

# THE HERALD

a publication of *Eastern Christian School*  
Volume 57, Issue 1

## HOMECOMING WEEKEND

SPRING 2016

**PLUS** RUNNING THE RACE:  
2016 EC SPIRITUAL THEME



## THE GREAT CLOUD OF WITNESSES

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I am a history lover. In the now more than eight years that I have been Head of School, I have collected a wonderful assortment of historic photos and documents ranging from a photo of our student body in front of our very first school in 1898 to The Record's photo of our Girls Soccer team celebrating their overtime win of the NJ State Soccer Championship in 2007. But one of the pieces that I treasure the most is a montage of small photos of our entire student body sometime between 1910 and 1920. Since finding this priceless piece of our history during a construction project in 2008, we have proudly displayed it under the title "The Great Cloud of Witnesses."

This title, of course, refers to the opening sentence of Hebrews 12 and is particularly meaningful in this school year in which we have selected Hebrews 12:1-3 as our theme passage for Eastern Christian School.

In this issue of *The Herald* we feature an article on this wonderful Biblical theme and the manner in which our students are internalizing its truths in our weekly chapels and small group Bible studies. But as I looked through this issue, it occurred to me that we are blessed to be a part of a school community that is a living part of our great cloud of witnesses. Throughout this issue you will see evidence of this blessing in articles about the Problem Based Learning project at our elementary school, the Hands Dirty Day of community service by our middle school students, the Thanksgiving Alumni Chapel in which our high school students worshipped with those who had gone before them, and in the wonderful stories of the hundreds of alumni who returned for class reunions during the last several months.

Thank you for being a part of our great cloud of witnesses and for cheering us on as we run the race marked out for us! We hope that you enjoy this issue of *The Herald*.

Thomas G. Dykhous '76  
*Executive Director & Head of School*



EASTERN CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOL

# THE HERALD

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### EC SPORTS



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*The Herald* is a bi-annual publication of The Foundation for Eastern Christian School. The purpose of this publication is to share the story of Eastern Christian School and to strengthen the bonds among our extended school community in support of Christian education. ***The Herald* is mailed free of charge to over 6,500 alumni, families, and friends of the school.**

Our address database is always being updated. If you would like to update your contact information or if you know of someone who would like to receive *The Herald*, please contact The Foundation for Eastern Christian School Association office and we will be very happy to update our database accordingly.

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## FULL STEAM AHEAD

By Jake Veenstra '16

US demand for scientists and engineers is expected to increase at four times the rate of all other occupations during the next decade, according to the website STEM careers. In keeping with the trend, Eastern Christian School has launched the STEAM program this fall—an accelerated program focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics.



1. Jax Revfi and Justin Kuiphoff with teacher Phil Verrengia; 2. Xinyu Xi, Stewart Elder and Sung Hyun Park; 3. Yeremiya Wright and Robert DeJulia; 4. Aidan Johnson and Diana Ibrahim



**EASTERN CHRISTIAN PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT ACADEMIC CURRICULUM TO EMPOWER STUDENTS AND DEVELOP THEIR GIFTS.** - part of EC's mission

The program involves a four-year commitment. Incoming freshman are eligible to apply and will be granted acceptance based on demonstrated aptitude and interest. Since the program is new this year, sophomores were also able to join.

The curriculum includes after-school work on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as the successful completion of four, five-credit classes: Principles of Research, Project Design and Research 1 and 2, and Dissertation and Defense. It also requires a four-year research project regarding a new idea, technology or process that is innovative and original.

To help STEAM students discover individual interests, participants start working on four mini-projects with one for each of the four pathways: physical science, biological science, computer science, and earth and environmental science. This semester, projects included a solar-powered oven and the development of a phone app.

The purpose of STEAM is to “offer students who are interested in math and science a program that has the same rigor and comprehensiveness of the humanities program,” said STEAM Director **Phil Verrengia**. “We want our students to develop technology that is God honoring, encourages community, and is earth friendly.”

# TOUCH A TRUCK

Drives Forward



1



2



3

1. Will Sloomaker; 2. Sawyer Gesch; 3. Everett Denekamp with his grandfather, Bill Vander Eems

**For nearly a year, a small group of elementary school parents made preparations. There were permits to get, food services to coordinate, and of course, trucks to reserve.**

“We were primarily focused on fundraising for the elementary school so technology needs could be met, but a secondary focus remained exposing the school to a broader audience,” says **Katie Tarta**, EC parent, EC events coordinator and PTO committee member. “We wanted to reach out and say, ‘hey! We want you to get to know us! Come check out our school.’ And they did.”

The group’s efforts culminated in a wildly successful, first-ever Touch a Truck event, hosted at the elementary school campus. The day brought nearly 900 people to view more than 35 vehicles. In the end, 30 families also requested admissions tours, and ticket and food sales raised \$8500 for technology needs.

At the event, “children were encouraged to pull levers, beep horns, blast sirens, ride lifts and release compressor switches. Each vehicle was manned by a volunteer driver who explained what the truck did and how it worked,” explained Tarta.

She added, “Fan favorites included the UPS Truck, which gave many rides to tots on its lift, as well as the boom truck from Kuiken Brothers and Russo Development’s giant dump truck. The fire engines and K9 units were big hits too.”

Will this be the last one for ECES? Although a time frame hasn’t been decided yet, Tarta mentions, “expect to see Touch a Truck again in the near future, maybe in the next 18 months.” The planning team is seeking more elementary school parent recruits. If interested, email [katietarta@easternchristian.org](mailto:katietarta@easternchristian.org).



# HANDS DIRTY DAY

Growing by Serving the Community



**Matthew 20:26-28 serves as a good reminder for those who wish to be fully devoted followers of Christ. The mother of Zebedee's sons asks Jesus if her children can sit at His right and left in heaven. Jesus' response is as follows: "Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (NIV)**

Eastern Christian Middle School students put their faith in action for the second annual Hands Dirty Day, an event where small groups go out into the community to serve. The event also serves a fundraising purpose. Students are asked to find sponsors and the money raised goes toward middle school technology. This year, students traveled to a wide range of organizations and homes, completing various tasks.

Eighth grader **Kim Abbas**, for example, went to the Eastern Christian Children's Retreat, a non-profit organization that serves individuals with developmental disabilities. She spent her time helping the residents there with daily tasks. Meanwhile, eighth grader **Cassie DeJulia** participated in a time of singing

hymns and worship songs at the Holland Home. Along with the residents, the small group of girls sang songs such as, Lead me to the Cross and Just as I am. "We got there and they loved the hymns," she said. "It really affected them."

Hands Dirty Day began with a commissioning and devotional time early in the morning, followed by working in the community until noon. Although not a typical school day, the day provided a rewarding educational experience for those involved. "Our education, in a Reformed sense, has as its objective transformation. We want to see our students transformed by the gospel and live lives that are fully devoted to our Lord, Jesus Christ. We also want to see these lives, which have been transformed by the



1. Top row: Jim Lloyd (parent), Grace Lloyd, Kelly Steenstra, Josh Steen, Aiden Sehulster, Joshua Yoon, Valerie Brain (parent); second row: Linda Lloyd (parent), Leah Boonstra, Kiandra Dussard, Brian Schaaf, Karlee Borduin, Yejin Park-Shin, Tara Brain; 2. Holland Home (L to R): Michele Vriesema, Katherine Marshall, Anya Veinberg, Cassie DeJulia; 3. Matias Cortes and Tyler Dykhouse at Abma's Farm; 4. Mahwah Environmental Volunteers Organization (L to R): James Klas, Alex Perez, foreground; Elise Reitsma, Isabelle Lazor, background.

gospel, living out their faith in the local community and having a transforming effect on the culture around them,” says **Daniel Lazor**, principal.

He adds: “For many students, and perhaps adults as well, experiencing a day of service can be a way of introducing them to the opportunities that are all around us. As important as the actual

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**WE WANT TO SEE OUR STUDENTS TRANSFORMED BY THE GOSPEL... LIVING OUT THEIR FAITH IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND HAVING A TRANSFORMING EFFECT ON THE CULTURE AROUND THEM.”**

service is on this day, it is equally important that we help students to see that service is a way of life, not a day or an activity.”

# NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL HOUSES

By Michael Vriesema '16



competitions. “[They will] earn points based on competitions, merits and possibly report card grades,” said middle school physical education teacher **Aaron Goldstein**. The winning team will receive a pizza party at the end of the year.

According to Goldstein, the purpose of the houses is to “foster bonds and friendships while motivating the students to excel.” Administrators are also hoping to build school spirit and encourage the students to be the best they can be through these competitions.

The first event, according to students, succeeded in achieving its goals. “It was great to cheer everyone on as a team,” said eighth grader Isabelle Lazor. “Everyone was going crazy.”

**It started with an Oreo cookie placed on the forehead of several students. Without touching it and without dropping it, the students needed to shimmy the cookie down their faces and into their mouths.**

It may seem like a strange exercise to complete at the end of a school

day, but it signaled the launch of the Eastern Christian Middle School houses, an initiative that divides the school into four teams. The goal of the cookie challenge, along with other events, is to earn points for your team and in the end emerge as the winning house.

House team competitions will extend far beyond cookie dexterity

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**THE PURPOSE OF THE HOUSES IS TO ‘FOSTER BONDS AND FRIENDSHIPS WHILE MOTIVATING THE STUDENTS TO EXCEL.’”**

*House teams get to work constructing a red cup tower that must collapse into itself. Below: Tyler Rumsey balances a cookie for a good cause.*



# LEARNING IN STYLE

By Emily Mulcock '16

When it came time to renovate rooms 303 and 305, high school administrators opted for a modern makeover. The school's two rooms have bucked the trend of neatly arranged, rigid desks in favor of chairs and desks that spin and move.



Students use the new space for a small group chapel conversation.

The rooms previously held a 15-year-old computer lab, which had become obsolete with increasingly sophisticated technology. When a new technology room was earmarked in close proximity to the media center, these two rooms needed a redo into useable classroom space.

“Since we were going to be re-doing the rooms, we wanted to reflect how students learn in the twenty-first century. They learn more collaboratively—less in rows with a teacher in the front—and seating should reflect that,” explains Principal **Ruth Kuder**.

As for desk design, Kuder said they are “high quality and durable, they are comfortable regardless of the size of the student, they offer a tremendous amount of flexibility due to the wheels and the mobility of the desktops. And practically, they have space for backpacks.”

“...WE WANTED TO REFLECT HOW STUDENTS LEARN IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY. THEY LEARN MORE COLLABORATIVELY—LESS IN ROWS WITH A TEACHER IN THE FRONT—AND SEATING SHOULD REFLECT THAT.”

Renovations began just one day after school let out in June and did not end until the desks arrived just one week before school began. The classrooms, in addition to the modern Node desks, also included a vibrant coat of paint, a wall to separate the classrooms and removal of old floors and wiring. The project was paid for through generous donations and grant money.

“What we really wanted was the design of the room to reflect teaching and learning,” says Kuder.

As for the students, the change has been welcomed. Senior **Jesse Blanco** remarks, “I am more creative and able to think more; I love the desk.”

# PROBLEM BASED LEARNING

Exploring the Cloud of Witnesses



Teachers were called up to the front during the PBL kickoff chapel to reveal each grade's assigned Hebrews 11 person of faith.

**On Nov. 10, the elementary school celebrated its PBL kickoff chapel. Standing for Problem Based Learning, the chapel service unveils a school-wide project each year based on real-world contexts, tasks and tools. The goal is to use a question, problem or challenge to build student knowledge and skills over an extended period of time.**

In its first year of existence (2006/2007), the PBL focused on the question: How do you live by faith? Almost ten years later, the PBL has circled back to a similar theme. This year, the challenge is to create a Hebrews 11 Hall of Fame focusing on the “great cloud of witnesses”—men and woman of the Bible who responded in faith to God’s promises.

Each grade level was assigned one person of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11. Although the work will be differentiated by grade level, all classes will answer the following questions: How did your assigned person run the race set before him? How can we run our race?

Tying back to the school theme of Run the Race, taken from Hebrews 12:1-3, students will specifically look at how their biblical role models achieved the school motto: “toss what hinders, run with perseverance and focus on Jesus.”

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**STUDENTS [WERE REMINDED OF] THE IMPORTANCE OF RUNNING THE RACE OF FAITH WELL:**

**“OUR GOAL IS TO ONE DAY HEAR, ‘WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT.’”**

The PBL will run until May 3, when each grade will present its findings.

While unveiling the plans for this year, **Carol Byma**, fourth grade teacher and PBL coordinator, reminded students the importance of running the race of faith well: “Our goal is to one day hear, ‘well done, good and faithful servant.’”

# SMALL GROUP FORMAT IN CHAPEL

By Michael Vriesema '16

It's 9:30 am on Wednesday and time for chapel, but today something is different. Instead of the usual migration to the auditorium, students divide into groups and move into various classrooms.

This year, on three Wednesdays per semester, high school students take a break from the norm to meet in Chapel Connection small groups.

Small groups consist of two student leaders and about eight students per group. During meetings, the leaders open up and close in prayer. In between, the group discusses questions following a video prompt. Leaders encourage students to open up to each other and get to know each other better.

The idea for chapel small groups stemmed from two places. The first was from observing the success of the middle school small group program. The chapel groups were also modeled after Timothy Groups,



the high school program that matches small groups of freshmen with junior leaders to make it easier to transition into high school.

One important idea of the small groups is that they are led by students. In order to be selected, student leaders had to receive at least two nominations from teachers. These students were chosen because their teachers felt they embodied EC's core values. These small groups are meant not only to help students in their faith, but also to give students the opportunity to become stronger leaders. One student leader, **Leslie Bond**, says, "I hope to grow in my faith and help others grow in theirs."

*Students gather together throughout the school to discuss spiritual topics during small group time. Below: Student leaders prepare for their first small groups during a Saturday in-school training session.*



# PRESCHOOL

Enrollment Soaring



**The youngest members of the Eastern Christian community—the pre-school children—are hard at work and play. There are songs to sing, sand tables to experiment with, and stories to hear.**

The curriculum at Eastern Christian Preschool “serves to help children in all areas of development, including social, academic, physical, spiritual and emotional. Children get ready for kindergarten through hands-on experiences and through interactions with teachers and their classmates,” says **Kathy Faasse**, preschool director. “Our children are introduced to the academics of early childhood in ways that will promote learning and the enjoyment of learning. This sets the foundation for a lifelong love of learning.”

In recent years, the program has seen a sharp increase in enrollment, currently filling 59 out of 60 available spots. To accommodate a greater number of students in



1. Jalen Mehar, Gretchen Lapinsky, Xander Bailey, Brenna Nelson; 2. Mia Foster and John Munene; 3. Gretchen Lapinsky

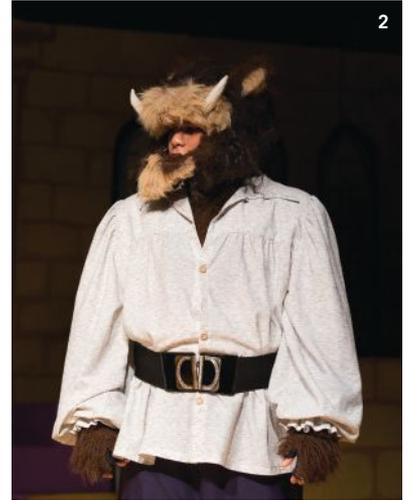
the future, the school is discussing adding five day/full day options for all levels of the program, as well as expanding into satellite locations.

“We want to make our school accessible to more students so that we can grow our school and our missional reach,” says **Rudi Gesch**, director of marketing and enrollment. “We’re looking into options to expand our potential capacity. In our existing elementary school campus footprint, we cannot fit any more students during the morning (generally the preferred time for young students). By partnering with a church program, we may be able to increase our offerings. This is still in preliminary talks, but is something we are pursuing.”

For now, the program is housed exclusively in the primary program wing of the elementary school. This enables preschool children to participate in many activities, including chapel and service projects. No matter where the program heads in the future, the mission won’t change. Faasse says, “I believe that parents choose a preschool where their child will be nurtured, taught, valued and loved. Our children learn quickly that they are loved and valued by their teachers, and most of all by God. He is the one who created each one of them, made each one special, and He loves each one very much.”

# TALE AS OLD AS TIME

By Christina Poliandro '17



**“Once upon a time, in a faraway land, A young Prince lived in a shining castle. Although he had everything his heart desired, The Prince was spoiled, selfish, and unkind.”**

This familiar prologue set the stage for *Beauty and the Beast*, a tale made famous by Disney and brought to life on the Eastern Christian High School stage Nov. 11-14.

The story begins with the transformation of a selfish prince into a beast, a predicament that can only be broken when he learns “to love another and earn her love in return.” With a colorful cast of characters, the ultimate message is that true beauty is not found in outward appearances. In the words of Mrs. Potts (played by senior **Hannah Furman**), it’s a “tale as old as time” and a “song as old as rhyme.”

Being in a production—whether it’s a play or a musical—can be a challenge. Every character needs to be believable, including characters as arrogant as



1. Scott Steenstra, Skylar and Adrian Brown; 2. Mathew Matthias; 3. Amanda Vincenti and Maggie Albies; 4. Michael Vriesema and Adelina Peretti

Gaston (played by senior **Mike Vriesema**). Mike says he gained some perspective through Gaston’s eyes before delving into the role. “The beast is rude and while Gaston is rude, he is [actually just] in love.”

Sophomore **Adelina Peretti**, who played the part of Belle, admired her character. “I love how Belle is both poised and strong—she has a very sweet kind of way about her but she’s also feisty and can defend herself.” And just like her character, who spends time in the beast’s dungeon, Adelina knows she is not truly home. “Even in the song ‘Home’ [Belle is] wondering: ‘is this really home?’ We can get caught up in all of the problems [of this world] and it’s important to know that this is not our home forever.” She adds, “It’s also cool how she’s a well rounded princess...she actually has some substance.”

# MIDDLE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

New Leadership Class Launched



**What does it take to be a leader? At Eastern Christian, it's commitment to the cause, spiritual maturity, demonstrated responsibility and a heart to lead others closer to God, according to Laurie Kuipers, fifth and sixth grade Bible teacher.**



On Tuesday afternoons, middle school students lead peers in a small group setting.

She, along with seventh and eighth grade Bible teacher **Betsy Tyvoll**, spend an hour and twenty minutes each week cultivating leadership in middle school students through the implementation of a new leadership class. Potential leaders were screened through a comprehensive selection process, which included an application and teacher and dean recommendations.

Currently, the class is working through the book *Student Leaders Start Here*, by Doug Franklin, to discover individual leadership styles, spiritual gifts, and the traits of good leaders. In addition to this time of study, the class engages in team-building activities to reinforce leadership ideas. Teams also spend time working on small group lesson material.

Each leader, in addition to participating in the class, spends a portion of Tuesday afternoons leading a small group of other students. Eighth grade students lead groups of seventh and eighth graders, while seventh grade students lead groups of fifth and sixth graders.

In the first year of its implementation, Tyvoll and Kuipers see a lot of student growth and are excited by initial observations. "I want to say our retreats are a highlight, but it is also pretty neat when student leaders come to you with ideas of how to improve their own small group and plead to take complete ownership of their group. There is a lot we learn by listening to our student leaders, especially since they have a pulse on student culture," says Kuipers.



**[TO BE A LEADER IS] COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE, SPIRITUAL MATURITY, DEMONSTRATED RESPONSIBILITY AND A HEART TO LEAD OTHERS CLOSER TO GOD"**

# GET YOUR SWAG ON

The Swag Shop Comes to EC

**A lot of people at Eastern Christian School have been sporting swag—school spirit swag, that is.**

The Swag Shop opens for business at Community Nights throughout the year, as well as home basketball games. In addition to EC-themed apparel that includes sweatshirts, scarves, T-shirts and hats, the shop also offers an assortment of foods ranging from mozzarella sticks to candy to empanadas. The assortment of food changes with the games.

All proceeds are funneled into the Eastern Christian Athletic Department. In addition to the fundraising aspect, the hope is to increase school spirit, especially during competitions.

The stand first opened in December 2014 at the beginning of basketball season. Last school year, it raised \$6000 through event and online sales (items are available online for a brief time before Christmas). To date, the most popular clothing item is long sleeve #SoarEC shirts, which are available in white and blue.

Getting The Swag Shop up and running has been a community effort. Donations covered initial start-up costs, and a 100 percent volunteer staff keeps it running. **Kelly Sietsma**, a mother of two EC student-



*Elementary school students sport “EC swag” during school spirit day.*

athletes, manages the swag shop, while **Amy Brooks** handles clothing sales.

“Sports have been a big part of our lives, and it’s nice to see the EC community come together at these events,” says Brooks. “We generally have three to four people working in the snack stand. We are always looking for volunteers. If you have any interest in serving in the Swag Shop and concession stand, please email [sietsmakelly@gmail.com](mailto:sietsmakelly@gmail.com).”



# MAD PROGRAM

MAD at the Middle School



1. (L-R): Ya'Nay Pope, Matthew Soder, Luke Vulpone and Isabelle Lazor; 2. Teacher Ben Kuiken and Principal Daniel Lazor perform in a skit during the MAD launch ceremony

**Every Thursday afternoon, for about 40 minutes, middle school students learn how to get MAD.**

The school's Make A Difference program—a year-long initiative encouraging service learning by partnering with a non-profit organization—kicked off in October. The kick-off event showcased three faculty runners to illustrate that “needs in our community are not obstacles, but rather outlets for us to share the Gospel and are part of our race,” explains **Naomi Braunius**, middle school teacher and MAD project guiding team member.

Each grade level is assigned an organization, either St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, Paterson Habitat for Humanity, Children's Therapy Center or New Hope Community Ministries. During their time together,

students learn more about their assigned organizations and “collaborate to find meaningful ways to help make a difference,” shares Braunius.

In addition to providing an opportunity to meaningfully serve, MAD also branches out into other areas of the curriculum. It ties into the school's theme (which is Running the Race this year), as well as the school's core values. In addition, sometimes the learning flows into classroom curriculum.

For example, in science, the eighth graders use ads from grocery stores to shop for nutritious meals for their “families” on a very fixed budget. In sixth grade social studies, students read nonfiction articles about Habitat for Humanity worldwide and investigate the housing needs and economic differences around the world.

The purpose for the program is multi-faceted. Braunius adds, “Our middle school community values the whole middle school student: academics, character and spirit. MAD is a time to recognize that we are all broken living in a broken world, and have the unique opportunity at ECMS to serve others as a response to what God has done for us. We do this in collaboration with each other, and with other members of the community outside of EC. Learning often happens during MAD that will be remembered long after eighth grade graduation.”



**[WE] HAVE THE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY AT ECMS TO SERVE OTHERS AS A RESPONSE TO WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US.”**

# YOUTUBE SENSATION

Eastern Christian and YouTube

If you saw last year's Eastern Christian video, "Do Life Big," you aren't alone. So did 14,000 other people. Currently the most popular video to date on the EC's YouTube channel, it highlights the power of video to effectively communicate many things in a short amount of time.



(L to R): Joey DeLuccia, Luke Baitzel and Nicholas Shortridge

ONE OF OUR KEY MESSAGING POINTS IS TO SHOW OUR AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN FAITH INTEGRATION. ...WE REALLY DO LIVE OUT OUR FAITH. WE LIKE TO SHOW THAT SO THAT PEOPLE KNOW WE ARE TRUE TO OUR MISSION. - Rudi Gesch, director of marketing and enrollment

With this understanding, the school added another video to its collection this year. "Love is the Evidence" is inspired and named after the song by Christian band Citizen Way. The video takes its footage from the regular school day, intertwining it with special events such as Hands Dirty Day, the high school service day, mission trips and the Christmas festival.

"All of these things are already a regular part of who we are and what we do. We just wanted to capture it all and put it in one short video," says **Rudi Gesch**, director of marketing and enrollment. "One of our key messaging points is to show our authentic Christian faith integration. We really are a Christian school and we really do live out our faith. We like to show that so that people know we are true to our mission."

Video is typically shot by **Justin Van Dyke**, webmaster and visual communications coordinator. All-campus community videos such as "Do Life Big" and "Love is the Evidence" take approximately three to five days to film and edit.

Perhaps a key piece of equipment that makes the videos stand out from others is the use of drone technology. Dubbed "Eagle Vision 1", the drone is a DJ1 Phantom Vision 2+. "It offers amazing vantage points of our facilities and programs that we've never seen before. These establishment shots really add a higher quality to the videos that we produce," says Gesch. He adds, "It can fly extremely high, but we're only allowed to fly it to FAA regulations—400 feet."

# THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

An EC Tradition, By Kelly Tanis '16



prior but then seriously ramps up the night before the event. NHS members decorate the halls, get supplies ready, and practice for the opening show that happens in the auditorium. Students agree, however, that the work is worth it. "Every year, the students hope that they can make their child's day one hundred percent better than it was before," says **Bryan Lineweaver**, this year's NHS president.

Heerema adds, "The Christmas Festival is so exciting because for one full day we work together as one body in Christ with a single purpose: let God's love shine through us. How often will we all have such a singular focus and spread joy to so many children in our typical daily lives? It is humbling to be a part of that joy."

**For one day in December, Eastern Christian High School transforms into a winter wonderland.**

Although it's not unusual to see schools with snowflakes and swaths of red and green during this month, EC high school students decorate with a different purpose in mind: hosting first and second grade students from PS#24 in Paterson.

It's a tradition that's lasted many years. Despite this, there are still numerous challenging details that need tending in order to make the day special for the PS#24 students.

Although the students and teachers decorate classrooms, the National Honor Society members assume the bulk of the work. Advised by teachers **Dawn Heerema** and **James Uitermarkt**, the preparation process begins weeks

1. (L to R): Chloe Argyros, Dana DelPizzo, Christina Piluso, Jax Revfi, YaLong Wong; 2. Skylar Brown takes a break from the action to pose with his buddy; 3. Leslie Bond decorates cookies with her elementary school friend.



# ALUMNI CHAPEL

An EC First, By Nicole Aoki '16



*The Foundation for Eastern Christian School hosted a continental breakfast for recent graduates immediately following the chapel.*

**On Nov. 25, Eastern Christian High School welcomed back many alumni and hosted its first-ever Thanksgiving Alumni Chapel at the high school. Some of these alumni led in worship and spoke to the current students at the high school about the influence EC had on them.**

The idea for an alumni chapel came about last year from **Rebekah Sankey's** Bible and Worship class, but the day the event was supposed to happen, the school had a snow day. The idea did not melt along with the snow, however, because this year's Bible and Worship class used the idea of an alumni chapel and turned it into the Thanksgiving Alumni Chapel. The Bible and Worship class started the planning in September and had the help of **Jesse Struck** and **Anne Borduin** to contact recent alumni. Additionally, The Foundation office assisted in creating a Facebook page and sending out emails to alumni.

Although the chapel welcomed all alumni, it was focused specifically on those who graduated in recent years. "We recognize that most young alumni are away at college during homecoming weekend. The alumni chapel provided an opportunity for reconnecting when most of those recent graduates are home for Thanksgiving," said **David Visbeen**, executive director for The Foundation for Eastern Christian School.

The chapel was led in worship by alumni who sang in chapel when they were in high school, one of them being **Taylor Faber**, graduate of the class of 2015. "It felt great to be back. I really enjoyed being able to see some of my friends still in high school, friends who were back from college, and some of my previous teachers. It was great to catch up with everyone in such a welcoming environment," said Taylor. Taylor continued to explain the excitement she felt when she was asked to sing at the chapel. "Leading worship in chapel was one of the most meaningful things that I feel I got to do in my high school years, so I was excited about the opportunity to do it again," she said.

## Alumni reflections on Eastern Christian



"What I appreciate most about my education at Eastern Christian is not

necessarily what I learned in my science or math classes, but the overall values of a Christian faith that were ingrained in the curriculum of the school. Now raising my own child, I reflect back on my 12 years at EC and long for my son to experience the same type of atmosphere of love, support and character-building that I had throughout my years at EC." - **Janessa Jeltema Davis, '00, Pennsylvania**



"What I most appreciate about the education at EC is the absolute faith teachers and coaches have in you. They all believe in bringing every student

to their highest potential, whether it's academically, athletically, or musically. I still remember Coach Apol having complete faith that my 4x100 relay team would earn the title of First Team All-County my senior year, and that is exactly what happened. Even though he made us practice hand-offs until the sun went down, it is what helped us earn the title, and I thank him for that." - **Esther Galo, '15, New Jersey**



"I spent my first 14 years of education in the EC school system (Pre-K, K included). It laid the foundations of a Christian worldview that has been lasting

a lifetime. It was not merely the knowledge that I received from a multitude of teachers that built this but also their love that contributed to a shaping of my life. I look back and think of every class or activity having the kingdom as its goal, whether explicit or implicit. I remember the impact of every teacher's faith on mine. I am grateful for the education I received at EC which has equipped me to live in a global world with Christ as my goal." - **Matt Stephan, '97, India**



*Members of the high school community surround the flag pole for chapel on National See You at the Pole Day.*

# RUNNING THE RACE

## 2015-16 Spiritual Theme at EC

**“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.” - Hebrews 12:1-3**

Every year, Eastern Christian School chooses a spiritual theme passage. The theme is woven through activities and curriculum on all three campuses—including some creative ones, like themed birthday gifts at the elementary school. But perhaps the most purposeful way to communicate the principles in the verse is through weekly chapels. Following is a look at how the theme has been incorporated in school worship services this year.

### HIGH SCHOOL

At the high school, students orchestrate all aspects of chapel service, with teachers serving as guidance counselors. Every semester, a small group of students sign up for Bible and Worship, a class where students plan and execute the details of weekly chapel services. The class is supported by a student-run worship team, which practices outside of the school day.

The theme of Running the Race was introduced on the first chapel of the school year with a series of videos showcasing the perspective of runners, created by the media literacy class in collaboration with the Bible and Worship team. From there, “our effort is to use the themes of these verses as a jumping off point for our focus each chapel. Bible and Worship students learn to cross-reference using Strongs Concordance and then plan [topics] for guest speakers based on ideas from the text and questions that arise in their own minds and hearts from the verses,” explains **Rebekah Sankey**, Bible and Worship Team adviser.

Sankey has been particularly impressed this year by students who are not only leading on stage, but also from their seats. Members of the student-led Bible studies, Man-Up



and Anchored, have pledged to pursue front row seats and take notes during chapel. “It is amazing to see passionate young leaders rise up in faith and pursue a lifestyle of godly devotion based in faith-filled community. Sometimes, I step back to see chapel and realize how blessed we are to provide these students a chance to discover the gold God has placed in them. They truly will transform the world through their spiritual leadership.”

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

At the middle school, traditional chapel services rotate every other week with small group meetings. The small group time has focused specifically on studying the “cloud of witnesses”, referring to the people of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11.

For the first time this year, a new middle school praise team has launched, under the direction of parent and staff member **Anna DeJulia**. Corporate worship services, in addition to a time of singing, also include a message from a speaker. Topics this year have all fallen under the umbrella of the theme verse, and have included throwing off what hinders and joining the race, rather than being a spectator.

“Having a theme provides a way for our faculty, staff and students to be united within the school. The themes we pick are broad enough to be incorporated in different content areas as well as to provide content to support our chapel and small group program. As we focus in on a particular passage, it helps us to grow together as a community of believers in our understanding of that



1. Rachel Post, Capri Kuiken and Matthew Barna participate in the Thanksgiving Chapel.; 2. (L to R): Stephanie Mirkhan, Katelyn Ross, Katie Reitsma and Rebecca Ross; 3. At the high school, student musicians lead worship time.

particular passage, as well as in our understanding of its implications for our walk with Christ,” says Daniel Lazor, middle school principal.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Chapel at the elementary school follows a fixed schedule on most weeks, which includes a combination of teacher and student involvement. Third and fourth graders lead the school in pledges, Bible reading and prayer. Teacher **Rob Flim** directs three songs, and then a chapel message follows. **Deb Veenstra** concludes each chapel time leading the students in reciting part of the spiritual theme: “Run with perseverance, toss what hinders, focus on Jesus.”

Chapel messages center around the theme, and music plays an integral role in conceptual understanding. The students learned a song called *Run*, by Bob Hauch, in music class, which is regularly sung in chapel. For messages, “typically we break the passage into small parts and look at each part to make sure students understand the meaning of each part,” explains **Sandra Bottge**, elementary school principal.

“Our spiritual themes are a great way for students to learn about God’s Word. When we emphasize a particular passage, students get to know and understand the message in the passage. Our hope is that students will internalize the message and let it guide their walk with Christ,” says Bottge. “We want students to continually build and strengthen their relationship with God through our spiritual themes.”



## MISSION POSSIBLE

Join the Mission Possible Team

**We have a very challenging mission, but is it far from Mission Impossible.**

Every year, The Foundation for Eastern Christian School manages events and organizes fund drives as a way to achieve our mission. There are auctions, beefsteaks, fashion shows, golf outings, and now a 5K; there's the Annual Fund Drive, the Business Drive, Christian Education Day, Giving Tuesday, and a Year-end Appeal. All of these are combined to reduce the cost of every student's tuition. You have made these events successful by giving your time, talent and treasures. Year after year, with your help, we can say: Mission Possible!

If you have wondered if there are other ways to support Eastern Christian School's important mission, consider joining The 1892 Society by establishing a Planned Giving option. Various forms of planned giving have been contributing to our

Endowment Fund for many years. Recently The 1892 Society was established to acknowledge those gifts and express our gratitude to the donors.

**EASTERN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL (WITH OUR MINISTRY PARTNER: BARNABAS FOUNDATION) IS ABLE TO OFFER A NUMBER OF CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU TO INVEST IN THE MISSION AND MINISTRY OF EASTERN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL:**

- Donate appreciated stocks or property. You will avoid capital gains and can take advantage of an immediate tax deduction at fair market value.
- Name Eastern Christian School in your Estate Plan. Your bequest will directly benefit EC and generally escapes estate and inheritance taxes.
- Establish a Charitable Gift Annuity with Eastern Christian School as the beneficiary. You receive an immediate tax deduction for a portion of the gift and you receive fixed income (interest rate based on your age) for life.
- Donate a Life Insurance Policy. There are certain tax deductions for premiums paid, dividends assigned, cash surrender or replacement value.
- Name Eastern Christian School as a Beneficiary for a Life Insurance Policy or Retirement Asset. Proceeds are received by EC at death and generally, the asset escapes estate, inheritance, and income taxes.

*For more information on Planned Giving and The 1892 Society, please contact David Visbeen in The Foundation office by email ([davidvisbeen@easternchristian.org](mailto:davidvisbeen@easternchristian.org)) or by telephone (973-427-9294).*



EASTERN CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOL

## Planned Giving

Have you considered a  
Charitable Gift Annuity?

**A CGA may make sense for you:**

- Receive an immediate tax deduction
- Provide yourself with guaranteed income for life
- Make a gift that will impact the future of Eastern Christian School

For more information on charitable gift annuities, contact The Foundation for Eastern Christian.

[foundation@easternchristian.org](mailto:foundation@easternchristian.org) | 973-427-9294

# WHAT AM I DOING HERE?

David Visbeen, Executive Director

**It has now been about 18 months since I became the executive director for The Foundation at Eastern Christian School. Those who know me well, know that coming to EC was a little bit like coming home. My heart has been a part of this ministry for a very long time. But many still wonder: What in the world are you doing there?**

Some believe that my job is simply that of a fundraiser. Many think of the fundraiser as nothing more than a person who is trying to talk them out of their hard earned assets. That is an unfortunate view of Christian fundraising and certainly not a job that I would be interested in. Working at The Foundation is a very different experience from that perspective.

Yes, funds need to be raised for Eastern Christian School. And yes, The Foundation is tasked with raising those funds. But rather than trying to separate our partners from their hard earned assets, I believe we are offering

them an opportunity to invest in something with eternal consequences. At Eastern Christian School, we are committed to a very specific mission. In a nutshell, our mission is *to provide an excellent, Christ-centered education to the children of Christian families, empowering those children to act as Christ's transforming agents in a global society.* My job is to make you, EC's supporting partners, aware of the opportunities to participate in this mission.

I take EC's mission very seriously. After all, I'm a product of that mission; as are my parents and my children. I know first hand, the difference an excellent, Christ-centered education can make. And I want that difference, not just for our current student body, but also for generations of students to come. I'm excited to be a part of this mission and I am humbled that I have the opportunity to invite others to join in the amazing things God continues to do here at Eastern Christian School after 123 years. So join me. Our mission is a challenging one, but with your help, it is **Mission Possible!**

## THE BOLGER CHALLENGE

### Matching Funds

**On July 24, 2015 Eastern Christian School received confirmation that we were the recipient of a Challenge Grant from The Bolger Foundation of Ridgewood, NJ.**

The Bolger Foundation was approached for assistance with security upgrades at EC's Middle School and High School. Mr. Bolger presented EC with a challenge: Raise \$60,000 for the needed upgrades and The Bolger Foundation would provide \$30,000.

In the Fall we quietly began a campaign to raise the necessary \$60,000. You may have seen news of The Bolger Challenge on Facebook or heard about it in some other way. Today, we are just about halfway to the goal which is all or nothing. Raise \$60,000 and get \$30,000 from The Bolger Foundation or raise less and get nothing at all.

Thank you to those of you who already contributed to The Bolger Challenge. We have until mid-summer to raise the balance of the funds for these much needed security upgrades. If we can raise the funds sooner, we can schedule and complete the work this summer. And so now we challenge you: Please consider a gift to help us meet The Bolger Challenge. Every dollar you give becomes \$1.50 once we meet the challenge.

The Bolger Foundation has previously awarded a grant to fund security upgrades in the Elementary School. This work, completed as part of the 2013 Capital Campaign, included the installation of new classroom intercoms, clocks, and bells, which replaced a system that was installed in 1965. Thanks to The Bolger Foundation the Elementary School now has a state of the art system to communicate between the classrooms and the offices.



## HOMECOMING WEEKEND

### Homecoming, Heritage Dinner and Hot Dogs

Nine years ago, Clixes Restaurant shut its doors for good and Northern NJ mourned the loss of hot dogs with signature Clixes sauce. For a brief window—October 24 to be exact—that sauce returned. This time, it was during a varsity soccer game played at Eastern Christian High School. Current and past students of Eastern Christian School, as well as parents, supporters and friends, came together to celebrate and reminisce during Homecoming Weekend. The jam-packed weekend, in addition to great food, included a number of athletic events, a family fest, and even a Battle of the Decades band competition.

“The idea behind homecoming was to build community. While there was a small fundraising aspect to the

weekend, our main goal was to get the EC community together and continue to strengthen our school spirit.



I think the weekend was a great success from this perspective,” says **David Visbeen**, executive director for the Foundation for ECSA.

An event of this magnitude necessitated tremendous planning. The Foundation office coordinated the effort, with Marketing and Enrollment, the Athletic Department and high school faculty and administration offering support

## HOMECOMING

“

OUR MAIN GOAL WAS TO GET THE EC COMMUNITY TOGETHER AND CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN OUR SCHOOL SPIRIT”



1. And they're off! The first-ever EC5K kicked off at 9 a.m. on Oakwood Avenue in North Haledon; 2. High school students Rachel Shultz and Mat Matthias cheer on the soccer team; 3. Varsity soccer coach Rudi Gesch pumps up his team before game play. The team played at noon on Saturday to an excited crowd; 4. Jason Englishmen during the boys Varsity soccer game. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Kyle Vandenberg '08, Dan Verrengia '06, James Fylstra '10 and Sam Martino '10, members of the band, *The Empty Frame*, accept the winning check from emcee David Zuidema '87. Six bands competed in the Battle of the Decades Band Competition.

in order to transform the idea to reality. Numerous volunteers and businesses also came together to support the event.

“The goals for the first year were to reconnect with some who may have not been back for decades, and make sure the alumni base knew that we are still the same school in some ways with the same mission, but the facility, programs, and drives are modern and

forward thinking—the best of both worlds,” says **Rudi Gesch**, director of Marketing and Enrollment.

The anchoring event for the weekend was the EC5K, which drew EC supporters and local runners alike. The top male runners were **Andrew Nashed**, who finished with a time 19:53.00; **Stuart Gordon**, 20:22.58; and **Tim Vander Eems**, '96, 20:27.28. **Melissa Woudenberg**, '06, clinched the winning

## HOMECOMING

female spot with a time of 21:19.99, followed by **Amy Minatelli**, '01, 22:56.93; and **Heidi Kabot**, '01, 23:03.15.

After the success of this first event, The Foundation plans to host a Homecoming Weekend every year. "Word is getting out how great the first Homecoming Weekend was and I'm confident that next year will bring more competitors, more fans, and more participants to every event," says Visbeen.

He noted that, "the weekend stirred up many memories from my days as an EC student. It was wonderful to reconnect with some old friends, to make some new friends and to simply watch this vibrant community come together and have so much fun. And yes, the Clixes hot dogs were as good as we all remember."



1. Student volunteers **Mat Matthias**, **Ben Boonstra**, **Brianna Altamuro**, **Nicole Martin**, **Erin Vander Plaats** and **Scott Steenstra**; 2. High school students cheer on the soccer players; 3. **Gretchen Lapinsky** enjoys a view of the Harvest Fest from atop a pony.; 4. **Sam Veenstra**; 5. Alumnus **Tim Vander Eems** crossing the finish line in third place.



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## A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING HOMECOMING WEEKEND SPONSORS:

**EC5K EVENT SPONSOR**  
*Nicholas Markets*

**EC5K RACE SPONSORS**  
*Atlantic Stewardship Bank*  
*Braen Stone Industries*

**EC5K SUPPORTER SPONSORS**  
*Hi-Tech Family Dentistry*  
*Visbeen Construction Co.*

**EC5K RUNNER SPONSORS**  
*Abbey Carpet and Floor of Hawthorne*  
*Anna Rose Floral*  
*Borduin Paving*  
*ditto Upscale Resale*  
*Living Spring Water*  
*Jeff Vander Molen/Terrie O'Connor Realtors*  
*V & S Floor Covering*  
*Wayne Tile Company*

**HOMECOMING EVENT SPONSOR**  
*Atlantic Stewardship Bank*

**HARVESTFEST & FAMILY BBQ SPONSOR**  
*Regency Wealth Management*

**HERITAGE ALUMNI DINNER SPONSOR**  
*Christian Health Care Center*



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6. Scott Martin and Principal Ruth Kuder at the varsity soccer game; 7. Matt Rief; 8. Denise Martin, Christi Mulder, Scott Martin and Nicole Martin; 9. Jim Stegink and Xander Gesch take a break near the garden during the Courtyard Dedication; 10. Phyllis and Rich Schuurman at the Heritage Years Alumni Sunday Dinner; 11. Fans at the alumni soccer game 12. Experiencing Missions fundraiser

# BEEFSTEAK DINNER

Golden Years of Basketball



*Bottom row (L-R): Barry Smith, Dan Steenstra, Coach Schultz, Bob Eelman, Ken Bogertman (all the players were the class of 1972); Top row (L-R): John Veenstra (1966), Dave Etterbeek (1968), Paul and Pete Veenema (1967), John Wispelwey (1969), John Smith (1967), Dave Bruinooge (1971), Craig Hoogstra (1968)*

**On Wednesday, Jan. 20, athletes and supporters alike celebrated the ‘Golden Years of Basketball’ at Eastern Christian, honoring Coach Schultz and players from the 1968-72 teams at the Beefsteak Dinner.**

Barry Veenstra gave an encouraging state of the Athletic Department address focusing on the successes of our varsity teams this past year. More than 245 guests attended and platters

were flowing from the kitchens of the Brownstone starting with the generous antipasto course through the ziti, onion rings and french fries, as well as the much anticipated Beefsteak course.

As one of the biggest Athletic Boosters of the year, the event supports our student athletes and the program, continuing to develop our competitive edge in our division. The Beefsteak, a special celebration by any standard and practiced by only two counties in the entire

country (Bergen and Passaic), brought in more than \$10,000 but also raised the spirits of athletes both past and present. It is the program’s greatest hope that our future athletes will also be inspired by not just the program but the individuals and coaches who form these teams. It is those players we look forward to honoring years to come as they follow in the footsteps of players like the ones making up the Golden Years of Basketball. Congratulations to all the coaches, players and supporters of EC Athletics!

SAVE  
THE  
DATE

**Scholars Dinner**  
March 11, 2016  
Arcola Country Club

Featuring special guest  
Anthony Johnson, EC  
parent and WABC-TV,  
Eyewitness News, NY  
Newscaster

Save the Date  
**The EC Spring Gala Auction**  
April 21, 2016  
Indian Trail Club

The EC Auction Gala is our premier fundraising event, raising \$60,000 for Eastern Christian School. Formerly known as Denim & Diamonds Auction Gala, this event is held each spring and includes a delicious buffet dinner along with silent and live auctions. The auctions feature many exciting items on which to bid including one-of-a-kind opportunities, vacations, tickets to sporting events and much more. This year our Auction Gala will be an entirely new event with not only a new name but a new venue, auctioneer, and several other exciting changes and opportunities. Multiple sponsorship levels are available as well. Contact the Foundation office for more information at 973-427-9294 or email [events@easternchristian.org](mailto:events@easternchristian.org).



EASTERN CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOL

**140 Golfers. 18 Holes. 1 Cause.**

Golf Outing to Benefit Eastern Christian School

Black Bear Golf Club  
Franklin, NJ **5.16.16**

**SAVE***the***DATE**

## ALUMNI NEWS I

### ALUMNI

*Note: The Alumni News printed was received via a written note, e-mail, or from media sources. The editors reserve the right to edit submissions.*

**Jim Reynierse '55** was informed his paper, "Toward an Empirically Sound and Radically Revised Type Theory," originally published in 2012 in the *Journal of Psychological Type (JPT)*, was selected as one of eleven articles to be republished in the "Best of 2015" collection. This is a retrospective edition of JPT that highlights the previous decade (2005-2014) and the first ten years of digital publication of the Journal. His paper makes significant revisions to Carl Jung's theory of personality types, provides the empirical justification for this revision (including his own research), and reinterprets Jung in terms of the Five Factor Model of Personality and evolutionary biology. Jim is an experimental psychologist and began his research and publishing career in

graduate school. He adds, "Fifty plus years later I'm still writing. Not bad for an 'old guy' who disliked writing term papers or other reports in high school. When I wrote the paper I knew it was important but it is still nice to be recognized."

**Al Lindemulder '64** published a second book, "God, I have a Question" Inkwell Productions. His book can be ordered directly from the publisher, Amazon and Kindle. Al's first book is "Life: It is All About God".

**Ron Steingina '65** has published his fourth book, "Wandering in the Promised Land." It is a novel that follows four generations of the Lienstra family, from their arrival

to the new world at Ellis Island at the beginning of the 20th century through the beginning of the new millennium. The setting is Paterson, Hawthorne and Prospect Park. As the title alludes, their journey in America is neither simple or easy. The book is available at Lulu.com.

**William Van Harken '67** retired in February 2015 as Director of Admissions at the Assessment and Referral Center of Forest View Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan. As a Clinical Psychologist, Bill treated and/or assessed 64,000 patients in his 43-year career. He and his wife are spending retirement enjoying their children, grandchildren and "especially U of M football!"

► ALUMNI continued on following page

► ALUMNI NEWS continued

**Arthur De Boer '76** was part of a Medical Mission team that went to the Amazon Valley jungle in Peru for 11 days. The team was comprised of 10 medical personnel from Massachusetts, 3 from Kentucky plus a Peruvian doctor and dentist. The team was based in Pucallpa, Peru and worked in three villages of the Aguaruna Indians. In all, 1,265 patients were seen and cared for, many for the first time. Patients ranged in age from 5 days old to the mid 80's. Arthur is a Director at Xcenda Consulting which provides business consulting services to the pharmaceutical industry.

**Dr. Garry Vermaas '92** and family recently moved to Brentwood, Tenn. Garry is CEO of BASE 4, an international engineering company. Garry & Jodi are parents of five children and are expecting a daughter arriving from India shortly.

In November, 2015, **Krissy (Belanus)Vande Vrede '02** defended her dissertation to complete her doctorate at Long Island University. Her dissertation focused on the treatment-seeking attitudes of Christians and she is specialized in child, adolescent, and maternal mental health. Dr. Vande Vrede is a Clinical Psychologist who works and has a private practice in Ridgewood, NJ.

**Dawn Wang '11** graduated from Princeton in June 2015. She is living in New York City and working as a software developer for a Japanese bank, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation.

## Celebrations

**John '49 & Isabel (Hemkes) Sweetman '51** celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on 2/5/16. They reside in Homosassa, Florida.

**Steve '98 & Jessica (Dykstra) Lagerveld '02** welcomed a daughter, Kenleigh Joy on 7/28/15. She joins big sister Joyanna (age 2).

**Amanda & William Bogertman '98** welcomed a daughter, Scarlett Marie on 10/11/15. She joins big brother Ezekiel.

**Ben '99 & Stacie (Tanis) Veenema '99** welcomed a son, Max Arthur on 6/16/15. He joins big brothers Jack and Charlie.

**Nick '00 & Kristen (Joustra) Vander Plaat '90** welcomed a daughter, Samantha Grace on 12/21/15.

**Scott '02 & Kristen (Lagerveld) Sietsma '02** welcomed a son, Jason Kenneth on 6/22/15. He joins big brother Sean (age 2).

**Dan & Krissy (Belanus) Vande Vrede '02** welcomed a daughter, Annabelle Elyse on 12/10/15.

**Marc '03 & Kali (De Haan) Spoelstra '06** welcomed a daughter, Everly Joy on 12/27/15.

**Jason Carelis '04 & Jane Berman** were married on 9/12/15.

**Joshua & Julie (Nienhouse) Preiskines '04** welcomed a daughter, Remington Nora-Kristine on 1/6/16. She joins big brothers Joshua, Blake and Wyatt.

**Tim '04 & Jessica (Mac William) Tanzola '06** welcomed a daughter, Hailey Joy on 5/21/15. She joins big sister Keira Grace (age 2).

**Anna & Jim Abma '05**, welcomed a daughter, Charlie Mae on 11/19/15. She joins big brother Colton.

**Kyle & Meghan (Van Hine) Sensenig '05** welcomed a son, Colton James on 4/29/15.

**Kathy & Ben Kuiken '06** welcomed a daughter, Sage Mercy on 7/30/15.

**Justin Brennan '06 & Lauren Vanvlaanderen** were married on 10/9/15.

**Laura Kuiken '07 & Simon Royle** were married 8/13/15. They reside in Montclair, NJ.

**Tim Rudd '07 & Kristen Lightner** were married on 6/27/15. They live in Hawthorne, NJ.

**Alyssa Steiginga '07 & Jeff DeKorne** were married on 8/28/15. They reside in Ringwood, NJ.

**Jay Van Buiten '07 & Cori Leegwater** were married on 9/5/15. They reside in Haledon, NJ.

**Justin Vierling '07 & Katherine Bansch** were married on 10/10/15.

**Ian & Melody (Lyman) Zacharias '07** welcomed a son, Eli Daveric on 8/26/15.

**Chip & Emily (Vriesema) Cathay '08** welcomed a daughter, Carla Grace on 6/15/15.

**Steve Knorr '08 & Amanda Falconcino** were married on 9/15/15. They reside in North Haledon, NJ.

**Terri De Jong '08 & Mick Canonico** were married on 9/25/15.

**Seth & Lilianna (Wilson) Ditmer '09** welcomed a daughter, Elliot Grace on 8/22/15.

**Tim & Emily (Brotherton) Milazzo '09** welcomed a daughter, Liana Rose on 4/30/15.

**Stephanie Jacobs '09 & Matthew Touw '09** were married on 8/15/15. They reside in Carlstadt, NJ.

**Jaci Woudenberg '09 & Brian Turner** were married on 9/6/15. They live in Westwood, NJ.

**Brittany Faber '10 & Jordan Klingler '11** were married on 10/10/15.

**Rachel Greenfield '10 & Joseph Hathcock** were married on 10/24/15.

**Emily D'Amelio '11 & Jake Gorter** were married 7/2/15. They reside in Midland Park, NJ.

**Adam Struyk '11 & Elizabeth Jensen** were married on 9/4/15.

**Michaela Westra '11 & David Mourao** were married on 6/14/15. They reside in Belleville, NJ.

**HAVE SOME NEWS YOU WANT TO SHARE?**

Send your alumni news to:  
[alumni@easternchristian.org](mailto:alumni@easternchristian.org)

# REMEMBERING

*The Foundation Office has learned of the following deaths of these alumni and former faculty members since our last issue of **The Herald**.*

## Alumni

**Conrad Sweerus, Jr., '39** of LaGrange, NC on 7/3/2015. Conrad was a member of the Preakness Christian Reformed Church during his years in Wayne, NJ. After moving to NC he joined the Swamp Christian Church.

**Richard Meyer '40** of Holland, MI on 8/16/2015. Richard served his country during World War II in Europe and earned five battle stars. He was a member of Central Avenue Christian Reformed Church of Holland MI.

**Florence De Roo '41** of North Haledon, NJ on 12/7/2015. She was a member of the Unity Christian Reformed Church in Prospect Park, NJ.

**Richard Rosendale '45** of Hawthorne, NJ on 12/21/2015. Rich attended Eastern Academy and Calvin College before serving in the U.S. Army during World War II. After the war he returned to Calvin, continued to Marquette University Medical School. He was a member of Midland Park Christian Reformed Church.

**Margaret (Vroon) Sikkema '45** of Chapin, SC on 12/26/2015. Margaret moved to Miami, FL, in 1969, where she became very involved with Redlands Community Church. She traveled with her husband on mission trips around the world, including Haiti, West Africa, Peru, Holland, and Germany.

**Edward Hoogstra '44** of Wayne, NJ on 7/2/2015. He served in WWII and graduated from Rutgers University. Ed volunteered for 17 years at Wayne General Hospital and Meals on Wheels. He was a member of Faith Community Christian Reformed Church, Wyckoff, NJ.

**Claire J. (Spyksma) Schutt '44** of Pompton Plains, NJ on 11/15/2015. She was a long time member of the Westside Presbyterian Church in Ridgewood, NJ

**Garret Link '45** of North Haledon, NJ on 6/24/2015. During WWII Garret served his country in the Navy. He was a member of the Unity Christian Reformed Church, Prospect Park, NJ. He also served on the Eastern Home Missions Board for many years.

**Ruth (Schuurman) Sonderfan '45** of Bradenton, Florida on 10/17/2015. She lived in Midland Park, NJ for many years before recently moving to Florida. She was a Secretary for Eastern Christian Jr. High, Prospect Park and also taught typing. She was an active member of the Ridgewood Christian Reformed Church, Ridgewood, NJ.

**Russell Voorman '49** of Ellicott City, MD on 7/24/2015. He served his country proudly during the Korean Conflict and later graduated from Rutgers University.

**Gertrude (Meines) Beintema '52** of Pella, Iowa on 9/16/2015. Gert was a member of Eastern Academy's woman's basketball team where her lifelong love of sports was cultivated. She was among the first inductees to the Central College Athletics Hall of Honor in 2003.

**Robert Struyk '54** of Fayetteville, GA on 9/2/2015. Bob was a former member of Covenant Christian Reformed Church in North Haledon, NJ.

**Ann (Meines) Ricco '56** of Sussex, NJ on 9/8/2015. Anne was a member of Sussex Christian Reformed Church.

**Anna Mae (Andringa) Haalstra '57** of Dunville, Ontario on 10/18/2014. She was a member of the Smithfield Christian Reformed Church.

**Jack Faber '60** of Mahwah, NJ on 10/26/2015. Jack was an active member of Faith Community Church in Wyckoff and sang in the Cathedral Choir for more than 30 years.

**Charles Kuperus '76** (see side bar)

**James Lindemulder '84**, of Vernon Township, NJ on 8/17/2015. Jim was a member of Pompton Plains Reformed Bible Church in Pompton Plains, NJ.

**Martha Griswold-Quijano '89**, of Hawthorne NJ on 8/17/2015. Martha graduated from Gettysburg College in 1993, and went on to earn her masters in physical therapy at Temple University in 1996. In 2005, she was Employee of the Year at Kessler Rehabilitation Institutes. She also authored "Spanish for Physical Therapists," a book published by the American Physical Therapy Association in 2006. She was active at Cornerstone Christian Church in Wyckoff, NJ.

**Jolene S (Siepert) Broseman '97** of Wayne, NJ on 7/12/2015. She was a member of Midland Park Christian Reformed Church.

## Former Faculty

**Shirley Oetman** of Zeeland, MI on 10/6/2015. Shirley taught in Midland Park at the Elementary School during the 1950s.



**Charles Kuperus '76** of Sussex passed away on 12/30/2015 after a courageous battle with cancer. He served at Sussex Christian

Reformed Church, on the Sussex Christian School Board and on the Christian Schools International Board. He also held leadership positions on the Sussex Borough Council, Freeholder Board of Sussex County, Sussex County Board of Agriculture, New Jersey Farm Bureau and the State Planning Commission. In 2002, he was appointed New Jersey secretary of agriculture by Gov. James E. McGreevey where he served until 2008. Our sincere sympathy to Chuck's wife Marjorie (Veenstra) Kuperus '76 and their children, Mark '98; Katherine '99, Jonathan '01, James '03, Annette '05 and David '06.

# TO PAKISTAN AND BEYOND

Fred Lanting, Class of '54

**In its most recent statement regarding travel to Pakistan, the US Department of State warns travelers against “non-essential travel,” citing more than 200 terror-related incidents from January through August 2015.**

These warnings didn't stop Fred Lanting, class of 1954, however. In late November, he traveled from his home in Alabama to Ayub National Park, Rawalpindi, Pakistan. As an internationally respected dog show judge and one of only two SV breed judges in the United States, his purpose was to serve as a judge in several national dog shows.

“The assignment was set up by the two dog clubs [the German Shepherd Dog Club and the Rottweiler Club], but the show was sponsored by the Pakistan Army, which controls the grounds of the park,” he says. “As the invitee (partly) of the Army, I was in good hands. In addition, the Islamic tradition is strong in respect to hospitality—if you are a guest in their care, you are honored and protected as if a member of the family.”

Lanting was particularly taken with the scenery in Pakistan. Described as a “twin city” of capital Islamabad, Rawalpindi has a population of two million. Just to the north rests the Himalayas' Margala foothills. “On one of my ‘off-duty’ days, I was treated to such a trip up the mountain for cool breezes, tea, and local

culinary treats. On other days, I consulted with local veterinarians who were very interested in hip dysplasia control and did a little sightseeing.”

Lanting says all the while, he was careful of remaining obedient to the “great commission.” “I, as an outspoken Christian, was warmly welcomed in a 97 percent, Muslim country.” He adds, “Just as it is eminently true that travel broadens one, there is also an effect upon the peoples that are visited in the course of such travels, not just on the traveler. The more we interact with decent people of other cultures, the more tolerant we become. This is not the same as giving up your core values, but rather more like casting off burdensome false prejudices the way you would remove a heavy and superfluous overcoat after walking in the warm sunlight for awhile.”

Although Lanting is known worldwide for his dog show judging, he is a retired organic chemist. His high school teacher at Eastern Academy was Sid Bangma, “who inspired my love for science.”

“ LANTING SAYS ALL THE WHILE, HE WAS CAREFUL OF REMAINING OBEDIENT TO THE “GREAT COMMISSION.” “I, AS AN OUTSPOKEN CHRISTIAN, WAS WARMLY WELCOMED IN A 97 PERCENT, MUSLIM COUNTRY.”



# THE FORECAST IS BRIGHT

Todd Klaassen, Class of '98

**Todd Klaassen's alarm clock rings at 3:15 a.m. Before most people have had their morning cup of coffee, he's figured out a weather forecast, designed graphics to accompany it, been on the radio six times, and broadcasted on television once.**

The pace may seem rigorous, but it's nothing new for Klaassen. It's just a typical day in the life of a morning/noon meteorologist for Indianapolis' ABC station, WRTV6.

Before leaving for college, Klaassen had already begun to plan for his future career. "Being a meteorologist is the only job I really ever wanted," he says. "I was always fascinated by the weather as a whole and how it changed day to day...so when I graduated EC, I looked for colleges (and there aren't a lot) who offered meteorology so I could pursue my dream."

Klaassen graduated Kean University in Union, NJ with a major in meteorology. Since then, he has seen God's sovereignty in his career. "My faith is very important to me and I have had to rely on it often. Television is a very, very competitive field," shares Klaassen. "Over 13 years now in the profession and over two cities and three stations, my faith has been tested. When looking for my first job, I sent resume tapes all over the country. Of all the places I could have ended up, I landed in Lansing, Michigan. This was my first time away from home and I couldn't have landed in a better place since I had family in Michigan. The next stop was Indianapolis for a great job in a much larger market. [It was] God's hand at work the way it worked out."

Klaassen breaks down his job into quadrants. By his own description, he is 1/4 scientist, 1/4 graphic artist, 1/4 presenter, and a 1/4 social media specialist. In addition to his television appearances, he regularly hosts and emcees events across Indianapolis along with participating in many fun events. He has flown in a hot air balloon, gone around the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in an Indy car at over 180 mph and taken batting practice with the Indianapolis Indians the AAA baseball team in Indy. He regularly shares weather and fun activities on his Twitter feed @toddklaassen, as well as a Facebook page, Todd Klaassen, RTV6 and "would love for you to follow me."

Although his future looks bright, Klaassen remembers his past fondly, including his years at EC. "One thing looking back on my years at EC—really from elementary school through high school—is how much the teachers and administration cared. Not only did they help you learn, but they helped you grow up into young men and women of faith. Whether it was extra time with classwork or just a word of encouragement, the faculty was there for you."



He adds, "I don't know if I would be where I am today without EC. EC gave me the solid foundation both educationally and spiritually to succeed, and I am so thankful my parents made the sacrifice to send me there. The education I received in my opinion is second to none. It was challenging but prepared me well. In fact, when I got to college, I breezed through a lot of the core classes because I had already been through it all at EC. My GPA was actually higher in college than in high school and that was a product of the EC education."

## ALUMNI

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# REUNIONS

*The following reunions recently took place. For additional information and pictures, please visit [easternchristian.org/alumni/reunion-updates](http://easternchristian.org/alumni/reunion-updates).*

## Class of 2005

**10-Year Reunion** || During Homecoming weekend on Saturday, October 24th, 24 graduates from the class of 2005 and their guests gathered at the Taphouse Grille in Wayne, NJ for a 10 Year Reunion. Everyone enjoyed good food, drinks, and conversation. It was great to catch up with those that could make it!



Row 1- Melissa (Pruiksma) Visbeen, Jillian (Berry) Tuit, Jimmy Abma. Row 2- Jenna (Hulsebos) Beverly, Phil Beverly, Taylor Maneri, Mike Alsum, Bobby Struck, Brian Knorr, Sean Tanner, Annette (Kuperus) Franco, Josh Castro. Row 3- John Van Buiten, Matt Milkamp, Daryl Leegwater, Art Vooyo, Sam Dykstra. Row 4- Jaclyn Veenstra, Elyse (De Jong) Fritzsich, Becca (Rivera) Knorr, Xiomara Robinson, Sara Davidson.

## Class of 1975

**40-Year Reunion** || The Class of 1975 gathered for a reunion on November 28, 2015 at Portobello's Restaurant. Classmates traveled from California, Michigan, Vermont, New York and Virginia. It was a wonderful evening reconnecting with classmates.



Adria (Van Leeuwen) Broersma, Barry Broersma, Nancy (Steiginga) Bruining, David Bruins, Bill Bushman, Marilyn (Lont) Bushman, Roy Bushoven, Linda (Vant Land) Bylsma, Nicholas De Graaf, Marilyn (Van Wyck) Evans, Ruth (Huizenga) Everhart, Ed Gorter, Henry Groenewal, Bruce Jacobs, Janet (Baum) Klamer, Joanne (Martin) Kukol, Lynnell Lindsay, Debra (Van Althuis) Mack, William Meier, Beth (Youngsman) Milkamp, Brenda (Jonkman) Nienhouse, Susan Oostdyk, Joyce (Van Dyk) Romine, Paul Siljee, Lynn (Drukker) Henry, Jayne (Tanis) Spoelstra, Beverly (Braunius) Tanis, Gary Van Boerum, Sharon (Borduin) Van Der Heide, Bob Van Schepen, Korky Vander Ploeg, Susan (Borduin) Vander Ploeg, Kim (Almroth) Vanderwende, Barry Veenstra, Gerald Veenstra.

## REUNIONS ARE A GREAT WAY TO RECONNECT WITH FORMER CLASSMATES

*Class Reunions are a wonderful event where classmates can enjoy time together and catch up on the years gone by, reminisce and renew old acquaintances.*

*The Foundation Office at Eastern Christian School encourages classes to celebrate their milestone reunions. If you are thinking about planning a reunion, we are happy to help you out with the process.*

*Please call Beth Milkamp, Alumni Relations at Eastern Christian School at: [alumni@easternchristian.org](mailto:alumni@easternchristian.org) or via phone at 973-427-9294 for further information.*

**Class of 1965**

**50-Year Reunion** || On September 18, 2015, the Class of 1965 enjoyed a festive reunion at The Brownstone. The four hour event came to an end too quickly to recapture 50 years. It was a memorable event with many renewed friendships.



Seated (L to R): Eileen (Vander Meulen) Hutton, Dorothy Molnar, Marilyn Schryvers, Ellen Simpson, Joyce (Ten Kate) Steen, Marsanne Reid-Hufty, AnnaMae (Meyer) Bush, Irene (Den Hollander) Tyler, John A. Hartog. Row 2: Barb (Baker) Higby, Brom Vermeulen, Gary Dob, Sally Steenland, Lynda (Walkotten) Winnick, Wayne Kuiken, Edna (Kuiken) Wiegers, John Keeley, John Hartog, Carol (Meyer) Vander Tuin, John Van Beekum, Kathy (Sharp) Anema, Lois (Bangma) Meyer, Anne (Meyer) Christenson, Karen (DeGraaf) Steiginga, Sam Husselman, Gary Fischer, Elaine (Van Dyk) Weiss, Barbara (Braunius) Smith. Top row: Rich Higby, Dale Tanis, Ron Veenema, Ron DeVries, Bill Beversluis, John White, Dennis Vogel, Betti (Keutgen) Abbas, Jim Faber, Mike Naumoff (partially hidden), Ron Steiginga, Bob White, Pete Steensma, Betty (Hagedoorn) Kolk, Dave Vander Goot, Joan (DeBoer) Schmitt.

**Class of 1969**

Several classmates from the Class of 1969 met during the summer. It was a simple, small yet wonderful event. We laughed, caught up, reminisced while eating a great lunch. We are tentatively planning another such mini-reunion this coming summer and would like to invite classmates to join us. The date and place is still to be determined. Please contact Fenna (Van Leeuwen) Reitsma at fenmar1951@gmail.com or thru Facebook.



(L to R): John Everett, Jerry Kuiken, Kathy (Veenstra) Jeltema, John Reitsma, Fenna (Van Leeuwen) Reitsma, John Wispelwey, Bill Bosma, and Marie (Yskamp) Carsey.

**2016 UPCOMING REUNIONS**

**Class of 2006 - 10 Year Reunion**

A planning committee is currently being organized. If you would like to help, please contact Kali(De Haan) Spoelstra at kalispoelstra@gmail.com or Mary (Tolsma) van der Meer at mary.vdmeer63@gmail.com

**Class of 1976 - 40 Year Reunion**  
Saturday, October 22, 2016

More details to come! Questions? Contact Judy (Veenstra) Bruinooge at judybruinooge@easternchristian.org or Jeanne (Steenstra) Bushoven at claypot45@hotmail.com

**Class of 1966 - 50 Year Reunion**  
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Facebook Page: ECHS Class of '66

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### Season Highlights: Boys Soccer & Girls Soccer

#### Boys Soccer

**The 2015 boys soccer season came to an end after a loss to Newark Academy in the second round of the playoffs.**

With the season in the rearview mirror, the team, led by senior captains **Jason Englishmen** and **Kyle Dykstra**, have a lot to be proud of. The Eagles more than doubled its win total from the previous season, and hosted its first playoff game in the careers of the seniors (a dominant 7-0 victory over Queen of Peace). On senior night, perhaps the season's high point, EC played some of the best soccer of the season—a dominating 4-0 victory over Manchester with EC controlling the ball on both offense and defense. “We will



*Jon Veenstra*

greatly miss our seniors next year – they contributed in a major way to the program over their four-year career and culminated with a great season in their final year,” said coach **Rudi Gesch**. Post season awards went to **Jason Englishmen** and **Henry Ruitenbergh**, who earned all-league second team, as well as **Kyle Dykstra** and **Sam Veenstra**, who were honorable mention.

#### Girls Soccer

**The girls varsity soccer team, coached by Laura (Kuiken) Royle '07, competed in many close, exciting games this season, highlighted by the come-from-behind win against Rutherford.**



*Brooke Van Lenten*

Trailing 2-0 in the second half on our home field, the girls fought back to win that game 3-2. Finishing at 9-9-1 and fourth place in the league, the season was filled with all the thrills and frustrations that come with any competitive team. It wouldn't have been the same without the contributions of senior captains **Carlin Sietsma** and **Kelly Dykman**. Congratulations to them, classmate **Nicole Tartini**, and to leading scorer **Erin Vander Plaat** on being named first team all county for the third consecutive season! With several other talented underclassmen returning, including juniors **Brooke Van Lenten**, **Brianna Altamuro** and **Alyssa Bothyl**, the Eagles are excited about next year.

# FALL SPORTS

Season Highlights: Cross Country, Volleyball & Girls Tennis



## Cross Country

The cross country team finished its official season with the Lady Eagles taking tenth in the state meet and the men thirteenth.

Carter Heerema placed 26th in the men’s meet and Will Fan achieved 44th. In the ladies meet, Kelly Bosloper took 35th and Allison Steinginga 39th. Final records for dual meets were 5-4 for the girls and 3-6 for the boys. Allison Steinginga achieved a first team all conference award and an honorable mention in the county along with Emily Byrnes, who won the freshmen championship at Darlington over all area schools.

The team is saying good-bye to senior captains Carter Heerema and David Hefty along with classmate Devin Graham. No one on the ladies’ team is graduating. Both teams leave a strong base for next year’s team. High points of the season included the team’s overnight training and service project to Shiloh camp and the girls fourth place finish in the NJIC.

“ IN PURSUING THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST, WE WILL...STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE”

- excerpt from the Eastern Christian Schools Core Values statement



1. Allison Steinginga, Emily Byrnes, Stephanie Cabral;  
2. Carter Heerema

## Volleyball

Led by senior team co-captains **Emma Hagedoorn** and **Nicole Aoki**, the otherwise young 2015 volleyball co-captains learned to compete against the league's best.

According to coach **Steffanie Honore**, some highlights included winning a match against a talented and powerful Garfield team featuring 7 blocks from Hagedoorn. The homecoming match vs first place Rutherford saw the Eagles score 17 well-earned points including 15 digs from libero Aoki, who had an impressive 252 digs for the season (tied for second most in the county). Nicole was named first team all league and second team all-county. **Carina Castagna** led the team with over 50 kills and was a great asset in the back row as well. Other seniors on the team included **Chloe Argyros**, **Dana Del Pizzo**, **Kelly Tanis**, **Brianne Remy** and **Mackenzie Wiegiers**. They all showed a great deal of leadership and team spirit this year and will be missed. Some talented and enthusiastic underclassmen have the program pointed in the right direction!



*Nicole Aoki*

**THE EASTERN CHRISTIAN ATHLETIC PROGRAM EXISTS TO GLORIFY GOD BY DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN CHARACTER AND COMPETITIVE EXCELLENCE IN ITS STUDENT ATHLETES** - *excerpt from Eagles Athletics Pillars*



*Caitlin Shurminsky*

## Girls Tennis

Girls varsity tennis, coached by **Amy Hulsebos**, ended the season with a league record of 4-10—not quite what they were hoping for after coming off of a strong season last year.

Senior captain **Caitlin Shurminsky** led a young team and earned second team all county and second team all league, competing against the league's best at first singles. She took her first round match in the County tournament against PCTI with strength, and then fought to the final point in her second round match up versus Wayne Valley. Juniors **Rachel Shultz** and **Kristen Casey** earned all county honorable mention for second and third singles. Schultz finished her season with an amazing 13-2 overall record. With all but one teammate back next year, the girls look forward to a competitive season.



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