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On Being Community ... Even When It's Tense

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR



We have been initiating some discussions in our community lately which make us feel a little bit tense. This can be the case when we bring up the topic of student lifestyles. Here are a few of the expressions we sometimes hear when this topic comes up: "Are we going to be the judge of other parents?" "I had no idea these things happened in our community." "Should we really be talking about this?" "If it happens away from school, what business is it of ours?" I also hear "I'm very glad we can support each other as a community by talking about this."

A Christian high school community has three choices in addressing student life style questions:

- (a) disregard our mutual responsibility for working together on raising healthy and holy teens and do nothing;
- (b) denounce the community for the poor choices its young people sometimes make; and
- (c) acknowledge that our young people are subject to the same cultural influence as any other young people and rally together to give them direction on how to live for Christ within their culture.

We come from the third direction and are getting less shy about it. It is no secret and no surprise that our kids are kids and that they face the same challenges that other young people face as they move towards maturity. The challenge is that our kids tend to be in the spotlight a bit more because – as Christians – more is expected of them and their parents. We could simply say that this is unfair, but I am more inclined to say that it is a good thing that both we and others have high expectations of our parents and students.

Continued on Page 2 ...

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The board and school leadership have indicated what these expectations should be and have discussed them at a parents' meeting, published them in our school directory, and submitted them in a recent Forecast (our bi-weekly newsletter). Why are we working harder to make these expectations clearer? Because we care deeply about what students are doing when they are not under our supervision, and because they are better off when the home and school see issues the same way. You might ask if this is also a promotional discussion? Of course it is! We are keen to present no hurdle in getting other Christians to embrace and to be blessed by a Christian high school education.

Sometimes a community needs a little tension as we sharpen each other. Other school systems do not experience this tension in the same way because there is no possible way to unify an entire community around common expectations. But I think we can do better. With Jesus Christ to unify us and the power of the covenant to embrace us, our community will continue to be a blessing to our young people as they grow into what the Lord plans for them to be. I invite parents to keep talking about these things and to adopt the Parents as Partners guidelines as a spark for connection with other parents.

The blessings of leadership

BY WAYNE SCHILSTRA, BOARD CHAIR

What an honour and a privilege it is to serve the parents, students, staff and God as a board member at Smithville Christian High. The school is such a positive place with an amazing staff, awesome students and committed membership – and we are debt free!

In November there will be a 'changing of the guard' with three board members retiring (Liz Witteveen, Brian Wagter and myself, Wayne Schilstra), and three new board members being appointed.

At this point we have one leader willing to stand but we need two more. As a board we are looking for individuals who possess the following gifts: 1) a committed follower of Jesus Christ; 2) a leader in the community who is committed to the advancement of Christian education; 3) wisdom, in order to make good, long-term decisions for the well-being of the school. If you know someone with these qualities, ask them to step forward.

You might think that being a board member is a burden, or that you don't want to nominate yourself. But listen to how outgoing board member Brian Wagter describes the time he has spent as part of the school's leadership:

"You feel a strong connection to the daily operations and life at the school," said Wagter. "You feel a sense of Christian service and responsibility to the staff and membership. There is a genuine feeling of connection and friendship with fellow board members. It is a blessing to be part of the Smithville Christian High School community as a board rep, and there is a feeling of accomplishment when a task is completed to its best and we see the fruits of what was done.

"I felt it was a blessing and a privilege to be able to serve on the board."

We need strong leadership to continue the tradition of 30 years of excellence at Smithville Christian High. If you have questions about the time commitment and what is involved in being a board member and would like to speak confidentially, then give me a call on my cell phone at 905-515-8066.

STUDENT LARS HUIJGEN IN THE WOODWORKING SHOP IN BORROWED COVERALLS.





Members of the Nicaragua team, back row from left: Emily Monster, Shannon Vanderhout, Mr. Dave Giesbrecht, James DeVisser, Jocelyn Klompmaker, Crystal Elmers and Melinda Bouwers. Middle row, from left: Taryn Vermeer, Julia Smit, Kaleb Antonides, John Kamphuis, Diana Slappendel, Alanna Pot and Kelsey Visser. In front, from left: Cassandra DeBoer and Bethany Stuive.

Education as Mission

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

As part of its mission to offer a Christ-centred education that allows students to develop their talents for service, Smithville Christian High School is excited to be offering 15 students a hands-on opportunity to connect their schooling with service through a six-week mission trip to Nicaragua.

The senior students, who were selected after being interviewed and submitting an essay explaining why they wanted to go and what they hoped to contribute, will live in a combination of guest houses and homestay placements in the village of Leon, Nicaragua next spring, while they learn Spanish, teach English, and work with Nicaraguan students in after-school programs. Their work will be in conjunction with the Nehemiah Centre,

a Christian agency which partners with numerous other agencies to build Nicaragua's physical, social and spiritual structures. Alicia Hamming (SDCH Class of 2000) is on staff there and will help coordinate the accommodations, excursions and work placements.

Members of the team will be blogging their experiences through a link on the school's website, and you can also find out more about the Nehemiah Centre at <http://www.nehemiahcenter.net/English/index.asp>

Dave Giesbrecht, the geography teacher and spiritual life coordinator who is organizing the trip and travelling with the students to Nicaragua, said students were chosen because of their initiative, integrity, self-awareness, emotional stability, physical conditioning, positive attitude, willingness to be uncomfortable and ability to be group-focussed. The team

still needs a female chaperone: interested volunteers should contact Giesbrecht.

In addition to earning three high school credits (Geography, Spanish and Interdepartmental Studies) and developing their talents for service, Giesbrecht said a goal of the experience is for students to grow spiritually.

"They will grow in faith as they face the challenges and joys that are part of this type of experience," he said, "as they relate to each other, their leaders and the Nicaraguan people." Students will gain an understanding of the needs in developing countries and consider their roles and responsibilities as Christians, said Giesbrecht, both during the trip and for the rest of their lives.

Pray for the students as they prepare for this experience and as they learn and serve in the second poorest country in the western hemisphere.

Students Win Art Contest

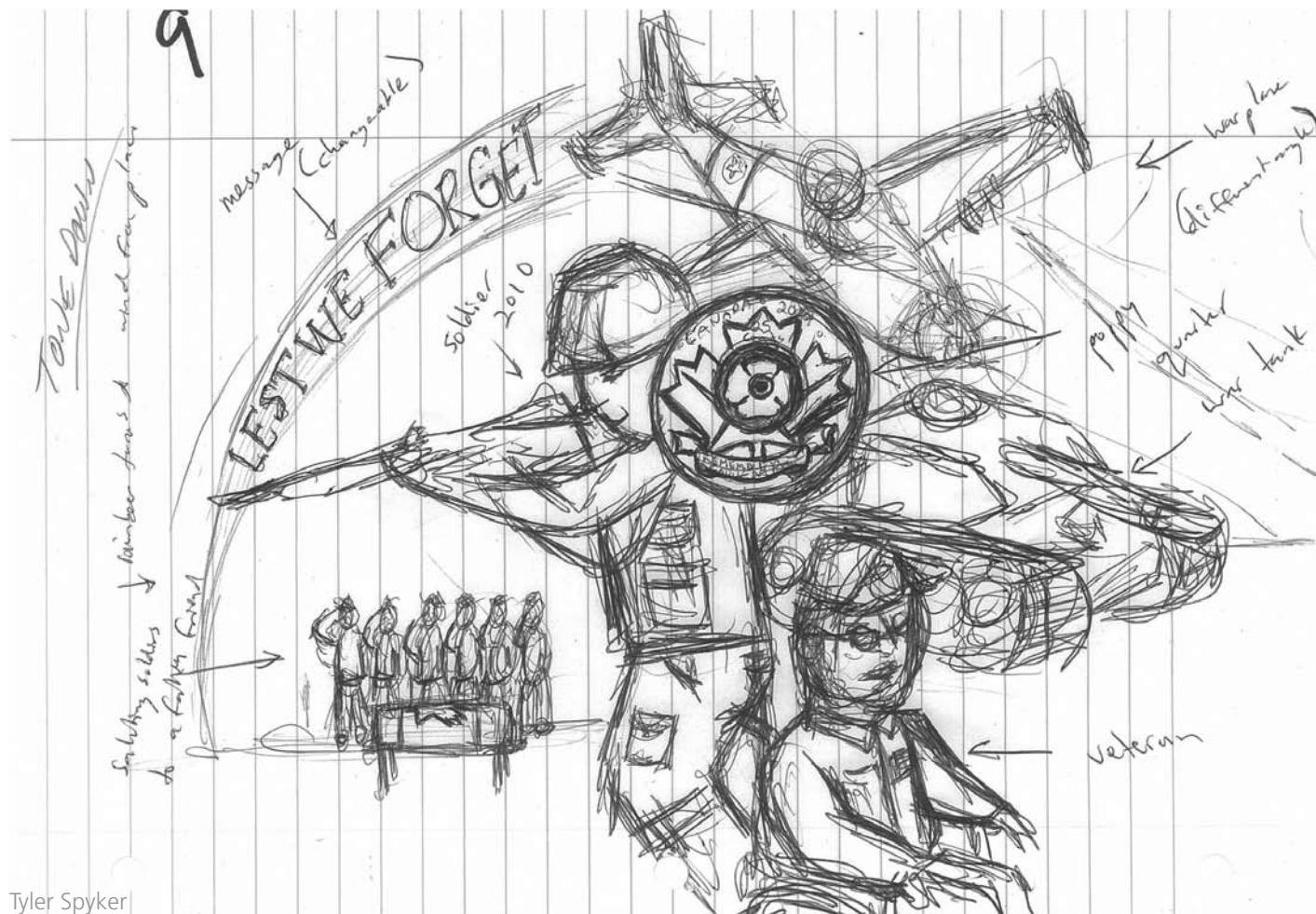
BY MARLENE BERGSMAN,
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS



Tyler Spyker



Mariah Hoekstra



Tyler Spyker

Smithville Christian High School students are taking their talents to the streets this month, as they paint a pair of award-winning murals on the walls of the Royal Canadian Legion.

Art teacher Andy Wunderink assigned his senior art class to reflect on remembrance and the impact of war in our lives, and then submitted the students' concept drawings to Legion Branch 393's mural contest. The drawings were displayed in the Legion for several weeks, and nearly 100 Legion members were given the chance to vote on the designs they liked best, said Wunderink. Students from South Lincoln High School also participated in the contest.

Two of the three designs that were voted the best are by Smithville Christian students: congratulations to Mariah Hoekstra and Tyler Spyker!

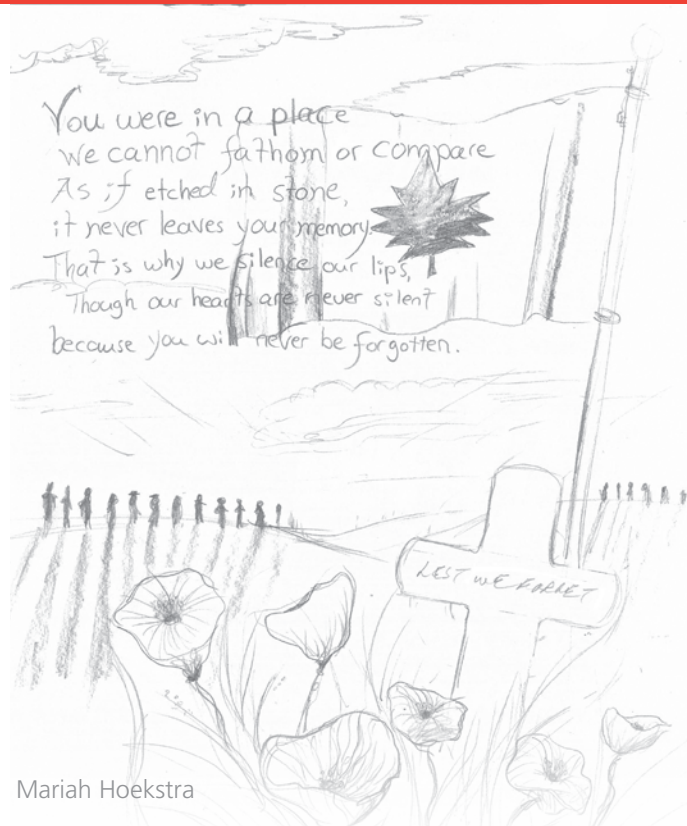
Over the next few weeks you will see them and their classmates painting these winning designs on the Legion walls on St. Catharines street. Stop in and say hello, and watch as the bare white walls are transformed into evocative images of war and remembrance. The murals are to be completed in time for Remembrance Day, November 11.

Hoekstra, who says she has had a lifelong passion for both writing and art and who has won writing contests in the past, included an original poem in her design. She said the words of the poem, which will be superimposed on the art, are meant to invite people into the work, "to attract people to read."

Hoekstra said she was both surprised and delighted to have her design chosen, and says it's her desire to use her talents to glorify God.

"I hope God will be with me in the years to come so I can find good ways to put my gifts to use," Hoekstra said.

Wunderink said he decided to enter the art contest because of the school's deliberate emphases on connecting with the community and on offering students an opportunity to be involved in mission as part of their daily lives.



Mariah Hoekstra

REMEMBRANCE

By Mariah Hoekstra

You were in a place
We cannot fathom or compare
As if etched in stone
It never leaves your memory.
That is why we silence our lips
Though our hearts are never silent
Because you will never be forgotten.

CLASS OF 2014

Smithville Christian High School
Grade 9 Class 2010/2011



Kristen Antonides



Jonathan Attema



Marissa B.



Ashley Buist



Marcus Buist



Jason DeHaan



Gregory DeKlerk



Andrea DeVries



Caitlyn Duck



Emma Dykstra



Honour Giesbrecht



Mitchell Harris



Katie Horvath



Devin Lunshof



Chantal Masselink



Matthew Muysson



Dean Oudman



Jordan Pols



Morgan Schilstra



Jodi Scholman



Allison Schwanz



Matthew
Stephenson



Aaron Teeuwsen



Ben VanderHeide

More New Students



Caleb VanderHeide



Lauren
VanGeytenbeek



Lucas VanHoffen



Nick VanRyn



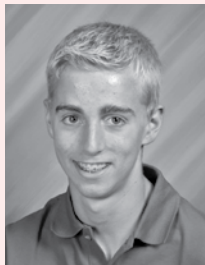
Sarah Veenhof



Nick Vermeer



Esther Zantingh



Joseph Zantingh

The students and staff of Smithville Christian High are delighted to be joined by new students – some of them from around the globe.

This year we are welcoming international students from seven different countries.



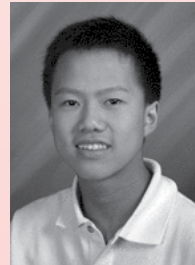
Robyn Brinkert
GRADE 10



David Honcoop
GRADE 10



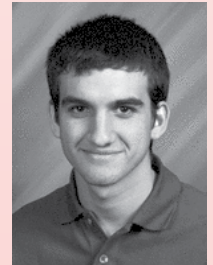
Idalene Shrimmer
GRADE 10



Jeffrey Wang
GRADE 10



Amanda Banai
GRADE 11



Marcel Camps-Ingles
GRADE 11



Scarlett Cheng
GRADE 11



Ben Wang
GRADE 11



Kiko Yang
GRADE 11



Rick Zhu
GRADE 11



Giordyn Garrick
GRADE 12



Alexandra Lodge
GRADE 12



Anastasiya
Syargeichuk
GRADE 12



Wenlu Yu
GRADE 12

The Importance of Parents

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

The more connected parents are with their kids the less likely it is that those teenagers will be sexually active, says Peter Jon Mitchell, a research analyst with the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada in Ottawa. Mitchell launched Smithville Christian High School's Parents' Forum on October 14 with his talk entitled "Family Ties: How parents help young people navigate the teen years."

"You are your child's primary sex educator," Mitchell told parents. "I can't stress that enough. Parents chronically underrate their own influence, and this becomes a lost opportunity." In addition to communicating their expectations for healthy sexuality, parents need to model good relationships, Mitchell said. "Don't neglect your marriage to pour yourself into your kids."

Sharing the results of numerous studies, Mitchell said teenagers themselves acknowledge how important their parents are, even if the world suggests parents are irrelevant. He said parents have to take advantage of their influence, and not relinquish their teenagers to teen culture, which is often missing the important characteristics of nurturing acceptance, sacrificial giving and unconditional love.

Mitchell offered several suggestions for parents who want to claim or reclaim attachment with their teens:

- 1) Invite dependence – introduce your teen to new experiences or places where you are the one providing the orientation, where you are your child's guide.
- 2) Establish structures and limits
- 3) Create time away

- 4) Court the competition – get to know your teen's friends, and make sure that they get to know you too.

Smithville Christian High School organized the series of events for parents as a way to be a blessing to its community and to invite people into the school, said principal Ted Harris.

The next speaker in the series will be Michelle DeBoer of Shalem Mental Health Network in Hamilton, who will be speaking Nov. 18 on the topic of "Fostering healthy independence: being the kind of parent your teen needs you to be." For more information on DeBoer's talk, to request copies of Mitchell's handouts and for details about upcoming talks in the series, visit the school's website at www.sdch.on.ca. All talks start at 7:30 pm. Admission is free and everyone is welcome.

PLAY BALL!

It's not often that cool weather and cloudy skies are described as "perfect weather" but for the eight teams that participated in Smithville Christian High School's annual fundraising baseball tournament, September 25 was indeed a perfect day. Over 100 ball players and their fans came out to have fun and support Christian education in a tournament organized by Rick Voortman and the fundraising committee. Congratulations to the Giants, who took home the pennant. Back row from left, Debbie Deleeuw, Neil Deleeuw, Mark Bruining, Kevin Janssen, Brad Bruining, Mike Douma, Theresa Douma and Beth Bruining. Front row, Greg VanLochem and Cheryl Pols.



We're Smithville Christian and we're unstoppable!

BY DOROTHY DE BOER, STUDENTS' COUNCIL TREASURER

Two years ago, our school began to stand out strong. Last year, we did our best to shine like stars. This year, the Students' Council of Smithville Christian High School would like to launch our new theme of being **UNSTOPPABLE!**

First of all, let me introduce to you our new Students' Council:

President—Robyn De Klerk

Secretary—Honour Giesbrecht

Treasurer—Dorothy De Boer

Activities Coordinator—Tallia Bezemer

Advertising—Daniel Vandersteen

Vice-all—Nygel Washington-Purser



MEMBERS OF THE 2010-2011 STUDENTS' COUNCIL, FROM LEFT: NYGEL WASHINGTON-PURSER, DANIEL VANDERSTEEN, ROBYN DE KLERK, HONOUR GIESBRECHT, DOROTHY DE BOER AND TALLIA BEZEMER.

When we first met together on our retreat in the middle of September, we had many great ideas for how we could lead the student body in a great year. But of course, we had to come together on one strong idea on which we could work together to make us stronger. When we put together all the best of our suggestions, we realized that we couldn't even stop there. We had to go above and beyond. We had to be **UNSTOPPABLE!**

What does it mean for the students at Smithville Christian to become unstoppable? It means that we need to stand out wherever we go. We need to work together to make a difference in our community and in our universe. We need to visibly be followers of Christ, in our classes and out of them. We don't want anything to be able to stop us from our goal: not our peers, not poverty, not even persecution.

And how are we as Students' Council going to lead the student body in being unstoppable? Once again this year, we are going to invest in our monthly cash for change event. This is where the students have the chance to pay five dollars to wear non-uniform clothing. All the proceeds will go to an organization in our community which needs our support. We have also invested some of the Students Council funds into trio-recycling bin centres. We hope to be able to be unstoppable for the environment around us and around the world.

The theme verse that we chose for this year is Philippians 3:13-14:

"Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

This is our call from God, that we be unstoppable – wherever we are.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

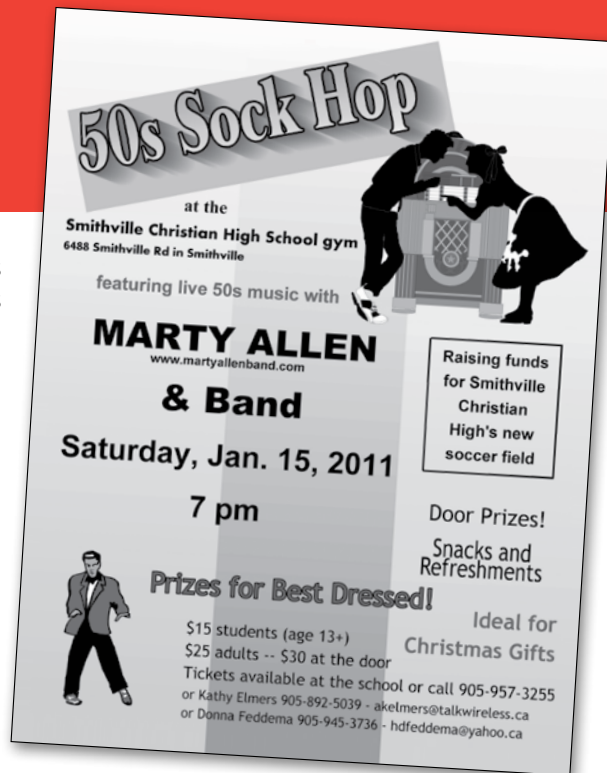
BY LINDA BOOY-KORVEMAKER
HEAD OF STUDENT SERVICES

At Smithville Christian we work hard at intentionally building community for all our new students. In September we celebrate our new grade nine students by holding a Grade Nine Blast on the first Friday of the first week of school. This program enables all the grade nine students to learn more about our school, each other, and the staff. The day is filled with mixer games, learning how to be part of the solution when it comes to bullying, and learning about how to be successful in their studies. By the end of the day the students and staff are exhausted, but they claim the school as their own.

One of the responsibilities of a guidance counselor is to also help new students with their transition to high school or their new school if the transition happens after grade nine. This is something we are always excited about at Smithville Christian. These new students are asked if they would like a buddy for the first few days or weeks of the semester. We want new students to know they are part of the Smithville Christian High community as soon as they enroll and that they are supported in every way at our school.

This year we also launched a new club that grew from our increasing number

of new students and our changing ethnic diversity. It is called the Culture Club. As we admit more international students we thought it might be fun to involve them and get to know more about them as they learn more about Canadian culture. Any student is welcome to join, but international students are required to belong. When we had our first meeting we had 10 international students and 15 Canadian students! It is our hope to build community and celebrate the diversity in our small school by visiting tourist attractions, attending cultural events, eating ethnic foods, and playing games that challenge us to get to know our community.





Do good sports make God smile?

BY FRED BREUKELMAN, ATHLETICS DIRECTOR

Does a great dig make God smile? Does a sub-four-minute mile make God smile? What about a perfectly executed give and go? A three-pointer – I'm sure that does – exact calculation and beautiful follow through. Badminton smash? That could be up for discussion. Watching a game played flawlessly and skilfully is a beautiful thing to watch. But should there be more to what we invest in?

There are many times when our athletic endeavours at Smithville Christian High School do provide more than mere athletic excellence. Here are three examples:

Family support of student athletes. There is no doubt that when your son or daughter participates and makes a team – celebration exists. Then reality sets in. Getting up at 6 a.m. for those 7 o'clock practices. Picking them up and everyone else's brother or sister and caravanning home – taking an extra 20 minutes to drop off the 'extras'. Ain't it beautiful! In fact the last thought – working together,

organizing rides, waiting in the halls (if you're a sibling) for the game or practice to finish – is what stretches us a little more. If you are a parent – you met a family that you never knew. If you are a student – you talked and hung out with that Grade 10er till 5 because that's when your older brother's volleyball practice finally ended. Truth is – meeting those new people and working together makes God smile.

Hosting Girl's OFSAA Soccer Championships in 2009. This was a monstrous undertaking and we couldn't have managed it without the full support of students, staff, and community. We broke down barriers hosting OFSAA. People in our community knew about it. Our students did amazingly well showcasing who we are and what we are about. Extensive feedback noted that our OFSAA was the smoothest, well organized and most professional tournament that many teams had been to – thanks to the selfless service of numerous Grade 12 Leadership students, staff and community. Excellence and service make God smile!

A team is a great example of a community. You become friends with someone you never really hung around with before because of the experiences you share. Each player plays a role. Those roles are not always determined at the beginning of a season but are honed over time. Sometimes they change when they have been established – this can be difficult or joyous – yet all roles are critical. When those roles are compromised it affects the entire team. Character plays a huge part in the success of the community. A player who is comfortable with their role, change or no change, and exudes a positive character begins the road to success. Does that mean that you need a winning record? No. It helps, but success within the team community makes God smile!

Whether you are a fan or an athlete, there may be many more examples that come to mind when you look back on your high school athletic career and remember that community. If so, let us know! Write us a letter, fax it to us, e-mail it, or post it on our Facebook page at Smithville Christian High School. We would love to share some of your memories in a coming issue!

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