra funds in a few important ways:

With strong transparency with board and membership, our school has built what we call our Pursuit of Excellence Fund. Since August 2012, a total of \$140,000 has been placed in this fund. The goal of the fund is to allow our students to pursue excellence in ways that would not be possible if the funds were not available. The funds have been used for actual class projects, cameras and tripods, a class set of iPads, an iPad for every teacher, equipment for many different

programs, specific teacher training (remember the San Diego High Tech High visit?) and several other things that have helped to make student learning experiences memorable.

We have carried forward part of our surpluses from one year to the next over the past five years. Of course, this has helped us to construct budgets which did not call for tuition increases.

We used some funds this past year to build our bursary fund when we chose not to hold a Spring Drive and our In Motion Campaign had not yet built the fund up sufficiently to carry on for the current year.

So how does this all connect with our current tuition increase?

It is good and appropriate to raise tuition regularly. Since the cost of living always increases, so too will Christian high school tuition. We may be guilty of using our bounty of the last few years to keep tuition artificially low. Costs always go up; so should tuition. That being said, it is difficult for our board to present a budget report indicating significant surpluses and a tuition increase at the same time. One drawback of this action is that there is always catching up to do.

When the current school year ends in August 2015, we anticipate no significant surplus. Thus we will have no opportunity to use surpluses to hold tuition increases in check.

Therefore, we will raise tuition by \$500-\$700 (representing a range of 3.8%-5.5%), depending on the tuition category. It is certainly time we got back on track.

What if the increase is too much for families to bear?

Years ago we made a decision to charge what we are worth. This is called cost-based tuition, and it is the responsible

way to operate a Christian school. At the same time, we have made a firm commitment that families would not be turned away because of tuition costs. That's where our bursary fund comes in. We have been blessed to help many families with bursary support every

year, and our fund continues to be built for this purpose.

Running the finances of a Christian school is a fascinating challenge, and it would be terribly difficult for us if we did not have the incredible support of

many donors and our Foundation to help us maintain our bursary fund. It is our prayer that, with good stewardship of our financial resources, we will be positioned to bless more and more families in the decades to come.



Son Power – an Earth Day reflection on a renewable power and revenue source

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

I am writing about our solar project (called Son Power) on Earth Day, a day of the year when we are asked to think about the planet which we call home. I am pleased that we are doing something to move our culture toward using the sun's energy as a source for power here on earth. It is responsible to encourage this. It is also good, of course, to work out other sources of revenue for the school.

I am often asked how the solar project is going. When folks asked me that question in February and the panels were covered with snow, my response was not so positive; but as the months wear on, I am very encouraged by how things are going on our roof.

The project has been actively pushing power into the grid since mid-December 2014. On a good day in April, Son Power gathered over 1.4 megawatts of power and moved it to the grid. This generated revenue of around \$1,000 for the school. As of April 22, the month had brought in over \$13,000. The month of March brought in around \$12,000, while the months preceding that generated around \$5,500. This means that four months of winter and early spring have yielded a total revenue of around \$30,000.

In short, the project is doing even better than expected. We are very pleased, but it is hard to translate that emotion into an expected dollar amount over the course of a full

year. We know that there will be many good days when the sunshine will translate into over \$1,000 in revenue for the school. We are blessed to have this fundraising mechanism in place.

The other question I am often asked is what we will be doing with all the revenue.

Right now we aren't spending any of these funds. Until the fall, we will simply collect the money, pay down the financing costs, and allow the balance to accrue interest.

We will not use these funds to directly reduce tuition. That being said, we will be using the funds to make certain purchases that might have only come to us through tuition dollars; therefore there is an indirect connection to tuition.

Our finance committee, administration and board are in the midst of discussions about how best to manage the expenses and revenues of the solar project. The highlights of this discussion are that we do not want to put solar funds into our operating budget. Rather we intend to keep the accounts separate and use solar money for initiatives that impact students greatly and would not otherwise be possible. This will include technology and other materials and experiences that allow our students to pursue excellence and be better prepared with a global vision for serving Christ.

In next year's budget, as a means of holding our current tuition increase in check, we have made plans for some of the funds within our operational budget.

Our hope and prayer is that our Son Power project will position our school to provide Christian education that is both excellent and remarkable. If you wish to have a tour of our Son Power project some time, please ask. It's good for me to get out in the sun once in awhile.



Bookkeeper Caroline Eyk receives our first solar energy revenue cheque.

To see the impact of the solar project in terms of the amount of carbon reduced, kettles of water boiled or kWh generated, visit the Son Power dashboard and summary <https://installations.tigoenergy.com/base/main/summary?sysid=19370>

A link is also available from the bulletin board of the school's website and from the school's fundraising page: www.smithvillechristian.ca

Investing in diversity

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS



YanYan Wu, fourth from right, with some of the international students at Smithville Christian: the students are from left Cristina Li, Victoria Zhang, Davina Li, Caroline Wang, Zhen Sun, YanYan's friend, YanYan Wu, Liam Li, Jason Wu and Amy Ni.

Smithville Christian High School has been blessed with a vibrant international student program. With supportive homestay families, an excellent ESL (English as a Second Language) Program and a recruitment partner in China, we have successfully grown our program to reach the self-imposed limit of 10 percent of total enrolment.

This year, with the help of YanYan Wu, a missionary who attends our weekly chapels, we added a Chinese language component to our spiritual life department.

YanYan provides a Chinese translation of the weekly chapel message and is available to meet with students afterwards to answer questions. YanYan and her husband, pastor Changbing Li, also invite our students to worship with them at their Chinese language church in St. Catharines and invite them to be part of the Christian student fellowship which meets weekly at Brock University. This spring, we rejoiced when Canace Gao, one of our students, was baptized.

In an effort to further increase our diversity, Smithville Christian High School has partnered with nine other Christian schools in Ontario to attend an international recruitment conference in Montreal in May. This three-day event included workshops

and seminars on trends and best practices in international recruiting and offered us up to 30 one-on-one half-hour sessions with agents of our choosing.

Attending this fair represents a significant expense — roughly \$10,000 including transportation, accommodations and promotional materials. However, by partnering with other schools, the cost to each individual school was greatly reduced. Recognizing the benefit, the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools also joined as a sponsoring partner, further reducing the cost and allowing us to expand our presence at the conference.

I attended on behalf of Smithville Christian High School along with Linda Wielinga of Durham Christian High School and Jennifer

Bergner of John Knox Christian School Oakville to meet with agents and represent the participating schools.

Over 300 agents from around the globe attended the conference. We have reviewed the agent profiles and have carefully selected representatives from countries such as Cameroon, Nigeria, Guatemala, Germany, France, Russia, El Salvador, Australia, Venezuela, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia and more. It is our hope that we will be able to develop strong working relationships with several of these agents, who will represent our schools to those families in their countries of origin who are seeking an English language learning experience.

It's a big investment of time and money — one that is not likely to see any harvest until September 2016 at the earliest. But join us in praying that the partnerships we establish will be strong and fruitful. It is our prayer that our school will be able to extend the blessing of Christian education to families around the globe, and that all our students will be enriched by a learning environment that reflects the diversity of the kingdom of God.

Students at Smithville Christian High School prepare and enjoy a meal of Chinese food to celebrate Chinese New Year.



The blessing of a community of support

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

Since its amalgamation with two other southern Ontario foundations, Smithville Christian High School's foundation, now part of the Christian School Foundation, has continued to prosper and grow.

Last summer, our school was able to access part of a one-time donation of \$100,000 to offer two new entrance scholarships, and the Christian School Foundation announced recently that this new bursary program is expected to double in size for the 2015-2016 school year. Seed funding for this program is conditional on participating schools being able to leverage the funds to increase revenue through new enrolments — a valuable and exciting tool which Smithville Christian High School is pleased to be able to use.

The Christian School Foundation is also growing with a new member (John Knox

Christian School Oakville) and talks with several other prospective members, with a Memorandum of Understanding to merge with the Ontario Association of Christian Schools Foundation and with an affiliation agreement with the Ontario Christian Administrators' Association. These developments make it easy for donors who want to support Christian education to have a clear destination for their gifts and a guarantee those gifts will be carefully managed and used.

*Leave a legacy,
plan ahead*

Making a will and choosing to leave a portion of your estate to charity can result in the double benefit of reducing the tax burden on your estate and of blessing those causes that are important to you — such as Smithville Christian High School in particular or Christian education in general.

The Christian School Foundation, in partnership with Christian Stewardship Services, offers free advice from certified professionals. No matter how modest your net worth, it pays to plan ahead and to plan well. Ask your financial advisor if your plan includes charitable giving, or, for a no-obligation consultation, contact Henry Koornneef, CFP, CPA at hkoornneef@christianschoolfoundation.ca or visit the foundation website at www.christianschoolfoundation.ca.

You can leave a legacy.

Christian School Foundation

FAST FACTS:

- Nearly **\$4 million** in combined assets
- Current operating budget of approximately **\$300,000**
- Nearly **\$1 million** in seed funding
- Modest membership and management fees
- Online giving tools for all member schools

Smithville Christian High School's

FOUNDATION BY THE NUMBERS:

- Smithville Christian High School Endowment Fund - **\$322,591.70**
- Computer Tech Fund - **\$13,440.49**

Smithville Christian also has a shared interest in the FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS:

- Daniel & Tina Bremmer Memorial Fund - **\$61,247.79**
- Koornneef Family Fund - **\$155,045.95**
- Niagara Bursary Fund - **\$307,893.91**
- Christian School Foundation Fund - **\$170,118.25**
- Stewardship Education Curriculum Fund - **\$16,142.70**
- Isabel Adams-Don Nelson Fund - **\$147,560.02**

Plus deferred planned gifts on record that will bless our school in the future.



Annual golf tournament builds community and bursary fund

The Total Proceeds for Christian Education golf tournament, was held this year on September 20, 2014 at Sawmill Golf and Country Club. Although the traditional two-day tournament was compressed into a one-day event this year, the revenue generated for Smithville Christian High School and Niagara Association for Christian Education's two schools is only slightly down from last year.

After expenses, the tournament netted just over \$32,000, which means the two partners will get \$16,000 each.

We are grateful to the organizers and sponsors and thankful for a fun day of friendly competition and support.



Budgets & blessings: the art of giving and receiving

BY LINDA BOOY-KORVEMAKER, HEAD OF STUDENT SERVICES, STUDENT COUNCIL LIAISON

When our school began over 35 years ago, its founders decided that in addition to the curricular program there should be an extracurricular program.

In those early years, students would spend two days every year during the annual teachers' convention working at various jobs — sometimes assigned by the school — to fund the school's extracurricular activities and athletics.



Grade 1 students from Beacon Christian School present their Habitat for Humanity fundraising project at a chapel at Smithville Christian High School and Smithville students respond generously.

Since then, the method of generating revenue for extracurriculars has changed, but what has not changed is that it's the elected student council that disperses the funds.

Today, our student council operates a budget of over \$40,000 a year. The \$220 annual student activity fee pays for all the athletics and activities at Smithville Christian. (When there is a surplus, which may accumulate over a number of years, big projects for the students are funded. Some of these larger projects have been the gym floor, the Pumpatorium, and most recently the student lounge area in the library mezzanine.)

At the beginning of each school year, members of student council plan the budget, ensuring the funds are equally distributed between athletics and activities. Staff sponsors for the various teams and clubs request a budget amount, with the funds only being available for student activities, not the school's operating budget. Finally, the

student leaders must balance their budget, as there is no deficit budgeting at this level.

To help alleviate the cost of the activity fee, student council organizes an annual magazine subscription campaign, which allows individual students to earn or offset their activity fee for the next school year. The students also operate three vending machines that raise money.

Overall, students feel blessed by the many opportunities to get involved. A number of years ago, while discussing this blessing, student council started a Pay it Forward campaign. The goal of this campaign was random acts of kindness to encourage generosity. Chocolate bars and Tim Horton coffees were randomly left for people with a sticker on them with the name of the school and "Pay it Forward."

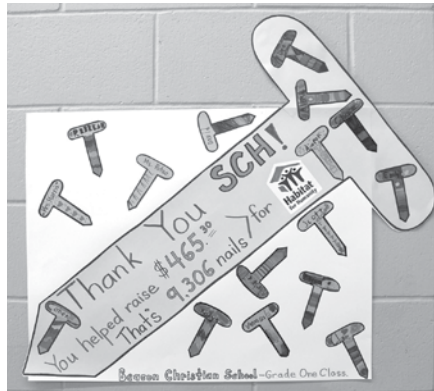
The goal was to motivate students to think about all their blessings and how

they can bless others. The following year student council started what they named a "Cash for Change" program that blessed charities. Students could pay a minimum of \$5 on designated days and not wear their uniforms. Outside organizations such as McNally House, the CURE foundation for cancer research and Mike's Miracles were given donations on behalf of our student body.

Recently I was asked whether our students only donate so that they can dress out of uniform. I decided to find out. Many said that they did not mind wearing their uniforms and sometimes even donate when they do not dress down. Others told me they gave more than the \$5 minimum when it was a charity they really felt close to. What moved me was not only the willingness of the students to explain their motivation but also the sincerity of their responses. When we tally up the donations on a typical Cash

for Change Day, they almost always exceed the expected minimum amount.

Recently, we witnessed our students' generosity again, when Grade 1 students from Beacon Christian School asked for our support for a community project to buy nails for a Habitat for Humanity construction project. After a chapel presentation from the Beacon students explaining the need,



our students were invited to make a free-will donation for a snack bag of popcorn or a candy treat. Our students opened their hearts and wallets, generously donating \$465.30, thereby purchasing 9,306 nails.

Not only did our students pay sometimes as much as \$10 for a ring pop or a bag of popcorn, they spontaneously modelled their giving for the younger students,



hopefully encouraging generosity among future students.

We pray that as we go forward at Smithville Christian we will continue to teach and encourage our students to be both responsible financially and to give generously.

Wayne Schilstra

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