

Calvin Christian School Equipping To Shine

2020 / 2021 | Issue 1

NEW FACULTY STRUCTURE

> **HOPE IN A PANDEMIC**

GRADES 7&8 AT THE UNITY **ROAD CAMPUS**







ABC - Arn Boonstra Connections

by Mr. A. Boonstra, Principal



I'm writing this latest ABC article on December 23 and it is just before Christmas, but we have also just gone into lockdown in Ontario. School was supposed to begin on January 4, but we have been instructed by the provincial government to keep the school doors closed an additional week, from January 4–8. This means we will conduct some lessons remotely the first week "back" after the Christmas break. I can't help but feel a sense of "here we go

again." However, the Christmas season also helps me keep this in perspective and reminds me of God's providence and care for his people. He gave us his Son and we commemorate that fact at this time. Although these are trying times, Christmas is a time to thank God for his enduring faithfulness to us, and we certainly still have a lot to be grateful for.

Our school year up to this point has gone remarkably well. The protocols we put into place to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic have kept our students and staff safe, and in addition we are able to carry on with our mission: to equip our students to shine, shine for God's glory. You can read more about how the year is going in my article "A Sign of Hope in the Midst of a Pandemic."

I would also like to give you an update on some of the behindthe-scenes events. This summer, the board committed to an ambitious plan to keep our students and staff safe, a plan that included the opening of the Unity Campus and adding eight additional classroom spaces and nine additional teachers to teach in those classrooms. However, those plans came with a significant additional price tag, upwards of \$300,000. The board recently launched the Annual Drive and at the time of this writing, we have raised close to \$200,000 - praise God! We recognize we are still a ways away from meeting our ultimate goal, and a tuition pledge may be required of our parents. However, it is nevertheless exciting to know that our community is stepping up to do what it can to continue to ensure health and safety for staff and students and to do so in the midst of not only a health crisis, but also challenging economic times. I am confident that Christian education in the Hamilton community will be around for a long time.

With the school's long term viability in mind, we have hired Hathway-Stewart to connect a feasibility study to determine our community capacity to fund a renovation or rebuild of the Unity Campus. Mr. Dave Stewart recently conducted phase one of the study, dubbed the Discovery Phase, of the 5-phase framework for the project. Phase 2 will be starting soon. Recently, Mr. Stewart reminded members of the board that what we are undertaking needs to be viewed through the lens of God's plans for Christian education in the greater Hamilton area, not through the more limited lens of our own plans. I found this encouraging, knowing that whatever plans we undertake will be done with the hope that this is what God sees for the future of Calvin Christian School. I know that our parents and grandparents operated with a similar faith in God's leading.

We are a very small part of God's kingdom. We see how God ushered in that kingdom with the gift of his Son. May we experience God's leading

as we grapple with a worldwide health crisis and as we seek to grow Christian education in our small corner of the world.

Wishing you the peace of Christ, Arn Boonstra

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Art by Gr. 4

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VISION Calvin Christian School's vision is that all God's children are "thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 3:17

MISSION The mission of Calvin Christian School is to assist parents by providing for each student a Bible based elementary education in a supportive Christian classroom community that nurtures growth in knowledge, maturity and commitment to God for sharing in the life and work of his people in the world.

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CCS, School Structure

'EQUIPPING TO SHINE'

by Mrs. D. VanEgmond

At CCS, we come alongside parents and families to embrace children in a supportive Christian classroom community. Building a sense of community means students are understood and valued as unique children of God, and our shared purpose is to lead them in knowledge, maturity, commitment and service to God and others.

The visual here represents a division structure transition at CCS, implemented in the 2020-2021 school year. We believe that the change will increase opportunities for the faculty to work intentionally together, around common classroom and curriculum practices, in order to benefit students in their learning journey. A key component of the new structure is a closer working relationship within smaller groups of teachers (crews) and with partner teachers in the same grade.

The arrangement of the crews is as follows:

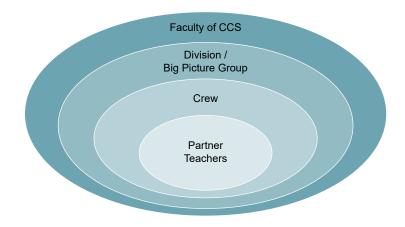
KINDERGARTEN CREW: Junior K,

Senior K, Full Time K

PRIMARY CREW: Grades 1-2 JUNIOR CREW: Grades 3-4

INTERMEDIATE CREW: Grades 5-6

SENIOR CREW: Grades 7-8



As a faculty, working within the crew allows for:

- Development of curriculum and classroom practices that are based on common developmental traits in an age group
- Increased collaboration among teachers; scheduling for teacher meetings is simplified and can occur frequently on an ongoing basis
- Option to plan cross-grade and interdisciplinary units, and for regrouping students within a crew for community building
- Development and implementation of shared goals for teacher professional growth
- Crew leadership for professional development or community building activities in the broader staff community
- Increased professional leadership opportunities within a crew (crew leaders, mentorship)

- Clear and predictable communication for families (i.e., weekly communication notes, webpage)
- Consistent curriculum strategies and practices
- Digging deeper:
 - Development of crew team spirit activities, intramurals, assemblies, school programs, devotional activities, outreach, and fundraising activities

A stronger emphasis on working with same grade teachers allows for:

- Shared planning for similar age group, according to CCS Program Goal Statements and Ontario Ministry of Education expectations
- Development of meaningful lesson materials that are shared across the grade
- Long range planning for grade level curriculum
- Development of shared folders for curriculum storage and revision, and for mentorship of new teachers
- Development of differentiated materials and strategies for learning experiences that are tailored to individual needs of students.





Christmas Stories

by Grade 2

Donkey Derek's Story

My name is Donkey Derek. I am a brown donkey. I am from Bethlehem. A regular day for me is eating and jumping over a tiny fence. I sleep a little. I also go outside and go walking.

I heard about Jesus when I heard him laughing. I went to the baby. I felt surprised and happy. I decided to stand and I was in shock.

When I saw Jesus I got more animals to come. They stood there and waited for Joseph and Mary to come. They heard people coming and it was the three wisemen. Then we heard more people coming and it was the shepherds. Mary carried the baby and showed Joseph, all the animals, the wisemen and shepherds that the king was born. Then she started to sing "Hallelujah." I stood there with all the wisemen, all the shepherds and Mary and Joseph and I was jumping on my two back legs because I was so happy that the king was born.

And things were never the same!

-John M. Gr. 2A

Kerby's Story

My name is Kerby. I am a spider. I live in a stable. I saw a baby born in the stable. My friend the mouse told me that the baby is a king. The sheep told me his name is Jesus! I was so excited about King Jesus that I spun a web. It was a really good web. Baby Jesus liked my web.

And things were never the same!

-Taylor M. Gr. 2A

King Herod's Story

My name is King Herod. I am a king with a crown. I am from Jerusalem. A regular day for me is sitting on my royal throne and asking impossible questions.

The way I heard about Jesus was when the wisemen told me a new king was born. I felt mad because I didn't want to get kicked off my throne and he would be king. I decided to try to kill him.

I didn't see Jesus because I was on my throne. And the wisemen never came back to tell me where he was. I hated him and wanted to kill him because he was also a king. I didn't kill him because he was in Egypt.

And things were never the same!

-Jonas H. Gr. 2A



Art by Gr. 4

Wisemen Steve's Story

My name is Steve. I am a red robed wiseman. I am from the far East. A regular day for me is telling people wise things. I study the stars at night. I also ride on a camel to help me carry things and so I don't have to walk.

The way I heard about Jesus was when I saw a big, sparkly, shiny star. I followed the star to study that star. My camel became tired following that star because he was carrying heavy gold, frankincense and myrrh. I felt happy and amazed. I decided to give baby Jesus gold.

When I saw Jesus I gave him gold, frankincense and myrrh. I bowed to him because he was a king. After I saw him I heard that he fell asleep at the stable.

And things were never the same!

-Kaius H. Gr. 2A

Scout's Story

My name is Scout. I am a black horse. I am from a Bethlehem stable. A regular day for me is playing in the stable and eating hay. I get ridden by my owner every hour. I run slowly in the field because I am a foal. I win competitions every summer.

The way I heard about Jesus was when I saw him in the manger. I heard him giggle in the manger. I liked him because he was cute. I felt happy, amazed and scared. I decided I was furious because he was laying where I was supposed to eat my dinner.

When I saw Jesus I bowed my head. I rejoiced. I praised him. After I saw him I sang a song to him. I was frightened and scared of the light and the angels.

And things were never the same!

-Abigail P. Gr. 2A

Grade 3 Ornament Fundraiser

by Mrs. M. Eising

In the grade 3 Bible curriculum, throughout the stories of Isaac and Jacob, wells are often mentioned as an essential source of survival and a meeting place. Especially in the book of Genesis, we see again and again that God, in His faithfulness, provides for His people and would often show His presence while His people were near a well. Water, too, is a symbol of God's forgiveness and His eternal love for us.

This year, God planted a small idea, and a project to provide clean water for some of His neediest people began. The grade 3 students were challenged to raise money to allow funds to go towards two World Renew projects: water filters and hand-washing stations. World Renew is a Christian organization, founded in 1962, that provides aid for peoples in disaster





areas, by reducing hunger, poverty and illness.

Early in December, the students in grade 3A and 3B began to make three styles of ornaments to be combined and sold in packages for a suggested donation of \$5. Our plan was for each student to sell 2 packages of ornaments, allowing enough money to be raised to provide funds for two family sized water filters, (\$115 each) and three or four handwashing stations (\$30 each).

From there, God made this small idea grow into something bigger and more beautiful than we could have imagined. The students rose to the occasion and poured their energy into sanding, stamping, cutting, drilling and painting, resulting in beautiful ornaments, while also experiencing feelings of joy and excitement in doing Kingdom work.

On the last day before the Christmas break, after all of the ornaments had all been sold and delivered to grandparents, neighbours, family, and friends, we took some time to count the money that came in. Every last cent was counted carefully and the result was beautiful. Not only had the students managed to raise the necessary funds of \$380 to ensure our initial goal was met, we surpassed it by over \$100 allowing for even greater things! Sometime in 2021, three families will be blessed with water filters for their homes "bringing a life-changing impact on a family's workload and health," and three hand-washing stations will also be built, to help stop "the spread of germs and disease" (worldrenew.ca/gifts).

The look on the students' faces when they realized what they had accomplished was incredible! Their hearts were bursting with joy knowing that they had been a source of light in our sometimes dark world. As they blessed others, they were greatly blessed! Perhaps some small seeds were planted in the students' hearts, knowing that they are able to share the love of Christ - sometimes through just a few small ornaments.



Today was a great day! First of all, Ms. Van Voorst told us that we were making ornaments and then selling them for \$10. We would then bring the money in and we would buy hand washing stations and filtration systems for people who can't afford these things. So, we sanded our ornaments that were wood. It took a lot of time. Next, we painted our wood ornaments with white paint. After that, we cut out orange paper into noses for our ornament. Then, we took a pencil and dipped it into black paint to make eyes and a mouth! That was our snowman ornament! Next, we made a cookie ornament that smelled like cinnamon. We got to knead the dough, rolled out the dough and then we cut our ornament into a star. Tada! We were done! I know you want to eat the cookie one, but don't it has glue in it! It was so great to make something that can help other people.

-Abby D. Gr. 3A

In Grade 3 we have been making ornaments. The ornaments are one snowman, one snowflake, and one cinnamon star. We painted the snowman, stamped the snow flake, and made the star out of cinnamon dough. Mrs. Eising brought round wood pieces and we were allowed to drill holes in them! The ornaments turned out great! My favourite one to make was the cinnamon star because it smelled SO GOOD. We are getting money to buy 3 handwashing stations and 3 family water filters through World Renew. We collected more money than expected, which was super exciting, so we could buy 2 extra water filters! These are going to help people with no clean water. I can't imagine having no clean water. We are helping to keep the germs away with buying hand washing stations, and helping 3 families drink clean water. Thank-you for buying the ornaments.

-Ruth H. Gr. 3B

What's new at CCS this year?

THIS YEAR AT CCS we moved to a new school on Unity road. I like being in the new school because I have my own space at recess and it isn't crowded. There are fewer people, making it easy to do stuff and have shorter lines for bathrooms and fountains. One downfall is that we have friends in younger grades that we won't be able to see this year because the Grade 7 and 8 classes are at Unity and the younger grades are at the Hamilton Campus. Unity is a great place and I would love to see what they do with this place in the upcoming years.

-Andrew K. Gr. 7B

OKAY, LET ME BE HONEST here, even though this year is so different and we have to wear masks, and social distance, this year has been amazing. Being at the Unity campus has been a wonderful experience. There have been opportunities that I never would have had at the West Fifth campus. Some of the best parts of the Unity campus are the huge field, the bocce ball tournament, and even just the shuttle rides to school. Having the shuttle rides to and from school gives me time to decompress or prepare myself for the day ahead. They also give me time to talk to my friends, to have more time to have fun and laugh, because sometimes that's just what you need especially in a time of trial like this. This year has been a very different experience that I never would have had if the coronavirus hadn't come around. So, I have to say, in some ways, I am thankful for COVID. I mean, no, learn from home, isolation, social distancing and hard news about cases are not fun, but sometimes you have to look at the bigger picture. So, when I look at the full picture, I see blessings, and opportunities I may never have had if COVID hadn't come.

A LOT OF THINGS are new at school this year. First of all, the Unity campus is really nice. At recess, we have the whole space to ourselves. The classrooms are also really nice too.

Another thing that is different this year, is that we have to take the shuttle in the morning. I personally like taking the shuttle because I get to talk with my friends.

Wearing a mask is definitely different, but you do get used to it after a while. The same is true with social distancing.

Even though a lot of things are different this year, I still like going to school.

-Josh S. Gr. 7B

COVID-19 HAS BEEN hard with physical distancing and mask wearing, but the grade 7 and 8's have had the opportunity to be moved to the Unity campus on Unity road.

The shuttle is a great opportunity for kids whose parents can't drive them all the way to Unity. The system with the shuttle is so well organized and safe, with the cleaning and our classes separated.

The campus has a usable gym and classrooms. There are a total of 5 classrooms. The classrooms are fairly big with space for distancing. We had a bocce ball tournament and for P.E some classes did Spikeball. There was lots of space for playing around at recess.

Overall lots of students think it's nice here, and so do I.

-Jenna W. Gr. 7B





-Hannah Z. Gr. 7B



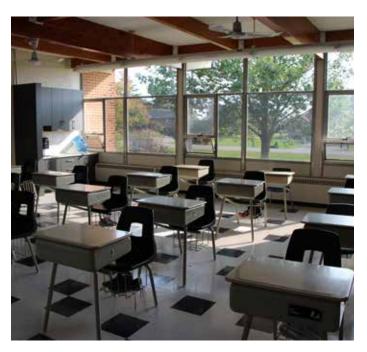


Grade 8 Reflections on Unity Campus









the Unity campus. It's large enough for us to have enough room for each class to have its own section to plant lots of flowers and veggies! Some examples of what we planted are: spinach, peppergrass, beets, and cilantro. Our facilities coordinator's wife, Mrs. Byl, visited, to tell us about plants. She gave us good advice and a bag full of seeds to plant. Then we planted the plants! They started to grow shortly after planting. We realized that we needed some way of watering our plants and we discovered that we had this cool in-ground watering system that still worked! The system was made up of a whole bunch of tiny sprinklers that slowly squirted out water in a circle! Now that we have a way of watering, and our plants were planted, we just had to wait for the plants to grow! They did! The radishes, cilantro and peppergrass were the first to pop through the soil! The radishes were very ripe and ready! We took them out and they looked terrific! I tried some cilantro and it tasted exactly like I hoped! The peppergrass was growing fruitfully! They were growing like crazy! I tried some and they tasted okay. My teacher says they are mostly for salads. Right now, since it is winter, the plants aren't really growing anymore but that is okay. We can try again in the spring when the temperatures are warmer and the ground

We planted a garden at

-Nella B. and Ana V. Gr. 8B

To a new building we go Without our masks? No! We wear them all hours of the day Except for when we go out to play

-Emily BS Gr. 8A

Something great about Unity Is the big and spacious field There are lots of opportunities To play sports and be weird Lots of students play soccer And some just sit on the ground

But the biggest shocker is that There are no little kids running 'round

-Naomi C. Gr. 8A

At the beginning of the year, I thought the Unity campus would not be as good as they were hyping it up to be. I remember on the first day when I walked into the classroom I instantly felt better. I was used to having lots of posters on the walls and different things around the room, but there was only the desks, the whiteboard, and the cubbies on the side of the classroom. Usually, we would have an assembly in the morning but because of Covid we just stayed in our classroom. My favourite part of Unity is the big field. I am proud to be a student at Unity.

-Rose H. Gr. 8C

Tick tock, tick tock Goes the insanely slow clock Only five more minutes till the fun begins We bring out the soccer ball and we're convinced we're going to win One goal, two goals, three goals, four One more and we tie the score But wait, no is that the cow bell I hear? The only thing we can do is shed a tear. Back to class we go, oh no! -Halie M. Gr. 8A

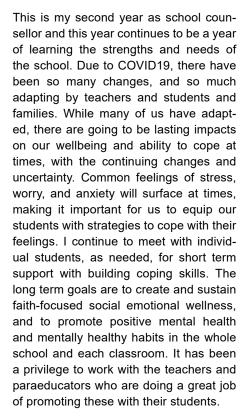
All God's people United in God's love Even through in the pandemic At Unity Road.

-Daniel K. Gr. 8C

Promoting Social and Emotional Wellness at CCS

COUNSELLING SERVICES AT CCS

by Mrs. T. Schinkel



God gave us all our emotions and all our emotions are ok but not all our actions are ok. This is a phrase that I have been using when teaching social emotional skills to students. When we are feeling stressed, it is harder to control or manage our emotional responses. So the focus this year has been on promoting overall wellness: encouraging students to learn ways of taking care of our bodies physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. This is done by identifying feelings (using the Zones of Regulation) and then choosing helpful actions in response to the feeling.

The Student Wellness Team has also been focused on this theme at the Unity campus. I have been supporting the Unity campus classes on Tuesday mornings. I thoroughly enjoy working with this dynamic team of several grade 8 students who are interested in promoting student health and wellness throughout the year. These students have been meeting with myself



and Mr. Maughan weekly, and are engaging in discussions and facilitating wellness themed activities for Wednesday morning meetings, coined "Wellness Wednesdays". They have done a wonderful job creating a Wellness Wall at Unity, providing daily reminders to take care of themselves.

I am a member of the committee that is addressing Diversity and Belonging as it pertains to race, and we continue to learn and explore ways that we can increase belonging for all of our students. We recently read and discussed the book Unconscious Bias in Schools, which was an extremely helpful resource for exploring the ways our systemic and unconscious biases impact students.

I am also helping organize the CARE team (Caring Assistants Regarding Emergencies), a proactive crisis response team that had been established many years ago and continues to operate when/if a crisis arises. The team consists of several parent professionals who can assist with consultation and support when needed.

I continue to collaborate with EDVANCE and other mental health professionals/ school counsellors in Christian schools across Ontario to support each other, and align our goals for improving social and emotional wellbeing for students.

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING MENTAL **HEALTH, ANXIETY AND STRESS:**

- Find Balance: Overall balanced wellbeing and self care are important, so that our tanks don't run on empty. This includes physical, mental, social, emotional, spiritual, etc.
- Be real with each other: One thing that keeps coming to me during this pandemic, is how valuable it is to share experiences in real and raw ways; by being authentic with our struggles, it can give us a sense of relief knowing we are not alone, it can validate that our feelings and experiences are common and to be expected.
- Talk to each other: God has created us as social beings to be in community to support each other through the joys and the challenges.
- Find the good: Acknowledge that not every day will be good but we can find the good in every day. Choosing to be grateful and trusting God "has overcome this world" will carry us through and give us peace each day. 1





View from the Inside

by Mrs. M. Star

It's 8:20 am. I'm a little early. I've just backed into a spot in the Immanuel CRC parking lot. I struggle to get my mask on before I make my way to the school property. The school's back gate is locked. There are cars full of kids with their parents waiting for a staff member to unlock the gate at 8:25 am before anyone exits vehicles. No gathering around the gate to wait. Even when the gate is opened, we try to avoid crowding as we approach the gate. No mixing cohorts.

Making my way through the back door of the school, I pass by the lost and found. A variety of masks are a new part of this collection of misplaced items. Arrows on the floor remind me to stick to one side of the hallway as I head to my classroom. I pass by a series of dots on the floor outside of the boys' and girls' washrooms - markers for where students are to stand, spaced apart, as they wait for a turn to use the facilities. Signs outside of the washrooms remind the students that there is a limit on the number of students who can be in the washroom at one time. Teachers have staggered washroom breaks for the classes to avoid long line ups and the mixing of cohorts. The water fountain between the washrooms is now a bottle refilling station.

I pass by the project room where I will work a little later. There is a bottle of cleaning solution and disposable wipes in the cupboard for me to wipe down the furniture in the room when I am done. As I enter the grade one classroom, there is a bottle of hand sanitizer stationed by the door. It will get used several times today - before students use equipment in the gym or go to the play structures at recess time or board their buses at the end of the day. There's a container of hand lotion at the spot where I sit in the classroom - a necessity as I deal with dry skin issues that result from frequent hand washing every day.

There are a series of evenly spaced stickers on the floor by my feet forming a large oval where the children sit for some of their instruction time each day. Each child has their own "spot." Monday morning meetings as a class have been very different from other years. Masks on. High fives and handshakes are done with paper hands attached to ends of rulers. Physical contact is limited to some fancy foot tap greetings. No singing. Instead, we hum "O Canada" and do lots of actions to express ourselves with other songs. We also enjoy providing musical accompaniment to songs with percussion instruments, taking delight in being loud when our voices have to be quiet!

There is a hook on the side of each desk to hang masks when students are eating or heading out for recess. The desks are spaced a meter apart. The students now know which corner of the black tile the desk leg needs to sit on for the desk to be in its correctly spaced location. Each student has his/her own container of school



supplies. No sharing. While it sounds unloving, we're learning that it's one way that we show love for each other in this time. The bell rings. I look out the window. The grade one classes have moved from their before school meeting spot/play area to their recess line locations. There are six lines of students on the pavement, each class at least 4 meters apart from the others.

Soon the voices of the children will fill the hallway and classroom with laughter and chatter - a little muffled by tiny masks. I look forward to seeing the bright eyes that top the masks, evidence of the smiles that hide beneath. The children are eager to learn and I am eager to make new discoveries with them. We are about to begin another Covid school day!



Covid Time...

Covid Time...

Thinking of no more Covid time...

- ...sharing pencils, toys, and books
- ...no more masks on my desk hook ...playing tag without pool noodles
- ...working together on a doodle
- ...playing with friends from other grades
- ...washing fewer times each day
- ...giving hugs to all my friends
- ...singing loudly without end!

Covid time...

Covid time...

Thinking of no more Covid time!

-Molly V. Gr. 4A



CCS Welcomes New Staff



MRS DYKSTRA

GRADE 2C

Sheila Dykstra grew up in the Ottawa area and then went on to study at Redeemer University. After that she spent time teaching in both Canada and Nigeria. She was a Christian Education Consultant for West Africa with Resonate Global Mission for eleven years. She has also volunteered with Open Homes Hamilton, the Hamilton Public Library and Edudeo.

In her free time, Sheila loves to walk at local parks and trails, read cookbooks and try out some of the recipes, and read children's literature.

Sheila is excited to be back in the classroom following a few years of working with teachers. She loves to be working with children again on a daily basis and sharing her love for reading and learning. Sheila is excited to be part of a community which offers quality Christian education.





MRS HARSEVOORT

GRADE 2C

Katrina lives downtown Hamilton with her hubby Joel, her three delightful girls (who all attend CCS), and her dog, Mercy. Katrina's first teaching experience was as a Grade 4 homeroom teacher, but she has been teaching music to SK - Grade 8 at Providence Christian School in Dundas for the last seven years. Katrina is excited to bring her loves of the outdoors, games, and music to the classroom. She's delighted to be working in the community she has respected and loved as a parent and volunteer, and is looking forward to getting to know many of you!



MRS KIKKERT

GRADE 4C

Jennifer Kikkert grew up in Mississauga before attending McMaster University where she received her Bachelor of Arts Honours degree with a concentration in history. She enjoys spending time with her husband and two daughters on their farm in Jerseyville. She enjoys curling up with a good book, baking with her girls, as well as dabbling with photography. In the summer she spends a great deal of time in her vegetable garden.

Jennifer spent the first part of her teaching career working for the Peel District School Board. After many years working in a variety of different positions she discovered she has a passion for special education.

Jennifer feels blessed for the opportunity to join such a wonderful community. So far she has found encouragement and support with staff, students, and parents alike. She is grateful for such a warm welcome.



MR MAUGHAN

GRADE 8C

Michael happily joined our staff in August, having come to us from HDCH. He is grateful that God has allowed him to teach in a number of places over the years, in addition to working as a pastor.

For most of his teaching career Michael has taught High School English, but he was very excited to work again at the intermediate level and to get immersed in a grade eight homeroom community here at CCS.

When not at work, Michael enjoys spending time with his wife Tricia, his teenage children Micah and Hannah, and his standard poodle Guster. Michael has always loved listening to music and enjoys playing guitar, singing, writing, and recording. From time to time he attempts DIY projects around his house, but would rather be outside landscaping or hiking. Whether indoors or outdoors, Michael is always happy to have a good cup of coffee in hand.









MRS LANGENDOEN

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT

Amber Langendoen is an educational assistant at the Unity Road campus. She grew up on a mushroom farm in the Woodstock area. Amber and her husband lived downtown Hamilton before moving to Caledonia. They have three beautiful, wild children who keep them on their toes.

Amber graduated from Redeemer with a double major in Social Studies and History. She has worked in a day program for adults for nearly ten years, implementing a wide variety of programs throughout the Hamilton area.

When she has the time, Amber loves to be outdoors, gardening or hiking. She loves to explore conservation areas, hiking trails and anything with water. She also loves a good strong coffee with a good book. Amber is excited to be a part of the new Unity Road Campus, watching the senior students make the campus their own.

MISS VOSKAMP

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT

Ally Voskamp is excited to be working as an educational assistant in Junior Kindergarten this year. She is originally from Peterborough, but is a recent graduate of Redeemer University, so she has called the Hamilton area "home" for the last few years. She enjoys music, being outside (especially disc golfing), reading a good book, and spending time with family and friends. Ally joined the CCS team in September and has really enjoyed her time here so far. She is thankful for the opportunity to get connected and serve here at CCS, and looks forward to the rest of the year with joy and excitement!



MRS WENSINK

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT

Kathy Wensink is a paraeducator in the SKB class. She has been teaching for the past 20 years in Kindergarten and Grades 1-4.

Kathy is married to her loving husband, Bill, who is a pastor and also a teacher. They are the parents of three incredible young men... and yes, one of them is Mr. Wensink who teaches Grade 7! Kathy is the proud Nana to five grand-children. Emma is in JK and Carter is in Grade 1 here at Calvin.

Kathy considers it a blessing to be at Calvin as part of such a caring community. "How great is our God who allows us to demonstrate His love to these precious children!"

MR BYL FACILITIES MANAGER

John Byl is the new Facilities Manager for the Unity Campus. Previously John worked as the Youth and Children's ministries Coordinator/Facilities Coordinator for Meadowlands Fellowship Christian Reformed Church. He also works part time as the Youth Ministry Champion for Classis Hamilton. John lives on the Hamilton mountain with his wife, Connie. Their daughter Spencer attended CCS and together, they have many great memories and enjoyed their time in the CCS community. In his spare time John enjoys working out, cycling, baking, and photography. He looks forward to making more memories with the community at the CCS Unity campus.

EZRA CHRISTOPHER KONING

SEPTEMBER 24



Congratulations to Rachel Koning, as she and her husband Evan and their son Levi welcomed Ezra Christopher Koning into their family September 24, 2020.



Sensory is Powerful

by Ms. S. Knevel

"Growth and development depend upon a continued narrowing of the relationships between a child and his environment."

-Maria Montessori

It is a common practice within the education system, specifically in the primary grades, that involving all of the students' seven senses (touch, taste, sound, sight, smell, balance, and spatial awareness) is crucial in their development and learning. But what often gets overlooked is how these senses can determine and impact a child's behaviour; specifically in those with autism and sensory processing disorders. Students with these exceptionalities often need to be stimulated in order to focus, manage behaviour and anxiety, improve motor and cognitive skills, and learn how to socially interact with their peers. This comes from an inability to process information and their environment normally. Many of these students can exhibit a variety of hypersensitivity (extremely reactive to stimuli) and hyposensitivity (under-sensitive to stimuli) tendencies. For example, someone with hypersensitivity tendencies may become distressed with loud and repetitive noises, bright lights and colours, certain textures and touches, fast movements, and strong scents and tastes. Someone with hyposensitivity tendencies may become excited about loud music and overly animated talking, tickling and deep pressure touch, oral exploration, vocal stimulation, and repetitive and fast movement. As you can imagine, the classroom environment can become very overwhelming to students with sensory needs, often resulting in

meltdowns and aggressive behaviour. This is where sensory rooms can become so effective.

Sensory rooms were invented in the 1970's by two Dutch psychologists: Ad Verheul and Jan Hulsegge. They were originally called "snoezelen" rooms, combining

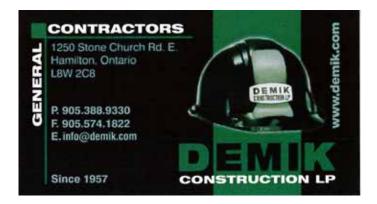
the Dutch words "snuffelen" and "doezelen," meaning sniff and snooze. The idea behind the sensory room was for people with exceptionalities to be exposed to different forms of stimuli to expand their sensory perception and calm their bodies. Today, they are often used to manage stress levels, de-escalate aggressive behaviours, and meet the specific needs of a person's "sensory diet."

As Calvin Christian School continues to strive to be accommodating and accepting, and to celebrate the unique differences of every student, it has become apparent that creating a space that could meet the sensory needs and support the learning of specific students was necessary. A conference room with a table and some chairs became the perfect space to hang some visually stimulating lights, add some movement based equipment, and incorporate some developmentally appropriate activities. With the help of these students' parents and their Paraeducators, the room became an anxiety-calming, socially interactive, safe space.





Personally, it has been a privilege to have helped create this room for a student I work with. The sensory room is supporting the development of her verbal and motor skills, and it has created a safe space for her to engage in organic social interactions with her peers that would not have been possible in the classroom. This, combined with the school's enthusiasm to educate ALL of God's children, despite their differences, continually emphasizes the wonderful community of CCS. This is something for which we can all be truly grateful!





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City Kidz Bus

Over the last several years, City Kidz has seen increased demand and potential in ministering to the youth of Hamilton. One way that ministry has been able to grow is through an increase in the number of their easily recognizable "red" buses. For years CCS has, in its effort to create and maintain a bus fleet that meets our transportation needs, found ourselves with a surplus bus. With our past support of City Kidz, it seemed a natural way to bless their ministry efforts and fulfill a need that they had: more used buses. We are thrilled that City Kidz is able to use these bus donations to further their ministry within the city of Hamilton. We look forward to future opportunities to further support this local ministry.



Orange Shirt Day 2020

by Mrs. R. Van Voorst

On October 1, classes at both campuses commemorated the *Orange Shirt Day - Every Life Matters* campaign. Staff and students were invited to wear an orange shirt to commemorate the survivors of the residential school system.

Orange Shirt Day began with the story of Phyllis Webstad who was to attend her residential school in B.C. for the first time in 1973. Her grandmother, with her limited income, was able to purchase a new orange shirt for Phyllis to wear on her first day of school. Upon arriving at the school, her orange shirt was immediately confiscated and Phyllis never saw it again. She was forced to wear a uniform at school and from that day on, Phyllis felt that her feelings didn't matter. Today, the orange shirt is a symbol of all that survivors of residential schools lost such as their family, communities, language, culture and sometimes even their lives. By recognizing and acknowledging this trauma, we hope





that reconciliation and healing will continue to occur for those who endured the experiences of residential schools.

The students at Calvin Christian School focused on age-appropriate activities to remember residential school survivors and to be reminded that all children deserve to feel safe and cared for at school. Some of the activities students participated in included reading stories of indigenous students, making wampum (peace) belts, and decorating orange shirts. We also focused on the message that we are all children of God and that He has created us to be unique. Those differences are to be celebrated.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

–Psalm 139: 13-14 🔥



Mission Services

Thank you to our Public Relations Committee for organizing this year's Christmas service project. It was communicated to CCS how grateful Mission Services was for all the items donated. They were surprised by the amount of items donated and are so thankful!



SECOND WEEK of school: Grade 1 student looking out at the JK/SK class playing on the primary playground, "Oh, to be young again."

WHILE WE WERE beading in grade 1: "If my grandma were here she would have had this done in 15 minutes."

AT THE END of November, a kindergarten student asked her teacher, "On Monday, is it summer?"

GRADE 6 STUDENT: We have a compost pile in our yard. We put our food scraps there to get composed before we use it on our garden in the spring.

A Sign of Hope in the Midst of a Pandemic

by Mr. A. Boonstra

Back in the early summer of 2020, I was responsible for writing a story for a program that I had joined a couple years earlier. As part of the course work for the Van Lunen Fellowship Program, I wrote about the journey of how Calvin Christian School arrived at the decision to purchase the Unity Campus. I have altered the ending of the story because of the COVID-19 health crisis. This is that story with an addendum that includes the opening of the campus in September for our grade 7 and 8 students.

I HAVEN'T BEEN on a roller coaster for a long time, but I certainly remember the exhilarating feeling of slowly climbing up a steep section of track, only to come flying down the other side and whipping around a corner at breakneck speed. I also remember hanging on for dear life when whipping around those corners and at times wondering if we would safely complete the ride. Roller coasters are inherently about the ups and downs and twist and turns, which is why they are often used as a metaphor for life. At times you race through sections of track hanging on through the sharp curves, while at other times you crawl along listening to the tick of the track underneath you.

I feel like Calvin Christian School's pursuit of a satellite campus is analogous to the ride on a roller coaster. CCS was founded in 1952 and has since established itself as a reputable institution of Christian elementary education in the greater Hamilton, Ontario area. It is perhaps that reputation that has fostered a desire for Christian education in the community that has pushed CCS to its enrollment capacity. There have been many conversations in recent years that have explored the potential for another Christian elementary school in the Hamilton area. The fact that CCS has had a waiting list of prospective parents for many years accelerated those discussions, and a few years ago the school board and its lead administrator took very specific steps to determine if a second campus was feasible. It was perhaps at this time that I hopped on the



roller coaster myself in my role as vice principal, supporting the school board and its principal in the initial steps of exploring options for families lingering on a waiting list for admission into our school.

We started the process off slowly and gradually picked up speed. We found ourselves taking the tentative first few steps of exploring different scenarios and options. The board hired a consultant to carry out a demographic study of Hamilton and the surrounding area, and what that study revealed was largely what we had been experiencing -- a wave of families vacating the greater Toronto area and moving into the more affordable Hamilton and surrounding area. While the demographic study told us that people were moving into the greater Hamilton area, it didn't tell us who they were or if they might want Christian education. We knew determining this would be a task for down the road.

An important and necessary next step was to involve the school membership in the growth plans. A town hall was scheduled that allowed the membership to give voice to what they thought might be a wise course of action. I believe this action was critical in looking to the future. Our membership would eventually be enlisted to support any project both prayerfully and financially. We had to ensure that any steps taken were not arising out of our own kingdom building plans, but from a real desire to grow God's Kingdom and to provide a viable option for families seeking Christian education.

After sharing the consultant's demographic study with the supporting school community via a town hall session, we began to consider which options might be available to us in terms of servicing the families on our waiting list and potential families moving into the region. A second town hall session was organized for the supporting community to participate in round table discussions and once again have the opportunity to let their voices be heard. We delved more deeply into the pros and cons of various possibilities, the logistical impacts of those possibilities on children and families, and the financial and organizational feasibility of each option. These were exciting times. The enthusiasm was palpable and the conversation robust.

From these conversations, the CCS board of directors compiled the input from the membership and began to synthesize what appeared to be the most logical way of moving forward. We landed on four specific options as possible solutions in solving our capacity concerns. They were:

- Southward Development grow in the region south of CCS with a development of a JK-8 school, provided that this satellite campus had a schooling model similar to CCS.
- 2. Middle School develop a middle school for Grade 6-8 provided that the school was located on either Hamilton District Christian High lands or CCS lands for ease of

transportation, and provided that current tuition structure and costs remained similar.

- Surplus School Purchase consider the purchase of Mountain Secondary School (a surplus public school adjacent to CCS).
- Second Storey Addition proceed with the plans for a second storey addition on the West 5th Heritage campus (CCS) regardless of other choices.

All the above were exciting options that would require a deeper exploration of what would work best for our situation. It was also at this time where things took a significant shift, in that our head school administrator retired and a new principal was hired: me. Suddenly I was thrust into the lead role of providing direction and guidance in moving Calvin Christian School into the next stage of planning and development when it came to addressing our capacity concerns.

At one of our first board meetings at the beginning of the 2017/18 school year, I suggested that perhaps it was time to appoint a committee whose sole task was "to present to the Board of Directors of Calvin Christian School a recommendation(s) to respond to the School's enrollment capacity challenges." From here the school's Compass Committee was born. What I appreciated about the Compass Committee was the fact that its membership consisted of parents and community members, members who could offer insight and guidance based on their professional experiences, but also members who were invested in the vision of our school.

For the better part of a year, the committee met regularly to drill deeper into the above options that were suggested as possible solutions to the capacity issues of the school. Tasks were divided among the committee members and reports were delivered back to the board based on what we were discovering. Throughout all this time, it was becoming increasingly clear that our options were being whittled down to either southward development or a partnership with the local Christian high school.

The Compass Committee dedicated itself to the exploration of available lands south of Hamilton that could be considered for a prospective second campus, while discussions with representatives from Hamilton District Christian High began in earnest. Occurring simultaneously was the decision to conduct a market research project to make a formal determination of who lived in the greater Hamilton area and whether or not they were interested in Christian education. We once again turned to the experts: Hathway Stewart Management Consulting. A survey of families in Hamilton and the surrounding area was conducted and specifically targeted protestant church attending families. The survey response data was compelling. It revealed a number of key points, including:

- High ratios of church attendance vs Christian school capacity within the greater Hamilton area suggesting continued pressure on the West 5th campus capacity moving forward.
- Population growth projections suggesting additional pressure on the Hamilton site moving forward.

 Survey response data suggesting meaningful interest in the Caledonia site (land south of Hamilton) at levels that could yield 70-120% capacity utilization at Caledonia within 1-3 years, alongside other key information.

Based on Hathway Stewart's data, the committee determined a need for a second campus, and the sooner the better.

The survey results and the summary findings were shared at another town hall session and it was soon after this that the CCS Board of Directors recommended the critical next step of committing to a second campus option. The only thing to be decided at this point was which option was going to best provide Christian education for families in the greater Hamilton region.

One exciting component of the process was the opportunity to network with leaders in other Christian schools as we considered how to share resources and wisdom to grow Christian education across this region. It was fascinating to reach out to sister Christian schools to gauge their response to our plans, given the fact that what we decided had the potential to impact them, mainly by the "competition" for students who bordered our respective school communities. It was also incredibly encouraging to receive the blessing of these school organizations, as there was the recognition that this was a unique opportunity to grow Christian education in the greater Hamilton area.

Not only were we engaging with sister schools, we were also partnering with Edvance Christian School Association, an umbrella organization of Christian schools in Ontario. We were thankful to the





leaders of Edvance who provided insight and direction when it came to opening up a new school. Deep conversations were held where we discussed governance and school design. The passion and enthusiasm to launch the new school was palpable, and receiving professional advice on how to do so with vision and innovation while

still maintaining our CCS distinctives was the crucial next step in the launch of a possible second campus.

It was also around this time that I enrolled in the Van Lunen Fellowship program, which is an organization that provides executive leadership training. I was thankful for the advice provided by the instructors and the fellow attendees while discussing a wide range of leadership topics. I was provided the opportunity to explore best practices with others who had experience in setting up and running a second campus.

It was early in the year of 2019 that our plans began to crystalize. We had received an offer for "first right of refusal" from a church that owned a piece property that was south of Hamilton. The church was worshipping in a school building that was on this property, and they were looking to build a new church and therefore ready to sell the school building and the eight acre property. Things were moving very quickly, because in the new year, 2020, we took the next step to firm up our agreement with Trinity Canadian Reformed Church to pur-











Chantelle W. Gr. 7B

Brooklyn D. Gr. 7B

Hannah Z. Gr. 7B

Avalyn D. Gr. 7B

chase the property and the school located on 32 Unity Side Road in Caledonia. We were looking at a final closing in March 2020, with an opening of our second campus in September 2020.

Needless to say, if you know anything about March 2020, you will also know that was the exact moment in history when a world health crisis struck: the pandemic of COVID-19. Countries around the world were faced with one of the biggest health crises in the past century and CCS was not immune to the challenges of dealing with COVID-19. We reluctantly put the brakes on our plans for opening up in September and changed gears to a "what next" conversation. We made the difficult decision to delay the opening of the second campus, rescheduling that for September 2021.

It was with deep disappointment that we made this decision, but it was also with an understanding that critical times call for critical decision making. We once again messaged to our community and stakeholders that the plans for the new Unity Campus needed to be put on hold.

We were thankful for the offers of support and understanding, and we gratefully accepted the prayers of the community as we not only changed gears for our Unity Campus plans, but more importantly, as we changed gears to support our students and their families in the midst of the pandemic. It was clear that our timing was not God's timing.

It was shortly after the decision to delay the Unity Campus opening that a friend of mine sent a picture of the campus with the most amazing rainbow "landing" in the heart of the school building. Was this a sign from God that he had not forgotten us and that we should continue to be excited to open up the new campus with a different timeline? It seemed we needed to remain patient and continue to serve God in such a way that allowed his plans to unfold.

We will continue to explore the opening of the new campus in September of 2021, and quite frankly it will provide us with more time to complete renovations on the building and to organize a comprehensive and thorough capital campaign. In some respects it might have been a blessing not to open up the school on the original date. Perhaps waiting an extra year was exactly what we needed to do. Although families would need to remain on the waiting list a little longer, we were given the time to ensure that our plans were indeed God's plans too.

Looking back at this incredible roller coaster ride, I can't help but feel that there were lessons to be learned. Involving the school membership in decision making from the outset was crucial. Communicating clearly and regularly to our supporting community was essential. Engaging the experts in and outside our community to provide insight and wisdom was critical. Hiring outside help to navigate the complexities of land acquisition turned out to be wise and responsible. But perhaps the biggest take away was

the need to rely on God's providence, leading, and guidance--a lesson that was made clear by a global health crisis, but also by God's unwavering promise of care and love.

ADDENDUM TO THE STORY

At time of the above writing, the decision to delay the opening of the campus had been finalized; however, with the COVID-19 health crisis raging across the world, CCS was forced to reevaluate our decision to delay the opening of the Unity Campus.

In the summer of 2020, the provincial government communicated that class sizes needed to be reduced in order to facilitate the necessary physical distancing required to slow the spread of the virus. The school administrative team and the school's Board of Directors worked hard to explore how we could create the additional spaces needed to limit most class sizes to 20 or fewer students. Where would we find additional classroom spaces? The answer lay in our

second campus located on Unity Road in Caledonia!

The CCS Board quickly explored what it would take to get the Unity Campus ready to house students in order to facilitate smaller class sizes. It was decided that Demik Construction would be hired to renovate the school and make it usable for the upcoming school year. It was further decided that students in grades 7 and 8 would receive their education at the Unity Campus, thus creating space at the West 5th Campus.

On September 8, 2020, we welcomed the very first cohort of students to the Unity Campus, and for the first time ever, Calvin Christian School was operating two campuses located on different pieces of property. The opening of the second campus has certainly come with many challenges, but our students, staff, and supporting community have been amazing at making it all work. Even in the midst of a health crisis, we were able to open a second campus, a campus that provided an amazing solution to what looked like an impossible task.



As for our original plan to use the Unity Campus for students in JK-grade 3, we are still optimistic that when the health crisis abates, we will be able to return to that plan. As with so many things in life, we will take things one day at a time and see where God leads us. This strategy seems to be working very well for us so far. When I think back to the sign of the rainbow, I am reminded of God's faithfulness and providence, which he pours out on us again and again.

The Home Learning Program

As told by Brynley, the family pet dog, to Mrs. Wrench



It's been wonderful having the humans home all day long. In the morning, the five small humans sit around the table talking

about Bible stories, spelling, grammar and phonics. Afterwards, they take a break outside and run around with me.

When we come inside, they eat a lot of snacks and talk about numbers for a very long time.

One time, they dropped a pencil and I tried to get it for them. They tackled me for it like they thought I was going to eat it. Now it's a fun game we play!

In the afternoon, they talk about social studies, science and art. They also speak in another language and start calling me Chien.

The house is much louder than it used to be. Sometimes I miss my quiet, peaceful days but I'm reminded of those days when the humans bury their noses into books. I much prefer to bury my nose in the dirt.

Speaking of dirt, when the humans put their books away each day, we go for long, magical hikes. It may be louder around here but I love it!





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\$50,000!

Thank you to all the staff and volunteers at reSource who bless CCS in such a wonderful way!



GRADE 3 STUDENT comes into the classroom not wearing her glasses.
Teacher: "Did you forget your glasses today?"
Student: "Yes, that's why you look like a big blob."

GRADE 2 STUDENT on the Thursday before Thanksgiving, "What, we don't have school on Monday?" Another student answers, "It's a holiday." First student, "Oh ya it's New Years." Other student, "No it's something else. We're not saying Happy New Years on Monday..... are we?"



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Questions? Contact: Lianna Reitsma trip@ccshamilton.ca

Did you know?

If you spend \$100 on groceries and \$50 on gas each week for a year using gift cards, you would earn \$390 towards next year's tuition! Thank you for your support of the TRIP program! We are encouraged by the new participants in this year's TRIP program, and thankful for the businesses that participated for their Christmas gift giving. For those not familiar with our TRIP program, it's a great way to support the school by purchasing gift cards. Simply, you purchase gift cards and the school is given a discount. A percentage of the discount is passed on to the purchaser as a credit towards their tuition, or designated to another family's tuition, or the Tuition Assistance fund.

If you haven't participated in TRIP yet, it is never too late to start saving! Check out the link on our website to our online retailer Fundscrip to get started! Fundscrip offers over 200 retailers to meet your purchasing needs from Dollarama to Esso, Indigo to your favourite restaurant, grocery and home improvement stores, travel and hotel. The online website is very user friendly.

If you are a member of the community at large, this is a great way to support the school throughout the year simply by purchasing gift cards for groceries, gas, Tim Horton's – items you purchase every day.

Please contact Lianna Reitsma at Ireitsma@ ccshamilton.ca if you would like to learn more about this great opportunity.

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The Calvin Christian School Annual Drive looked a little different this year. Our membership was challenged to address a significant budget shortfall in the neighbourhood of \$320,000 dollars. Much of the shortfall was related to the opening of our Unity Campus, as well as the hiring of additional staff to ensure small classes sizes in order to deal with the COVID-19 health crisis. At the time of publication, we have raised over \$258,000 of our stated goal!

There is still time to donate! Simply click on the 2020/21 Annual Drive link on our website, ccshamilton.ca. Your donations enable CCS to continue to provide Christian education in a safe and healthy environment.

Thank you for supporting CCS! 6

\$200,000



\$100,000



Dr. Stephen W. Hambly DMD, FAGD

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