



THE HERALD

a publication of *Eastern Christian School*
Volume 64, Issue 1

REMAINING FOCUSED

Faith • Excellence • Partnership

PLUS
STEWARDSHIP REPORT

SPRING 2023

Faith, Excellence, Partnership



When I have the opportunity to introduce Eastern Christian School, I usually say, "We partner with believing families and churches to provide an excellent Christian education." While our official mission statement fleshes it out more thoroughly, for me, that brief sentence captures our focus on faith, excellence and partnership.

FAITH

As a thoroughly Christian school, our faith drives everything we do. The spiritual theme for 2022-2023 is "Promise Keeper:

Faithful to All His Promises" based on Psalm 145:13b: "The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does." We have been able to reflect on God's promises through chapels, devotions, lessons and conversations throughout the year. In addition to academic integration in all of their classes, our students have regular opportunities to cultivate and share their faith through worship, service and personal testimonies.

EXCELLENCE

As Christian educators, we believe that each student, as an image bearer of God, is worthy of our best efforts. We continue to pursue excellence in all areas. We are strengthening our longstanding Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation with a joint Christian Schools International accreditation. Teachers are active in a variety of professional learning opportunities, on the national level and in teacher-leader roles, through our professional pathways program.

Our students are excelling, in contrast to many who are remediating pandemic learning loss. Our enhanced Academic and College Counseling Office is providing highly individualized advising to our students as they consider post-secondary opportunities. The Alumni News section of this Herald edition highlights a handful of over 6,000 living alumni who have embodied the graduate profile: "The Eastern Christian graduate is prepared to be a person of Christian vision and influence and seeks to contribute cooperatively and responsibly to God's mission of renewing all of creation."

PARTNERSHIP

This work can only be accomplished through the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds Eastern Christian School. Generous individual and business donors provide resources for capital improvements, student scholarships and program enhancements. Staff members work diligently to secure grant funding. We celebrate the vision and creativity of ditto's founders and the commitment of the 1892 Society members to legacy giving. Parent volunteers, pastor partners and prayer warriors are a faithful presence on our campuses on a daily basis.

I hope that you enjoy reading about the exciting things happening at Eastern Christian School in this issue of the Herald!

Ruth Kuder '84
Executive Director and Head of School



EASTERN CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL

THE HERALD

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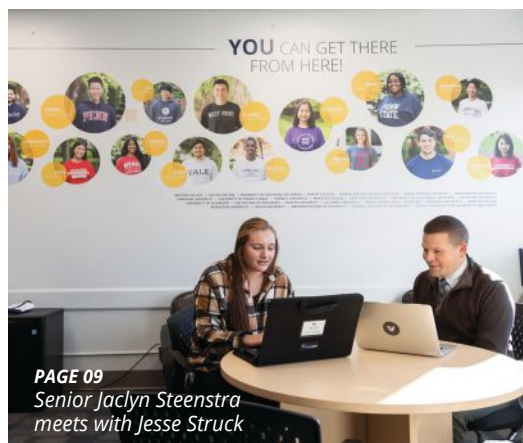
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The Herald is a bi-annual publication of The Foundation for Eastern Christian School. The purpose of this publication is to share the story of Eastern Christian School and to strengthen the bonds among our extended school community in support of Christian 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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New era, same mission: Remaining focused

Working to carry out this same mission in a new, post-COVID era



Jeremiah Dimetry and teacher, Phil Verrengia

Coming out of the pandemic, education news has been largely dismal. Consider these recent statistics—The National Center for Education reported that in 2022, 76 percent of public schools experienced an increase in students experiencing depression, anxiety and trauma.

Associated Press reported that ACT scores have dropped to the lowest point in 30 years. And last spring, Barna Group reported that only 21 percent of teens in the US believe Jesus is active in the world today.

The work of education is challenging, but stories like these also highlight why the mission of an excellent Christian education, and one in which the entire child is nurtured, remains critically important. Before and after the pandemic, Eastern Christian School has remained focused on its goal:

“By providing an excellent academic curriculum, offering a variety of extra-curricular activities, and assembling a caring, culturally diverse community, we, with support of parents and local churches, empower students from Christian families to develop their gifts within the context of a Reformed Christian worldview so that they can act as Christ’s transforming agents in a global society.”

Across the school, the community of believers surrounding EC has been working to carry out this same mission in a new, post-COVID era. Following is a snapshot of some of the exciting developments as we forge ahead.

COMMUNITY

Enrollment has drastically increased since COVID, especially in our lower grades. Our current enrollment is resting at more than 900 students, with several grades at or nearing capacity. We remain committed to being a covenantal school, working in partnership with Christian parents. Families represent 204 churches. As part of their contract,

faculty and staff sign that they subscribe to the Heidelberg Catechism, Canons of Dordt, and the Belgic Confession, as well as have a strong philosophical commitment to Christian education and the mission of Eastern Christian School. We are thankful for the faithful support of the greater community of believers (read more on 12).

DISTINCTIONS

EC has won several awards and recognitions in recent years. These include the National District of Character, New Jersey Small Business Success Award Winner, Top 50 Christian High Schools in America, and a Top Place to Work in NJ. The school is also a



Students utilize revamped space, furnished courtesy of generous donations raised last spring at the Auction Gala, the Foundation's annual fundraiser.

founding member of Christian Schools International and accredited by Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools. Teachers are certified and 46 employees have earned advanced degrees. In the past five years, we have seen our students go on to a number of prestigious establishments, including the University of Pennsylvania, Cornell University, Georgetown University, Boston College and Yale University. We are aware of more than 6,100 alumni living and working around the world, and count among our great cloud of witnesses pastors, missionaries, professionals, artisans, business executives and entrepreneurs.

GROWTH MINDSET

We have proactively worked to successfully nurture our kids out of this season of pandemic and into a season of growth. Efforts in this regard have included professional development for teachers, including trauma-informed teaching and Responsive Classroom methodology, pursuance of joint accreditation (read more on page 4), a reimagining of academic, college and career services, which includes an enhanced department (see more on page 9) and further development of our WINGS internship program. We also look forward to next year and the unveiling of a strengthened upper elementary school program. MAP test scores from this year, our measurement of performance, have bucked national trends and revealed a continued pattern of our student growth meeting and exceeding norm group expectations. In addition to individual growth, we are also anticipating a renovated high school cafeteria as well as ongoing upgrades of our athletic facilities. More than \$2 million dollars a year is raised through various initiatives and events to reinvest back into the community.

It is an exciting time to be part of Eastern Christian. We do this work and report these developments with the humble understanding that it is not ourselves we serve, but the Lord, and that it is his faithfulness alone that has enabled the school to flourish, even rising out of a difficult season. School decisions are prayerfully



Students utilize revamped Wyckoff space.

informed by the goals we have set for our students, encapsulated in the graduate profile:

“Utilizing Biblically informed inquiry and strong academic knowledge, an Eastern Christian graduate will think critically, exhibit curiosity and develop the discernment that will enable him/her to confidently and intentionally strive for excellence in every endeavor.

Having studied the message of Jesus Christ and having experienced models of Christian servanthood in community, the Eastern Christian graduate develops a healthy self image. Recognizing and responding to the will of God, and seeing in humanity the image of God, the graduate embraces diversity, exhibits compassion, offers respect, and is forgiving and open to others.

The Eastern Christian School graduate is prepared to be a person of Christian vision and influence and seeks to contribute cooperatively and responsibly to God's mission of renewing all of creation.”



A bird's eye view of last fall's open house.

Eastern Christian marks the 100th year of accreditation

By Michelle Vriesema



One hundred years ago, the academic institution that would one day become Eastern Christian School received its first accreditation. This distinction is essentially a stamp of approval from an outside governing body that proves the school is following and achieving a set of performance standards.

The school has been accredited since 1923, but this year the cycle will include a new milestone: for the first time, pursuit of dual accreditation. In addition to Middle States accreditation, Eastern Christian is also pursuing Christian Schools International accreditation.

"It is especially unusual for a school system to go through this dual accreditation process," remarks **Liesl Botbyl**, accreditation coordinator. "What's even more significant is working with a Christian organization that views education through the same faith lens as we do. And having us approach our 100th year of accreditation reminds us of God's faithfulness to us over all these years and our desire to remain faithful to God in our educating of his children for his kingdom. We have chosen to strive for excellence generation after generation."

In spring 2022, EC's initial application was approved by CSI and the school submitted to its first site visit. The evaluation process will continue until a site visit in spring 2024.

According to Botbyl, CSI will be evaluating the school based on four standards: Leading with a purpose, teaching for learning, leading for learning and learning for community. A team will assemble documents, interviews, survey data, policies and other documentation to demonstrate evidence of completion.

The Middle States accreditation process, which will happen in tandem with the CSI accreditation, traditionally incorporates three goals determined by the school. Goals are gleaned from stakeholder survey results. In the most recent cycle, which ends in 2024, the focus has been on character, global competence and strategic planning.

"Accreditation provides us with a regular opportunity to collect feedback from all of our community members and to use that feedback to create a thoughtful plan for the future. We want to strive for excellence in all of our endeavors and look forward to finding new ways in which we can do that. It should be our desire to become the best school we can," says **Ruth Kuder**, head of school.

Botbyl adds, "if we claim that we are an excellent school, then we need to show that we are meeting all of the standards of what an excellent school is."



Hands Dirty Day

By Nicole Verrengia

Eastern Christian School's upper elementary and middle school campus organized Hands Dirty Day, sending approximately 270 students to a variety of local venues to perform acts of service. Students had the opportunity to practice being the hands and feet of Jesus in our community.

"The point of Hands Dirty Day was to go out and assist organizations, and I feel like I really helped a lot at the Lighthouse Pregnancy Resource Center," eighth grade student **Mia Alvarez** says. "The other girls and I wiped and vacuumed the whole place, and we had a fun time doing it. The man there said that they usually didn't get many volunteers, so he was grateful we were there. It wasn't a lot, but it mattered."

Twenty staff members and more than forty parents served alongside the students. "We are greatly privileged at Eastern Christian to be in partnership with parents that show up to help for days like this," fifth and sixth grade Language Arts teacher **Teresa Sippel** says. "They serve our students and our school, as well as the ministry organizations that we are able to work with, on Hands Dirty Day. This is my fourth or fifth Hands Dirty Day experience, and each year the experience is meaningful. I love learning about the organizations that are serving in this area, and to see how young people step up to work."

Students served in activities like raking leaves, moving firewood, organizing a food bank, mulching a local arboretum and playing games at the Holland Christian Home and Christian Health. As two of our values here at Eastern Christian involve embracing community and contributing to the kingdom, Hands Dirty Day is an opportunity to allow students to live out the foundational qualities that we hold dear as we point others toward Jesus.

"The goal in a one day service project is to show our students that they are able to step in and help no matter how old they are," middle school principal **Dan Lazor** says, "Their work makes a difference, and we want them to connect this to life for others, both in physical ways but also as ambassadors for Christ. Service to others provides a platform for us to share why we serve."

"Not only did our students embrace the communities they served, they also embraced and strengthened the EC student community. Several teachers noted that younger students in their groups partnered up with older students and worked well together," **Lynda Vincenti**, who coordinated the event, says. "We saw them continuing those newfound friendships when they returned to school. When students were asked to write thank you notes at the end of the day to 'the service partner location, their chaperone, or anyone else that made an impact on them that they want to thank,' one of our fourth graders wrote a thank you note to the seventh grader he worked with that day."

Hands Dirty Day is a tradition that serves everyone involved. From the organizations to the staff to the students, its ripple effect is still being felt.

"I think the students had a strong sense of accomplishment afterwards knowing they made a difference," says music teacher **Rob Flim**, who led a group at Camp Shiloh.



Reading Buddies program shines at the elementary school

By Nicole Verrengia



If you enter a classroom at our preschool and elementary school campus at just the right time, you'll witness a precious moment as second and third graders read books alongside preschool and kindergarteners as part of our Reading Buddies program. This program, beloved for many years, has far reaching benefits for both the younger students and their older reading companions.

"Reading Buddies is one of our favorite programs for our students," Principal **Sandra Bottge** says. "Older students have the opportunity to model reading to their young friends. They carefully choose books that their buddy would enjoy and they read to them with great expression." The interest that second and third graders show toward reading can often be infectious and motivational.

"They love it," kindergarten teacher **Grace Kim** says. "Our kindergarteners are so encouraged to read. They practice more and they want to show their Reading Buddies they can read."

This collaboration also has a positive impact on the older readers, often spurring them on to challenge themselves and improve their reading fluency.

"It gives all readers the chance to build their confidence," second grade teacher **Kelly King** says. "When they got back [to our classroom]" she says of one visit, "my kids were so excited. They had

read half of the book and stopped and asked their buddies to predict what was going to happen. It was neat to see that they picked up on that and knew it was important."

Third grade teacher **Alyssa Westra** also sees the benefits. "By third grade, students are reading a variety of texts independently," Westra says. "The Reading Buddy program allows them to practice and model reading aloud. After years of being read to, they now get the opportunity to read to others. More so, the third graders get an opportunity to help the younger students decode words."

Meanwhile, the school is seeing positive outcomes outside of reading progress. The relationships and mentorship that are occurring have proved to be one of the biggest wins.

"I see so many benefits to the Reading Buddy program," kindergarten teacher **Jessica Truran** says. "My students, no matter where they are on their own reading journey, feel so special because of the individualized attention they receive from their buddy. They look up to the third graders and feel so proud when their buddy remembers their favorite color, and the kind of books they like to read."

"It gives students an opportunity to practice leadership skills and act as a mentor, which builds their confidence," second grade teacher **Colette Nazon** said.



Preschool educators head to the NAEYC annual conference

By Nicole Verrengia



The National Association for the Education of Young Children, or NAEYC, is the world's largest early childhood education association with nearly 60,000 members. Every year, they hold a National Conference with Washington D.C. as the host location for 2022. This year, the entire preschool team was in attendance.

"NAEYC is a very comprehensive organization," says **Karyn Baitzel**, preschool and extended



The EC preschool team

...OUR PRESCHOOL CLASSROOMS WERE INDEED OFFERING THE SAFE AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENTS THAT LEAD TO QUALITY CARE AND EDUCATION. —*Stacie Veenema*

day director. "It's the leading organization in early childhood. If you're looking for best practices, you look at NAEYC."

The conference featured dozens of workshops, vendors and presentations all geared toward early childhood education. According to its website, NAEYC's mission is to "promote high-quality early learning for all children" and "advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children."

"As I sat through the workshops at the convention, I found myself noticing over and over again how our preschool classrooms were indeed offering the safe and nurturing environments that lead to quality care and education," preschool teacher **Stacie Veenema** says. "It was inspiring to be surrounded by other early childhood educators and confirm that we are offering a great program at Eastern Christian Preschool."

Baitzel agrees. "As we heard best practices, we felt like we matched up really well."

"I did leave inspired," adds teacher **Adelia Cruz**. "The experience of being around thousands of other early childhood educators from so many different states in America and to meet so many vendors that dedicate their lives to the field of early childhood education was both inspiring and encouraging."

Nine teachers present master teacher-level projects



Master-level educators meet with Ed Council members to present their work

Before the school year started, nine teachers presented their projects to the Eastern Christian Educational Council, a leadership council comprised of campus-level administrators, as part of the school's innovative Pathway Program. Developed in 2013, the leadership development program represents a distinctive of Eastern Christian School and a win-win for teachers and students.

The program provides a way for experienced teachers with a master's to go one step further and earn a Master Teacher, Senior Specialist or an Educational Leader career designation. Teachers pursue further professional development in areas of professional passion, and tie in research projects and initiatives that will benefit the school system. It also provides teachers with an opportunity for increased compensation.

"The program is intended to support teachers who go way above and beyond the normal expectations of their classroom and will provide opportunities for them to develop additional leadership skills and broader exposure within

the organization," says Head of School **Ruth Kuder**.

This year, nine presenters shared projects in a small group setting using a consultancy protocol that included a presentation, time for questions and discussion, and then a presenter response and debrief. The presenting teachers were at different places in this three-year-long professional development process.

Under the curriculum category:

- **Christina McGowan** spoke on implementing best practices for reading and writing in early education.
- **Joyce Breur** presented on her continued work with middle school language arts curriculum, which included more intentionality in strengthening global competency.
- **Stephen Bailey** shared his research on improving standards for Bible education, which included proactively mitigating youth culture trends that point to declining biblical literacy.

In regards to promoting a safe and nurturing environment:

- **Alyssa Westra** explained her goals for the Responsive

Classroom teacher methodology, a methodology that is rooted in creating safe, joyful and engaging learning communities.

- **Jessica Truran** presented her continued work on trauma-informed teaching.
- **Esther Kim** discussed culturally responsive curriculum, the facilitation of which increases student academic engagement and strengthens implementation of core values at the school.

Finally, on teacher support and development:

- **Donna Furrey** explained her goals to increase math fluency for all types of learners, and then share these math resources to colleagues.
- **Tim Steen** showed his work on digitizing teacher professional development at the master-teacher level, as well as his next step to bring it to the school's larger Professional Development Academy.
- **Jim Uitermarkt** unveiled a plan for instructional coaching of new teachers, and in particular adopting a coaching cycle modeled after educational best practices that promote a growth mindset.

"Teachers are the ones most directly responsible for student growth, which is at the heart of our work. We believe that excellent teaching results in students who meet our mission of developing students' gifts so they are 'empowered to act as Christ's transforming agents in a global society.' Eastern Christian School is committed to supporting teachers in their own learning and growth," Kuder adds.

The road to college

Academic and college counselling

The high school cafeteria transformed into a college fair this December, except the presenters were not admissions counselors. They were actually EC freshmen in the middle of Career & Technical Education's post-secondary education unit, a required class for incoming ninth graders.

For two weeks, CTE is taken over by **Jesse Struck** and **Stephanie Lim** in the Academic and College Counseling office. During this time, students learn about the college process, gap years, military service and trade school. They tour Ramapo College and conclude with a college fair, where pairs of students research a specific school, create a visual display, and present to their older peers.

Like everything coming out of the ACC office, these initial steps were carefully crafted with an understanding of what is down the road. "I want students to understand what options are out there and what things actually mean. When we get students onto the Ramapo campus, for example, it provides a concrete, shared understanding of what college actually is, which is what grounds subsequent conversations," shares Struck. "I want them to understand that freshmen year really matters. The decisions they are making today, fairly early in freshmen year, have very real implications on their options and opportunities in the future."

The Academic and College Counseling office has been rethought and reimagined this year to support students more strategically from eighth through twelfth grades. Its mission is: "to provide comprehensive academic college and career advisement to support students throughout their academic progression and post-secondary transition."

This means the road starts earlier. ACC work now begins in eighth grade, where every student and parent will be invited to discuss high school course selection. Struck says it is a time to "get a sense of a student's inclination and aspirations

and make informed decisions." For example, a STEM-inclined student might be encouraged to take Principles of Research while a mathematically inclined student might want to double up on math in her freshman year.

For high school students, the ACC team has begun to launch a variety of initiatives aimed at increasing the excellence of college advisement. Initiatives this year include a mock SAT/ACT, college essay help, and a variety of evening programs. More than 50 college representatives have been invited to the building, and more plans are in the works, such as the launch of a senior seminar.

In addition to on-campus initiatives, the college road trip was brought back. This year, the ACC team took 12 students to four colleges in four days. Struck explains, "Our hope is to provide exposure to different types, different sizes, so that students can walk away not just having experience with those schools, but a better sense of their categorical preferences."

Struck, who has previously worked at prep schools and public schools, sees the EC college advisement experience as one that is innovative. He believes Eastern Christian High School is in a better position than larger public schools to offer individualized attention, while remaining true to the school's intention to love the whole person. "I would imagine there aren't many schools of our type that would have deans on student life and leadership, and the ACC focused on academic sequence and post-secondary transition. We have quite intentionally tried to serve the students better in a more focused capacity. It is quite unique to have a robust college counseling program in a place like EC."



*Senior Brent Van Harken
meets with Stephanie Lim*

The word of our testimony

The role of student testimonies in high school chapel

Brooke Talsma shares her testimony in a chapel this fall



Senior Brooke Talsma stood up from her front row seat in the auditorium and took her place at a mic on the stage. As cheers from her friends died down, she began to speak.

"For as long as I can remember, my parents made sure my brothers and I did the same three things: Go to church every Sunday, pray before dinner, and pray before we go to bed. I always did what I thought a good Christian would do, but never actually thought about the true meaning behind it. Until my parents sent me to Eastern Christian..." she shares.

It is the beginning of her 'First Five,' a five-minute testimony time toward the start of high school chapel. Brooke would go on to share about the month where she lost her grandfather and her mother was hospitalized, a month she characterized as "hitting rock bottom." As the stress built up, she added, "I ended up quitting basketball...I would just sit in my room alone. I lost the routine I was used to and pushed everyone far away. I was so angry at God."

She credits a campfire with the EC soccer team as the place where she was "put back on the right path again. It completely changed my perspective on life." And then she ended her testimony with encouragement. "You're supposed to have

questions, you're supposed to feel uncomfortable at times. God just wants you to talk to him. He is always constant in your life even though you might not feel him at all times. He keeps his promises. He never leaves your side."

Brooke is one of many students who have shared this year. Student testimony time became a staple of the chapel program in 2019. "They've been a beautiful catalyst to encourage other students into their faith with Jesus. It creates an environment of empathy and inspiration as they connect with their classmates who share," says **Stephen Bailey**, Bible & Worship teacher.

He adds that there is a reason we as Christians are attracted to these stories. "Testimonies are powerful because they inspire us into a deeper trust in Jesus. When we hear stories of God's faithfulness in others, we are reminded of the simple fact that 'if he was good to them, he will be good to me.' Humanity's biggest problem is forgetfulness. We forget that God is good and truly loves us as deeply as he says he does in his word. That's why we are commanded to read the Bible, meet in community, worship together, and even more so we are commanded in the Bible to remember his faithfulness. Testimonies remind us that Jesus is alive, active and moving in the world, so as a result we can believe that he is alive, active and moving in the part of the world we live in."

"The gospel itself is a testimony. Before the New Testament was written, the gospel was spread by word," he says. "Mary Magdalene is the first one to actually have a testimony of experiencing the resurrected Jesus. In John 20:18, she states the first testimony simply and beautifully: 'I have seen the Lord!'"



Mike Cook gives his 'First Five'

Spiritual Emphasis Week

And the three-legged stool

Twelve pastors set aside time to visit the high school during its Spiritual Emphasis Week in January, a week where a portion of the day is intentionally focused on spiritual development.

Some answered student questions on topics ranging from apologetics to spiritual gifts to forgiveness as part of pastor panels; others shared a message. Meanwhile, leading up to the week, a group of parents gathered regularly in room 407 of the high school to pray. And when a pastor gave an invitation to students to come to the front and respond to the Lord, and about 40 came down, it was those same parents who were able to stay and pray.

This is just one of many examples of the philosophy of the 'three-legged stool' at work: a phrase that has come to mean the partnership of families, the school and the church in raising up children to be people of Christian vision and influence.



Pastors from area churches gave their time in January to answer student questions about faith.

"Our identity in Christ shapes—or should shape—everything we do and the way we view the world. The partnership among church, school and home reinforces seeing the world through a singular, consistent viewpoint, and trains our students to do this as they grow up," shares **Dan Lazor**, middle school principal.

On all three campuses, church leaders are often tapped for chapels. For example, "At the high school campuses, we have the opportunity to invite local pastors to speak at our weekly chapel services.



Parents serve in a variety of ways, including volunteering at events.

These pastors and speakers have faithfully devoted time and energy to speaking the word of God into the lives of our students week after week," says **Dan Cirone**, high school principal. "We need the support of our local churches. At EC, we pride ourselves in partnering with parents and the local church. It is only through this partnership that we can have a lasting impact on students' academic, emotional and spiritual growth."

Parents also fill vital roles in many areas across our three campuses. Parent involvement ranges from chapel participation, to serving with PTO, to reading books to students. They have also traditionally been involved in supporting school staff through various initiatives and chaperoning during service events.

"When I see our parents coming alongside our school staff and meeting needs that we have as we engage in the work of Christian education, I see 1 Corinthians 12 come to life. Each is giving what they have to make the school and the experience our students have here at EC all the more rich," says Lazor.

"We are honored that parents entrust us with their precious children in their educational journey," says **Sandra Bottge**, elementary school principal. "Parents and grandparents are an integral part of the body of Christ at EC and we are so thankful for their tremendous support."



North Haledon police, fire, ambulance and library funds. They have also donated to Habitat for Humanity, Lighthouse Pregnancy Resource Center, New Hope Community Center, Madison Avenue Crossroads, Servants' Heart and Project Hope.

But perhaps some of the most meaningful contributions have not been as tangible.

Visbeen recalls a time on a Saturday night, when multiple families were displaced by fire in Haledon. Volunteers baked goods and opened the store the following day, allowing the displaced families to shop for free.

The volunteer community—a workforce numbering more than 100—that has been built up around ditto is also notable. “This is a group of individuals that love ditto and may even love EC, but they have become a community that love and support each other,” comments Visbeen.

Despite the board’s significant loss of two founding members, there is much to celebrate as ditto continues to innovate. At the Eastern Christian School January board meeting, the ditto Student Commons Center was approved, a redo of the cafeteria space that has been largely financed by ditto. In addition, the store itself recently underwent a makeover.

“Keeping the store updated is important to our image of quality. When you walk in, you know this isn’t your ordinary resale shop,” says Visbeen. “You can’t imagine what a great place to shop ditto is if you haven’t been there.”

ditto board says thank you to two founding fathers:

David Visbeen and Garret Nieuwenhuis

In December, David Visbeen and Garret Nieuwenhuis officially retired from the ditto board after more than 12 years of service to the community.

The past twelve years of ditto’s existence has been nothing short of remarkable, and to date, the upscale thrift store has risen to become one of Eastern Christian School’s top donors, raising more than \$2 million.

Like many endeavors, it had a humble start. After the Board of EC decided to close the Corner Closet in the 2000s, an EC thrift store that was located on the site of an old bowling alley in Hawthorne, Visbeen and another EC supporter, Bernie Tolsma, began talking seriously about a relaunch with a new business model. After meeting with successful thrift shop managers, the idea gained traction with Nieuwenhuis, then-director of the Foundation of Eastern Christian School. Along with Tom Dykhouse, head of school at that time, the four prepared a business plan.

According to its operating agreement, ditto’s purpose was to benefit Eastern Christian School. “Our desire was simply to raise funds for EC without ‘drawing from the same well again and again.’ ditto was to raise funds without putting additional burdens on parents and families. And those funds were to benefit every student at EC. We also wanted very much to serve our geographic community with quality goods at great prices,” shares Visbeen. The store is powered largely by volunteers, and the inventory is donated.

As part of its commitment to the local community, ditto also began to tithe its profit to various other organizations. The store has given gifts to

Campaign 125

Progress report

CAMPAIGN 125 HAS BEEN A BOLD AND AMBITIOUS \$3.7 MILLION INITIATIVE WITH THREE MAIN PRIORITIES: SECURITY UPGRADES, CLASSROOM RENOVATIONS, AND IMPROVEMENT OF OUR HIGH SCHOOL OUTDOOR ATHLETIC FACILITIES. MORE THAN \$3.1 MILLION HAS BEEN RAISED, AND WE ARE RACING TOWARD THE FINISH LINE!

SECURITY

The security upgrades of Campaign 125 have been completed, thanks to the generosity of individuals, businesses, and governmental grants. Campaign 125 was blessed to receive grants from New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (NJOHSP) which helped us jump-start the planned security upgrades. Campaign 125 has allowed us to strengthen interior security measures, as well as fund the installation of card access systems at all three campuses.

A network managed camera system has been installed on all three campuses as well, increasing our ability to monitor activities at all exterior entries and many interior spaces. Exterior lighting has also been upgraded and expanded on all three campuses in conjunction with Campaign 125. Additional "target hardening" initiatives have also been finalized.

Our three campuses have never been safer and more secure; this was our first priority with Campaign 125, as our students' well-being always comes first.

CLASSROOM RENOVATIONS

There is nothing more critical to our mission at EC than what

happens in the classrooms. Means of engaging today's students have changed dramatically, and we need modern classrooms to reflect this change. Campaign 125's goals for classroom renovations were aggressive and have been completed.

As we have said many times, however, classroom renovations never end at Eastern Christian School. Rather, we continue to assess our campuses, making upgrades to provide our students with facilities that meet the increasing needs of 21st century education learners.

During Campaign 125, we were able to complete numerous classroom renovations that have enriched our learning spaces. Those renovations included:

- 44 classrooms of new furniture
- 39 classrooms repainted
- 19 classrooms received new ceilings and LED lighting
- 17 new whiteboards
- 13 classroom technology upgrades
- 6 rooms with new floor covering
- New audio/visual system in the high school media center
- New audio system in the high school cafeteria
- Air conditioning in every learning space on all three campuses including the high school cafeteria

We are indebted to the numerous donors who sacrificially contributed to this second phase of Campaign 125.

TRACK AND FIELD

The third and final phase of Campaign 125, the most ambitious undertaking, is the design and construction of new outdoor athletic facilities. These facilities are a significant improvement in our athletic programs, provide opportunities to build school community around athletic contests on our campus, and will

raise our current programs to a higher level of performance.

Today, construction is underway for a new combination soccer and lacrosse artificial turf field surrounded by a two-lane practice track with an adjacent area for field events, including javelin, shot-put and long jump. This new field will be easily accessible and well drained, eliminating multiple problems faced on our current soccer field. It will provide a "home" field for our men's and women's lacrosse teams. It will also offer a place where we can at last host our community night games on our own campus.

The original financial goal of Campaign 125 was \$3 million. More than \$3.1 million has been raised, thanks to the Lord's provision through the outpouring of support from our community, for which we are enormously grateful and humbled.

Two recent developments have increased the goal by \$600,000:

- *The opportunity to install fixed, exterior lighting around the field to enable us to host night games and maximize the field's use*
- *The requirement to install a more comprehensive draining system to ensure the field dries faster after hurricanes, eliminate "wet field" delays, and prolong the use of the field for more years*

Most recently the lights, scoreboard, and electrical systems have been installed, along with an underground drainage system. As we approach the finish line, we look to our alumni, current families, students' grandparents, foundations, and local businesses to help us achieve a strong finish.

If you are curious about how you can make a gift to this project, either outright or through your estate plans, please contact the Foundation Office at 973.310.0402.

Gift received to establish new student prize

An anonymous donor, who goes by the pseudonym Piet Hein, has recently donated \$10,000 to establish the Student Prize for Outstanding Research Papers.

Foundation Executive Director **Maura Byrnes** reported, "This donor, a long-time alumnus of the school, has a keen interest in students performing high-quality, in-depth historical research. His personal interests at this time include race relations, the decline of denominational churches, and socialism versus capitalism. He, like so many EC alumni, has an inquisitive mind, curious spirit, and deep commitment to being a lifetime learner. We are enormously grateful that he is partnering with us to help our students stretch themselves even beyond their current work-load, which is already rigorous."

The competition, open to select sophomores, and all juniors and seniors at Eastern Christian School, was promoted by high school history teachers **Marci Roniet** and **Jim Uitermarkt**.

There are four areas to be judged by a panel of English teachers:

- Quality of research
- Quantity of research
- Historical quality
- Clarity of presentation

Three prizes are offered: \$5,000 for First Place; \$3,000 for Second Place; \$2,000 for Third Place. Award monies are to be used to further one's educational goals, such as for college or post-high school study, travel, computers and other technology, books, or other educational pursuits.

In keeping with "National History Day," an initiative sponsored by a national educational organization, the theme for the students' papers is Frontiers in History: People, Places and Ideas, which is broad enough to provide a vast range of topics.

All contestants will participate in a celebration of their work in spring 2023. Parents and loved ones, as well as the larger school community, will be invited to hear from the students and learn about their research.

According to high school principal **Dan Cirone**, "Eastern Christian High

School prides itself in excellence in academics, so this research competition fits beautifully with our desire to help students strive for excellence."

"The students who are participating in this competition are truly going above and beyond, as they already have a full load of academics, papers, exams and extracurricular activities," reported **Ruth Kuder**, head of school, who with Byrnes met with the donor. "We are enormously grateful for his foresight in offering such a generous prize, and we are excited to share the fruit of our students' labors with him."

Roniet and Uitermarkt have agreed to serve as the participating students' mentors for the student prize. They, too, are among the contestants for a prize, as the donor also has contributed a \$1,000 stipend for the top student winner to present to his or her teacher who assisted with the winning paper as a "Thank you." Stay tuned to learn more about the winners and their research papers.

Changing a student's life

One of the most dramatic ways to change a student's life is to provide a scholarship. Through this tuition assistance, children and teenagers can attend Eastern Christian School where they can become people of Christian vision and influence. "There are countless stories from alumni and current students sharing how their lives were impacted by attending our school," reported Head of School **Ruth Kuder**.

According to **Maura Byrnes**, executive director of the Foundation for Eastern Christian, "It might surprise you to learn that 42% of the student body at EC requires financial help in order to attend school here. To help meet this need, there is the Variable Tuition Program as well as 15 scholarships available, ranging from the 9/11 Academic Scholarship to the Mephibosheth Scholarship for students who have physical disabilities."

Creating an endowed scholarship fund at EC is a meaningful way to memorialize a loved one because with an endowment fund only the interest earned is spent on the scholarship, allowing the fund to last in perpetuity. Alternatively, an expendable fund is one in which the entire fund is spent over a set period of time. In the past few months a few new scholarships have been created and an older one has a new purpose.

NEW SCHOLARSHIPS

The school recently learned that it will be the beneficiary of a living trust created by Harriet E. Van Reken, the wife of alumnus Stanley Van Reken. As a result, Eastern Christian will receive a significant gift to endow a scholarship in the name of Stanley and Harriet Van Reken.

EC awarded massive security grant

Ruth Kuder, head of school, is thrilled to announce that the school has been awarded a three-year grant in the amount of \$441,000 from the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (NJOHSP).

"We are beyond grateful for the opportunities that this magnificent contribution will provide, as the safety and security of our students are always our foremost priority. This work will be methodically carried out in incremental stages over the next 36 months," Dr. Kuder reported.

*Each campus has been awarded \$147,000, which will provide funding for an array of improvements. At the high school campus in North Haledon, the security alarm system will be upgraded and additional access readers will be installed. "Lighting will also be improved on the exterior of the building and parking lot," explained **Jeff Botbyl**, director of operations and school security, who co-produced the application with Foundation Executive Director **Maura Byrnes**. At the upper elementary & middle school campus in Wyckoff, bollards (concrete posts) will be installed along the curb at the exterior of the building to prevent any vehicle from jumping the curb. The security alarm system also will be upgraded and there will be safety improvements to the interior of the building. The preschool and elementary school campus in Midland Park will also see the installation of bollards installed along the curb at the exterior of the building. The security alarm system and PA system will be upgraded, allowing for easier communication when the students are outdoors, as well as additional safety improvements to the building's interior.*

According to NJOHSP, 269 nonprofit organizations applied for funding but only 131 New Jersey organizations were selected for grants through the NonProfit Security Grant Program. Nearly \$18,000,000 was distributed, with an average award of approximately \$137,000. Ms. Margaret

Sometimes individuals or couples make a plan to include EC in their bequest planning, as did the Van Rekens, while other times a family member may choose to honor a loved one by establishing a scholarship fund in honor or in memory of the other person. This was the case of Ronald Vanden Dorpel who decided, along with his wife, to honor his late brother, Roger Vanden Dorpel. "Roger was a proud graduate of EC in the Class of 1968 and played guard on the 1967-68 boys varsity basketball team, which had a winning record of 18 victories and only three losses... Roger had a life full of tragedies and tribulations but his faith never wavered," explained Ronald. The Vanden Dorpels have chosen to set up both endowed and expendable scholarship funds with very generous gifts, both outright and through estate plans.

Scholarship funds can also be set up by a church or other organization. Recently, the proceeds from the sale of Ridgewood Christian Reformed Church and its parsonage benefited several local charities, including EC, with the creation of the Paul Beverly Project Hope Scholarship Fund, an expendable fund, named in memory of the beloved high school faculty member who was a life-long member of Ridgewood CRC. His scholarship benefits students living at or near the federal poverty level who reside in one of three local communities: Paterson, Haledon or Prospect Park.

Griszenkow, grant liaison conveyed her congratulations to Eastern Christian and the other recipients during a recent Zoom call and shared, "We know each of you has worked very hard on the preparation and submission of your application so you should feel very proud!"

*"This application was a major undertaking that now brings a detailed and time-consuming oversight process. We are grateful to **Ben Spoelstra**, director of IT, and **Kate Schneider**, foundation office coordinator, for their technical assistance with the application and implementation of this grant. It takes a team of people to receive and carry out a grant of this magnitude," said Maura Byrnes.*

NEW PURPOSE AFTER 20 YEARS

The Foundation staff of Eastern Christian enjoys working closely with donors, not only to create scholarships but also to ensure that the donors are satisfied and the fund's mission stays relevant. For example, the Elise Gorter Scholarship Fund was originally created to support future nursing students and then morphed to support students who had a parent pass away or become terminally ill. More recently, however, Elise's parents, Laura and Steven Gorter, saw the growing need to help students who fit the criteria for Project Hope, and recently amended their daughter's named scholarship.

Each one of these funds has the potential of changing students' lives for eternity. If you are interested in learning more about how to create an endowed or expendable scholarship fund, kindly reach out to Maura Byrnes, executive director of the Foundation for Eastern Christian School, at maurabyrnes@easternchristian.org or by phone at 973.310.0402.

HomEComing 2022 recap

Despite soggy ground conditions that required rescheduling of our Varsity soccer games, the rest of the HomEComing events happened as planned. More than 650 attendees participated on a gorgeous Saturday, powered by a team of 75 volunteers.

Highlights from the more competitive elements of the weekend included fans cheering on the boys middle school team to a 5-1 victory over Haledon

during the Isaac Hennessy Soccer Game; a 3v3 basketball tournament with three EC varsity players–**Jean Italien**, **David Kim** and **Luke Connelly**–emerging triumphant; and a staff “Eat a Donut on a String” contest, with a victory clinched by **Karyn Baitzel**.

The weekend included many other fun elements–some older traditions, like the golf outing, student dance, alumni soccer game and large inflatable area, and some new traditions, such as the Taste of Korea food stand, hosted by EC Korean parents.

Special thanks to our 2022 HomEComing Sponsors who helped make the weekend a wonderful community activity!

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR BUSINESS SPONSORS!

Event Sponsor – Columbia Bank Foundation

Isaac Hennessy HomEComing Soccer Game Sponsor – Sarepta Therapeutics

Eagle Sponsors – KV Builders; Search Consultants of Northern Jersey

Alumni Soccer Sponsors – Regency Wealth Management; Wayne Tile

Picnic Sponsors – Regency Wealth Management; Veenstra Family Dental; Jeffer, Hopkinson, & Vogel; Martin Orthodontics; Wayne Tile; Shotmeyer Brothers; Nicholas Markets; Kuiken Bros.

Fellowship Sponsors – ditto; Christian Health

3v3 Basketball Sponsors – Athletes In Action; Visbeen Construction; Regency Wealth Management

HomEComing Dance Sponsor – Regency Wealth Management



Scenes from
HomEComing 2022



2023 UPCOMING EVENTS

EC Spring Golf Outing

May 22, 2023

Wild Turkey Golf Club
Hamburg, NJ

HomEComing

October 13 and 14, 2023

Eastern Christian Upper Elementary
and Middle School, Wyckoff, NJ

Questions? Contact events@easternchristian.org

PAUL BEVERLY PROJECT HOPE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Fund established after generous donation

In August 2017, the Eastern Christian School community lost an icon. A much beloved educator, Paul Beverly's ECHS teaching career had spanned 33 years.

This November, after a generous donation in his name from Ridgewood Christian Reformed Church, Eastern Christian School has set up the Paul Beverly Project Hope Scholarship Fund. This scholarship money will assist one student annually for the next several years through the Project Hope program, a needs-based fund that benefits students from Paterson, Prospect Park and Haledon.

At a small ceremony, members of Ridgewood CRC, Eastern Christian administrators, friends and family celebrated his life, as well as opined on the importance

of making Christian education accessible to as many families as possible.

In regards to Paul, "Paul taught his students to think Christianly. He challenged all of us with hard questions and then pointed us to biblical truth," shared Ruth Kuder, head of school. "Paul was the kind of teacher who changed the trajectory of lives."

The night also featured speeches from **Pastor Mary Stegink**, former pastor of Ridgewood CRC; **Maura Byrnes**, foundation executive director; **Jonathan Frank**, a pastor of Cornerstone Church, another major church donor to the Project Hope Program; **Phil Beverly**, EC alumnus, an advisory board member of Project Hope, New Hope Community Ministries executive director and Paul's son; as well as **Susan Jackson**, who spoke of the profound impact the program has had on students, many of whom are part of New Hope Community Ministries in Prospect Park.

If you wish to contribute, please go to www.easternchristian.org/donate and designate your gift for Project Hope.

Alumni Thanksgiving Chapel returns!

On Wednesday, November 23, 2022, EC alumni visited the high school campus and gathered with current students and faculty to worship together on the day before Thanksgiving. Established about a decade ago, Alumni Thanksgiving Chapel includes several recent alumni in the service and is always held the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

**IT'S NOT TOO SOON
TO SAVE THE DATE OF
THE NEXT ALUMNI
THANKSGIVING CHAPEL!**

Wednesday, November 22, 2023

1949: Betty (Lanting) Bowers shares her appreciation for her time at Pine Street Grammar School and Eastern Academy.

1954: Dave Reilly has published seven books on climate change. Prior to retiring, Dave spent 44 years in academia, including 22 years as a university dean and two Senior Fulbright Professorships. He can be reached at skipreilly@aol.com.

1955: Donald Zuidema worked for Garden State Tile for 60 years and helped launch their branches in South Carolina and Georgia. He retired at the age of 80 and now lives on Hilton Head Island with his wife Marianne. They are members of Grace Community Church.

1961: David Van Til (JD) is now a private Judge working throughout southern California.

1961: John Wynbeek volunteers as Director of Technology at San Jose Christian School.

1963: Susan Grosser has worked as a missionary nurse for 53 years, two years in Ecuador and the last 51 in Costa Rica. She currently works near San Jose, with Christ for the City International, serving in a community of largely Nicaraguan refugees and immigrants, called La Carpio.

1965: Ronald Veenema, now retired, previously owned and practiced veterinary medicine and surgery at Vermont - New Hampshire Veterinary Clinic. In his retirement, Ronald serves as an elder at Community Bible Chapel and as the President of the Board at Thompson House Nursing and Residential Home, both in Brattleboro, VT.

1966: Donald Belanus served in the Navy and retired as Captain in 2000. He currently serves in part time ministry after completing his Th.M and Ph.D while he was on active duty. Donald states he is "Thankful for EC academic rigor...even more thankful for EC's faith foundation and proud that my great grandfather Gerhardus Bos was one of the founders." "EC's influence is never more needed than today!"

1966: Virginia (Daumann) Christian Young has worked in several areas of social work throughout her career including as a school social worker in the seventh largest school district in New York State and in private practice. Virginia

received spiritual direction training from Sisters of St. Ursula and has used these skills in various prayer ministries. Virginia has also served on missions trips to Oman, Sicily and Israel.

1966: Karen Stam served as Public Defender from 1981 until 2016.

1967: Peter Veenema earned his Bachelor's and Masters in Mechanical Engineering. Peter worked in research and development at DuPont for 40 years. He is now retired and serves as an Elder and Trustee in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, DE.

1968: After graduating from EC, **George Schaver** attended electronics school and then joined the US Naval Reserves. George served for six years and was honorably discharged at the rank of Operations Specialist First Class. After his time in the Navy, George earned a degree in Business Administration and Economics. George worked in banking for 37 years, retiring in 2013 as Vice President.

1969: Mark Sankey credits EC's high level of academics to be "a foundational help to reinvent myself as a writer in my semi-retired years." Mark writes a blog, www.therichesofchrist.com, and has published a book entitled "The River of God - Always Flowing". He is currently working on a second book on sustainability; a cause for which he serves in related groups in Maryland.

1969: Bruce Nelson has spent his career in education. After college, Bruce taught history at ECHS while studying for his first master's degree. He then served as principal at Sussex Christian School while studying for another Master's in Educational Leadership. After 20 years in Christian education, Bruce moved to Michigan and served as a principal and later a superintendent in various public school systems. Bruce states "Eastern Christian endorsed and promoted a reformed world and life view..."

1970: Jentine (Jansen) Arkema has been teaching in higher education for the past 22 years. She

currently teaches classes at Bethel University and helped launch the Post Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program. Jentine has fond memories of her time at EC including the fish and chips dinner, the Labor Day picnic at Terrace lake, and her many teachers here.

1972: Janice (Hartog) Streelman states "I have always held firm my faith in God." Janice is now retired and living in Greenville, South Carolina.

1972: Emily J. (Graves) Fritz states "I'm just glad I was able to go to Eastern Christian!"

1972: Linda (Beverluis) Van Kessler is the Founder and CEO of Passion 4 Life Liquid Vitamins & Minerals and Passion 4 K.I.D.S nonprofit. Linda states "The older I get the more I appreciate being grounded in the EC community from kindergarten through high school. Bible verses and hymns I learned as a child still bring comfort to me... Thanks for the impact you made in my life!"

1973: David Reid retired in 2020 after spending most of his career in construction.

1973: Eileen Salazar-Szep is the Senior Executive Assistant to the President & CEO of Royal Caribbean International. Eileen is thankful for the "...formation of integrity, loyalty and Christian values" that occurred during her time at Eastern Christian and attributes them to her success in life.

1973: Inette (Verhaar) Libolt is employed by National Community Renaissance, a nationwide nonprofit affordable housing corporation, as Legal Department Project Manager. Inette states "The teachers I had at ECHS provided an excellent education."

1973: Lynne (Portsmore) Granz has traveled to Kenya seven times. In her most recent trip, Lynne spread the gospel, brought food aid to special needs schools and assessed the needs of families affected by HIV.

1974: John Minnaard works as a Licensed Electrical Contractor.

1975: Tinetta (Valkema) Cooper worked for a nonprofit organization that helped blind individuals. Now retired, Tinetta volunteers for events for the National Federation of the Blind.

1975: Ellen (Van Someren) Smith recently retired from teaching elementary school at District #34 in Glenview, Illinois. Ellen credits EC teacher, Barbara Wymore, "with igniting what became a lifelong love and participation in music!" Ellen also shares, "My many years of teaching were shaped by the memories of excellent student engagement and the compassionate care and attention given to struggling students by teachers like C. Ruth Spikeboer, Alan Vander Lugt, Hedwig Lucas, MaryJane Styles, and Charles Adams."

1980: Carolyn (Elzinga) Salvesen serves on the women's ministry team and writes Bible studies at Bear Creek Bible Church in Texas.

1980: Tom Joustra has been teaching in Christian schools for 39 years in Michigan. Tom shares "I'm thankful for EC elementary teachers like Miss Van Hook in first grade, Mrs. Aupperlee in third grade, and Miss Spikaboer in sixth grade. They and others modeled Christ for me while teaching me how to read, to write and to think mathematically. Whether you are still living or have joined the 'cloud of witnesses', Thank you!"

1980: Attila Havassy currently serves as an elder at Midland Park Christian Reformed Church.

1991: Mark Reitsma obtained certification as an Accredited Estate Planner® (AEP®) designee by the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils (NAEPC) on August 10, 2022. It is awarded by the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils to recognized estate planning professionals who meet stringent requirements of experience, knowledge, education, professional reputation, and

character. An AEP® designee must embrace the team concept of estate planning and adhere to the NAEPC Code of Ethics, as well as participate in an annual renewal and recertification process.

1992: Jennifer (Steensma) Ritzema works as the Learning Support Coordinator at Brookfield Christian School in Milwaukee, WI.

1995: Donna (Huntington) Herr owns her own professional organization business.

1999: David Aupperlee started an organic apple and blueberry farm in West Michigan.

1999: Ben Veenema was awarded certification as an Accredited Command Executive (ACE) through The New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police (NJSACOP). Lieutenant Veenema has served on the Hawthorne Police Department since 2005. He holds a Master's Degree in Public Safety Administration and a certificate in Emergency Management and Organizational Management. In 2022, Lt. Veenema was named the Emergency Management Coordinator for Hawthorne.

2002: Kristina (Belanus) Vande Vrede works as a clinical psychologist, specializing in women's health and perinatal issues. Kristina is a certified Perinatal Mental Health Psychologist and recently trained to support patients going through stillbirth and infant death. Kristina states, "I am humbled each day by my ability to bear witness to others' pain, and the privilege to sit with them through their journey." She continues, "Through the combination of my Christian education in primary school and my secular doctoral training, I feel uniquely equipped with the skills to sit with people during difficult times and accompany them on their journey toward moving forward."

2003: Ryan Kuiken sold his tech company and is now pursuing other passion projects.

2009: Lauren (Spoelstra) Paquin currently works for Child Protective Services for the State of Michigan. Lauren states, "I love bringing my faith base into my job in order to show compassion for the families and children I work with." Lauren also serves as a GEMS leader at her church.

2012: Bethany Gorter earned a PhD in Clinical Psychology and currently practices as a neuropsychologist with individuals recovering from traumatic brain injuries. According to Bethany, "Eastern Christian [School] equipped me with strong critical thinking and writing skills which supported the research and clinical endeavors necessary for success in college and graduate school. I am also grateful to the EC faculty and staff for cultivating an environment where I felt very loved and cared for. Thank you EC!"

2015: Rachel Lee currently teaches middle school math in Westchester County and is completing a Master's Degree in Instructional Design.

2019: Juliana Struyk is currently a senior at Hope College and recently began a research internship with Hudson Institute, supporting its China Center. "Through this internship experience, I look forward to learning more about America's approach to China," she shares.

2020: Emily Steen was chosen as one of three college students nationwide to receive the Hatfield Prize, an award named after the late senator Mark Hatfield. Steen is a senior at Calvin University, pursuing a degree in sociology with minors in urban studies and criminology. She will use the award to conduct a semester-long research project in tandem with her professor, focusing her work on the carceral system, and specifically the barriers to re-entry into citizenship and higher education.

WE WANT YOUR NEWS!

Recognizing that more of our alumni now turn to social media for information on personal celebrations, Eastern Christian School will be following trends in higher education publications by increasingly shifting toward featuring updates on academics, ministry and career.

Please let us know about the milestones and big moments from your year, like professional accomplishments, church and ministry involvement, and advanced academic degrees. We would also like to hear stories of how the EC community has supported you in your professional and faith journey. Eastern Christian School reserves the right to edit and/or omit submissions. Submissions can be sent to: Alumni@easternchristian.org

Reunions

CLASS OF 1970



(Left to right) Laura (Swankie) Enneson, Beth (Van Der Have) Huschens, Mary (Vande Ree) Terpstra, Trudie (Heerschap) Puijsma, Bernie Kuipers, Linda (De Witte) Spyckaboer, Bill Sybesma, Gregg Martin, Linda (Greydanus) Van Lenten, Steve King, Glenn Dyksen, Wally Lindsay, Fred Ostermann, Claire (Ribbe) Zandstra, Larry Dykhous, Joyce (Bartlam) Bombay, Henry Schuurman, John Algera, John Breur, Pete Boelens, Jake Stavinga, John Bruins, Marlene (Sonderfan) Cook, Randy Vander Weit, Lois (De See) Schuurman, Roy Heerema, Rich Voorman, Warren Van Wyck, Cheryl (Visbeen) La Fleur, Nancy (Leesman) Eardley, Bev (Soodsma) Ten Kate, Bob Jacobs, Bill Bogertman, Linda (Vander Plaat) Brock, Gary Link, Faye (Tolsma) Dyksen, Joyce (Lont) Jonker, Steve Hoekstra, David We San Yip, Ken Lagerveld

CLASS OF 1972: 50th Reunion



(L to R) Row 1: Nancy (Veenstra) MacDonald, Inge Richard, Bob Hengeveld, Karen (Boelkins) Hengeveld, Karen Commeret, Jan Vander Goot, Janet (De Boer) Jacobs, Beverly (Tietsma) Quemada, Janice (Hartog) Streelman; **Row 2:** Jerry Tanis, Sue (Belanus) Burke, Deb (Soodsma) Veenstra, Susan (Etterbeek) Soderlind, Helena (Dykstra) Veurink, Linda (Jeltes) Irwin, Diane (Kuiken) Bosloper, Donna (Memmelaar) Michaelson, Diane (Avogardo) Romano, Judi (Borst) Vander Zee, Linda (Van Heemst) Eggebeen, Nancy (Van Tol) Hoogmoed, Lynn (Minkema) Ver Hage, Lois (Mierop) Belle; **Row 3:** Barry Smith, Beverly (Hagedorn) Den Hollander, Glenn Palmer, Brian Wispelwey, Frank Vander Zee, Cathy (Beverluis) Tanis, Rick Ver Hage, Dan Steenstra, Gary Rozema, Jean (Martin) Lindsay; **Row 4:** Neal Vander Weert, Joe Siepert, Fred Spoelstra, Pete Faber, Bob Eelman, Dave De Ritter, John Klein, Paul De Roo, August Hollema, Al Lindsay, Ken Bogertman, Ken Tanis, Ken Winters, Bob Van Der Have

CLASS OF 1982: 40th Reunion



In Memoriam

REMEMBERING OUR ALUMNI

ALUMNI

William Sikkema '42
1/29/22 Fort Myers, FL

Robert Troast '46
7/16/22 Wyckoff, NJ
Board Member 1970-71

Edith (Jackson) Halliwell '46
11/2/22 Wyckoff, NJ

Lois (Dapp) Veenstra '47
12/9/22 North Haledon, NJ

Raymond Cooper '48
1/29/23 Maple City, MI

Barbara (Butler) Kaminska '48
9/1/22 Saint Louis, MO

Jean (Leyman) Kort '48
5/12/22 North Haledon, NJ

Ruth (Faber) Sisco '48
9/15/22 Newton, NJ

Ann (Sybesma) Bushoven '49
12/29/22 North Haledon, NJ

Trina (Hulzebos) Brock '48
11/6/2022 Grand Rapids, MI

Barney Kamp '49
12/18/22 Jenison, MI

Huberta (Bakker) Kruithof '49
1/27/23 Midland Park, NJ

Wilma Lamring '49
7/24/22 Wyckoff, NJ

Samuel Van Der Wiele '49
9/1/22 Jenison, MI

**Trina (Vander Eems)
Kuyten Bolt '50**
4/25/22 Holland, MI

James Bruinooge '50
6/23/22 Wellfleet, MA

James Post '50
6/23/22 Keller, TX

Connie Henson '50
11/20/22 Greensboro, NC

Donald Van Dongen '51
7/22/22 Nazareth, PA

Frederick De Ruiter '52
12/13/22 Crestwood, IL

Stuart Kingma '52
12/16/22 Vaud, Switzerland

Joyce (Williams) Van Der Wiele '53
7/11/22 Knoxville, TN

John Zegers '53
12/4/22 Gloucester, ON

Ruth (Streelman) De Visser '54
6/26/22 Pompton Plains, NJ

William Baker '56
10/31/22 Park Ridge, NJ

Edward Nieuwenhuis '56
11/19/22 Wanaque, NJ

Andrew (Jack) Snope '56
1/21/23 Columbia, MD

David Boardman '57
10/31/22 Byron Center, MI

Wilson Tanis '58
5/31/22 Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Judith (Martin) Van Grouw '58
9/10/22 Midland Park, NJ

James Woudenberg '67
6/8/22 Hawthorne, NJ

Albert W. Borduin '68
5/5/22 Pompton Lakes, NJ

Debra Okma '72
9/7/22 North Haledon, NJ

Sharon (Peters) Gordon '72
10/29/22 Wanaque, NJ

Barry Borduin '74
12/25/22 Atlanta, GA

Peter Vink '75
1/28/23 Mahwah, NJ

Timothy Van Der Weert '76
1/9/23 Chapel Hill, NC

Hannah (Decker) Keels '91
12/1/22 Phoenix, AZ

Jeffrey Steinginga '92
12/29/22 North Haledon, NJ

FORMER FACULTY/STAFF

Trina (Hartog) Meeter '43
12/16/22 Wyckoff, NJ
ECHS Faculty (Commercial) 1946

Elizabeth (Sikkema) Gerritsen '51
11/8/22 Grand Rapids, MI
*Faculty N 4th St, ECMS (Grade 5)
1957-58; 1967-68; 1/1972-6/1990*

Joan (Steen) Kuiken '52
9/19/22 Berkeley Springs, WV
ECHS Faculty (Phys. Ed) 9/1958 - 6/1960

Sherrill (Kuiken) Windeler '55
8/7/22 Hudson, FL
Faculty ECHS (Phys. Ed) 9/1971-6/1977

Claire (Bergsma) Ashman '60
7/12/22 Mansfield, MA
Faculty ECHS (English) 9/1965-6/1966

Ruth Shiu
12/19/22 Franklin Lakes, NJ
*Faculty ECES (Music) 1958-1968,
1969-1971*



Dear Friends,

Since 1892, faithful individuals have been impacting Eastern Christian School students' lives by praying, as well as giving financial gifts, making our community stronger for the next generation.

The following pages list all donors who gave in fiscal year 2021-2022 (September 1, 2021 - August 31, 2022). Your generous gifts to our Annual Fund, endowment, as well as capital and special projects strengthened our programs. These lists include those who gave new gifts, those who fulfilled pledge commitments, and those who made estate gifts. These gifts will be an enduring legacy for future generations of EC students.

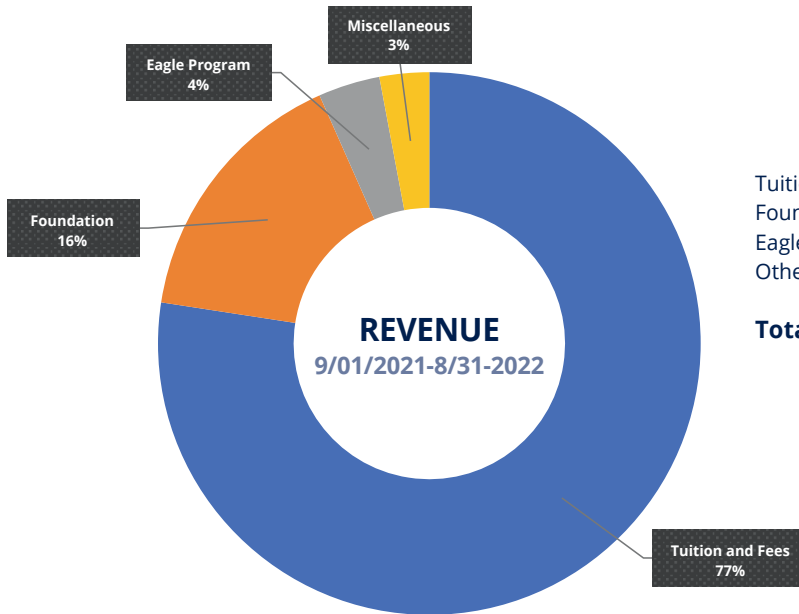
In keeping with our school tradition, we only share donors' names and not gift amounts.

Thank you for your kind support!

Warmly,
Maura Byrnes

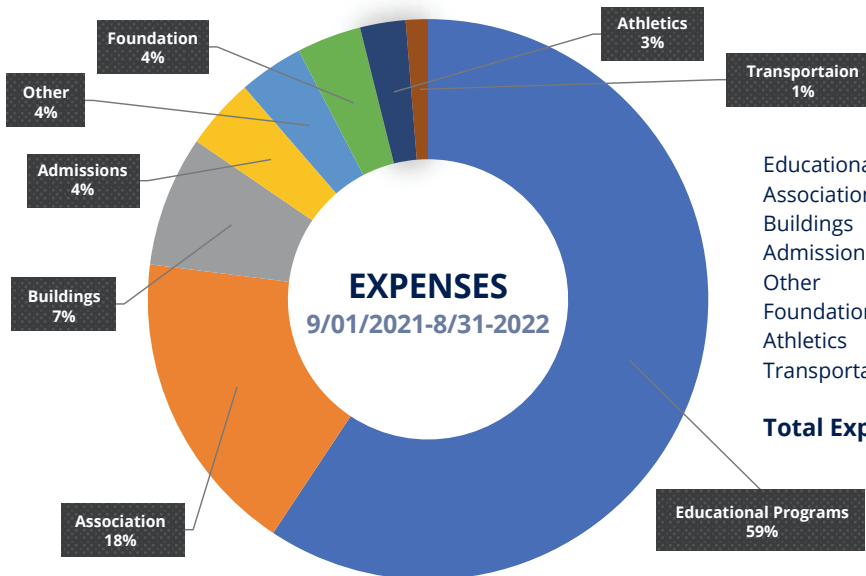
Executive Director, Foundation for Eastern Christian School

2021-2022 Financials



Tuition and Fees	\$9,405,861.18
Foundation	\$1,936,949.51
Eagle Programs	\$446,700.01
Other Income	\$358,766.25

Total Revenue **\$12,148,276.95**



Educational Programs	\$7,070,530.47
Association	\$2,107,082.61
Buildings	\$899,136.84
Admissions/Enrollment	\$489,358.91
Other	\$444,326.77
Foundation	\$444,077.73
Athletics	\$312,992.94
Transportation	\$152,317.97

Total Expenses **\$11,919,824.24**

Celebrating our Donors

The Foundation sincerely thanks each member of our faculty, staff, administration, and board leadership who supported EC in 2021-2022. Your donations go above and beyond and serve to demonstrate your deep commitment and dedication to the school and all its students. We appreciate the tremendous amount that you do every day!

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WHAT IS THE ANNUAL FUND?

Eastern Christian School's Annual Fund is the account that pays for specific expenses not always covered by tuition or the school's budget. When large but necessary spending is required for projects like installation of playground equipment, classroom improvements, or building renovations, fundraising becomes vital.

Thank you to all those who so generously supported EC through the Annual Fund in the 2021-2022 school year.

See the following page for our list of annual donors.

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continued on next page

ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS 2021-2022



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\$588

average gift among individual donors (not corporate or organizations)

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Thank you to all those who gave so generously to specific needs and programs of Eastern Christian School. When there was a particular need, the following donors answered the call.

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Project Hope Donors

Project Hope seeks to transform the lives, families, and the communities of Haledon, Prospect Park, and Paterson, New Jersey by empowering one underprivileged student at a time through access to an excellent Christ-centered academic education. This scholarship fund provides an otherwise unavailable educational opportunity for these students, equipping them for success as the next generation of leaders in their communities. Thank you for joining EC in supporting Project Hope's mission.

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Angel Fund Donors

The Angel Fund Scholarship was created to assist current students when they are faced with the death or serious illness of a parent or other critical situation. With support from The Angel Fund, we can come alongside those families and ensure that their tuition is covered. By doing so, we keep our community whole, and prevent additional heartache and loss. Thank you for partnering with EC and blessing our families when they most need a helping hand.

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The following Capital Campaign donors have helped Eastern Christian make significant progress towards the major multi-year capital project of constructing a new turf field, installing lighting, and building a practice track without impacting student tuition. Thank you for partnering with EC and blessing our current and future students with your incredible generosity.

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Scholarships

Thousands of dollars are awarded each year to new and current Eastern Christian students through school-wide programs as well as specific named scholarships. The following donors generously partnered with EC to help make a quality Christian education more attainable for those in financial need.

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Eastern Christian School is so grateful for the following corporations and businesses for partnering with EC and investing in our community-building efforts, events, and most importantly our over 900 students. Together we are truly making a difference.

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AUCTION GALA, APRIL 2022

The Auction Gala is the school's primary fundraising event and sold out six weeks prior to the function. In addition to a cocktail hour and dinner, there are silent and live auctions throughout the evening. We are deeply grateful for the outpouring of support from our sponsors and guests.

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Giving Tuesday, November 2021

Giving Tuesday specifically refers to the Tuesday immediately following Thanksgiving and has become a global giving movement that encourages people and organizations to donate their time and money to charitable causes in a day of generosity. We thank the following donors for participating in our 2021 Eastern Christian's Giving Tuesday campaign; we are truly grateful for your friendship and support.

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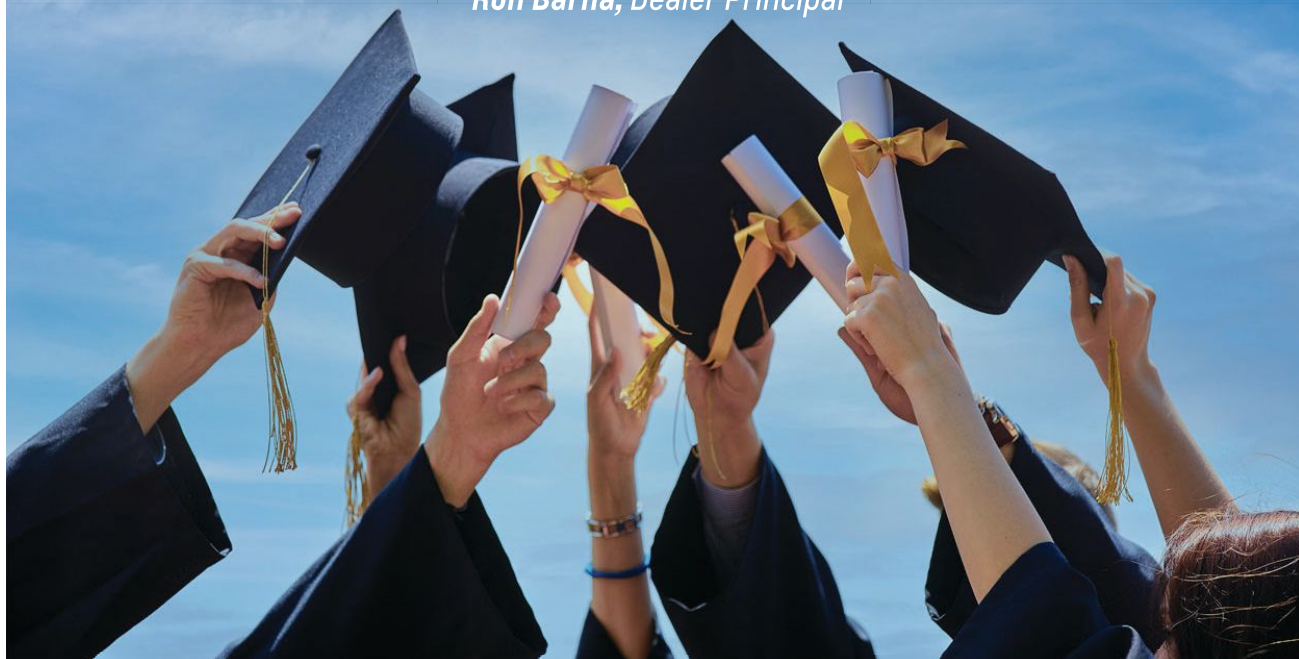


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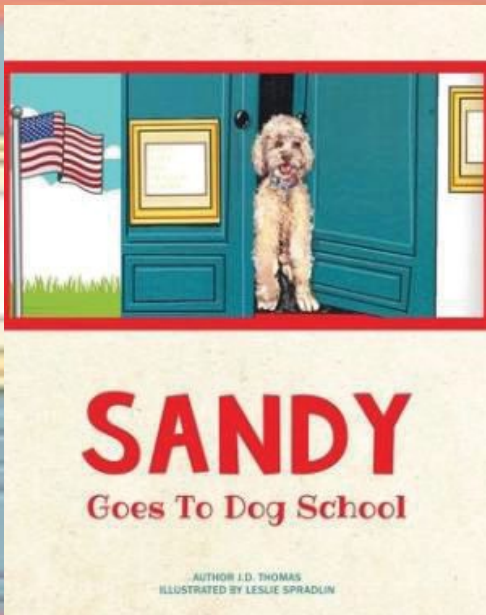


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Fall 2022 Season

Girls Varsity Soccer

The girls soccer team saw great growth this year, qualifying for the state semi-finals for the first time in 10 years. Behind the senior leadership of **Sam Garcia**, **Anneke Kuperus**, and captain **Brooke Talsma**, our team was able to compete to a .500 record and got stronger as the year progressed. Junior Mackenzie Wynbeek led the back four with her defense, while sophomore **Kirsten Braunius** led the team in goals (15) and assists (11). After our starting goalie was injured the first week of preseason, freshman **Hannah Leegwater** stepped up and tallied over 100 saves. Two other notable freshmen who started every game for the Eagles were **Caroline Pringle** and **Charlotte Ohnegian**, both of whom received awards from the NJIC and PCCA for their play in the midfield. The future is bright for the team, with eight returning starters and a large junior class that is excited to play on our new turf next year.



Charlotte Ohnegian

Boys Varsity Soccer



Emanuel Lazor

It was a wild ride for the boys team this year. Due to injury, we did not play a single game with a full roster. The team battled all season long without several key players, which allowed for many of our younger players to receive valuable minutes on the field. Finishing with a record of 4-12-2, this team was much better than the record showed. Senior captains **Caleb Troast** and **Michael Cook** kept the team focused from summer training on. Captain **Manny Lazor** led the team with 10 goals and six assists playing in the midfield and senior goalie

Jonathan Dykman made 110 saves on the season. We had a big win in the first round of states, with six different players finding the back of the net to win 7-0. With only seven seniors graduating, there are great expectations for the team next year as we continue to focus on the athletic pillar: Compete as One...what is best for the team always comes first. This principle is rooted in Philippians 2:4: "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Girls Varsity Volleyball

The EC varsity volleyball team continues to improve each season. Our seniors and captains **Raquel Saharig** and **Jennifer Braunius** led this season with positivity and encouragement. Lillian Vogel led the team with 90 kills, 28 blocks, 149 digs, and 138 service points. **Charlotte Van Goor** was a powerhouse on the service line even earning 10 consecutive points in a row against Hawthorne. **Grace Ivanov** was a huge voice on the court. As a setter, she maintained the tempo and as an opposite hitter earned the team points with kills and smart plays.



Raquel Saharig

GIRLS JV VOLLEYBALL

The JV volleyball team had many new players this year and improved in skills and teamwork across the board. Setter and captain **Rebekah Baker** led her team with steady consistency. Their best win came against HCA near the end of the season. **Viktoria Brown** led the team in number of kills and **Melissa Hurtado** and **Skylar Kuiken** led the team in number of digs.

BOYS JV SOCCER

The boys JV soccer team put together a successful season finishing with a 6-6-1 record. The team grew together and displayed improved team chemistry as the season progressed, beating key competitors in their final two games. The team captains **Andres Alvarez** and goalie **Caleb Kuperus** displayed leadership throughout the season. Coach **Max Harvell** looks forward to seeing many of these players contribute at the varsity level next year.



Katherine Kim

Girls Tennis

EC's 2022 girls tennis team took to the courts this fall with a determination to continue building on the progress made by last year's team. Senior **Katherine Marshall** and junior **Jamie Kim** set a high bar by posting an undefeated record in the league, including wins over Glen Rock and Pompton Lakes, earning them first team honors in the league. Senior singles players, **Juliana Hopeck** and **Laurel Vander Pyl**, both battled their way through a challenging schedule to secure winning records at second and third singles, respectively. Second doubles players **Victoria Baitzel** and **Sarena Lee** followed suit by winning the majority of their matches. Senior **Jaclyn Steenstra** and sophomore **Taline Madalian** also contributed with wins in a number of key matches. The league's top honor went to junior standout, **Kathy Kim**, whose winning record at first singles earned her first team singles recognition in the league. When the team's 10-6 record is forgotten, memories of food, fun, and hard fought victories will remain.

HS Cross Country

The high school boys and girls cross country teams battled through different types of adversity throughout the season. The season started with a last-minute coaching change when coach **Joel Apol**, a cornerstone of the Eagles cross country and track teams for many years, was forced to step away from the season due to a biking accident. After this significant blow early on, the team rallied behind the two seniors, **Matthew Vander wall** and **Peter Visser**, who helped lead by example and set the tone for the younger runners. The boys team benefited greatly from the efforts of underclassmen, including standout freshmen **Nathan Kim** and **Jared Breur**, who ran consistently within the top five finishers throughout the season. In addition, sophomores **Alex Culp** and **Cade Sipple** had enormous contributions for the young team. Alex Culp finished in the top 10 at the state meet and ran as Eastern Christian's sole representative at the NJ Meet of Champions. The girls team also saw growth in both quantity and quality. With their commitment and efforts, we are hoping to see a full girls team next year to accompany our boys team.



Alex Culp

FALL 2022 COUNTY AND LEAGUE RECOGNITIONS

GIRLS SOCCER

ALL-LEAGUE SELECTIONS

Second Team: Charlotte Ohnegian,
Caroline Pringle

Honorable Mention: Brooke Talsma

ALL-COUNTY SELECTIONS

Second Team: Caroline Pringle
Honorable Mention: Kirsten Braunius,
Charlotte Ohnegian

BOYS SOCCER

ALL-LEAGUE SELECTIONS

Second Team: Michael Cook, Emanuel Lazor
Honorable Mention: Jonathan Dykman

ALL-COUNTY SELECTIONS

Honorable Mention: Michael Cook,
Emanuel Lazor

CROSS COUNTRY

ALL-LEAGUE SELECTIONS

First Team: Alex Culp

ALL-COUNTY SELECTIONS

First Team: Alex Culp
Honorable Mention: Cade Sippel, Peter Visser

GIRLS TENNIS

ALL-LEAGUE SELECTIONS

First Team: Katherine Kim,
Katherine Marshall, Jamie Kim

Second Team: Juliana Hopeck

Honorable Mention: Laurel Vander Pyl

ALL-COUNTY SELECTIONS

Second Team: Katherine Kim
Honorable Mention: Juliana Hopeck,
Laurel Vander Pyl

VOLLEYBALL

ALL-LEAGUE SELECTIONS

First Team: Lillian Vogel
Second Team: Grace Ivanov
Honorable Mention: Raquel Saharig

ALL-COUNTY SELECTIONS

Second Team: Lillian Vogel
Honorable Mention: Jennifer Braunius,
Grace Ivanov



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