

The Crusader Chronicle

finding

OPPORTUNITY



WHITINSVILLE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

Rick Lukianuk



I draw a deep breath and look out on the empty parking lot. Another year done and another one to prepare for. Yet, this one feels somewhat different; I am more physically and emotionally tired than I ever remember, but I am more optimistic and energized than I have been in quite some time.

“I have realized that this past year was not a time to hunker down and “survive,” but a series of opportunities and challenges to bond, to innovate, to problem-solve and to go deeper in our relationship with Jesus.”

year was not a time to hunker down and “survive,” but a series of opportunities and challenges to bond, to innovate, to problem-solve and to go deeper in our relationship with Jesus.

I believe our high school hit the nail on the head when they choose a theme for their school year: “Opportunity out of Adversity.” When we decided to remain open, there were concerns that we would lose students, but the Lord protected us and we actually gained students throughout the year to end enrollment of 598 students. This coming year we are expecting almost 640 students to begin the school year in late August.

Not only was our enrollment unexpectedly strong, but the hard work of our Finance Committee in obtaining a PPP loan and having it forgiven, when coupled with the enrollment and generosity of so many families, placed us in a far stronger financial position at the end of a pandemic year than we were at its start. Our God is a God of miracles!

We were also blessed with many new families this past year. The manner in which our staff, students, and families welcomed these new family members and taught our new students was so effective that 98% percent of them

For despite the difficulties of this pandemic year, and there were many, there was also a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment in completing a year in which we, despite the pundits’ proclamations, were able to stay open for in-school instruction the entire school year. The more I have thought about it, the more I have realized that this past

“For those who love God, all things work together for good for those that are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

have returned for this coming year. As one new parent put it: “We didn’t know what we were missing until we found it here.” Opportunity seized by WCS.

There were many, many other growth opportunities for our students, staff, and families. In my one-on-one meetings with most of our seniors, and at our live graduation, I was struck by how mature, thoughtful, and resilient they had become. They may in fact be the most prepared senior class we have ever sent on to the next phase of their journey. They faced adversity in a way no other class has, and they stood fast and succeeded. As an example, they managed to bond through the use of early morning water gun wake up visits and a socially distanced prom that balanced safety, fun, and great memories. Elsewhere, Art students were asked to design a graphic depicting the “Opportunity out of Adversity” theme. Rather than pictures of animals hibernating or cocooning, they were those of doors opening, plants sprouting, and hikers reaching a summit. Our students got it: “For those who love God, all things work together for good for those that are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

Our teachers were asked to go above and beyond, swapping preparation periods for additional duties, teaching live and virtually at the same time, and building relationships with students they could only identify by their eyes. They all adapted and came up with tremendously creative solutions to “pandemic problems.” Whether it was outdoor classes, libraries of recorded lectures, humorous memes, sympathetic ears that listened, or encouraging words that were spoken, our teachers embraced the opportunities here at WCS to meet and mentor students, go deeper into the subject matter, and help them to see God’s Hand in all things, even while we adults have been struggling with the same or similar issues.

Now we turn to another year. As much as we would like it to, the adversity has not disappeared. There remain health concerns and deep divisions in our country regarding the correct responses. We will do our best to keep abreast of all the valid information as well as state health guidelines. However, we will also keep in mind what God has taught us this past year. “There is always opportunity in the adversity and He said He would be with us always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:20

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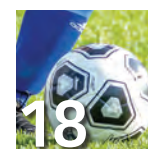
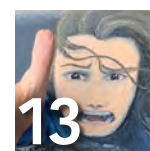
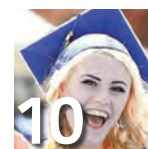
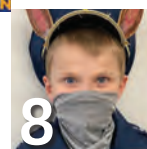
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ON THE COVER

High School Art students designed posters to illustrate "Finding Opportunity out of Adversity." Kaylin Fogg's design was featured on a t-shirt given to all WCHS students.

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GRADUATION 2021

On June 4, family, friends, and faculty gathered to celebrate the Class of 2021. This was a celebration, not only of the 52 students who were graduating, but of the fact that an in-person ceremony was taking place, at the culmination of an in-person, final year of education at Whitinsville Christian School.

Class advisers, Sherri Watters and Rocky VanTol, shared memories of each student as he or she received a diploma. Parents, Thomas Curtis and Jamie Walton, offered prayers during the service. And inspirational addresses were given by valedictorian, Micah Hart, and co-salutatorians, Bethany Peterson and Ella VanTol.

Wendy Groot, retiring faculty member, delivered the commencement address. She shared words from her heart, and words from scripture, found in so many places on campus.



A little less than four years ago, the Nehemiah Gym was packed to overflowing. This was your first day of high school, the opening convocation of the 2017-2018 school year and the dedication of the Nehemiah Center. The years dedicated to transforming a vision to this beautiful building addition came from Godly men and women who planned, dreamed, prayed, and committed their work to the Lord. They did this for you.

Serving others as Jesus served is what I call “doing hard things.” To be other-focused and not self-focused is a struggle for all of us. Don’t forget that through this challenging year you have done hard things. To be graduating from high school, you have done hard things. So how will you be able to be other-focused for a lifetime? To do this hard thing? Well, those men and women of faith who built this school left you reminders all over this building. They know that God speaks to us through His Word. They placed the words that God wrote on their hearts on the walls of this school as a means to write them on your hearts.

Is this not more evident than the words from Psalm 19 written on the wall of the Nehemiah Gym? “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.” When God redeems you, your heart will be other-focused and your words will be God-filled. Sometimes, though, your heart will grow weary and the burdens seem too great to care for others. Listen to the words of encouragement from Isaiah 40 placed on the wall across from the weight room going into the gym, “Even youths grow tired and weary and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will

renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” You are young men and women of hope. Hope makes all the difference in the world.

There will be times in your lives when a problem you are helping a friend or family member with seems unresolvable. You cannot envision a way to get to the other side. You are ready to give up. May these words of Jesus recorded in the gospel of Matthew be written on your hearts, “With man, this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” These words are found in perfect spots – over both sets of doors to the bridge. What is the purpose of a bridge? A bridge allows you to navigate dangerous or impassable terrain. It is the solution to an impossible situation. The gospels tell us that God is the solution, God is the bridge from what seems impossible to all that is possible. Finally, remember the importance of encouragement in your own lives, how you have encouraged others this past year. If you forget, the words of Paul to the church of Thessalonica, found right next to Mr. Freitas’ classroom door, will remind you. “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as you are doing.” Serve others with the sweetness of encouragement.



Congratulations Whitinsville Christian Class of 2021! I am so thankful for all you have accomplished. I am even more thankful for who you have become. ~ Wendy Groot

High School Awards

Strong Academic Endeavor Awards

Grade 12: Seth Massotti
Grade 11: Jenna Dolan
Grade 10: Anela Esler
Grade 9: Megan Foellmer

Academic Subject Awards

Art: Madi Paul
Band (John Philip Sousa National Band Award): Harry Wang
Bible: Ella VanTol
Business: Karlee Buurma and Simon Guo
Choir (National School Choral Award): Dylan Anema and Bella Ibrahim
Drama: Madi Paul and Micah Hart
English: Bethany Peterson
History: Micah Hart
Math: Ella VanTol
Musicianship (Quincy Jones Award): Dayne Stafford
Orchestra: Ally Fogg
Science (Biological): Mikaela Rose
Science (Physical): Anthony Gilbert
Outstanding Science Award: Bella Ibrahim
Spanish: Olivia Fleming
Technology: Dylan Anema and Drew Burkhart

Additional Awards

Mass Secondary School Administrators: Alyssa Worley
Global Seal of Biliteracy: Karen Bekhet, Olivia Fleming, Hannah Liu, and Fiona Shaw
RPI Medal Program Award: Meghan DeGregorio
Senior Athlete Female: Ella VanTol
Senior Athlete Male: Joseph Thumann
Prudential Spirit of Community Award: Anna Watters
Brandeis Book Award: Meghan DeGregorio
Harvard Book Award: Juliana Buchanan
Smith College Book Award: Jillian LaBonte
Suffolk University Book Award: Abbi Cullen

Annual Local and Memorial Scholarships

Blackstone Valley Rotary Club: Josiah Graves
DAR Good Citizens Award: Ella VanTol
Garry and Annette Keessen Scholarship: Becky Dowling
Jim and Jean Nydam Memorial Scholarship: Eliza Dowling
Roland and Sandra Vander Baan Scholarship: Grace Hart

Milford Federal Savings & Loan Scholarship: Bella Ibrahim
UniBank Scholarship: Ella VanTol
Fredericks Family Award, Perseverance and Personal Success: Christian Holm
Leonard M. Krull Memorial Scholarship: Karen Bekhet and Lillie Burns
Sadie DeYoung Memorial Scholarship: Karen Bekhet
Thelma DeYoung Memorial Award for Excellence: Becky Dowling
Arthur A. Wiersma Memorial Scholarship: Seth Massotti and Karen Bekhet
Eric J. Cook Memorial Scholarship: Lillie Burns
George J. VandenAkker Memorial Scholarship: Micah Hart
Kimberly Hannon Memorial Scholarship: Dayne Stafford

Founders Award (Graduates who have attended WCS since Kindergarten)
Dylan Anema, Tess Belanger, Jacob Bell, Lucy Bowler, Drew Burkhart, Karlee Buurma, Sam Chilton, Olivia Fleming, Ally Fogg, Josiah Graves, Ben Johnson, Ella VanTol, Nathan Walton, Brandon Whiton

Outstanding Senior Award
Ella VanTol

Appreciation for the Class of 2021

Our community came together to make this a very special senior year!



Micah Hart, Valedictorian



Bethany Peterson, Co-Salutatorian



Ella VanTol, Co-Salutatorian



Our Adopt-a-Senior program was loved by the families who "adopted" a senior, as well as the Class of 2021 who was overwhelmed by the generosity.



Senior privileges included extended lunches with special treats, early dismissal, and the most popular privilege of all, the Crusader Coffee Bar!

The seniors organized a Senior Sunrise morning at the end of the year – a final chance to gather in faith and fellowship.

Our Prayer Team showered the seniors with blessings and gifts.



Legacy Families

It is our joy and privilege each year to honor the families that have been part of the WCS community for more than one generation.



Lucy Bowler with mother, Sarah (Plumb) Bowler (Class of 1995)



Drew Burkhardt with mother, Becky (Patnode) Burkhardt (Class of 1994)



Karlée Buurma with grandmother, Cynthia (Nydam) Frieswyk (Class of 1955), father, Phil Buurma (Class of 1977), and grandmother, Kathy (Bosma) Buurma (Class of 1949)



Katie Weedon with mother, Shelly (LaFleur) Weedon (Class of 1987)



Ally Fogg with father, Ian Fogg (Class of 1995)



Josiah Graves with mother, Michelle (Borghetti) Graves (Class of 1999) and father, Brian Graves (Class of 1999)



Ben Johnson with mother, Erika (Anderson) Johnson (Class of 1996), father, Bryan Johnson (Class of 1995), and grandmother, Marilyn Nydam (Class of 1966)

THE NEXT OPPORTUNITY

Lauren Airey	Fairfield University
Dylan Anema	Grove City University
Karen Bekhet	Calvin University
Tess Belanger	High Point University
Jake Bell	Bryant University
Lucy Bowler	Gordon College
Drew Burkhardt	Wheaton College (IL)
Lillie Burns	Calvin University
Karlee Buurma	University of Tampa
Benjamin Cannistraci	Southeastern University
Lucas CaraDonna	Wheaton College (MA)
Samuel Chilton	Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University
Victoria Christo	Gordon College
Bobby Cline	Gap Year
Jeff Curtis	Porter and Chester Institute
Josh Delaney	Quinsigamond Community College
John Esler	Baylor University
Olivia Fleming	Gordon College
Ally Fogg	Michigan State University
Anthony Gilbert	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Josiah Graves	University of Massachusetts-Amherst
Josh Guertin	Electrician apprenticeship
Simon Guo	Clark University
Micah Hart	Hillsdale College
Jack Hearn	Nichols College
Bella Ibrahim	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Benjamin Johnson	College of the Holy Cross
Thomas Karns	Assumption University
Hannah Liu	Brandeis University
Seth Massotti	Waynesburg University
Calvin Mawn	Lynn University
Joella Mills	Rutgers University-New Brunswick
Zach Nolen	St. Leo University
Madison Paul	Oral Roberts University
Bethany Peterson	Gordon College
Bejamin Pielt	Auburn University
Maggie Rejmer	Gordon College
Mikaela Rose	Western New England University
Ashley Schofield	University of Tampa
Fiona Shaw	Eastern Nazarene College
Nicole Spiller	San Diego State University
Dayne Stafford	Rhode Island College
Joseph Thumann	Northeastern University
Ella VanTol	Carnegie Mellon University
Nathan Walton	Worcester State University
Harry Wang	Berklee College of Music
Anna Watters	University of South Carolina, Columbia
Katherine Weedon	Hope College
Brandon Whiton	Middle Tennessee State University
Alyssa Worley	Wake Forest University
Tyler Yakimowsky	Lynn University
Ian Yang	Ohio University

What a Wonderful Year!

Chris Vander Baan, High School Principal

We, the faculty, staff, coaches, and students, had a wonderful school year! Covid created many obstacles and challenges that no one could have anticipated. The global pandemic forced everyone in our high school to rethink many of the paradigms and methods we had become so comfortable with. Covid also allowed more than 240 people (high school staff and student body) to connect in ways we could have never imagined. Looking back on this school year and meeting face-to-face with the entire high school faculty for end-of-year checkouts there was a common theme: 2020-21 was an amazing year!

Each school year is a special journey that is unlike any other year. This journey comes with unique challenges and unexpected blessings. Teaching at a school like Whitinsville Christian allows the student body and staff the unique opportunity to walk through 10 months together under the umbrella of a Christ-centered education. One of my passions outside of working at WCHS is gardening. I love growing flowers for my wife, and I love perennials, the plants that come back year after year. What makes them unique is that they never come back looking exactly the same as the year before. Flower colors change due to cross-pollination. Shapes and plant size change based on soil richness and the amount of water and the weather. Living in New England poses the challenges of late snow falls, early frosts, and furry little critters that will eat and destroy many plants.

WCHS is the same way. Like perennials, our school year starts and stops and most of our students come back the next year. Each student is a unique and special individual created in the likeness of the God of the Universe. All students change, morph, and grow. As teachers, coaches, and staff members, we have the blessing and

responsibility of cultivating and affecting growth in every one of our students. Like perennials, each student has his or her own unique needs and challenges. Some students are gifted in areas that others are not. For some, grades come easily, while others face academic and motivational challenges. Some students learn best in a traditional classroom, while others thrive with hands-on learning. Each one of our teachers is like a gardener. Great gardeners have to understand the

growth cycle and unique needs of each plant. Our teachers have to do the same as they meet with 50-100 different students per day. In the gardening world, the best and most unique species of new flowers receive the “Best in Bloom” award. I would suggest every one of our students, teachers, mentors, and staff members should receive such an award this year!

Covid took away lockers and the community that develops in the hallways before and after class.

As a faculty, we created cohort lunch groups. Some of the community spirit lost in the hallways was recaptured, and perhaps even strengthened, by our lunch groups. Chapel went from live gatherings with music and energy, to pre-recorded meetings. Impact, our chapel team, created meaningful experiences that impacted many students’ personal and spiritual growth. Covid and remote learning forced even our finest educators to rethink their teaching methods and content in new ways. We changed our master schedule to accommodate contact tracing, mask breaks, and minimal traffic in the hallways. Teaching students present in the classroom at the same as teaching others in a remote location was incredibly difficult, but also rewarding.

As I “Zoomed” with leaders from other school systems, I felt so thankful for our Task Force, leadership team, and the support of our parents and students. What I think God showed us most this school year is that high school students at WCHS are resilient, resourceful, and can handle almost anything thrown their way. They responded positively and quickly to all Covid expectations, and the ever-morphing national, state, and local changes that came our way. Our high school students were nothing short of amazing. They brought a positive attitude to school each day. Their smiles and some of their joy was “masked,” but their excitement about being with each other and learning face-to-face made the school year incredible.

God gives every one of us choices to make when things go awry. We can choose to make lemonade out of lemons, or we can whine and complain. Making lemonade out of lemons takes more energy, effort, and vision. I want to thank everyone at WCHS that made this year such a wonderful year. I want to thank our students most of all! They brought joy and life to a challenging world. God is great and so is WCHS!



— “ —
“Making lemonade
out of lemons
takes more energy,
effort, and vision.”



The Importance of “BEE-ING” TOGETHER

We are a community. Those opportunities to be in community this year made being in-person worth every sacrifice.



After our second graders spent time studying China, **Harry Wang (Class of 2021)** visited the class to speak about the Year of the Ox and the joy of Spring Festival.



Hands-on learning is an important tool! Mrs. Anema's first graders learned important observation skills with Mrs. Harper's chickens.



Cross-school learning opportunities: Mrs. Casey (5th grade teacher) and her son, Zach (rising sophomore), gave a lesson on honey bees, the unique roles the different bees play in the life of the hive, and their importance in nature. We have a lot we can learn from these amazing communal insects!



Julia with Sandy (Youngsma) Wynja (Class of 1962) and Ruth Wynja Gibbons (Class of 1991)

We are honored to celebrate special moments with our multi-generation families! At the 8th grade advancement, Julia Gibbons wore the same dress her grandmother wore to her own 8th grade graduation. This 4-generation family also includes **Jeanette (Oosterman) Youngsma (Class of 1933)**.



Our sixth grade students love their reading buddies in preschool and kindergarten. Students of all ages can inspire minds and ignite hearts!



As part of the Step-Up to Middle School events, Mrs. Dykstra returned to the art room to lead a project with the fifth graders.





Outdoor Ed is the ultimate in hands-on learning. With Mrs. Shearer's help, students tapped several maple trees and enjoyed a pancake picnic!



Our Stepping Stone Preschool students learned about veterinary medicine, then practiced their skills on some stuffed friends.



We love our annual events such as Character Day, Kindergarten Storywalk, the Fun Run, Middle School Team Week, and Field Day!



Discovering SUPERHEROS

Katrina Holm (Class of 2017) has known since grade school that she wanted to make movies. Completing two film documentaries as her WCS Capstone Project made her question if she really wanted to do this as a career as she realized how much work was involved! Fortunately, the experience gave her practical skills to plan out a large film project within time constraints. Thank you to Katrina and Kay (Banning) Holm (Class of 1983) for submitting this story.



Katrina graduated Cum Laude with Bachelor of Science in Video Television & Film Production.

In the last 15 months we have all faced challenges due to the pandemic, especially college students trying to continue their education. Working around social distancing, virtual learning, masks, and regular Covid testing, Katrina found herself needing to consider all these things to fulfill her senior film project required for graduation from Hofstra University.

It would be a culmination of all she learned at the Lawrence Herbert School of Communication. She had written her script during her sophomore year, basing it on the superhero genre she so loved. She spent hour upon hour with her crew planning the sets, scoping out locations, designing costumes, providing lodging for the crew, and even arranging meals while on set. Her dream was to film in her hometown and use locations from her childhood.



But how to safely film during Covid times?

Kat's senior film was the second one to be filmed in the senior film class. If anything went wrong due to Covid-19, the rest of the class might not be able to complete their films. She felt the weight of this prospect.

But God is so good! Everything fell into place. The weather was storm-free despite being bitter cold. Cast and crew all tested negative for Covid-19 and stayed healthy. Financing was provided. Covid protocols were carefully followed. Meals were safely prepared. Scenes were successfully shot in her family's home including brother Christian's (Class of 2022) bedroom and the family room. The basement was even set up for a jail cell scene. Her sister, Annika (Class of 2022) served as an Art Assistant and the Wardrobe Assistant. Christian was a Gaffer, and mom, Kay, helped in the Crafty (food preparation). All 20 prayer requests earnestly prayed by her family were answered!

Kat is so grateful to WCS for letting her fulfill her dream project by filming scenes at the school. She filmed a few scenes in the Middle School hallway and a few more on the playground at night. She is especially thankful to Mary Dykstra, Brady Bajema, the janitorial staff led by Paul Paquette, the WCS administration, and the Covid Task Force for allowing her to shoot *Monomania* during this past year.

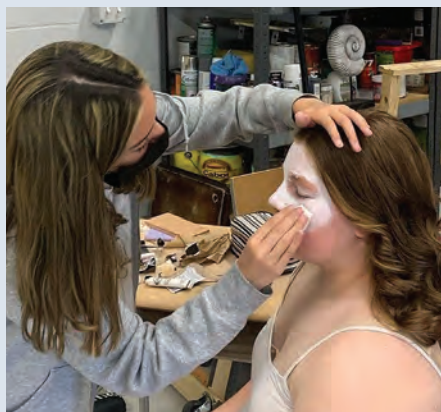
She was thrilled to win 2nd place Best Film at the 24th Annual Student Film Festival at Hofstra for *Monomania*! She plans to submit to other film festivals to get more recognition and looks forward to using her God-given talents in the film industry in Massachusetts.



Unlike your typical story from the comics, *Monomania* focuses on the friend who is left in the dark. The story follows Cody, an insecure high school student, consumed by the envy of his well-liked best friend Ben. Knowing there is something Ben isn't telling him, Cody falls into a pattern of paranoia that brings him to believe Ben may be the famed superhero, The Pulse. The film explores themes of tension in unequal friendships, the results of allowing insecurities to take control, and finding value in yourself.



Madi Paul, a talented visual and performing artist, created a 2D animation project. She executed each step of developing characters, drafting the story, creating storyboards, planning each scene shot-by-shot, and finally, drawing and animating. Her final short film told the story of a parent and child, and the importance of apologies and forgiveness.



Tess Belanger has a passion for art and makeup artistry. By leading classes with middle and high school-aged girls, she taught self-care, skincare, and the importance of celebrating how we are all individually and beautifully made by God. Several of her students also helped as Tess did the make-up for the Middle School Drama Club production of *Into the Woods, Jr.*



Nicole Spiller has been dancing since she was very young! For her project, she studied Dance Movement Therapy, then led several exercises with some elementary students. This same team learned two dances and gave a private recital to family members. Nicole also choreographed three dances for the MS Drama Club production of *Into the Woods, Jr.*



Lucy Bowler combined her love of art with the joy of helping others. During recess in her elementary school years, she enjoyed the large, painted map on the blacktop near the playground. After surveying younger students and researching playground games, Lucy, and some amazing helpers, gave our elementary students new adventures at recess! They are loving hopscotch and follow-the-leader through the obstacle course!



Capstone Projects

These year-long projects are an option for seniors. Students can further explore their passions, and learn important skills such as collaboration, time management, and patience!

2020-21



Lucas CaraDonna, member of WCS's Robotics Team, produced a documentary about Team 663/The Robonauts. He gave us a look back at the beginning of the organization and early days of competition. With interviews from current members and mentors, we are reminded of the career skills these students are gaining through hands-on learning!

WE DID IT!

Miranda Osterman, Director of Enrollment

What a year we have had here at WCS! I'm so thankful we can say that now. I remember every Friday realizing what a gift it had been that we completed another week of in-person learning. Fast forward to summer where we can now say it - We did it! Our school did it, our families did it, our students did it! We should be proud. In keeping with this past year's theme, God is FAITHFUL.

I remember looking out at Field Day and getting emotional, grateful for the opportunity to be in community, welcoming our new families on campus, having them be involved and be a part of our school family. We look forward to many more opportunities to be in community in the next school year.

One of the many parts of my job is meeting prospective families and showing them our school, telling them exciting things about it, and just sharing my love of WCS. Seeing families' faces light up as I give them a tour and tell them about our amazing programs is one of my favorite things. I meet families who have thoroughly researched WCS and some who wait to discover everything on the tour. What is common with both is that until they see our school, they really have no idea what they have been missing. Some of the comments I hear are: "I had no idea." or "Wow, your facilities are amazing." or "For a school your size, you sure offer a lot of classes and opportunities. This is a hidden gem." I agree with them all and am so grateful to be the one to show it off!

This fall we will be welcoming more than 100 new students to our school. We are thrilled to welcome them into this community and continue to show them what it means to be a part of our WCS family.

We were thrilled to be able to welcome parents at events such as the Fun Run, Field Day, Kindergarten Author's Day, and a Stepping Stone Preschool Picnic!





ARTISTIC OPPORTUNITIES

WCS Launches New Fine Arts Track

We are made in the image of our Creator, to be creative. WCS has always been a place that nurtures the talents of our students, and provides a variety of ways to express that creativity. Beginning with the 2021/2022 academic year, students will have the opportunity to receive a Fine Arts Endorsement on their high school diploma.

This new arts track will require 20 credits in Fine Arts courses, participation in performing opportunities, attendance and a review of outside performances, and a senior year performance or showcase. All of these activities are recorded by the student in order to create an e-portfolio, an important tool as they audition for programs and apply for colleges and scholarships.

Heather (Hannon) Rufo (Class of 1999), Director of Arts, was instrumental in developing the Fine Arts Track, approved by the WCS Ed Committee in June. "I wish I had this Fine Arts Track when I was in high school. For my college auditions, I was auditioning for very competitive musical theater programs, and needed every edge I could get. This endorsement provides an edge!"

The WCS Fine Arts Endorsement was a major initiative of Rick Lukianuk's first year as Head of School. "The WCS Fine Arts Diploma Endorsement sends the message to colleges that while we may not be a conservatory, Whitinsville Christian School is preparing students for college, and helping them to build a future in the arts," said Rick.

"We have an incredibly rich elective program at WCS that extends beyond drama, choir, orchestra, and band. Students can take specialty classes like sound tech, music composition and songwriting, AP music theory, modern American music, sculpture, and digital art, just to name a few!" said Heather. "The Nehemiah Center for Arts and Worship features a stage that some could only dream of performing on. And yet, this is a stage that is used for our



K-12 WCS Arts programming for all school plays, concerts, and performances."

"This formal recognition of our talented students sets us apart as the top area Christian school for the fine arts," said Rick. "I am grateful for Heather's leadership in this program, and to our Education Committee members for their support of the idea."



Godspell!

We LOVED producing this show! *Godspell* is a simple, yet challenging show with a strong history and message about God's love and the community built around Christ and His teaching. It was first written in the 1970's after the Vietnam war. One of its goals was to bring unity and love to a country torn apart by War and polarized by political unrest. It was also written in reaction to the perception that religion and faith had lost much of its welcoming, celebratory nature, as well as the frivolity and joy of worship.

The original goals for this show are just as relevant today. As a cast, we talked through the themes found in *Godspell*, and worked to portray them in a way that speaks to today's culture. Composer Stephen Swartz also points back to the original telling of the story which is found in the Bible, stating that it's not a "new" story; it is just shared in new ways.

We loved working on this show, experiencing times of laughter and joy as we played and learned together. It was challenging as well, as we worked to make our production safe, taking into account the safety guidelines set in place for COVID. It also pushed us to be even more creative as we explored outdoor spaces to hold our production. Being outside allowed for a little more freedom for our actors and for our audience. Our actors wore masks and stayed physically distanced during all song and dance numbers. These accommodations challenged and stretched us as a cast—but we were thrilled with the results!

It was such a blessing to hold this production this year! We prayed every day that we'd be able to continue



and bring *Godspell* to fruition. Our prayers included our audience members. We prayed that each person who experienced *Godspell* with us would be filled with God's love and the message of hope for our collective future. In our own times of political unrest, polarization, and a country seemingly torn apart, we prayed for all to experience joy, love, hope, and community through this production. We are in the palm of God's hands and that's the best place to be.

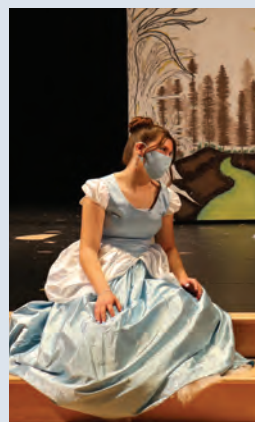
Soli Deo Gloria,
Mary Dykstra, High School Drama Director





This show, music, and theater in general, have been passions of mine and big parts of my life for a long time. I have been in and out of these woods a few times now. Between being in a full production and directing a junior version 10 years ago, I have come to be very familiar with the story, and the way art imitates life has only grown for me over time. I previously worked at Sight and Sound as a

Into the Woods, Jr.



stage technician and although it helped me know the ins and outs of the technical side, to direct and produce a show certainly takes a village! I am SO incredibly thankful to so many people that had a hand in making sure this production came together seamlessly. I would not have survived without Natalie VandenAkker, Heather Rufo, Mary Dykstra, Lina Avila, Mateo Landono, Zac and Tania Taylor, Baird Lashley, and Laurie Baker. To the hair and makeup crew, you made the kids look fabulous! Nicole and Tess, I'm so grateful that you took time out of your busy senior schedules to help us! You were invaluable! (See page 11 for more about these Capstone Projects.) To our small, but oh so mighty crew of students, thank you for stepping up and taking on these tasks! The show could NOT have happened without you. And lastly, to the amazing cast, we certainly went through a lot together. I was so impressed and blown away by your use of your God-given gifts, talents, and abilities, your perseverance, your positivity, and your overall hard work. You guys rocked my socks off! Thank you for making this experience a truly memorable and enjoyable one!

Love you all!

Liz LaRosa

Middle School Drama Director

AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT



In April of 2020, three new Trustees began their terms on the Board. This was a time of great uncertainty, for our students, our community, and God's world. As Jim Gulinello, Erika Johnson, and Jeff Mogan wrapped up their first year of service, they reflected on this extraordinary year, and what it means to serve as a Trustee.

What is your role/function on the Board of Trustees (BOT)?

JIM - All three of us are serving on the newly-formed Committee on Trustees to help with oversight and policy as it relates to developing good practices around the Board. This new committee is a natural fit for my professional background in human resources and organizational development.

JEFF - The purpose of the Committee is to develop a BOT leadership plan that ensures WCS stays true to its mission by providing capable BOT members and effective committees. Among other actions, the Committee on Trustees is focused on development of a Trustee profile/skills matrix, a comprehensive new BOT member onboarding program, annual Trustee evaluations, and leadership succession planning. This is new for WCS and we are excited to improve the BOT member experience, ensure long-term stability, and support standards that are consistent with WCS's mission!

ERIKA - I also serve as co-chair with Jeff Ryan on the Development Committee. This is an interesting role because it brings together so many facets of WCS. There is a wide range of gifts and personalities and we all work very well together to support and further the mission of WCS.



Margaret (rising sophomore), Sam (rising 5th grader), Erika, and Bryan Johnson, attending the graduation of their son, Ben, and their international "son," Harry Wang.

You all joined at a very unusual time in the life of WCS as the school, community and families were dealing with a global pandemic. What are your impressions of how the BOT and school responded to the challenge?

JEFF - It's been a challenging year for everyone, to say the least, and I have been extremely impressed with how WCS, the BOT and the entire school community have come together to respond to the challenge. The fact that WCS provided safe and effective in-person school from day one is amazing. While I certainly didn't anticipate joining during such a challenging time, it has been a blessing in disguise to play even a small role in the response and to have an inside look at God's work in action at WCS.

JIM - I was impressed with how agile the BOT was in adjusting our priorities for the year and increasing our communication outside the typical monthly meeting. This was important so we could respond to Rick (Lukianuk) and the administration's needs, make decisions quickly, and ensure the BOT was aligned and fully supportive of the decisions that needed to be made. My first role after being elected was to represent the Trustees on the Readiness Task Force. This eventually became the

Response Task Force (RTF) once school was in session and we began addressing issues and solving new challenges as they arose. There were so many questions and unknowns during this unprecedented time, but the depth and talents of the teachers, staff, and administrators was amazing.

JEFF - As a Trustee and a parent of two WCS students, I am incredibly grateful for all of the work by the Readiness Task Force to understand a complex landscape, implement an effective plan, and then continually check and adjust as the situation changed. The faculty, administration, and staff at WCS have risen to the occasion and displayed the amazing qualities that make WCS such a special school. From creative solutions to ensure social distancing, to enhanced cleaning, and the courage to come in every day during a global pandemic, everyone deserves a heartfelt "thank you" for all they have done in these unprecedented times.

“I am passionate about all things WCS and have often referred to it as my first institutional love. I am thankful and humbled to serve in any capacity.”
— Erika Johnson



Jim, Sam (Class of 2017), Jake (Class of 2014), and Lori Gulinello



“Serving on the Board is a privilege and highlight of my time being part of the WCS family. I have a deep appreciation for the role our school plays in developing young people through Christian education.”

– Jim Gulinello

ERIKA - We are all in a world of unknowns. No one has assurance of tomorrow and this year was certainly filled with even more of that. This year was a wonderful example of how we need to lean less into ourselves and more into God.

By leaning and trusting more and more, we were able to see where God opened doors and created opportunity for WCS to really shine. It also gave our staff an opportunity to shine. We relied heavily on the custodial and support staff, more than in previous years.

What role do you see the BOT playing in delivering on the WCS mission?

ERIKA - I believe that ensuring the school stays true to the mission is fundamentally our most important job. We also know we cannot make decisions based on one single situation. There are decisions that require us to stand back and look at a situation, and the school community as a whole. It isn't always easy. Just like every administrator and staff member, we are human as well. We seek God's guidance in these decisions and ask for grace when needed.

JIM - There is much to accomplish and WCS is a growing, thriving institution that will continue to fulfill its mission under Rick's leadership. The BOT represents a talented and diverse group of individuals committed to the long-term success of the school and adherence to its mission. Each of us brings a unique perspective and skill set that's needed to accomplish the strategic initiatives we undertake. Working with the administration to provide a great education for our kids and work environment for our faculty and staff is our primary responsibility.

JEFF - The BOT plays a critical role in delivering on WCS' mission. In fact, everything we do ties back to ensuring that WCS stays true to its mission and continually improves. The Strategic Plan is a great example as every item relates to an element of the Mission. Our most notable recent accomplishment is hiring and onboarding Rick as the new Head of School. Rick has been a fantastic partner and it's exciting to discuss his plans for the future, including strategies to ensure that WCS provides a positive workplace culture and that our students are best prepared following graduation.

Other recent accomplishments from the Strategic Plan include creation of an enrichment opportunities matrix, creation of a Society for the Performing Arts, completion of the Best Christian Workplace Survey, updating the WCS website, and enhancing digital outreach. I take pride as a BOT member that in all of these actions we are mindful of the Mission and doing our part to build upon a great tradition at WCS.



“The faculty, administration, and staff at WCS have risen to the occasion and displayed the amazing qualities that make WCS such a special school.”

– Jeff Mogan



Jeff, Kathryn, Avery (rising 3rd grader), and Cameron (Stepping Stone Preschool) Mogan

Sportsmanship, Fair Play, Teamwork, and Dedication

Brady Bajema, Athletic Director

To say that athletics in 2020-2021 were different is an understatement. It was a year where many seasons were cut short, rules were modified, masks were being worn, all-star teams weren't named for every sport, postseason play was stripped, fans were limited or watching from home, and the list of "different" than any other year goes on. Each sport and each season had its own unique set of changes and challenges. And yet, we are thankful we had an opportunity to play.

It is so easy for all of us to fall into the trap of defining a season based on the accomplishments, awards, and records of our teams. However, this year a lot of those perceived "defining" moments were taken away. This naturally led to a choice our coaches, teams, and athletes had to make going into their seasons. "What is going

to define this season?" I am hopeful that this year provided clarity and perspective on the purpose and importance of sports within education. In our school's Philosophy of Athletics, there is a piece that reads: "Our teams will focus on competing in such a way that honor is brought to the team, the school, the community, and most importantly, to our God. Therefore, the ideals of sportsmanship, fair play, teamwork, and dedication should be exemplified by our teams. It is our hope and prayer that these characteristics will become lifelong qualities of Whitinsville Christian athletes."

In reflection of these words written in our Philosophy of Athletics, I can say

with great confidence that important opportunities and lessons took place within our teams this year. We witnessed our athletes compete in a God-honoring way. We watched our athletes wear masks if that meant they could be with their team and play. We saw our seniors running alongside underclassmen. We were able to see athletes and teams that wore the Whitinsville Christian jersey for a purpose larger than themselves.

I am thankful for how our athletes, coaches, and community chose to respond to the challenges that we faced in athletics this year. I will never forget this season, and I pray that what we learned this year will continue to develop into lifelong qualities.





Boys and Girls XC- Undefeated Seasons
Ice Hockey- Undefeated 11-0 Season
Volleyball- Undefeated 11-0 Season
Girls Tennis- Division III District Finalists (1st in School History)
Girls Outdoor Track & Field- District E Class C Champions (1st in School History)

Thirty-four of the members of the Class of 2021, including eight four-sport athletes, have participated in Athletics during their high school career. Thank you to all of these students for their leadership, sportsmanship, and dedication on the courts, tracks, and fields.

Lauren Airey: Volleyball and Tennis

Dylan Anema: Cross Country, Indoor Track, and Track & Field

Karen Bekhet: Volleyball, Indoor Track, and Track & Field

Tess Belanger: Soccer, Basketball, Track & Field, and Tennis

Jake Bell: Cross Country, Soccer, Basketball, and Track & Field

Lucy Bowler: Volleyball and Softball

Lillie Burns: Cross Country, Basketball, and Track & Field

Karlee Buurma: Cross Country, Soccer, Basketball, and Tennis

Sam Chilton: Soccer, Basketball, Baseball, and Lacrosse

Jeff Curtis: Soccer, Indoor Track, and Track & Field

John Esler: Cross Country, Soccer, Basketball, and Track & Field

Olivia Fleming: Volleyball, Basketball, and Softball

Ally Fogg: Volleyball

Anthony Gilbert: Cross Country, and Track & Field

Josiah Graves: Cross Country, Soccer, Basketball, and Track & Field

Josh Guertin: Football, Indoor Track, and Track & Field

Simon Guo: Tennis

Jack Hearn: Cross Country, Indoor Track, Lacrosse, and Track & Field

Bella Ibrahim: Soccer, Basketball, and Track & Field

Ben Johnson: Soccer, Basketball, and Track & Field

Tom Karns: Cross Country, Golf, and Tennis

Hannah Liu: Indoor Track and Tennis

Seth Massotti: Soccer and Basketball

Calvin Mawn: Soccer, Basketball, and Track & Field

Ben Pielt: Cross Country and Track & Field

Maggie Rejmer: Soccer, Volleyball, and Softball

Ashley Schofield: Soccer and Track & Field
Fiona Shaw: Volleyball, Tennis, and Track & Field

Joseph Thumann: Cross Country, Indoor Track, and Track & Field

Ella VanTol: Cross Country, Soccer, Basketball, and Track & Field

Nathan Walton: Soccer, Basketball, and Baseball

Brandon Whiton: Cross Country, Indoor Track, and Tennis

Alyssa Worley: Soccer, Basketball, and Track & Field

Ian Yang: Track & Field

Spring Auction

The Annual Spring Auction was a virtual event again this year, yet it still offered opportunities to be in community. Hand-made and home-made favorites returned, and we were thrilled to host a live event featuring updates, item highlights, and entertainment courtesy of the Jazz Band and the Chamber Orchestra. “Guests” were able to purchase tickets at three different levels which included bidding access, swag bags, and meals to go! High school students helped hand out meals and swag bags, as well as the won auction items, and kindergarten students were featured in the special appeal for new iPads. We are grateful our guests enjoyed the new elements of the 2021 auction and thankful that with the support of our bidders and sponsors, we were able to raise more than \$50,000 in support of WCS.



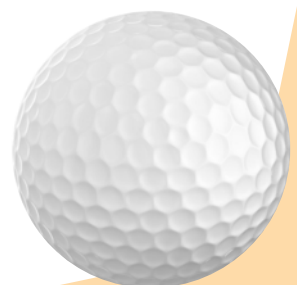
Congratulations to the winning team of Russ Vanderbaan, Jeff Timmer, Noah Timmer, and Sam Timmer.

Golf Outing

The Annual Golf Outing in June marked the return of the most “normal-feeling” event of the year! More than 100 golfers joined us at Blackstone National Golf Course for a day of golf, fellowship, food, and fun!



Thanks to the support of our golfers and our sponsors, the event raised over \$18,000.



ALUMNI UPDATES

NEW ARRIVALS



Ryan and Leeann (Hackett) McMorrow (both of the Class of 2007) welcomed a daughter, Bridget Grace, on January 26.



Nathan and Heather (Irwin) Engle (WCS 2nd grade teacher and member of the Class of 2012) celebrated the arrival of Noah William on March 15.



Joshua and Rachel (LaDine) Perez (Class of 2012) welcomed a daughter, Clara Madeline on May 7.



Mark and Greta (Miersma) Sielgock (Class of 2006) welcomed a daughter, Elle Jo, on March 13. She joins her older brother, Teddy.

ENGAGEMENT



Brady Bajema (WCS Athletic Director and member of the Class of 2006) and Sarah Grzybinski are engaged and planning their wedding for October in New Hampshire!

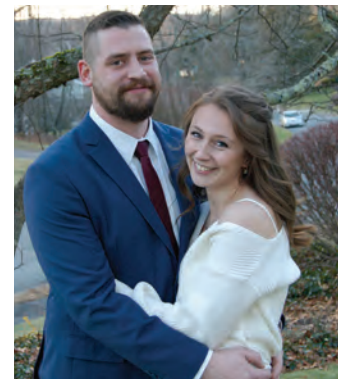
We also offer our congratulations to all WCS alumni who graduated from college this spring!

Please share your alumni news at advancement@whitinsvillechristian.org

JUST MARRIED



Spencer Gorman (Class of 2016) and Kate Killoy (Class of 2015) exchanged their vows in June.



Phil Wassenar and Amy Garrey (both Class of 2011) were married by Phil's dad, Dave, (Class of 1971) in January.

CLASS OF 1961 REUNION



CONDOLENCES

Edward Joubert, Jr ('85) passed away. In keeping with Ed's wishes, details and services were private.

Tillie Visbeek, ('94), passed away May 31. A lifelong resident of Whitinsville, Tillie was a charter member of the Fairlawn Christian Reformed Church.

Thank You For Your Years Of Service

On Tuesday, June 1, family, friends and colleagues gathered to celebrate the retirements of Wendy Groot, Gerri Fogg, Geraldo Ferreira, and Maria Ferreira. Each retiree was the recipient of kind words and gifts from the school and their co-workers.



CELEBRATING Gerri Fogg

by Jamie Thiesing, Strings Instructor

Mrs. Gerri Fogg has been an integral part of the WCS Strings program for the past 33 years. If you have heard violin music lilting into the hallway by the high school office, chances are Gerri is teaching a lesson in her nearby office. She has spent countless hours instructing and encouraging students in their musical pursuits.

Gerri is a dedicated teacher who loves God, her students, and music. As a fellow strings teacher, I admire Gerri's love for her students, her patience, and how she cultivates her students' musical and spiritual well-being. Gerri starts each of her students' lessons with prayer. She deeply cares about each student's musical growth and even more for their spiritual growth. Mrs. Fogg and her students have a mutual appreciation for one another. She encourages her students to recognize that music is a gift from God to bless them and others.

Gerri, thank you for three decades of pouring into the lives of students at WCS. You are deeply loved by your WCS family and though we will surely miss you, we wish you the best!



THANK YOU, Geraldo and Maria!

by Laurie VanderBaan, Fourth Grade Teacher

Each day, teachers and students have walked into a clean school thanks in big part to the diligent work of Geraldo and Maria Ferreira. One thing that Geraldo and Maria have appreciated most about working at Whitinsville Christian has been the friends that have become their American family. They greeted each teacher as they moved from room to room and chatted with students who were in the hallways. In particular, they have enjoyed watching children grow up, keeping a special eye on the "little kids" of previous students. Thank you, Geraldo and Maria, and best wishes as you move to Florida!



HONORING Wendy Groot

by Chris Vander Baan, High School Principal

I admire Wendy as a “master teacher,” sister in the Lord, colleague, and friend. About 10 years ago, I started referring to her as Dr. Groot. Interesting enough, Wendy never shied away from the nickname, nor did she ever ask me why I called her that. Doctors fascinate me. They have the power of healing and changing lives. They have the respect of their patients and oftentimes their blind trust. Doctors and surgeons are precise men and women who study their craft and day in and day out perform amazing tasks. Great doctors not only meet the physical needs of their patients but also understand the patient’s emotional and psychological needs.

I have never met another teacher who does all of that like “Dr.” Wendy Groot. Some doctors save lives and give life-extending treatments. She has also done that for her students. She has given them confidence and the skillset to persevere. She has taught them to think and ponder, to wrestle and fail. She has taught her students to enjoy learning and finish hard things, to enjoy the thrill of solving a problem, and to relish it like a game-winning goal. She has encouraged kids to become better people and better students. Her modeling of Christ has challenged student to examine their own lives and seek Christ.



It is my prayer that her legacy here at WCHS will continue to be carried on by all of those who walk through these doors and serve the students of WCS. You will be missed! Dr. Groot, thank you and “Well done.”

More Friends We’ll Miss



Sherri Watters
High School Faculty



Sue Claggett
Student Academic Services



Bonnie Shearer
Student Academic Services



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