

November 13, 2013

High school students host dinner and auction for life-changing mission trip

Smithville, ON — Smithville Christian High School students travel to South Africa every other year because they are committed to sharing the blessing of Christian education, says one of the teachers helping organize an upcoming trip.

"Our school believes in its mission to further the cause of Christian education," said Stuart Bender, a teacher and one of the chaperones for the 10-day trip, scheduled for March 2014. "One way we can help is through our partnership with a school far beyond our borders."

Smithville Christian has partnered with Theocentric Christian School in Limpopo, South Africa, since 1999 when Theocentric opened, and this trip will be the school's fifth, Bender said.

Bender said the goal of the trip is to bless the students and teachers of Theocentric with resources and encouragement, but also to develop the leadership of the Smithville Christian students.

"It stretches our students beyond their imagination," Bender said.

Smithville Christian sent its first team of students in 2006, and the early emphasis was on construction, Bender said. But now the local students focus more on developing relationships and modeling Christian leadership, he said.

In preparation for the trip, the Smithville Christian students are meeting weekly to plan and pray "so that God's hands are over everything," Bender said. While in South Africa, Smithville students will lead worship, help with school projects and activities and share their testimonies.

They are also preparing by raising money to cover the close to \$50,000 total cost of the trip, including an upcoming dinner and live auction, Nov. 22 at 6:30 p.m. at Smithville Christian High School. Dinner tickets are \$10 per person and can be purchased or reserved through the school office at (905) 957-3255 or office@smithvillechristian.ca

The evening will include live entertainment and student testimonies. Auction items include jewelry, a go-kart, a Keurig coffee maker, Maple Leafs tickets, golf passes, a wooden rocking horse, Christmas porch pot inserts, gift baskets, landscaping, household items and more. A complete auction list will be available on the school website Nov. 18.

Grade 11 student Joseph Falzone said he was "super happy" to learn he had been chosen to be part of the 2014 South Africa team.

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel the world and help other people, and to change my life and other people's lives by doing that," he said.

"It's a spiritual walk," Falzone said. "It's intensely personal, as well as helping others."

Grade 12 student Kristen Antonides agrees.

"I am excited to be a part of a team that is benefitting other people," Antonides said. "I am

looking forward to serving others and I am ready for a new experience to get out and be the hands and feet of Jesus.

"Getting out and spreading the good news is such a blessing."



Shae Vlaar and Nico DeBruyne, members of Smithville Christian High School's 2014 South Africa Team, wash cars at the Smithville Garage during a recent fundraising car wash.