



THE *Herald*

A PUBLICATION OF EASTERN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2008
VOL. 47 - ISSUE 1



115 YEARS...
Transforming the
World



Eastern Christian School Association
50 Oakwood Avenue
North Haledon, NJ 07508-2449

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

The 2007-08 school year marks Eastern Christian's 115th year of service to the children of the Christian community of Northern New Jersey—115 years of engaging the minds of our students, nurturing their spirits and, through God's blessing on our students, 115 years of transforming the world!



Excellence in Education—For a Higher Purpose!

For 115 years, God has used Eastern Christian to educate covenant young people for lives of service. We have strived to teach excellence in the classroom and laboratory, in the arts and on the playing field. We have strived to teach respect for others as a duty to people made in God's image. We have strived to teach the importance of living lives of service as an expression of thanks to our Creator and Redeemer. God has blessed these efforts with success as reflected in the high academic achievement and love of learning evidenced by our students, through artistic expressions that reflect the beauty built into creation by our Maker, and by athletic performance carried out with grace, skill and a spirit of sportsmanship. God has blessed the efforts of our students' service in places like Uganda, Mexico, Newark, Paterson, and in literally hundreds of other places around the world.

The "Glue" of the Christian Community

For 115 years, God has used Eastern Christian as a vital part of the Evangelical Christian community in Northern New Jersey and extended the links from that community throughout the US and around the world. Today, 138 different congregations are represented in Eastern Christian's student body. Through the years Eastern Christian has been the source of the leaders of churches, Christian schools and colleges, as well as hundreds of ministries and community organizations in the New York metropolitan area and around the world. God has used Eastern Christian as a unifying force across congregational and denominational lines—truly the "glue" of the Christian community.

Transforming the World!

For 115 years, God has used Eastern Christian's students and alumni as a leavening influence—a force for good—to transform the world! Today's students, from the youngest to the most senior, are engaged in lives of service—supporting a sister school in Uganda, constructing and repairing schools in Mexico and Jamaica, working in the heart of Newark's Ironbound District, wearing pajamas to school to show solidarity with other kids hospitalized with cancer, lending their spirit to less fortunate kids around the world through the Samaritan's Purse and in our neighborhood by way of a Christmas party for the students of Paterson School #16. Our recent graduates have been challenged to prepare for lives of service and are currently in colleges and professional schools around the country training for careers as doctors, teachers, social workers, pastors, development workers, nurses, military officers, and business people—confronting the cultural norms of individualism and selfishness with a countercultural vision of serving others! Our alumni continue to live out lives of service—those actively involved in careers of service, those raising Christian families, serving their churches and communities to the older saints of our school community still engaged in serving others well into their later years!

This issue of *The Herald* portrays God's continuing work at Eastern Christian and the way that he is using the continuing unselfishness of the many people who remain so faithful in the support of our mission.
Eastern Christian School—Engaging the Mind, Nurturing the Spirit, Transforming the World!

Thomas G. Dykhouse ('76)
Executive Director & Head of School



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ABOUT THE COVER

To celebrate EC's 115th anniversary, student designed tee shirts were distributed to all students.

Top: EC High School Students.

Bottom: EC Middle School students,
EC Elementary students,
EC Preschool students.

The Herald is published twice a year and is a publication of the Eastern Christian School Association's Board of Directors. Eastern Christian School is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools and is a member of Christian Schools International. The Herald is mailed free of charge to Eastern Christian alumni, parents and supportive friends.

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Jan Lucas

P-8 Principal & Curriculum Coordinator
Richard Van Yperen

Asst. Elementary School Principal
Sandra Bottge

EC SPORTS



2007 State Champions!

Sports Highlights

EASTERN CHRISTIAN FALL ATHLETICS | BY STEVE KING, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

Girls' Varsity Soccer coached by **Barry Veenstra** concluded a very successful season finishing at 16-5. The season began with 8 victories in the first 8 games before losing 1-0 in overtime to Glen Rock. During the course of the regular season the team continued to play well and won the Bergen Passaic Scholastic League Championship. Excitingly, the season was extended as the team entered the state tournament. And here history was made! Playing outstanding soccer throughout the tournament, the Girls' Varsity Soccer Team won the Non-Public Girls' State Soccer Championship! The team won against Bishop Eustace 2-1 in overtime. The game was played at College of New Jersey on a cold

November evening. Eastern Christian trailed 1-0 at halftime. At the 12 minute mark of the second half, **Kelsey Spoelstra** stole the ball from the defender and put it into the lower right corner for the goal. The game remained tied and went into overtime. At the 35 second mark of the first overtime Kelsey again scored off a corner kick to begin the Eagle celebration. This marks the first overall State Championship in EC Girls' Soccer history! Congratulations to Coach Veenstra and the Girls' Soccer Team on this fantastic accomplishment. Among the many honors received was Eastern Christian's selection as the "Team of the Year" by the North Jersey *Herald News*.

Girls' Junior Varsity Soccer coached by **Bryan Troast** finished at 6-5-3. The team was young, but remained competitive in spite of a tough schedule.

Boys' Varsity Soccer coached by **TC De Geyter** ended the season at 10-10 despite many key injuries. Those injuries forced Coach TC to constantly juggle



Senior **Joe Barry Veenstra**



Senior (#10) **Randi Lynn Veenstra**,
Sophomore **Kelsey Spoelstra**,
Senior (#19) **Nicole Struck**



Senior Ashley Baratta

the line-up to fill various positions. Highlights of the season included the 2nd place finish in league competition. The team also won in the first round of the County Tournament over Hawthorne Christian before losing 1-0 in double overtime to County Champion Wayne Valley.

Boys' Junior Varsity coached by **Aaron Berger** finished the season with an impressive 12-2-2 record. Although losing many key players to varsity, Coach Berger guided the team

thru many close games. Despite the disappointing 1-0 loss to Waldwick midway thru the season, the game proved to bring out the best in team members and led to a turn around that fueled the rest of the season. They finished with a strong victory over Midland Park.

Girls' Tennis coached by **Adam Culp** showed as much potential as any team in recent years. The returning players combined with the promising newcomers provided Coach Culp with an exciting season. Though key injuries at first hampered the season, the younger players were given a chance to perform and helped in many of the wins for the team. The team finished with an impressive 9-11 record.

Cross Country coached by **Joel Apol** once again concluded a very successful schedule. The boys' team finished at 8-1 and won the Bergen Passaic Scholastic League title. They also finished 6th in the county,

7th in the Non-Public B meet, and took 2nd in the EC Invitational. The girls' team finished at 4-5, taking 2nd in the league, 14th in the state, and 3rd in the EC Invitational.

Varsity and Junior Varsity Volleyball were coached by **Holly Goodman** and **Christina Lobacki**. Varsity finished at 7-16, but this record was not indicative of the season. Most of the matches went down to the 3rd game. The team had

a hard fought win over Hawthorne Christian, as well as league wins over Lodi, Immaculate and Paterson Catholic. The Junior Varsity finished at 10-9 and had key wins over Saddle Brook and Midland Park.

Middle School Girls' Soccer coached by **Laura King** finished at 8-3-1. This team consisted of seven 7th graders and eleven 8th graders. The team worked very hard, showed great skill against many tough opponents and finished the year with a win over Garfield.

Middle School Boys' Soccer coached by **Jeff Botbyl** finished at 1-11. This team consisted of equal 7th and 8th graders. Many of the games were extremely close and Coach Botbyl saw tremendous growth in ability as the season progressed. The team finished with a 4-0 shutout over Waldwick.

Middle School Cross Country was coached by **Terry Allen**. The girls' team finished at 8-1, losing to Maywood by only 3 points. Many team members improved on their individual times and this led to the fabulous season. The boys' team did not have a winning record, but each of the boys improved individually. Most of the runners return next year for Coach Allen. In October the teams ran in the Garfield Invitational with twelve other schools participating. Led by **Kristen Traub**,



Freshman Mackenzie Lewis



Senior Jeremy Boling

FALL 2007 ATHLETIC AWARDS

Girls' Tennis

Rachel Soodsma
First Team All League
Second Team All County

Victoria Westra
Honorable Mention All County

Schuyler Sietsma
Honorable Mention All League
Honorable Mention All County

Girls' Cross Country

Erica Lotz
First Team All League
Honorable Mention All County

Ashley Baratta
Second Team All League

Kerith Sunden
Second Team All League
Honorable Mention All County

Amy Vormbrock
Second Team All League

Jee Young Kim
Honorable Mention All League

Boys' Cross Country

Steven Bosloper
First Team All League
Honorable Mention All County

Craig Jacobs
First Team All League

AJ Panzica
First Team All League
Honorable Mention All County

Parker Tubman
Second Team All League

Joshua Tanis
First Team All League

Jeremy Boling
Honorable Mention All League

Girls' Soccer

Joanna Switzer
First Team All League
First Team All County

Rachel Greenfield
Second Team All League

Nicole Struyk
First Team All League
First Team All County

Terri De Jong
Second Team All League
Honorable Mention All County

Kelsey Spoelstra
First Team All League
Second Team All County

Randi Veenstra
Second Team All League
Honorable Mention All County

Nicole Brello
First Team All League
Second Team All County

Brianne Traub
Honorable Mention All League

Boys' Soccer

Joe Everett
First Team All League
Second Team All County

Mike Dykhouse
Second Team All League
Honorable Mention All County

Brian Sietsma
First Team All League

Tyler Westra
Second Team All League

Chris Beggs
First Team All League
Honorable Mention All County

Joe Veenstra
Second Team All League

Eric Postma
First Team All League
Second Team All County

Dave Rainville
Second Team All League

Trevor Brennan
Honorable Mention All League

Girls' Volleyball

Rachel Kuder
First Team All League
Honorable Mention All County

Amanda Rypkema
Honorable Mention All League
Honorable Mention All County

Jessica Wisse, and Kayla Van Lenten the girls finished in second place. Kristin defended her league title for the second time with a new meet record of 6 minutes, 45 seconds. Jessica Wisse finished 5th overall out of 129 participants. Eugene Park placed 12th and Ben Zacaroli finished 22nd out of 149 participants.



Senior Joe Everett



Sophomore Rachel Soodsma



Senior Joanna Switzer

CAMPUS NEWS

Learning Lessons from the Sun

BY STACY WIERINGA, HIGH SCHOOL ART TEACHER

The Design Technology class at Eastern Christian High School is about technology, creativity, brainstorming, process, visual communication and function. In order to get students to begin going through the design process and thinking like designers, they had to solve a global problem: How can people with no electricity cook and pasteurize food so that it is safe to eat and affordable for everyone?

Each group researched solar cooker designs and found inexpensive materials such as umbrellas, tin foil, plastic wrap, and cardboard with which to build their solar cookers. Then the groups tested the temperature of their solar cookers on a chilly morning in September in the northern hemisphere. By lunch one cooker was at 160° and the other at 150°. We would not even be able to boil water at those temperatures, but the students learned lessons about the design process, properties of different materials, and the potential that design has for helping people around the world.

Students in the class had the following to say about the project:

“I learned that teamwork and communication is needed,” said Linley Thobourne.

“I wanted [the teacher] to give us more time to invent a better design,” commented Trevor Brennan.

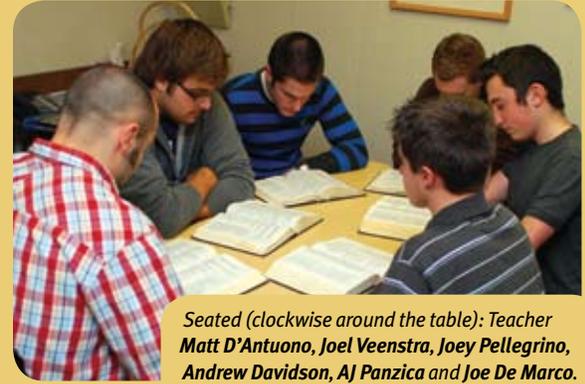
“I would like to try it a different time of year for more sun,” said Matt Boonstra.

“I learned that you can use inexpensive materials to make something that can cook food,” said Matt Touw.

“I learned that certain materials have good and bad qualities in absorbing and reflecting heat. I never thought you could get a cardboard box to well over 100° on a cold and windy day,” said Josh Tanis.



Students setting up their solar cooker



Seated (clockwise around the table): Teacher Matt D’Antuono, Joel Veenstra, Joey Pellegrino, Andrew Davidson, AJ Panzica and Joe De Marco.

Early Encounters

by Matt D’Antuono, High School Math Teacher

Every Tuesday morning before the bell rings to begin the school day, a handful of male students have been meeting for a Bible Study with teacher Matt D’Antuono. Matt, who is also the Senior Class Dean, finds this early morning gathering a way to encourage students in their spiritual journey and get them reading the Bible!



Junior Michelle Okma and Senior Vickie Faber

Denominations Fair

by Pat Fish, High School Bible Teacher

On Monday, January 7 the Biblical Theology 4 classes held a “Denominations Fair” in the High School Media Center. The educational impact was to teach students about other Christian denominations: the history of the Church, how each denomination differs and what they share in Christ’s body. What became “transformational” was a greater understanding among students of various denominations within the school. And, with an eye to the future, to help them focus as adults on our unity as Christians: “one Lord, one faith, one baptism...” amidst our diversity of expressions.



Environmental songwriter Bill Oliver visits ECMS

Habitat, Habitat

by Betsy Tyvoll, Middle School Bible Teacher

"Habitat, habitat, hafta have a habitat to carry on."

These are lyrics our Middle School students learned at a recent assembly led by environmental songwriter **Bill Oliver**. For 40 minutes, Oliver sang about recycling, protecting forests and picking up trash. By mixing humor and audience participation, he raised our level of awareness to the world we live in - and to our responsibility to maintain and protect it. Bill had students paddling down imaginary rivers and collecting trash along the way. He coerced the audience into singing an opera about "Migrating Bats in Flight", and had them "howling at the moon." One of our sixth graders, **Kathryn Post** commented that the assembly "...was very interesting and made us think about ...what would happen if we didn't take care of the beautiful world God gave us." As Bill returned to his home in Austin, Texas, he was pleased to hear that one of our students, **Luke Pecoraro**, responded to the assembly in this way: "We should go clean up the earth."



8th grade Bible students.

Topographical Maps

WRITTEN BY BETSY TYVOLL, MIDDLE SCHOOL BIBLE TEACHER

What do tennis balls, corks, paper mache, and painted golf balls have in common? They can all be used for making topographical maps of Palestine, that's what! This year's eighth grade Bible students were challenged to make maps of first century Palestine, reflecting the area in which Jesus lived. Showing incredible creativity and ingenuity, our students worked hard trying to demonstrate the dramatic altitude changes throughout Israel, as well as using symbols and icons to depict events in the life of Jesus.

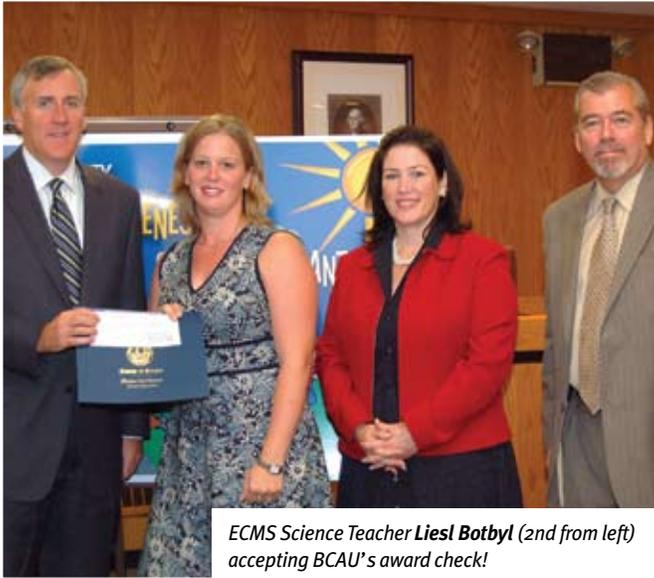
Eighth Grade Small Group Leaders

Twice a month the entire ECMS divides into 20 small groups instead of attending the usual weekly chapel service. These groups are led by 8th grade students who have been trained to be leaders of their peers. Several times a month, Principal **Dick Van Yperen** meets with selected students to prepare them for their small group sessions. He adds, "Teaching the components of leadership will grow students into responsible men and women of God. They learn about responsibility as they learn more about God's Word and its relevance to our lives." Transforming students to leaders is one step in the journey of training our students to transform the world!



MS students meet as a small group twice a month.

Environmental Awareness Challenge Grant



*ECMS Science Teacher **Liesl Botbyl** (2nd from left) accepting BCAU's award check!*

If your school were chosen to receive a \$1000 grant to spend on a project related to recycling and/or environmental awareness, how would the money be spent? This question was posed to all public and private schools by the Bergen County Utilities Authority and EC Middle School accepted the challenge. As a result of science teachers Liesl Botbyl and Everett Henderson's proposal to start a healthy garden on the Middle School's campus, the BCAU awarded the school \$890!

The purpose of the healthy garden will be to promote student leadership and pride in workmanship while also generating awareness of environmental issues. It is our hope that in math class, students can discuss perimeter and area while planning the appropriate size of the garden, while science students can learn about water collection methods and weather forecasting to ensure success in plant growth. Health class would be a perfect setting to discuss healthy eating and promoting EC's efforts to minimize unhealthy snacks in our vending machines.

The transforming aspect of this project has been the increased awareness of our environment, the ongoing discussions about global warming and our limited natural resources.

Operation Christmas Child

BY NAOMI BRAUNIUS, MIDDLE SCHOOL HORIZONS TEACHER

For a couple of weeks at the end of October, EC Middle School students brought in shoeboxes filled with small toys, personal hygiene items, candy and personal notes. This was all a part of "Operation Christmas Child," a program under the direction of Franklin Graham of the Samaritan's Purse. The boxes were then brought to a collection center to be shipped around the world. Our school wanted to participate in this project because it is an example of one way to answer the call of service to others outside of our school and also to give back at a time of year when we receive so much. It helped the students to remember the true meaning of Christmas and to give just as God gave Jesus to us. It also gave an opportunity for hands-on service and missions that make an impact on the life of a needy child. It helped students answer the question: "What does faith look like?" and to respond to our theme of "Do What It Says."

The transformational effect gave students the opportunity to reach out to children in countries all over the world to let them know that Jesus loves them.



Morgan Herman, Jayna Van Buiten (middle), Kaytlynn Knyfd

Eighth Graders Attend Pirate Open

WRITTEN BY CHUCK SHOTMEYER, EC PARENT

Give these boys a challenge, and they will “walk the plank” with it! Figuratively speaking of course! Four eighth graders traveled to Seton Hall Preparatory School to participate in the “2007 Pirate Open”. This event is an invitational Quiz Bowl Tournament, at which teams from private schools throughout Northern New Jersey participate. Each team is comprised of four members from either grades 7 or 8 and a coach. This year **Ameer Halim, Josh Davidson, Matthew Botbyl** and **Jacob Shotmeyer** competed for Eastern Christian under the assistance of **Coach Chuck Shotmeyer**. Three rounds of tough competition ensued with the Eagles qualifying for the first time in the Quarter Finals.

Each round pit our Boys against a team of boys from a rival private school. The competition was fierce. Many of the other teams have official Quiz Bowl teams and participate every year. Each round teams alternate through as many as 50 questions which range from history, geography, math, science to sports and current events in a timed environment. As Quarter finalists, our boys were treated to lunch and informed about High School level Quiz Bowl tournaments and activities. They were then pitted against the team that ultimately won the competition, ranked 5th overall and received a trophy for their achievement which is on display at Eastern Christian Middle School. Coach Shotmeyer comments, “As coach, I am



Pictured: Joshua Davidson, Matt Botbyl, Jacob Shotmeyer, Ameer Halim

very proud of our students and their ability to perform with such a high degree of success. They competed against private middle schools from all over and finished strong. I was equally honored to bring credit to our school and enjoyed the inquiry of others as to who we are. One coach who lives locally sought me out and complimented our boys for doing so well and thanked us for participating. It is very rewarding to see our students successfully compete in both athletic and academic arenas.”

Surprise!!!

WRITTEN BY BETSY TYVOLL, 7TH & 8TH GRADE BIBLE TEACHER

For **Principal Van Yperen's** birthday, ECMS school decided to honor his mission-oriented life and challenge us to put others first by caring for people around the world. We collected donations to go toward different needs in different parts of the world. Our efforts were coordinated through the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, an organization that channels monetary gifts for different causes around the globe. On Dec. 21, we presented Mr. Van Yperen with donations that went toward tree seedlings, livestock, Bibles, medical and building supplies. Mr. Van Yperen responded, “I was overwhelmed by the deeply touching outpouring of love that December 21



Meghan Raisner and Seonu Cho with Principal Van Yperen.

afternoon. In the morning I had wondered how so many students knew it was my birthday when I greeted them, but the busyness of the day quickly occupied my attention. So when I was escorted into the gym that afternoon, it was a complete surprise to see the entire student body assembled. I confess that I was a bit embarrassed by all the attention and my first thought was to look for an escape. However, I was thrilled and then deeply touched by the unselfish acts of each class's efforts at caring and providing for others in the world. As each

class announced their gifts given in my name, I felt blessed and honored to be a part of ECMS.”

ECES Red and Green Day

WRITTEN BY CAROL BYMA, 4TH GRADE TEACHER

Students at ECES were once again challenged to “clothe” themselves with compassion and kindness as the apostle Paul wrote about in Colossians 3:12. On Wednesday, December 12, students and staff wore red, green, and other Christmas colors and designs to celebrate the season. They were also asked to bring in \$1.00 to donate to Operation



Zachariah Wistuk, Ethan Vander Molen, Brooke Van Lenten, Abigail Johnson & Scott Steenstra

Christmas Child, a part of Samaritan’s Purse. The \$1.00 the students brought in has been sent to this organization to help pay for postage for the gift-filled shoe boxes it sends to needy children in crisis all around the world. These gifts not only bring joy to these children, but they also present the children with the love of Jesus Christ shown through others. Our school was very Christmas color-full as the students at ECES showed their love and compassion by raising \$243.00 for this cause. Thanks to all who helped us learn more about showing our love for Jesus by clothing ourselves with Christmas colors and compassion!

Elementary Christmas Chapel

WRITTEN BY DONNA HOLLY, KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

One feature that makes Eastern Christian School unique from other schools is the weekly chapel that our students attend. On December 19th, the kindergarten students performed this year’s Christmas chapel. In keeping with this year’s biblical theme, Ephesians 4:32 “Be kind and compassionate to one another,” our young students performed *The Crippled Lamb*, written by Max Lucado. As teachers read the story to the audience, the children pantomimed the story of how one crippled lamb showed kindness and compassion as he used his wool to keep the



Kindergarten students sing with Katie!

new baby king warm while lying in a stable. **Katie Johnston**, ECHS freshman, joined our kindergarten performers singing *Mary Did You Know?* All those who attended were blessed with the true meaningful performance, and wonderful way to begin the Christmas season.



Third Graders Honor Good Citizenship!

Third Graders Honor Good Citizenship!

Written by Rhonda Klein, 3rd Grade Teacher

The students in Mrs. Rhonda Klein’s and Mrs. Beverly Peters’ social studies classes have been studying about Citizenship and Government. They questioned, “What makes a good citizen?” and “What words would describe such a person?”

The boys and girls spent time reading short biographical sketches about people who made and are making a difference in the neighborhoods of our country, such as Jane Addams of Chicago and Virginia Ramirez in San Antonio. They learned about services that communities provide and, very often, it is just the ordinary volunteer who contributes the most.

As a final project they were asked to design and create their own “medal” for a good citizenship award. Each student had developed a vocabulary list of citizenship words that were drawn upon to be “engraved” into their original designs and prototypes along with an appropriate illustration. The third graders had fun while learning about exemplary traits of good citizenship.

EC MUSIC

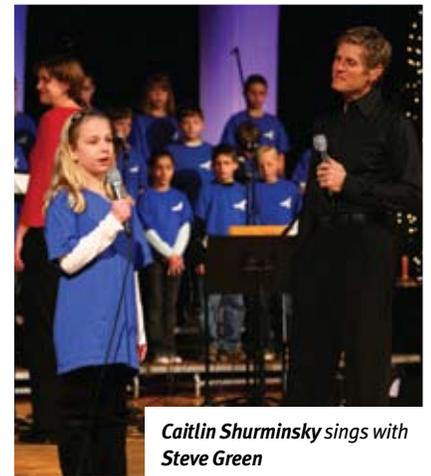


Fourth Graders Share the Stage with Recording Artist Steve Green

BY JACIE SYTSMA, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MUSIC DIRECTOR

On Saturday, December 8, forty-five Eastern Christian fourth graders shared the stage with Christian recording artist Steve Green. As part of Green's Christmas tour, the children were invited to sing three original compositions – beginning with the Advent hymn “Holy Child” and moving to an energetic rendition of Psalm 150, which included students as soloists and speakers. The children's performance ended with “Come Let us Bow Down in Worship,” a beautiful paraphrase of Psalm 95, which featured a duet between Steve Green and fourth grade student **Caitlin Shurminsky**.

Elementary Music Director **Jacie Sytsma** saw the concert as an opportunity to put into practice lessons she has been driving home since the beginning of the school year. “I stress to the students that we are to put forth our most excellent musical effort, because we are singing for the Lord, and He deserves our very best! We also talk about the effect that our facial expressions and demeanor has on how an audience receives the message of our songs. I was really proud of our kids and how they took that message to heart.” For the students, it was an unforgettable experience. “At first, we were nervous, but when we got up there and started singing, it was really FUN! I hope we get to do it again,” said one fourth grader.



Caitlin Shurminsky sings with Steve Green



Kathy Seo

Middle School Orchestra Students

Twelve Eastern Christian Middle School students along with High School freshman, **Jaclyn Jacobs**, participated in the Ridgewood Symphony Festival held January 26. This 100-piece orchestra invites 6th to 9th grade students from Northern NJ to try out, and if selected, to perform together as a group. Over ten percent of this orchestra was made up of EC students - quite an accomplishment! Middle School Orchestra Director **Cathy Clark** adds, “The students come back with knowledge of what it takes to play in such a large ensemble. Playing with advanced students stretches their abilities and brings them to a whole new level of playing. And, through their behavior and conversations at breaks and dinner, they are a witness to others.”



Freshman violinist Jaclyn Jacobs

THE HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL THIS FALL WAS

Charlotte's Web

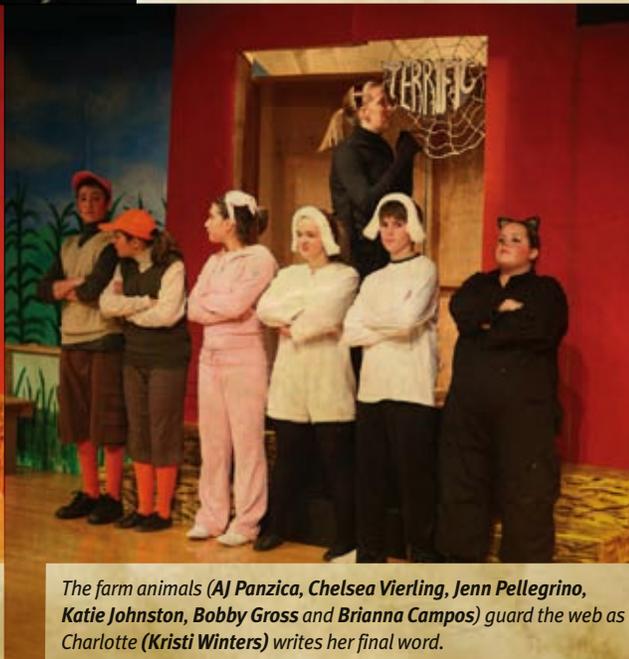
The cast and crew delivered four fantastic performances!



The towns people sing (and dance) their praises of Wilbur.



Fern (**Stephanie Jacobs**) and Mrs. Arable (**Sara Troast**) sing about the difficulties of being a thirteen year old girl.



The farm animals (**AJ Panzica**, **Chelsea Vierling**, **Jenn Pellegrino**, **Katie Johnston**, **Bobby Gross** and **Brianna Campos**) guard the web as Charlotte (**Kristi Winters**) writes her final word.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

2007 Capital Campaign

SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The 2007 Capital Campaign was conceived as a means of achieving three major strategic objectives for Eastern Christian:

- Completing essential repairs and facility upgrades that support Eastern Christian’s educational mission.
- Securing a significant investment in Eastern Christian’s campuses without increasing tuition.
- Advancing Eastern Christian’s educational program and new student recruitment efforts.



The upgrades and improvements that will be funded by the Capital Campaign are essential—real needs that directly affect the educational experience of our students.

While it will be really great to give Eastern Christian High School’s 55-year-old gym and front entrance a face-lift, much of the work that will be funded by the Capital Campaign will be behind the scenes—refurbishing roofs, updating locker rooms and beginning to build an endowment for maintaining Eastern Christian’s facilities for the future.

CAMPAIGN BUDGET

New High School Roof.....	\$650,000
Gymnasium/Locker Rooms Renovations.....	\$430,000
New Middle School Roof.....	\$125,000
Asbestos Abatement	\$100,000
Maintenance Endowment	\$100,000
New High School Entrance.....	\$70,000
New Baseball and Softball Backstops	\$25,000
Total	\$1,500,000



Eastern Christian School Association

"Engaging the Mind, Nurturing the Spirit, Transforming the World!"

Dear Friends,

Founded in 1892 with the mission of educating covenant young people in Northern New Jersey, the schools that form Eastern Christian were based upon the conviction that the Christian community has a shared responsibility to provide its children and young people with an education suffused with the belief that Jesus Christ is Lord of all knowledge and to support Christian parents in discharging their obligation to so educate their children. The result was a school in which the children of believers had an opportunity to learn about the world as God's marvelous creation and come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord.

For 115 years, Eastern Christian has remained true to that mission. It has engaged the minds of generations of students by challenging them to excel in the classroom and laboratory, on the stage, at the easel and on the court and playing field--not excellence for our glory but for the glory of God. Over the years Eastern Christian has expanded its programs to serve the broadest possible range of students, from young children starting in our Pre-K program to young adults in high school, teaching students to use their gifts to their fullest potential whether they are in advanced placement classes or in a resource room for students with learning differences.

And through its students and graduates, Eastern Christian has had a transforming impact on the world in virtually every field of human endeavor -- as a leavening influence and a powerful force for good!

For all of these 115 years, the Eastern Christian support community has recognized the critical importance of this mission and has freely given of its prayers, time, talent, energy and money. And because we believe that up-to-date, high-quality facilities are an important ingredient in continuing the tradition of educational excellence that we desire for the children of our community, we have committed to personally supporting the 2007 Capital Campaign with our time, talents and finances.

We hope that you too will agree that Eastern Christian's mission is as important today as ever in its 115-year history and join us in supporting this Campaign. Please help us support Eastern Christian as it prepares the next generation of students -- Engaging the Mind, Nurturing the Spirit, Transforming the World!

Sincerely yours,

*John and Barbara Belanus
William C. and Barbara A. Hanse
Bernie and Muriel Tolsma
Don and Mary Westra*

Co-Chairs, 2007 Capital Campaign

BUSINESS DRIVE

Business Drive Supporter

Bushoven & Co, CPAs has close connections to EC going back several generations. The partners—**Doug Bushoven** and **Roy Bushoven** along with founder **Neil Bushoven** ('49) of the firm are not only EC alumni but also have served on various committees as Eastern Christian School Board members. Doug adds, "Having experienced firsthand the blessing of a comprehensive Christian education for ourselves and our children, we feel very strongly that our business should support the EC. The mission of EC to provide an excellent education within a Christian worldview prepares students for the moral and ethical challenges of the business world and the workplace. Our investment in EC makes perfect sense."



Top row: **Doug Bushoven** ('79), **David Steenstra** ('02), **Roy Bushoven** ('75), **Ida Vanek**. Seated: **Laura Gallo**, **Kathy (Eelman) Klaassen** ('68).



Henry Hagedoorn ('84) presents a check to Head of School **Tom Dykhouse** on behalf of Borough Chrysler Jeep. At EC's Christmas Bazaar, Borough Chrysler Jeep sponsored "Chrysler's Drive-for-the-Kids" in which EC received a donation for each test drive taken.



Atlantic Stewardship Bank Chairman **Bill Hanse** and Board member **John Steen** present a contribution to Eastern Christian Board President **Tom Henion** and Head of School **Tom Dykhouse**. Eastern Christian is honored to have been a very significant recipient of support from Atlantic Stewardship's unique tithing program since the bank's formation in 1985.

2007- 2008 Business Drive Donors

We truly appreciate the support from the following Business Drive donors:

Action Graphics
Ashley Furniture HomeStores
Atlantic Stewardship Bank
Baker & Hoogerhyde LLC
Borough Chrysler Jeep
Braen Stone Industries
David R. Bruins, Esq.
Jennifer Bushman D.M.D. PC
Bushoven & Company

C S Stucco & Plaster Inc.
Christian Counseling, Patrick Yates, LPC
De Jong Iron Works, Inc.
Dykhouse Construction Company, Inc.
George Harms Construction Co.
Heerema Company
Hi-Tech Family Dentistry, LLC
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William Sytsma Landscaping
Tanis Hardware Corp.
Mark Tirondola Painting Contractor, Inc.
R. M. Tuit Paving
V & S Flooring, Inc.

Van Grouw & Associates
Viking Wood Floors, Inc.
Visbeen Construction Co.
Wayne Tile Company
Wallwork Bros.
Wiegiers, Inc.
Dr. John Wispelwey

Upcoming Events



EC's Annual Golf Outing



Monday, May 19, 2008
Crystal Springs Golf Resort
One Wild Turkey Way Hardyston, NJ 07419

1:00 Shotgun Start—Scramble Format

Dinner immediately following at Crystal Springs Resort.
Registration will be limited to the first 144 golfers

Call Kurt Faber, 973-427-7900

for more information or visit www.easternchristian.org

Auction Elegance

Thursday evening, April 17, 2008
The Tides Estate, North Haledon
6:30pm

Proceeds from all auctioned items directly benefits Eastern Christian School! The evening features a delicious hot/cold buffet dinner during which a Silent Auction takes place. During dessert the Live Auction occurs where our mild-mannered guests pull out all the stops to be the highest bidder. Live Auction items often include tickets to sporting events, long weekend get-aways, catered BBQ's and much more! Last year our school auction was a tremendous success! With 330 guests, and very active bidding, \$55,300 was raised. We need items for our guests to go crazy over ...you can help us get ready for a bidding frenzy!

It's not too late to consider a donation to the 2008 Auction Elegance.

Cannot attend? Visit www.easternchristian.org to place an absentee bid!

ECSA NEWS

Eastern Christian Alumni Directory Upgrade!

Eastern Christian is committed to creating and nurturing the unique community that is made up of our alumni. As part of our mission to engage the mind, nurture the spirit and transform the world, we continue to look for ways to bring our community together. A few years ago, we introduced a directory to allow you to connect with each other and maintain the relationships that were formed at Eastern Christian. Over the last year we have compiled your input about the Alumni Directory and we have made substantial improvements to improve your ability to maintain and enhance your connection to each other and Eastern Christian.

We have taken advantage of new technologies to take the directory from a simple listing of contact information to allow you to:

- Update your contact information
- Choose to make your contact information public or private
- Update your main profile image
- Create a photo gallery
- Search the directory
- Private Messages - We've made private messaging available as a way to ensure your privacy, but still be able to communicate with other members. These messages are more private than regular e-mail messages because the e-mail address of the sender and recipient

are not made available, but you can see the senders name. You can send a private message to someone even if they have made their e-mail address private. The private message will then be available when the user logs in to the site.

- Globally e-mail Classmates

We have had feedback that many of you would like to communicate with your classmates more easily than going into each person's profile and copy their email address. In an effort to streamline your ability to communicate with your classmates, we have set up an e-newsletter for each class. If you would like to send a message out to everyone in your class —, simply email alumni@easternchristian.org with your message and we can send out the message to all of your classmates.

Eastern Christian Website Upgrade!

You will notice other improvements to the site including:

- a streamlined Donation page
- an updated Events page with upcoming events listed at the bottom of the page
- updated home page.

PROFILE PAGE: *Create, Update & Edit*

The screenshot displays the Eastern Christian School Association website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'CONTACT US', 'FORMS', and 'Donate ONLINE'. The main header features the ECSA logo and the text 'Eastern Christian School Association'. Below this is a search bar and a horizontal menu with categories like 'HOME', 'WHO WE ARE', 'ADMISSIONS', 'EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS', 'CALENDAR & SCHEDULES', 'OUR STUDENTS & PARENTS', 'SPORTS', 'OUR ALUMNI', 'EVENTS & FUNDRAISERS', and 'EC BULLETINS'. The main content area shows a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > My Profile > David Luyendyk'. The profile page title is 'David Luyendyk Profile Page'. A red 'Edit' button is visible above a profile picture of a man, a woman, and a dog. A red arrow points from this button to a magnified view of the dropdown menu, which includes options: 'Update Your Profile', 'Update Your Image', and 'Remove Image'. On the left side of the page, there is a vertical navigation menu with links for 'Directory', 'Directory: Advanced Search', 'My Profile', 'Privacy and Usage Policy', and 'Help'. At the bottom left, there is a section for 'EC Alumni Directory Login' with the text 'Hi, David' and a notification: 'You have no new private messages'.

On the home page, we have created a connection between the Eastern Christian website and the EC Newswire website, which is created and maintained by EC students. If you want to get a better idea of what's happening day-to-day with our students, we encourage you to click on the links found on the home page under the EC Newswire heading.

We hope you enjoy the improvements that we have made to the directory and the website and look forward to your continuing feedback. With your help, we can continue to engage the mind, nurture the spirit and transform the world!

GALLERY SPACE: Upload Photos

In Memorium – J. Arthur Larson, 1916–2007



Mr. J. Arthur Larson, who served as the treasurer and manager of the Eastern Christian Endowment Fund for over 25 years, passed into the presence of his Lord on Wednesday, December 5 at the Ocean Medical Center in Brick, NJ. Under Art's leadership the Endowment Fund grew from \$25,000 to over \$6,000,000. From 2000 to 2005 the fund generated over \$2,203,000 for the Eastern Christian Annual Fund and helped reduce tuition for every student. Art is survived by his loving wife of 64 years, Louise. Please pray for Louise as she struggles with the loss of her beloved husband. We thank God for Art and for his love and commitment to the students at Eastern Christian.

SEARCH: Advanced Search Options Available

Double Your Dollars

Thousands of employers across the United States match their employee's annual gifts to educational institutions. The Matching Gift Program turns \$1 into \$2, \$100 into \$200, and in some cases more. Your employer's involvement along with your support allows your contribution to double its initial impact. Maximize your DONATION!

Matching gifts were received from the following companies resulting in an additional \$37,656 in donations during the 2006 – 2007 school year:

Becton Dickinson & Company
 FM Global Insurance
 GE Foundation
 GlaxoSmithKline Foundation Matching Gifts Program
 Insurance Services Office Inc.
 LPL Invest in Others Matching Gift Program
 Marsh & McLennan Co., Inc.
 Public Service Enterprise Group Incorporated
 The Bank of New York Mellon
 The Prudential Foundation
 Visit www.matchinggifts.com to see if your employer is listed! Please call Pat in EC's Development Office with any questions.



A Fond Farewell to Janyce Bandstra

Janyce Bandstra, who has served as the Director of Admissions for the Eastern Christian School Association since 1987, has announced her decision to retire effect March 2008. Janyce is a graduate of the class of 1957 and has served on the EC Board of Directors and the Public Relations Committee. Her deep love for and commitment to EC has made her the ideal Admissions Director. **Gilbert Kitchen**, former Superintendent at Eastern Christian said, "Janyce will be missed by everyone at EC. Her love for the school and warm personality impressed all of the new parents who came to visit the schools. I'm sure Janyce will continue to help in any way possible." **Thomas Henion**, President of the Board of Directors, expressed his appreciation for Janyce saying, "What a blessing Janyce has been to Eastern Christian. Her love for the Lord and the school radiates to all who come in contact with her. Many of us go to Janyce with issues because she is known to be a woman of God with tremendous wisdom. We will miss her, but we are excited as she begins the next chapter of her life." Thank you Janyce for your faithful service to God at EC; may God bless you as you have been a blessing to so many people at Eastern Christian.

Eastern Christian School Annual Fund

In a few weeks, Eastern Christian School Association will begin its 2008 – 2009 Annual Fund Drive. This year's theme will be "Transforming the World." Our scripture text is from 2 Corinthians 3:18, "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Spirit, who is the Lord."

As our students are being taught in every classroom from a Biblical perspective, they are being transformed by the Holy Spirit into the very likeness of Jesus Christ. As they reflect the Lord's glory and develop a

Christian world and life view, they will help transform the world for Christ. For over 115 years, Eastern Christian has been used by God for this purpose as our graduates serve Him throughout the world. Today as never before we need the salting influence of the Gospel on our world, and Eastern Christian needs your prayers and financial support to help us prepare our students for this mission.

To make a gift today, visit www.easternchristian.org or call (973) 427-9294.

ALUMNI NEWS

In celebrating Eastern Christian's 115th year of service to the children of the Christian community of Northern New Jersey – we also celebrate that many students today are the third and fourth generation of families that have chosen Eastern Christian. Now, after 115 years, a new fifth generation of students are walking the halls! If you or a family you know is a part of this tradition, please contact EC's Development Office – we would love to hear from you.

5 Generations of EC Alumni

BY RONALD STEIGINGA '65

Just about the time Christian schools were taking shape in northern New Jersey in the 1890's, my great-grandfather, Willem Steiginga, picked up his family and moved them from the Netherlands to America. He did not know what to expect, but he was convinced that America would bring him a better life than one he currently experienced. Willem did not know much English when he entered this country, but he knew that he wanted his son to have a Christian education. His son, my grandfather Henry Steiginga, marched off to Amity Street Christian School to receive his education.

A generation later, Henry sent all eight of his children to North 4th Street Christian School. Every Monday he handed his son, Bill, the money that would pay for another week's tuition. My father, Harry, had his education end with his 8th grade diploma from North 4th Street. It was the height of the Great Depression and there was no more time for school when every dollar that a family member might make at a job would help keep the family afloat.

Harry Steiginga sent all of his seven children to Eastern Christian, including myself. I have always treasured my Christian education, so much so that my wife, Karen (de Graff '65) Steiginga, and I sent our three children to Eastern Christian. Now my children are sending their children to the same schools they once attended. For five generations the name of Steiginga has appeared on the school's enrollment!

Eastern Christian is an integral part of our lives. I, along with my brother Roger and sister Nancy Bruining are past members of the EC Board



Front row: Allison Steiginga, Michael Steiginga, Kyle Dykstra, Bradley Schipper. Row 2: Marie Steiginga, Sara Schipper, Tyler Schipper, Christopher Schipper, Ryan Dykstra. Row 3: Ron Steiginga, Cheryl (Steiginga) Schipper, Jeff Steiginga, Laura (Steiginga) Dykstra. Not pictured: Shannon Dykstra.

of Directors. My daughter, Cheryl Schipper, serves in that same capacity at the present time. Most of us continue to serve the school through work at fund-raisers and Booster Club projects.

Eastern Christian School is now 115 years old. We as a family hope that God will bless it for generations yet to come. I pray that God will give me enough years that I can witness some of Generation #6 march off to the same schools that their forebears did. I suppose you would have to say that Eastern

Christian is in our blood. If we submitted to blood tests I'm sure that among the red and white blood cells they would find traces of blue and gold! You see, after five generations of Christian education Eastern Christian becomes part of your DNA.

Send us your news! Return to: The Herald, Eastern Christian School, 50 Oakwood Ave, North Haledon, NJ 07508

Names(s) _____

Graduation Year _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

E-Mail _____

Alumni News Reunion Information Alumni Profile Change of address

Alumni News

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

FORMER FACULTY

DEATHS:

Jessie Eichhorn (age 92) of Nichols, NY on 11/3/2007. Jessie taught in EC Elementary School.

HERITAGE YEARS

DEATHS:

Gertrude (Vander Meulen) Irwin ('26) of Wyckoff, NJ on 10/20/07.

Fogeline "Voge" (Kole) Veenema ('32) of New London, NH on 12/19/07.

Elsie (Van Hoff) Gideon ('37) of Belmont, MI on 11/13/07.

Wilhelmina "Billie" (Pruiksma) Roukema ('37) of Ft. Lauderdale, FL on 9/30/07.

THE 1940'S

Sam Greydanus ('41) was recently featured in *The Holland Sentinel* on Veterans Day, recalling the day that he was part of a patrol that liberated a concentration camp during the second World War. After the war, Sam taught history at Holland Christian School and Calvin College. See the article in its entirety on the Web at www.hollandsentinel.com.

DEATHS:

Alida (Borduin) Van Valkenburg ('41) of Prospect Park, NJ on 11/15/07.

Winifred (Sisco) Bushman ('41) of Wyckoff, NJ on 9/22/07.

Edith (Wynbeek) Smith ('42) of New Port Richey, FL on 12/19/07.

Frank J. Dykstra ('48) of Midland Park, NJ on 10/21/07.

Milton Minkema ('48) of Glen Rock, NJ on 10/11/07.

THE 1950'S

REUNIONS:

The Class of 1958 will celebrate the 50th

Anniversary of their graduation on Friday, June 27, 2008 with a reunion dinner at Portobello's Restaurant in Oakland, NJ. The weekend activities will also include a class brunch for Saturday, June 28, 2008 in the High School cafeteria starting at 9:30am. There will be opportunities for tours of the High School building for those interested. Please contact **Garry Nieuwenhuis** at 973-427-7948 or e-mail garnflo@optonline.net for more information.

DEATHS:

Grace (Broeils) Fellema ('56) of North Carolina on 12/16/07.

THE 1960'S

Cal Wieggers ('60) owns a chemical distribution business called Prime Materials. On 7/21/07 the building leased to operate the company burned to the ground. It was a former textile mill that housed 60 companies and 300 employees. "We lost all of the inventory, worth over \$750,000. My company is now back up and running, and we should be in our new building by the end of the year. We have landed on our feet in a very miraculous way. In spite of the loss, God had blessed us."

DEATHS:

Roy DeBoer ('61) of Grand Rapids, MI on 11/13/07. Roy taught for many years at Creston Christian School and at Calvin College, in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Robert H. Bardenhagen ('69) of Manchester, NJ on 9/12/07.

THE 1970'S

Janis (Tuit) Warden ('74) was selected as the July 2007 Shining Star of Pella Regional Health Center. Jan was selected by her peers for this award to recognize "her professional attitude, commitment to the PRHC team, responsiveness and sense of ownership."

REUNIONS:

Class of 1973: If you are interested in a possible 35-year reunion in 2008 please contact **Bonnie (Jonkman) Newton** (billn205@aol.com).

THE 1980'S

Bonnie and John Faber ('88) have recently relocated from Virginia to Plainfield, IL.

REUNIONS:

The Class of 1982 celebrated their 25th Class Reunion on November 23, 2007. It was held at Macaluso's, located in Hawthorne, NJ. Forty-seven classmates along with spouses attended. Reunion Coordinator **Lisa (Atema) Soodsma** adds, "We had a wonderful evening of delicious food, 80's music and talking to many classmates that had not seen each other in many years. **Steve Noordeloos** was the MC and welcomed everyone. **Pastor Doug Boyer** opened in prayer." The Class of 1982 gave of gift of \$730 to Eastern Christian School. "We all feel blessed to have attended a school that gave us the foundation of who we are today."

MARRIAGES:

John Van Dam ('81) and **Kristin Ellis** on 11/24/07 in Philadelphia, PA. They reside in Princeton, NJ.

THE 1990'S

Sue (VanHeemst) Sehulster ('90) has relocated back to Hawthorne, NJ and would love to be in touch with any classmates in the area. Her e-mail address is suevhs@verizon.net.

Lauren Kooistra ('96) is currently employed as Instructor of Piano at Messiah College in Grantham, PA. Lauren is currently on leave studying for her PhD. in Music Education at Penn State University.

Todd Klaassen ('98) has moved to Indianapolis, IN. He had been in Lansing,

MI where he was Chief Meteorologist for Fox-47 for three years. He is now the meteorologist for Fox-59. Prior to working in Lansing, Todd worked for CBS News in New York, producing weather segments for several shows. The best part about being



a meteorologist is “that the weather is always changing. No work day is ever the same.” Todd is competitive in his forecasts and doesn’t like “being beat by the weather!”

Marissa (Pajot) Webb ('99) is a speech language pathologist in the Godwin/Highland School in Midland Park, NJ. She and her husband Timothy live in Bloomfield, NJ.

Adam Choka ('99) was married to Kathleen (Kate) Wright on April 21, 2007 in Friendship, Maryland. Adam and Kate met at The American University where they both completed their degrees. They honeymooned in Ireland and Holland and are now living in Honolulu, Hawaii. Kate and Adam work for the Public Defender’s Service in Honolulu.

REUNIONS:

Class of 1998: A 10-year reunion is being planned for fall, 2008. Please e-mail **Sandi (King) Chiera** at alustri22@aol.com with your updated information, as well as any interest you might have in helping.

MARRIAGES:

Kevin Van Dyk ('92) and **Elizabeth (Liz) Hoogmoed ('95)** on 9/21/07. They reside in Butler, NJ.

Michael Van Lenten ('93) and **Elizabeth De Jong ('98)** on 11/24/07. They reside in Prospect Park, NJ.

BIRTHS:

Stephen ('95) and Janelle (Klaassen) Peters ('00), a daughter, Avery Minn on 10/19/07.

Kelly and Chad Vogel ('96), a daughter, Angelesse Nicole.

Bob ('97) and Leah (Steenstra) Genuario ('97), a son, Andrew Robert on 9/13/07. He joins big brother Lucas.

Aaron and Debbie (Vander Plaat '97) Berger, a son, Elias James, on 4/29/07.

THE 2000'S

Ryan Fischer ('02) moved back to New Jersey in August after finishing his Masters at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids. He is now a commercial auditor working for Deloitte and Touche out of Parsippany, NJ.

Krista Muzikowski ('06) was recently awarded the top prize in the James Madison University Writing Conference. Professors from the university’s general education classes submitted the best papers from their students for consideration by all members of the English Department. Four hundred papers were narrowed down to 40. Those 40 students

were then asked to give a 10-minute oral presentation before professors, other students and parents. At a dinner following the presentations, it was announced that this prestigious honor would be given to Krista.

Esther Tuit ('07) recently won first place in the International Category of *The Record's* travel photo contest. The picture was Inside a Glacier on Mont Blanc, Chamonix, France. The judges commented, “The walls of the inside of the glacier were positively icy. The people were positioned just right. We had no idea where this was but were all intrigued.”

MARRIAGES:

Julie Heerema ('00) and Derek Ferwerda on 6/30/07. They reside in Brick, NJ.

Bill Faasse ('00) and Emma Appleby on 9/8/07. They reside in Succasunna, NJ.

Amy Balkema ('01) to Jaren Minatelli on 9/29/07. They reside in Jersey City, NJ.

Jonathan Everett ('01) and Julie Stoughton on 9/15/01.

Michael Tolsma ('02) and Diane McClelland on 9/8/07. They reside in Vernon, NJ.

Larissa Troast ('04) to A.J. Santino on 12/29/07.

ALUMNI PROFILE

Of All Places, Utah!



The first word that comes to mind when you hear “Utah” may be “Mormon,” and for good reason. But our Lord Jesus Christ is working through a small number of ordinary Christians with an extraordinary mission: to bring Christ to teenagers who have made devastating choices.

For the last year, I have had the unique blessing of working at a Christian boarding school in Kanab, Utah. Abundant Life Academy is a ref-

uge for Christian teenagers who have been trapped by a series of ungodly choices and are now living with their very unpleasant consequences. I have

been working as a Life Coach and Family Representative, and most recently have taken on more responsibilities as an Assistant Program Director.

Presently we have 32 young men and 21 young women, ages 13-18, who live on campus in Kanab, a town of 5,000 people. We are located one hour from the north rim of the Grand Canyon. We are surrounded by red rock cliffs and have a climate that is basically free of humidity. Exceptional!

We challenge our students to accept a new T.W.I.S.T. that will give them better results than they have realized before. We offer a nine month trimester program which includes a fully accredited academic program, Bible courses, studies on human behavior and basic personality traits, and other electives. Our students also learn Christian leadership skills — invaluable life tools which place these intelligent young people far ahead of the peers they have left behind.

Ron Tuit ('69)

ALUMNI PROFILE

TRANSFORMING THE “WORLD” INCLUDES

“Rebuilding Lives and Disaster Relief”

A T H O M E I N T H E U S A

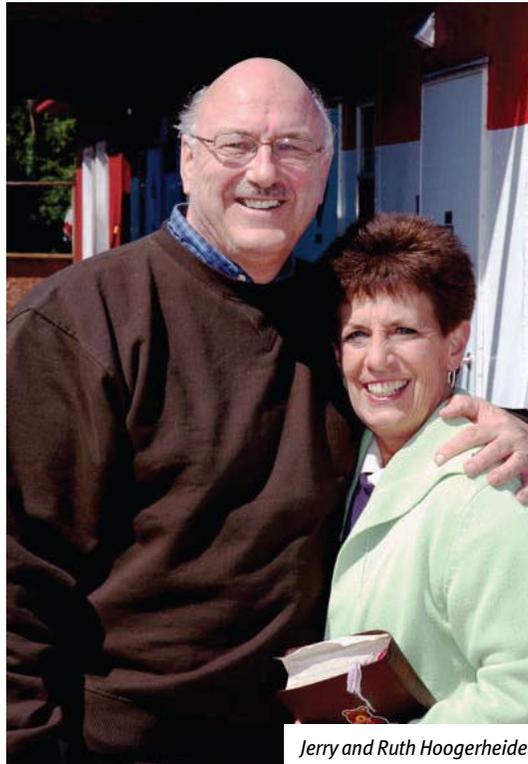
On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina pummeled Lakeshore, Mississippi as part of a 100-mile wide section of the Gulf Coast stretching from New Orleans, Louisiana to Pensacola, Florida. In the Hancock County area of Mississippi, often dubbed “Ground Zero,” the storm lasted fifteen hours, packed winds up to 150 mph, spawned numerous tornados, and generated a storm surge of over 40 feet which finally dissipated five to six miles inland.

TV documentaries have never been able to capture the sheer magnitude of the devastation. Every time we return to the area we are overwhelmed by the vastness of the rebuilding efforts which are still required. We ride for five or ten miles along the Gulf Coast and realize that what we’ve just seen has to be multiplied by ten or even twenty times to be equivalent to the total area affected.

We’ve stood in many spots along the beach imagining what it was like to see magnificent one hundred year old antebellum homes with vines, flowers, walkways and trellises, all facing the Gulf. Then, just turning from one side to the other, we’ve taken twenty pictures in a row of nothing except for debris, cement foundations or stairs leading to nowhere.

Whether the residents tried to ride out the storm or left under evacuation orders in response to the early warnings, they all believed that a few days after the storm, life would be normal again. Two and a half years later, while the rebuilding of homes and businesses is progressing (but still estimated to take another three to five years in Hancock County), none of the residents believe their lives will ever again be “normal.”

The lives of every individual along the hurricane-ravaged areas were totally transformed by this massive storm. For most of the residents, whatever they owned was at best severely damaged, or at worst, unrecognizable or just plain gone: homes, heirlooms, photographs, animals, automobiles, jobs, businesses, infrastructure. What we also have learned is that family and friends have been separated by distance or death. Many drowned and were never found. Others left during the evacuation and have not come back,



Jerry and Ruth Hoogerheide

recognizing the unsustainable conditions of their former community. Relationships and friendships that took many generations to build have been dismantled. Many of the institutions which had been used to weave the community into one fabric: churches, schools, post offices and community centers, have been closed or consolidated.

Some stayed to ride out the storm, not out of defiance or arrogance, but simply believing that Hurricane Camille had established a high water benchmark in 1969. Survivors of that storm remember that the “highest water never went further inland than the railroad tracks” (about one mile from the beach). There are many individual stories of horror, survival and unbelievable courage as they endured this ferocious storm, with its surge of forty feet, sweep away or damage every material thing they owned in areas well inland from the tracks.

The survivors fought their way back into their communities, with limited supplies and no working businesses. They cleared the streets of the fallen trees and snapped electrical poles, pulled their vehicles forward with chains and winches to get them through the mud, and found virtually every wooden structure within five miles of the beach water-penetrated, collapsed or gone. With a total dependence on resources coming from outside of the community until the businesses and infrastructure could be rebuilt, the residents supported each other through makeshift distribution centers and sharing. Now that some of the businesses and homes have been rebuilt by the efforts of 350 churches and volunteer groups, the residents are extremely grateful for the outreach of love and mercy shown to them from God’s ambassadors from all over the country. But the residents are now physically and emotionally drained from the 24/7 drill for two and one half years: “dead tired” is our phrase.

So why do we go back? Surely, they should be close to being finished after all this time!

Unfortunately, not for three to five more years. And why is it so compelling to go to Lakeshore? Restoration, restoration, restoration...

- Restoration of lives of special and grateful people (many elderly).
- Restoration of houses and then turning them back into homes.
- Restoration of the family fabric by recognizing emotional needs, and forging relationships by supplying hugs, listening, returning to visit, and corresponding long distance when we can't be on their home turf.
- Restoration of the "biblical community" that was lost by the consolidating and closing of so many area churches.
- Restoration of the belief in a living God who answers prayers for safety and physical needs in their very time of need.
- Restoration of hope in a living Jesus who offers compassion, mercy and grace, so essential to these individuals who had often grown up with only religious "traditions."
- Restoration of the exhibition of the fellowship and love of Christian believers united to work for the benefit of the Kingdom of God.

In October, 2005, fourteen months after the storm, the Lord placed the urgency of these people in Lakeshore upon my heart and the heart of my wife Ruth, and we have returned to the region five times. We have been blessed immeasurably. We have seen God do absolutely unexplainable amazing things through His volunteers from the 350 churches. We pray that the Lord continues to give us the health, strength, and passion to continue to "transform the world" for many of the residents there.



Scenes of Hurricane Katrina's destruction.

Little did we know that the preparation for these trips began over fifty years ago in our family upbringing, our churches and our Christian education, where we experienced love, friendship, nurturing, gentleness, compassion, empathy, enthusiasm and encouragement. That's where the "fruits of the Spirit" were initially modeled for us. Now we thank you all for the investment in our lives, and are grateful beyond words that as the Lord provides opportunities, we can share those fruits with others in need.

Ruth & Jerry Hoogerheide ('61) jrhoog@juno.com (704) 503-5367

ALUMNI PROFILE



Sarah Vander Ploeg ('03) is one of 37 American college students – the only Princeton University student – to be awarded the prestigious 2008 Marshall Scholarship. Established in 1953, the Marshall Scholarship funds two years of graduate study in any field at any institution in the United Kingdom. Sarah has chosen to use this prize to study at London's 600-student Royal College of Music. As reported in *The Herald News*, Sarah, "a lyric soprano who also plays the viola, wants to

become an opera singer. Above all, she aspires to use the power of the arts to make a difference in people's lives... Her passion for music is coupled with academic excellence and a commitment to the community, starting with her involvement at Cedar Hill Christian Reformed Church in Wyckoff. During her four years at Eastern Christian High School, she gave more than 700 hours to community service programs...

Last summer, she traveled to South Africa to delve into how apartheid

influenced the arts. Universal suffrage took place in the 1994 elections. About five years ago, Vander Ploeg says, the libretto of the opera "Carmen" was translated into the African language of Xhosa and set in the South African township of Khayelitsha. In Bizet's opera, the gypsies are looked down on by the military. The South African version speaks to the white minority shunning blacks and segregating them in townships.

"Carmen" was recast to make the story more relevant," she says. "It attempts to reclaim an art form in the aftermath of apartheid."

On Feb. 23, Sarah also received Princeton's Pyne Honor Prize, the highest general distinction conferred on an undergraduate, awarded to the senior who has most clearly manifested excellent scholarship, strength of character and effective leadership. Michael Pratt, orchestra conductor at Princeton, says Vander Ploeg is truly a well-rounded student who excels in music, academics and community service.

"She is really one of the best all-purpose musicians we've had here," says Pratt. "She is a stalwart in the orchestra as well as a singer," says Pratt, who acknowledges that her opera-singer ambition may be difficult to achieve. "Only 1/10th of 1 percent make it," he says. "But she might be able to do it. She's very focused and things are working out for her."

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