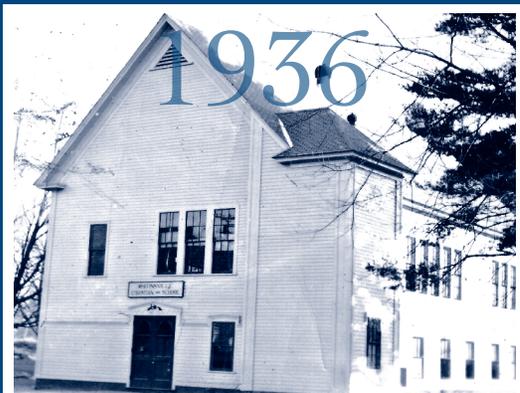


The Crusader Chronicle



RENEWAL



WHITINSVILLE
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



Transformed by the RENEWING of Your Mind

All of New England experienced a drought last summer resulting in brown grass, paltry compacted soil, and shriveling ponds of water. One autumn evening there was a torrential rainfall, described by some as a 50-year rain storm. It was refreshing because the more it rained, the more renewal was taking place in the soil as it absorbed water faster than a dry sponge. It reminded me of the words from Anastasia Bolinder, “Rain storms are destructive and renewing, I want to turn my bad days into rain storms.” Renewal is the theme of the current issue of *The Crusader Chronicle*. Our land has experienced renewal with increased rainfall. Our campus is experiencing renewal with the largest expansion in the 88 year history of Whitinsville Christian School. Our Christian education is characterized by the “renewing of your mind.” We are moving forward knowing that the vision of those who started WCS in 1928 is being renewed with the same faith, just different people. A new bridge symbolically connects our current building to the new facility that includes a performing arts center, a gymnasium, training room, and large foyer. It is a bold commitment of renewal to Christian education at WCS.



“As wave is driven by wave
And each, pursued, pursues the wave ahead,
So time flies on and follows, flies, and follows,
Always, forever and new. What was before
Is left behind; what never was is now;
And every passing moment is renewed.”

Ovid, Metamorphoses

This renewed commitment will allow us to expand our current enrollment, provide the kind of physical facilities that match the quality of our programs, and be much more flexible in scheduling events. It will also allow us to continue to develop programs that meet the needs of the students of today and the students of tomorrow.

The heartbeat of renewal, constant renewal at WCS, is found in Romans 12:2b “...be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.” In our mission statement we address the academic, spiritual, personal, so-

cial, creative, and physical development of students for Christ-like service. That is a comprehensive and transformative renewal for each student at WCS. By God’s abundant grace we are able to accomplish our mission.

In the parting of the Red Sea for the Israelites to move through on dry ground, I wonder what went through their minds and imaginations as they descended down into the bottom of the Red Sea with steep walls of water on their sides. As they rose up to the shore on dry land, I can imagine the sense of transformative renewal of their minds for faithfully living out their lives for service to God. As we walk over the bridge from the current building to the future of WCS, may we do so with a renewed faith in God to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Lance B. Engbers,
Headmaster



Published by Whitinsville Christian School and the WCS Advancement Office.

Comments, content suggestions and address updates should be directed to:

Advancement Office
Whitinsville Christian School
279 Linwood Avenue
Whitinsville, MA 01588

HEADMASTER

Lance Engbers

DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

Adam Meyer

DIRECTOR OF ENROLLMENT

Sonia Zeyl

HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Chris Vander Baan

MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Mary Dykstra

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

Sarah Bowler

PUBLICATION EDITOR

Laural Plourde

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Dionne Katinas

PRINTING

Kemp Publishing Inc.

ON THE COVER

Top left photo, the Willow Street building after a remodel in 1936.

Top right photo, the Willow Street building after a remodel in 1945. *Watercolor painting* of the connecting bridge at WCS by Emily VandenAkker, WCS Art Teacher and alumna.

The Crusader Chronicle

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The Crusader Chronicle is published twice a year for families, alumni, and friends of the school. For a change of address, to add someone to the mailing list, or to let us know of updates, please email advancement@whitinsvillechristian.org.

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Topping Off

Connecting Today and Tomorrow

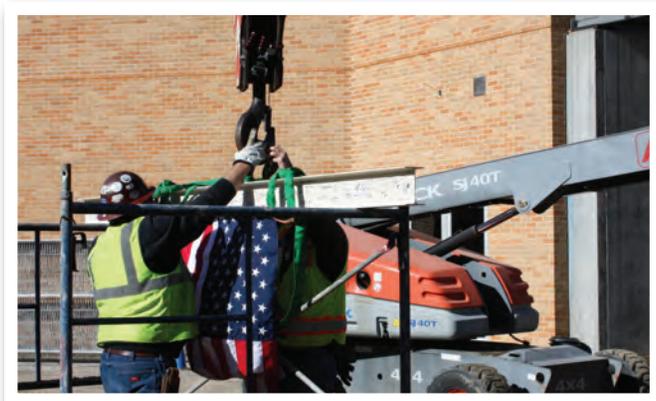
On a sunny October morning, a crowd of students, faculty, staff, alumni, elected officials, and construction workers gathered to see three special beams placed into the connecting bridge that joins the existing building with the new performing arts center and gym. This was a momentous day in the project known as Rise Up & Build.

“Our partner in this project, J.M. Coull, came to us with the idea of a topping off ceremony,” said Dr. Adam Meyer, Director of Advancement for WCS. “We were excited about the idea of connecting the old to the new, and giving our current students a permanent spot in the new building.” At the Topping Off, three beams were placed in a connecting bridge that will join the new and existing facilities. Students and faculty signed the beams which are incorporated into the design in a way that they will remain visible in the ceiling. The last beam set into place carried with it an American flag that now flies over the project.

Ryan Fattman, State Senator, and David Muradian, State Representative, each spoke at the event. They shared their memories of playing basketball for Sutton against the WCS team. Senator Fattman told the crowd, “When you consider the Whitinsville Christian School community, you realize how blessed Whitinsville Christian is by God. It is special to represent this school in the Massachusetts State Senate.” Representative Muradian said, “The vision and the belief of this school is in the students and in the future. Congratulations and enjoy!” Superintendent of the Northbridge Public School system, Catherine Stickney, offered her congratulations and thankfulness for the community partnership with WCS. “The growth, expansion, and continued development of your school community is symbolic of the continued growth we wish for the entire community,” said Mrs. Stickney.

“Once in a while, God gives you a perfect day.”

In other meaningful moments, a special elementary choir sang, “Rise Up & Build,” an original song written for the school by Kim Gentry Meyer. Joe Roberts, Worcester County Welding foreman, presented the U.S. flag to second grader, Abigail Huang. WCS’s Encore Vocal Ensemble sang “The Star Spangled Banner” as the last beam, with the flag, was raised and connected in place. The closing prayer, offered by WCS Headmaster Lance Engbers, was a reading of Richard G. Jones’ hymn, “God of Concrete, God of Steel.” After the event, Adam Meyer commented, “Once in a while, God gives you a perfect day. This was one of those days.”



State Senator Ryan Fattman addresses the crowd

Building on the Blessing of the WCS Endowment Fund

WHITINSVILLE
SCHOOL
— FOR —
CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION

“It was their desire to educate their children in a school where God’s Word was central to all of learning.”

For over forty years, the Whitinsville Christian School Endowment Fund has been a source of financial support for its students. It all began with the sale of a property during a time of growth. As WCS grows today, the fund continues through donations, many in memory or honor of loved ones.

Near the turn of the century (1907), a group of parents from the Christian Reformed Church of Whitinsville organized a Society for Christian Instruction. It was their desire to educate their children in a school where God’s Word was central to all of learning. In 1924, the Society was incorporated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as an educational institution. However, it was not until 1928 that Whitinsville Christian School opened its doors for the first time in the basement of the Christian Reformed Church on Willow Street.

When the church relocated to Pleasant Street, the old building was given to the Christian School Society. Renovations were made in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s to meet the school’s needs. Despite the renovations, it became more and more apparent that the structure was inadequate for the growing enrollment and increasing educational demands.

In the early 1960s, a decision was made to purchase land and start a fund for the construction of a new school. The property on Linwood Avenue was purchased from Whitin Machine Works in 1966. On March 30, 1968, ground was broken for the construction of a new building. Through the efforts of a dedicated building committee, much sacrificial giving of money, and volunteer labor, the building was ready for occupancy in November 1969.

The endowment fund began in 1972, three years after the opening of the present facility. After the Willow Street location was vacated, a lease agreement between the Northbridge School Department and WCS was negotiated. The town leased the facility for a couple of years and then purchased the building for \$50,000. The board members felt the time was right to start an endowment fund with this money. With support for the plan, the endowment fund was created.

The objective was, and remains, to provide a source of support to future students attending WCS. The WCS Endowment holds its principal in perpetuity and pays out a portion, 5 percent per year, to pay for school operations and programs. Endowment investments have dual goals: to grow the principal and to generate income. The WCS Endowment Committee invests in funds and companies that they feel will be successful and turn a profit, while also attempting to minimize risk. More than \$500,000 has been contributed over the last 44 years. The fund has provided over \$1.3 million to lower the cost of tuition for all our students.

For more information on ways to support future students, please contact Adam Meyer, Director of Advancement, at ameyer@whitinsvillechristian.org or visit whitinsvillechristian.org/support-wcs.

The WCS Legacy

Families often pass things down from one generation to the next. For many WCS families, that includes a Christian education. Since the first students passed through the doors in 1928, many generations have followed. We caught up with a few of our legacy families to hear their stories, and what that history means to them. While each generation was dedicated to the next one attending WCS, they didn't always share stories of their own time at the school. In a way, this allows each generation to have their own unique experience at WCS.

A Legacy Begins

The Nydams are very familiar faces at WCS thanks to four generations of students and generous volunteerism. **Jean (Feddema) Nydam** graduated from eighth grade in 1942. She and her husband, Jim, have four daughters who are **WCS alumnae: Laurie, Ruth, Susan, and Marilyn**. Erika and Elizabeth, Marilyn's daughters, each have three children attending WCS. "We never heard very many stories from the previous generations about their time at WCS," said **Erika (Anderson) Johnson (class of 1996)**. "Maybe because their more formative high school years were spent at another school. I do remember my mom saying they walked over with

their desks from Willow St. to the new school on Linwood Ave."

Denise (Koopman) Brookhouse graduated in 1987 and her family ties run deep. Her father, Don Koopman graduated from the eighth grade in 1950. "I didn't hear much from my father about his time at WCS, but I know the friendships from WCS have continued throughout his life."

Phil VanderSea attended WCS until sixth grade. His grandson, Jonny, attended Holden Christian Academy. "When Jon-

"My parents made every sacrifice they could to send us to WCS."
- Shelly Weedon



Phil VanderSea with his grandson, Jonny

ny and his parents began looking at options for continuing his Christian education through high school, I knew WCS would be a good fit," said Phil. Jonny's sister also attended WCS. Jonny remembers, "I was really excited. I was ready for a change. It's good to know I have a connection with certain people that know my grandfather. It made me more comfortable with the transition to WCS."

Shelly (LaFleur) Weedon graduated in 1987. Her father, **Sidney LaFleur**, graduated from eighth grade in 1950. Shelly and her father even had the same kindergarten teacher, Miss Pals. "He felt so strongly that the school molded him into the Christian that he was. My parents made every sacrifice they could to send us to WCS. He would work all week, then on Saturdays he met with a group of parents to physically build the new school on Linwood Ave. His priority for his children was that they would go to WCS. It was such a blessing."

Continuing the Legacy

Making the decision to send their own children to WCS was really an easy choice, but one that requires a significant commitment. Erika said, "We just can't picture for them an experience different than going here, and being part of this commu-

Photo to left: Jim and Jean Nydam and family





The Brookhouse family

nity.” Erika and Elizabeth appreciate the financial sacrifices their parents made for them and their sister, **Katherine (class of 2009)**. “When Erika’s son entered WCS, she kept saying to me, ‘Of course you’ll send your kids too.’ It wasn’t ever a question, but it’s a financial decision we make each year. We never want anything else. We make it happen,” said **Elizabeth (Anderson) Deters (class of 1997)**.

Denise’s four children have also attended WCS. “There was never a doubt in my mind that my kids would attend WCS. Both of my parents grew up with Christian education, as well as my husband, Tony. My faith defines who I am. Knowing the Bible, being taught from a Christian perspective; I can’t imagine not having that. I’m so thankful for this place. As my kids have headed to college, I felt they were so much more prepared spiritually.”

Shelly and her husband, Roy, were living on Nantucket when they started a family. “When the girls were in their early years of elementary school, my husband and I realized that the Christian education we wanted for them was at WCS. It’s a huge commitment, since my husband still works on Nantucket, but I knew I wanted the same role models I had, and my father had. I’ve shared how important it is to have friendships with people who are believers and share their walk with God.”

“There was never a doubt in my mind that my kids would attend WCS.”
- Denise Brookhouse

Sharing the Legacy

These parents are enjoying watching their children have some of the same experiences, and even some of the same teachers, as they did at WCS. Hope Brookhouse is playing volleyball, basketball, and is looking forward to tennis. “Hope gets her competitive streak from me, we both love athletics. My sons Owen and Gabe have played basketball and tennis. Nate was a runner. We’re all competitive like my father,” said Denise. Erika said, “As Benjamin goes through middle school, we’ve talked about the similar things I did in middle school.” Shelly and her girls have had Mrs. VandenAkker and Mrs. Exoo as teachers. They’ve also participated in some of the same activities. “Katie is in the choir. Ally played basketball and volleyball.”

When asked if the current students understood their families’ relationships to the school, Elizabeth remembers one day when her boys saw her name on a plaque naming her Athlete of the Year.

“They seemed surprised, as if to say, ‘Oh, you really did go here?’ I don’t think they realize yet that we’ve all chosen to be here, and everything that goes into that.” Shelly has told her daughters about their grandfather, and where the school used to be. They like to look at old photos. Erika said, “As the kids mature and think beyond



The Weedon family

themselves, they understand the family connection. I probably don’t talk about it as much as I could. The heritage is more emotional than physical; it looks back to where your heart was. They understand that their great-grandparents love that they’re at WCS. Whether or not they understand everyone who has attended the school, what they do understand is the love that we all have for WCS.”

In the 2016-2017 school year, eight families represent 3rd or 4th generations attending WCS. Legacy students make up 18% of the student population. This article tells the story of a few of these families. Do we know your story? Please accept our invitation to catch up with Adam Meyer, Director of Advancement, and preserve the history of WCS. You can reach him at ameyer@whitinsvillechristian.org or 508-372-3261.



A Mid-Ocean Night's Dream

What happens when you take Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream", set it in the 1920s on an ocean liner, add in some sea creatures, deck hands, and new aristocracy? "A Mid-Ocean Night's Dream" is born!

This year the WCHS drama club tackled Shakespeare, but changed things quite a bit. The play, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is a favorite comedy, performed many times a year by many different theater groups. This year, we took the famous play and made our own version, complete with a new setting and a fusion between old English and contemporary language.

Students learned to seamlessly move between the two language styles as they delivered their lines with finesse. In the traditional play set in Athens, characters portrayed noble men and women, tradesmen, and fairies. In our version, characters included the new aristocracy of the 1920s, deck hands who worked on the ship, and sea creatures who came up out of the ocean to wreak havoc on the other characters! Audiences were delighted as all the characters joined in a few Charleston dances. The storyline stayed true to the original, with star-crossed lovers, a donkey head put on a fool, and all things turning out well in the end.

The cast and crew were amazing as they worked as one body once again to produce a fabulous show. Our stage crew created a stage that was shaped like a ship, providing a much larger space for the actors. Audiences were given a prologue, as well as a flow chart in their programs, so they could understand the web of actors; who they are, who they love, then who they don't love, and who they love again!

Our drama club exists to glorify God with the talents He has given each one of us, all different and brought together in the one body of drama. We are grateful for the people who come and see our shows since they energize our performance! Without them, we would not be able to continue. However, we realize that ultimately, all that we do, we do for God. He is our "Audience of One". It is always a huge privilege and blessing to work with a group of people dedicated to excellence and glorifying God in all they do. *Soli Deo Gloria!* – Mary Dykstra, Drama Director



Encore Performs at the Old North Church

The enduring fame of the Old North Church in Boston began on the evening of April 18, 1775. Church sexton, Robert Newman, and Vestryman, Captain John Pulling, Jr., climbed the steeple and held high two lanterns as a signal from Paul Revere that the British were marching to Lexington and Concord by sea across the Charles River and not by land. This fateful event ignited the American Revolution. Each year, over half a million people visit this unique and stirring monument to liberty. On December 8th, Encore Vocal Ensemble celebrated “An Old North Christmas” at Boston’s oldest standing church building with a special a cappella concert of carols and Christmas classics. The concert was part of the Old North Church “Songs of Liberty” concert series.

Congratulations Encore!

WCS’ Encore Vocal Ensemble has qualified for the Northeast Quarterfinals of the International Championship of High School A Cappella! WCS was one of 12 schools to qualify from Massachusetts. The quarterfinal competition will be held on Saturday, February 4, 2017, at Danvers High School in Danvers, MA. Ticketing and other information can be found on the ICHSA website. Both the group and Encore Director Mr. Lawson would like to sincerely thank all of their fans, parents and supporters for their prayers and words of affirmation.



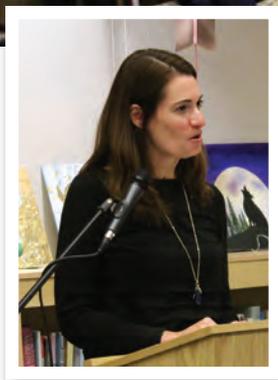
Hannah Mercer Chosen for NAFME’s 2016 All-National Honor Ensembles

WCS Senior Hannah Mercer was selected to join the “best of the best” for the National Association for Music Education’s (NAFME) 2016 All-National Honor Ensembles. The concert was held on November 13, in Grapevine, TX.

“WCS is incredibly proud and honored that we could send Hannah to the All-National Mixed Choir,” said Choral Director Joshua Lawson. She had previously reached the Massachusetts All-State Honor Chorus in 2015 and 2016, and the Massachusetts Central Districts Honor Choir for the last three years. This November, she became the first student in the history of WCS to reach the

final pinnacle of high school musical excellence in America in reaching the All-National Honor Mixed Choir. “During the last four years, Hannah has been an integral part of WCS’s acclaimed Encore Vocal Ensemble, serving as a leader in the soprano section. She has been taking private vocal lessons from me for over five years,” said Lawson.

The Massachusetts All-State Honor Chorus typically has between 120 and 140 members. Students who qualified for their state-level honor ensemble program then competed against top students for a spot in these national honor ensembles. After completing the incredibly rigorous audition process, Hannah joined approximately 350 other vocalists from all 50 states in the All-National Mixed Choir.



Mrs. Josten Swiader

NHS Induction

In November of 2016, twenty-five members of the high school were inducted into the John T. Bajema Chapter of the National Honor Society. Mrs. Tammi Gorman is the Chapter advisor. Mrs. Josten Swiader, parent of WCS students, gave a speech that challenged and encouraged our inductees and audience.

CLASS OF 2017: Lauren Bek, Patrick Estrella, Kade McCann, and Elizabeth Quercio

CLASS OF 2018: Claire Barker, Jacob Belanger, Zihou Chen, Jakki Cloutier, Qiyue Cui, Yanjia Fu, Katherine Johnson, Julie Kaminski, Katelyn Lashley, Jada Leung, Grace Malabanti, Elizabeth Marder, Shannon Morrill, Sarah Moschini, Drew Quercio, Cam Richey, Lindsey Swyers, Jonathan VanderSea, Tatiana Wiersma, Colin Wren, and Kaishuo Zhang

Student Council Hosts Pasta Dinner

Thanks to a pasta dinner hosted by the Student Council in November of 2016, a \$4,300 donation was made to Kaleb's Door. Kaleb's Door is a fundraising initiative designed to support inclusive learning. Steered by WCS faculty member and parents, Mark and Sara DeWeerd, Kaleb's Door has allowed Student Academic Services to add additional staff and provide the services needed to support a broader range of learners.

On top of selling over 250 tickets, additional donations totaling more than \$1,500 helped make this year's event a success. Musical performances were given by the youth choir, Encore, and high school teacher Matt Genese. The Student Council thanks all those who shared their time and talent to help make the event a success. This was the second annual Student Council Pasta Dinner. Last year's dinner benefited the Rise Up & Build campaign.



New Faces

WCS welcomed several new employees at the beginning of the school year, as well as familiar faces in new roles.



Dr. Erin Lowery-Corkran
Assistant Director of Enrollment (new position) and International Student Programs Coordinator



Heather Engle
Student Academic Services



Gerri Fogg (rehire)
6th Grade Orchestra, Strings Instructor



Susan Hammer
Preschool Teacher



Maria Jimenez
Preschool Lead Teacher



Kim Massotti
Student Academic Services



Laural Plourde
Public Relations Writer



Dr. David Romano
HS Computer Applications Teacher



Jody Shaw
Preschool Lead Teacher



Sherri Watters
HS Accounting Teacher and Student Academic Services



Sonia Zeyl
Director of Enrollment (new position) and Director of Stepping Stone Preschool

Unlocking the Potential in Zambia

by Jake Gulinello (class of 2014)

It's hard to describe exactly how I felt stepping off the plane in Zambia this past summer. My arrival represented the culmination of two semesters' worth of excitement, stress, hard work, and dedication. Six years earlier, Messiah College students had set up a community savings group as part of an economic development initiative in the village of Simaubi.

Through the success of that effort, participants had accumulated a substantial amount of money. As a result, Messiah College was asked to send a team to teach group members how to effectively manage and use their new earnings. So, with the residents of Simaubi in mind, three other students and I spent the past school year writing a curriculum focused on using this capital to help develop and create small businesses.



Business class in Simaubi

Before the actual teaching segment of our trip was to begin, my team spent several days living in a guest house in the city of Choma. It was here, working with our advisors, that I was able to connect with young Zambians and explore the local community and culture.

The four days spent in the village of Simaubi were the most meaningful for me. Most of each day was spent teaching in a small brick Brethren In Christ church. Word had spread of our arrival and almost 50 people filled the wooden benches in our small makeshift classroom. Over the next four days our students learned how to improve and grow their business to better support themselves and the wider community. We covered many topics such as tracking profits, and relationship building with customers. Even though we were there to teach them basic business

skills, I was blown away by their strong business sense. This made for lively discussions and a more enriching experience for all of us.

When we were not teaching, each member of the team lived with a local host family. It was an incredible opportunity to talk with my brothers and sisters in Christ who live such different lives. A favorite memory is of my host brother and me lighting up the small, mud brick house with flashlights at night (there is no electricity in Simaubi) so we could stay up and teach each other English and Tonga (the local language). I would try to answer all his questions about American culture while he tried to answer all mine about Zambia. Experiences like this helped me grow close to my host family and the rest of the village during my short stay. Saying goodbye was difficult.

I am often asked why this type of work in such remote areas of the world is important. After my experience in Zambia the answer became clear. Though materially poor, the people we met were not poor in spirit and like the rest of us, have hopes and dreams for themselves and their families.

They have so much energy and potential that is just waiting to be unlocked. Our time spent in Zambia is all about unlocking the

Photo to right:
Jake with his host family



The Messiah team

potential and God-given talents of the people. When you give others a chance to thrive under their own works and deeds, the impact is long-term and far-reaching, and creates a pathway to sustainable prosperity. My experience reaffirmed my belief that helping others help themselves is a powerful way to empower people and alleviate poverty.

“Our time spent in Zambia is all about unlocking the potential and God-given talents of the people.”

WCS played a big part in developing my faith and molding my heart for service and a desire to pursue God. These fundamental elements of my identity inspired me to work in Zambia. I think back to the seeds that were planted in Mr. Herrmann's Accounting I class at Whitinsville Christian School. The accounting lessons he taught sparked my interest in business and later morphed into my passion for economic development. I continue to look forward to seeing how God will use me as his vessel to further His Kingdom.



Carrying Hope to China and Back

When you're given a name like Carry Hope, you probably don't see a 9-5 job in a cubicle in your future. Of course Mr. and Mrs. Godeke probably didn't foresee their daughter living in China for eight years, then moving to Seattle and joining the police force. But that is exactly what Carry Godeke ('95) has done, and she is so grateful for the opportunities she's been given to build relationships with so many people.

“I'm very grateful that I have a name that means something.”

“My mom always told us that she wanted our names to be meaningful. My sisters are named Christian Joy and Grace May. When I was young, the unusual spelling

of Carry was bothersome. Now I'm very grateful that I have a name that means something – it's a lot to live up to frankly!”

During college, Carry was fascinated by a professor who had lived in China. She decided that before she began her “real life”, she wanted an adventure. Working with the Language Institute of China, she headed overseas to teach English. She enjoyed it so much, that one year turned into eight. She even took a break from teaching for a couple of years to become a student and study Mandarin.

While in China, she became involved in a sports ministry that allowed her to get out of the city during the summer and on holidays. She also gathered with other believers in small, informal churches, mostly in people's homes, to worship. She loved the relationship-building.

When it came time to come “home”, Carry knew she didn't want a job where she would be on the bottom rung, in a cubicle, working 9-5. The desire to be near family meant choosing to either go back to New England, or settle in the Northwest, since her sister lives in British Columbia. “When I came back, I needed a job that could train me. I needed to pay the bills. I was online looking at jobs, and law enforcement kept popping up.” Despite having no background and no family connection to law enforcement, she decided to go through the testing process. “I was intrigued by the idea that every day would bring something different. The whole process went very quickly, and once I was accepted I thought, ‘Well, I guess this is what I'm doing.’ That isn't the way they recommend starting this career, but it's worked for me.” She thought the language and relational skills she built during her years in China would be part of her past, perhaps useful for meeting people on the east coast, or in life outside of a job, but it's come to be a key part of her new career.

She joined the Seattle Police Department in 2008 and spent a few years on patrol, then with a new unit called the Neighborhood Response Team. After a year with that team, she was asked to join the Community Police Team. “They knew I had spent time in China and that I spoke some Mandarin. They needed someone to cover Chinatown and Pioneer Square.” The Community Police Team acts as a liaison between the community, businesses, and outreach centers, exploring ways to solve problems. “It's much more people-oriented than patrol work. On patrol, you're limited in how much you can invest in



Carry and her father, Don Godeke (retired WCS Middle School teacher and principal)

a person. On this team, we develop a relationship over time in a neighborhood, with a business, outreach workers, with the suspect – there is a lot more rapport that goes into working with the community. That fits my personality much better.”

Her time in China has helped her build relationships with business owners. “Just using a little conversational Mandarin, knowing places in China, and understanding the culture helps break down that cultural wall of mistrust.”

“My faith has always been with me. Being in China made me more aware of it because of the intentionality. My faith became more precious and more real by meeting people

that only had their faith to cling to, or seeing people with no faith and the trials in their lives.”

Carry looks back on her time at WCS with great fondness. “Looking back, my memories are about the quality of the teachers. I can't think of WCS without thinking about the Strings program. My family was there when Joanne Kuder started Suzuki, and I began playing the violin at age four.” Carry appreciates most the personal touch Mrs. Kuder gave to each student. “It wasn't just about being a good violinist. You were expected to learn your part and know how to work within the orchestra, working with a group. That was foundational. I know that I could have gone to every teacher at WCS for advice or with a question, and I cannot think of a single teacher that would not have taken the time for me. The level of care is mind-blowing.” It's safe to say her time at WCS fostered her love of building relationships.



Carry serving the community

Laying it on the Altar

The Kooistra family has lived a life of service, most of it overseas. The father heard a calling while he was far from home. The son's home was the mission field, but he had to leave that home to confirm his calling.

Gordon Kooistra graduated from eighth grade at WCS in 1951. In June of 1959, he was serving in the Army in Germany, with three months to go. He had been reading *Jungle Pilot*, the story of a missionary named Nate Saint, and remembers that it was affecting him in a way that he couldn't understand. Then he remembers hearing: "This is something you could do. Would you be willing to do this for me?" He thought about what that would look like, and all of the things he'd be giving up at home. "I wouldn't be water skiing. I wouldn't be able to build another boat. And I wouldn't be building a garage for my Renault I had purchased in Germany. But then I thought about what the Lord had done for me. He came into this world as a baby, He started a ministry, He went to the cross, and He died that I could have life and have it more abundantly. I knew I would go."

A week later, he received a letter from his parents with a news clipping of an article about Ron DeVries, who was also from Whitinsville and in the Army. Ron had been recently stationed in Germany, and was hoping to become a missionary pilot. By some miracle, Gordon found him outside his base in Germany. "Ronnie told me about the work Wycliffe Bible Translators did and about Moody Bible Institute's aviation training program. I went to Moody in September, after getting out of the Army. I completed their program and was sent to Nigeria for a couple of years. When I came back, I signed up with Wycliffe." That was the beginning of a 40-year experience in Colombia and Panama.

Gordon met his wife, Shirley, during his time in Panama. "We worked together for many years. I was able to help so many people in the jungle. I flew not only Wycliffe people, but government officials, patients, doctors, and nurses." The story that still gets to him is an emergency flight for Brad, a college student who had come to work with Wycliffe. Brad had gone to take a swim and dove into shallow water, hitting the bottom. When he came up, he couldn't move. "I needed to get him to a hospital in Bogota, but I was told that the weather was bad and I probably wouldn't make it. Brad was very likely going to be paralyzed, and I knew I had to get him to help. When we got near the airstrip, I asked God to make an opening in the clouds so I could see to land the plane. He gave me that opening. When Brad got on the ambulance, I prayed to God that the next time I saw Brad, he would be walking. Two years later we were visiting mutual friends in Michigan, and Brad walked into the room. I can't describe the way I felt seeing him walk," remembers Gordon.

The Kooistras had two children during their time overseas, David and Sheryl. After growing up, mostly in Colombia, David saw first-hand what life as a mis-

“He asked me to lay my things on the altar, my desire to waterski and to build a boat, so I could be in service to Him.”



Top photo: Gordon Kooistra with the Helio Courier. Bottom photo: David and Sheryl Kooistra in Colombia

sonary meant. Having parents who are missionaries is no guarantee that you'll follow the same path. David was one of five in his graduating class, and the only one who has continued with mission work.

“I thought about what the Lord had done for me. I knew I would go.”

While Gordon remembers a specific calling, David didn't have that same experience. “Since I grew up with this, I remember thinking, *I know how this works. I know there is a need. If there isn't a reason why I shouldn't do this, I should do this.* In high school, I started thinking about what I would do in college and if mission work was something I really wanted to do. I felt like I needed to get away from where I grew up. I had to leave the mission field to find out if this is what I wanted,” said David.

David spent a summer in Papua, New Guinea, with Teen Missions International. That was the confirmation he needed that mission work was in his future. During his senior year of high school, he began taking classes in the morning and then working in the hangar in the afternoon. “I flew with my dad growing up, but I didn't really like flying. He always let me work on different things like outboard motors and lawn mowers. That was always fun.”

After high school, his dad recommended Moody's aviation program. David met and soon married Jan. After graduating from the aviation maintenance program, the two settled in Tennessee. David worked at Moody as a shop instructor. He and Jan both knew they wanted to do mission work and in 1999, they realized it was time to begin. They joined Wycliffe and were sent to the Philippines in 2001. In 2007, Wycliffe's work there was coming to a close. Friends of David and Jan

were serving in Peru and let them know of a need for a full-time mechanic. A partnership with South America Missions sent them to Peru for the next seven years. They returned to the U.S. in 2014, and now David is providing field support, training, and maintenance. “When we were overseas, I relied on the people back in the States for help. Now I'm on that end, helping people when they call. We'd love to get back overseas, but right now we are where we need to be.”

When Gordon reflects on his time with Wycliffe, he is thankful for the Lord's goodness. “He asked me to lay my things on the altar – my desire to waterski and to build a boat – so I could be in service to Him. After I retired, He gave those things back to me. David and I built that boat, and I've watched him build others. I did it all for the Lord. If I could do it all over again, I'd be on my way yesterday.”

Photo below: David & Jan Kooistra with their children, Lauren, Dean, Adrianna, and Judah



Even Disciples Need Tech Support

Jason Maas has found a way to use his love of math and computers to help spread God's kingdom. As a student at Penn State, he found a calling with DiscipleMakers, first receiving support through the campus ministry, and later providing support to the entire network.



Jason came to WCS from Michigan in 1983, during his kindergarten year. Once Jason reached his late elementary years, most of his classmates were heading to choir and band classes. "God didn't make me a musician," says Jason. "I stayed behind and played with the Apple II computers. I took Keyboarding and BASIC programming with Mr. Herrmann and that further fueled my love of computers."

By the time he was well into high school, he had made his way through the full roster of WCS math and computer courses. This gave him the foundation to finish high school at The Massachusetts Academy of Math and Science where he could specialize in the subjects he loved.

In high school, Jason joined a youth group at a church in Hopkinton. "I thought I was a Christian all along. I went to Sunday school, to WCS, my parents are Christians, but this is when I really got it. I had been looking down on the kids down the road thinking, 'Those are the sinners. I'm a Christian, one of the good guys.' The Lord helped me see that I was living like a Pharisee."

After graduating from high school, Jason began studying at Penn State. In his search for other Christians, he became involved with The Navigators, a large international campus ministry. There he participated in Bible teaching with people who were welcoming, friendly, and wished to talk about real issues that mattered. He met another student named Ben who invited

Photo below: The Maas family with the Penn State Nittany Lion



"We help people see what Jesus talks about is what's going on in people's hearts, and if their heart is faithful to the Lord."

him to study the Bible with him. "I thought, this guy is super smart, super serious, and I can learn from him. If he's inviting me to Bible study, I bet it's going to be good." He was right. Through Ben, Jason was introduced to DiscipleMakers, and to Ben's sister Deeanne, whom he later married.

"DiscipleMakers is big on Bible study, specifically how to study the Bible. There is an emphasis on talking about what's going on in the heart, because the heart is what motivates our actions and behavior. We help people see what Jesus talks about is what's going on in people's hearts, and if their heart is faithful to the Lord."

DiscipleMakers has their headquarters in State College, PA, not far from the Penn State campus. Jason volunteered, helping with computer issues. He studied Computer Science and after graduating considered joining DiscipleMakers right away. College debts and his parents' concern over the personal support raising model kept him from doing that, so instead he went to work for IBM in New York. The following year, Deeanne graduated, the two were married, and they became involved with a campus ministry in New York.

In late 2001, Jason joined the IT Department at DiscipleMakers. "I do a lot of personal tech support. I manage all the technology at headquarters including networks, servers, databases, and PCs. I also provide general technical assistance to the media department. At headquarters, we can take on the behind the scenes work centrally so our campus ministers don't have to do it on their own. They can spend more time with students and less time fighting with technology."

Being in IT doesn't hinder Jason from ministering to others. When students come in to intern, that one-on-one time is spent wisely. "I've been able to minister directly to the computer interns over the years. When you work side by side for hours with someone every day, you get to know them. I love that it's expected and desired that we'll be talking about what's going on at the heart level, not just what's happening at work."

Jason has helped DiscipleMakers make important advancements in giving. "I was able to help roll out online giving a number of years back." With new technology often comes resistance. "God has helped me know how to work through the personal side of technology projects. God taught me how to relate to people, ask good questions, be a good listener, and find the best solutions."

Jason does not underestimate the importance of his time at WCS. "There was a lot more going on than learning to read and write. I really appreciate the time the teachers spent with me to encourage my love of math and computers. Those years were tremendously valuable in giving me a solid biblical world view. Not everyone has that experience."

Sympli Living the Dream

Whitney Marshall (class of 1994) learned about harmony during her time at WCS, both on the basketball court and as a member of the choir. Being able to harmonize, work as a team, and follow her passion has served her well in her many endeavors after graduating. She earned an MBA, served in the Army, currently works as a supervisor of case managers at the Department of Mental Health, and is a recording artist and CEO of Sympli Whitney, a music production company.

When she arrived at WCS in the sixth grade, she was searching to belong to something. This was complicated by the fact that she didn't look like any other student at WCS, and she had a high energy level. She remembers Coach Kris VandenAkker as someone who made her feel very comfortable at WCS. "I liked how hard she was, how animated she was, and how she talked to the team. She brought out a passion in me for basketball that continued during college, my service in the Army and continues today. She truly cared for us individually. In reflection, she prepared me for many things in my life," shared Whitney.

Whitney is also appreciative of her time with Franz Kuder. "I had already developed my singing skills in the Baptist church I grew up in. He helped me understand vocally what music was to the world." She still uses the skills and techniques Mr. Kuder taught her: breathing into a straw and opening your diaphragm. She



“I liked how hard Coach Kris VandenAkker was, how animated she was, and how she talked to the team. She truly cared for us individually.”



hasn't had any type of vocal injury and credits the techniques she learned in Choir.

Whitney's songs have hit the charts in the U.K. and for her, it was the realization of a dream she had as a baby. Known as Sympli Whitney, she has received accolades from Gladys Knight, Michael Bivins, and Doug E. Fresh on BET's Apollo Live. "In 2010, I was in a band called Nemesis, and we entered a contest to perform in a very big, popular African-American gala called Stepping Out. Another band performed before us and the host asked the lead singer her name. She replied Whitney. So when it was our turn, the host asked my name and I said, 'My name is also Whitney. Simply Whitney.' And it stuck. I spelled it 'Sympli' just to catch people's attention."

Going full time with music is the next dream. "I'm entering my forties, I've already established a career, now I'm looking for a purpose." She notes that this is a very exciting time in the music industry, with so many independent artists pushing back against the labels that are mismanaging the funds. "I'm starting as an independent, and I'm letting God manage things," said Whitney. "I went to school with some of the most talented kids at WCS that I've ever recognized. Whatever genre you're in, God is there too. Keep your focus on Him."

Whitney's faith has been strengthened through everything she's done. "We slip and we slide but if you keep that mustard seed, you end up with blessings beyond your dreams." You can see Sympli Whitney in her hometown of Framingham, MA, on February 18 at Angry Ham's. She'd love to see you there.

Booster Club Gets a Reboot

With a new name, new faces, and new business-like approach, the Booster Club has been reenergized. Now known as The Crusader Athletic Board (or CAB), the group has been working hard for our WCS student athletes. Laura Skudera, President of the CAB, has used her skills from the business world to organize and more clearly define the group and its activities. **Elizabeth Deters (class of '97)** serves in a new role, Concession Stand VP. Elizabeth has implemented an electronic sign-up system to make it easier for volunteers to choose shifts. **Melissa Hadley (class of '99)** serves as Vice President of the CAB. As a business owner, Melissa has played a critical role bringing in new sponsorship opportunities for businesses. This allows the CAB to increase the profitability of their concession sales. Other officers include Jeff, Linda Morrill and Treasurer, **Michelle Graves (class of '99)**. Typically, eight to ten CAB members regularly attend the monthly meetings.

Laura's first goal was to organize the new group. "We needed new officers, more effective meetings, and a consistency to the items we can offer the athletes, especially championship teams. Thankfully previous members showed me the ropes and now we've been able to take steps to improve upon the group. I'm also thankful to Len Krygsman (WCS Athletic Director) for his outstanding guidance, hard work, and dedication to the athletes and the CAB."

A new fundraiser took place in November of 2016. "The idea really evolved around our table one evening. My husband, **Matt (class of '02)** and **Nate Kuder (class of '96)** thought it would be fun to bring back the state champs for a basketball game. When I brought that idea to the CAB, we decided to make it an alumni event." The 3-on-3 tournament saw 17 teams compete. "I'm so thankful to **Brady (class of '06)** and **Jeff Bajema**," said Laura. "They were so great at managing the event. I'm really happy with the success of the event, especially since this was the first year." The CAB is looking forward to hosting the event again next year, in the new gymnasium at WCS.



From left to right: Laura Skudera (President), Michelle Graves (Treasurer), Melissa Hadley (Vice President)

Some of the successes the CAB has already celebrated include:

Providing **\$4,000** to help build the new cross country trail

Celebration of the Boys Tennis Team State Championship

Assisting with the cost of the athletic dinner for the coaches and athletes

Purchasing a banner for the gym

Providing each athlete and coach with a personalized sweatshirt and t-shirt

Providing a championship plaque to be hung at the tennis courts

Providing all coaches with a WCS sweatshirt as a thank you for their hard work and dedication

The mission of the Crusaders Athletic Board (CAB) is to support and enhance the athletic programs at Whitinsville Christian School. We work alongside administration, coaches, parent-volunteers, and alumni to enrich our students' God-given talents. We coordinate and organize fundraisers to fund and enrich our students' athletic experience. The CAB works to achieve this through active participation of parents and volunteers. We strive to maintain relationships and provide a positive platform for expression through our athletics. For more information, email WC-SCAB@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page: WCS Crusaders Athletic Board.



ALUMNI 3 ON 3

Thanks to all of our alumni and friends who participated in the 3-on-3 basketball tournament on November 26 in support of the Crusaders Athletic Board. Alumni included:

1981: Jon Nydam

1987: Denise (Koopman) Brookhouse, Cindy (Plantinga) Hart, and Shelly (LaFleur) Weedon

1994: Jason Wielsma

1998: John Hendrikse

2000: Becca Bowen

2002: Liz Bowen and Taryn (Denault) Flagg

2003: Mike Bangma

2005: Alex Vander Baan

2006: Brady Bajema

2007: Jordan Vander Baan

2008: Jon Himottu, Garrett Harden, and Austin Holt

2010: Andrew Dykstra and Kurt Steiner

2011: Ryan Plantinga, Taylor Bajema, Justin Tienharra, and Hans Miersma

2012: Connor Dolan, Aksel Thibodeau, and Sam Koopman

2015: Ian Haire

2016: Spencer Gorman and Owen Brookhouse



CHAMPS

WOMEN'S CHAMPS - Taryn Denault Flagg, Liz Bowen, Becca Bowen, and Melissa Murphy

MEN'S CHAMPS - Kurt Steiner, Justin Tienharra, Ike Osafo, and Erich Steiner



RISE UP & BUILD

The transformation of our WCS campus has been remarkable over the past few months. At the time of publication, the second story addition is nearing completion. Finishing touches are making way for punch lists and final inspections. The new offices and classrooms are scheduled to have happy occupants by the time this Crusader Chronicle arrives in mailboxes.

The exterior of the new Performing Arts Center & Fieldhouse has reached a point of substantial completion. With the heating system now operational, numerous subcontractors will be warm at work as they complete the interior. As performances and games take place this year, the excitement is growing at the idea of the talent and competitive spirit that will be on display in our new facility.



Have a Seat!

Thanks to amazingly generous and timely giving to the Rise Up & Build Campaign, we are excited to see our new Fieldhouse, Performing Arts Center, classroom addition, and connecting bridge literally take form before our eyes. Even more exciting is the empowered WCS mission of preparing students for Christ-like service in the world.

We have reached over 94% of our campaign goal. Now is the time to Rise Up and complete the project by having a seat! Make your support visible with a favorite Bible verse, your name, or the name of a family member or a friend on a seat in the Performing Arts Center. In the Fieldhouse, have a bleacher seat inscribed with a Bible verse or name. When you sponsor a seat, you will not only help complete the campaign, you will allow students to make a Kingdom difference in the world.

Fieldhouse



Help us complete the construction of our Performing Arts Center and Fieldhouse by making a donation that links a favorite Bible verse, your name, or the name of a family member or a friend in perpetuity with the life and work of WCS.

Performing Arts Center

By naming a seat, you help to develop the body, mind, and spirit of our students today – and tomorrow.





1961 REUNION

Recently Deb Oosterman Reitsma organized the annual WCS Reunion in Grand Rapids, Michigan with members of the class of 1961.

(left to right) **Deb Oosterman Reitsma, Elaine Youngsma De Jong, Gert Bosma Banning, and Paula Vander Hoven.**



The **class of 1996** got together for a 20-year reunion on September 17, 2016, at the home of Andrew & Bonnie Ziegler in Millbury. Ten class members came from FL, TN, PA, CT and of course MA. Not everyone present actually graduated from WCS, but all were part of the class of '96 for a significant period of time.

(front row) **Tye & Sarah (Schmitz) Cohen** with son Jonah, **Sarah (Johnson) Corson, Lou & Molly (VanderBaan) DeFrancisco** (back row) **Dustin & Alison (Duffy) Sarnoski, Andrew & Bonnie Ziegler, Ben & Gretchen (Savage) Michaelson, Nathan & Tahnee Kuder, Kristen (Chenet) Linehan, Jason & Deeanne Maas.**



Congratulations to **Leah Masselink Kyanya ('98)** and **Eppy Kyanya** on the birth of their son, Micah.



Sadie Geraldine Hendrikse was born to proud parents **Margaret (VanderBaan) Hendrikse ('01)** and **John Hendrikse ('98)** on Wednesday, September 14th at 9:34 pm (7 lbs. 10 oz, 20 inches). Proud grandparent, **Russ VanderBaan ('65)**, is the current President of the WCS Board of Trustees.



Congratulations to **Matt and Melissa (LaFleur) Hadley ('99)** on the birth of their second son, Jackson Paul, who was born on Sunday, November 20. Jackson's older brother, Nicholas, is a first grader at WCS.



Victoria Bol ('00) married **Tim Romanoski** on May 13, 2016 in Baltimore, MD. Many WCS alum were in attendance for the celebration. The couple currently resides in Annapolis, where Victoria works as an International Coordinator for Anne Arundel County Public Schools.



Alex Thomas ('04) and **Sarah Koopman Thomas ('06)** are the proud parents of Theodore Daniel. Theodore was born Sunday, September 18, in London, England. He weighed in at 8 lbs. 10 oz.

Stephanie (Gjeltema) Wilson ('04) and her husband, David, have moved from Colorado to the Raleigh, NC area with their two daughters, Charlotte and Paige. They will be there for two years while David is earning his MBA at North Carolina State University. Stephanie will be completing the Nuclear Medicine Program at UNC Hospital over the next two years.



Kyle ('05) and **Erica Engbers** welcomed daughter, **Hadley Ann**, on December 27. Hadley joins her two big brothers, **Landon** and **Owen**. **Lance Engbers**, WCS Headmaster, is the proud grandfather.



Congratulations to **David and Bonnie (Cooper) Shearer ('05)** on the birth of their second daughter, **Hannah** arrived on Saturday, November 5th.



Mitch Bajema and Samantha Homer (both '05) were married on Monday, November 14th. Many WCS alumni, staff, and faculty members were in the wedding party and in attendance. The ceremony took place in Playa del Carmen, Mexico.



Jan-Hendrik Pretorius ('10) married Victoria Mae Stevens on July 2, 2016, in Greenville, SC. They reside in Uxbridge, MA. Jan is working at Energy Federation Incorporated in Westborough.



Andrew Banning ('12) married Emily Veenstra on September 10 in Pierson, Michigan.



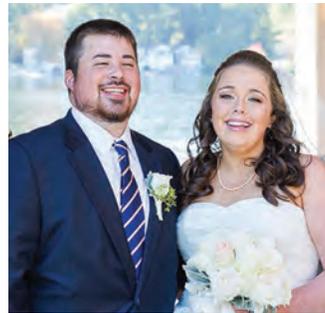
Nathan Swaim ('12) recently received word that he will be commissioning this May into the U.S. Military as a field artillery officer. In a Facebook post he shared, "I am excited and grateful for this opportunity God has given me and I am looking forward to serving Him in this way over the next four years. I would like to thank MIT Army ROTC and my cadre from CLC for the officer training I received. I would also like to thank my parents who encouraged me to pursue a career in the military. I will never be able to repay them for the love that they have shown me. Lastly, I want to say thank you to Chris Vander Baan who taught me how to be an effective captain while I was in high school. The leadership lessons I learned from him were also life-changing and will be with me for the rest of my life." We at WCS wish Nathan God's blessings and thank him for his service.



Matt Haddad ('06) and Kathryn Skudera ('06) were married in September.



Mike Bloem ('11) and Melissa Lubbers were married on December 28 in Ann Arbor, MI.



Nathan Engle and **Heather Irwin ('12)** were married on October 15th in Wrentham, MA. The couple met at Gordon College. Heather is currently a paraprofessional at WCS, assisting in kindergarten.



Zach Nydam ('09) and Emma Belanger ('12) were married over Labor Day weekend.



Matt Vriesema and Anna Hardiman (both class of 2012) were married on October 22nd at the Valley Chapel in Uxbridge, MA. Anna and Matt began dating at the end of their junior year in high school. Matt works as an ISP at Hanover Insurance

in Worcester while Anna works as a nurse at the VA Hospital in Providence, RI. They currently reside in Linwood, MA. (left to right) Dalton Weiner, **Jessa Mitchell, Jonathan Vriesema, Molly Hardiman, Anna (Hardiman) Vriesema** (bride),

Matt Vriesema (groom), **Rachel LaDine** and **Aksel Thibodeau**. All were grads of the class of 2012, with the exception of Jonathan Vriesema, class of 2010, and Dalton Weiner who attended WCS in elementary and middle school.



Mikaela Vander Baan ('09) and Brett Ellens were married on October 28th in Scottsdale, AZ.



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