



# The Beacon

News to family and friends of Ann Arbor Christian School  
2005-2006, Number 2

Ann Arbor  
Christian School  
offers a  
Christ-centered,  
academically  
excellent education  
that challenges  
students to live and  
act in society as  
committed followers  
of Jesus Christ

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January 2006

## Fresh starts, new beginnings

Dear Friends of AACCS,

As a child, one of my favorite winter activities was making snow angels, especially when the snow was falling. I would lie in the snow, looking up at the sky, trying so hard to keep my eyes open as the snow fell.

Vacationing in Connecticut with my family this Christmas, I found myself unintentionally making a snow angel when I slipped and fell while walking Ginger near the woods behind my mom's townhouse. All was quiet – the newly fallen snow making everything look beautiful. As I lay there in the stillness watching Ginger make her own snow dog angels, the words of Psalm 51:7 came to mind: "Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me and I will be whiter than snow."

This was part of David's renewed prayer for pardon. As believers, we know all about forgiveness – God's forgiveness – all-knowing, full of grace and truth. Fresh starts, new beginnings.

Many look to Jan. 1 as a new start; resolutions are made; changes take place. Looking forward – to a future we cannot see.

What wonderful news for us! In all that the year 2006 has in store, one thing is constant – the faithfulness of our God.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future..."

– Jeremiah 29:11

We are comforted, with all that the year brings, in the assurances of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Happy New Year!

In Him,

Kathy Broege, principal



Students Sarah and Colleen take advantage of an unusual snowfall this rainy January to enjoy making snow angels.

Photo by Marcia Mitchell

## AACS 2005-2006 Contact People

### School

Kathy Broege  
Principal  
principal@annarborchristian.org  
734.741.4948 x116

Cheri Lubbers  
Administrative Assistant  
office@annarborchristian.org  
734.741.4948 x115

Jan Musch  
Finance  
finance@annarborchristian.org  
734.741.4948 x120

### Board Members

Jane Anderson, At Large  
janejazz@umich.edu  
734.424.9725

Brooke Bowen, Treasurer  
BSBowen5@aol.com  
734.426.4713

Carla Byma, At Large  
cbyma@att.net  
734.426.7525

Tim Dekker, Secretary  
tdekker@limno.com  
734.327.0145

Joel Postma, At Large  
248.446.8849

Greg Vyletel, President  
gvyletel@comcast.net  
734.662.0472

### Committees

Building  
Jeff Eekhoff  
734.424.0563  
Steve Lamine  
734.424.2046

Education  
Katherine Gottschalk  
kgottsch@umich.edu  
734.663.4289

Finance  
Ken Fil  
kfil@sbcglocal.net  
734.332.1248

Public Relations  
Sue Postema Scheeres  
spscheeres@comcast.net  
734.213.2325

Technology  
Darren De Zeeuw  
darren@dezeeuw.us  
734.424.2579

### Beacon

Marcia Mitchell, Editor  
marciamitchell@charter.net  
734.424.8424

Kathy Ann Moilanen, Copy Editor  
734.668.7437

Jennifer Boes, Layout Editor  
jlboes@ameritech.net  
734.973.9798

The Beacon is published by:  
**Ann Arbor Christian School**  
5500 Whitmore Lake Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

office@annarborchristian.org  
734.741.4948  
www.annarborchristian.org



## Students help family victimized by Hurricane Katrina

By Jeanette Brooks, AACS mom

Instead of exchanging Christmas gifts with classmates, AACS students opted to donate to a family victimized by Hurricane Katrina.

The family – a grandfather and four grandchildren in his custody for several years – lost their home in the devastation that swept Louisiana in August.

They relocated to Ann Arbor through the help of Westminster Presbyterian Church, where kindergarten teacher Barb Dick is a member. The move has given the children their first experience with snow and the family an opportunity to get back on its feet. They're happy with the community and plan to make it their permanent home.

The AACS students' goal was to collect enough money to cover the family's living expenses – food, transportation, and housing – for one week. But the students passed the one-week mark in short order and collected enough for more than 17 days of living expenses!

"So many students and their families have been very generous," Mrs. Dick said.

She tells of one student who found a \$100 bill over the summer and hung onto it. When he learned about this family, he decided to contribute the entire amount. Many other students worked hard around their households to earn money, contributing far beyond the anticipated \$3-\$5 per student.

## Teachers refreshed at annual educators' conference

By Kellie Steen, 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade teacher

The teachers of AACS ventured across the state to the annual Christian Educators' Association conference in October. It is always a time of renewal for the staff, and this year was no exception!

Our staff, along with other Michigan-area Christian schools, attended this one-day regional conference at Grand Rapids Christian High School. All the teachers in attendance spent the day together and enjoyed interesting presentations that challenged us to meet the needs of our students physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Intermissions offered opportunity for round-table interaction. The staff took full advantage for some lively and enthusiastic discussions.

The conference – reformatted this year from a two-day to a one-day event – was quite refreshing to many staff members. Others said the conference helped renew their energy and focus for the school year ahead, and affirmed many things we already are working toward in our classrooms.

Much of the event's success is due to the work of our very own Principal Kathy Broege, who serves as chair of the CEA conference planning committee. Her responsibilities included selecting speakers,



Photo by Jen Boes

*The pastor of Westminster Church graciously accepts the students' donation for a family from Louisiana.*

In the words of one 4<sup>th</sup> grader: "Helping someone else is much more important than buying gifts for friends. That family really needed us and we were able to make a difference." 🙌

planning the schedule, and organizing the luncheon. We are grateful for her hard work and dedication to these tasks!

We also thank AACS parents for their continued support of our participation in this valuable experience! The conference was a great time for our staff to get to know each other better, grow together, and enjoy one another. 🙌



Photo by Sue Postema Scheeres

*Kindergartners and 7<sup>th</sup> graders act out scenes from the life of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. during an assembly in his honor. To conclude the event everyone joined hands and sang "We Shall Overcome."*

## Making and sharing memories at Grandparents' Day '05



Grandparents and grand friends enjoyed a morning with students at the annual AACs Grandparents' Day, Nov. 11. Since it was Veterans Day, it was a perfect opportunity to honor our many friends who served our country in the military. Nearly 40 veterans received our heartfelt thanks!



Photos by Sue Crittendon

Third grader Jonathan shares his work with his grandparents.



Elementary and middle-school students share a song with grandparents and grand friends.

As a part of Grandparents' Day, 8<sup>th</sup> graders interviewed their grandparents and wrote essays about their memories of childhood. Here is one such essay.

### From tragedy to blessing

By Rachel Lamine, AACs 8<sup>th</sup> grader

World War II brought many tragedies, but through those tragedies, many good things happened as well.

Ingrid Fischer Husch, my Oma (grandma in German), was 6 years old, living with her mom and siblings in Essen, Germany, when World War II began. She remembers running to the bunkers when the bomb sirens went off, sometimes even in the middle of the night. This was exciting for her and the other children, she recalls, because they could leave their homes in the middle of the night and play on the tops of the bunk beds in the bunker. For the adults who knew what was happening, it was very scary, though they tried to conceal their fear from the children.

When my Oma was 7, she and her siblings were "tagged" and evacuated to southern Germany to be claimed by foster families because the bombing had become so bad. Before she left, her mother told her to stay with and take care of her youngest sister, then only 4. Two foster families who had pity on them took them in and made sure they could see each other often.

My Oma never returned to live with her mother once the war was over, but stayed with her foster family. They had relatives in America who sponsored her to come over from Germany when she was 22. While in America, she met my Opa, Jakob Husch, and soon they were married.

Through it all, my Oma tells me: "God has always been watching over me, and it seems that every bad thing in my life has somehow turned into a good thing."

If she had never been evacuated and taken in by a foster family, she would never have come to America and met my Opa. Through the terrible tragedies of World War II, Ingrid found a new and better life in America.

### Keep AACs in your prayers!

Please pray:

- For the accreditation steering committee as they work to complete the accreditation process
- That our staff and teachers will be strengthened in mind and spirit as we continue through the long winter months
- For flexibility and creativity as we prepare for the change in school hours next fall
- That our students will know how much their maker loves them and will recognize God's faithfulness in their lives



## Protecting God's gift of water: middle schoolers practice environmental stewardship

By Jeanette Brooks, AACCS mom

Water-quality data the students recorded will be entered into a huge database being built through the Adopt-a-Stream program, coordinated by the Huron River Watershed Council.



Photo by Marcia Mitchell

Wearing her waders, 6<sup>th</sup> grader Christine takes a measurement from the Huron River that will be used to monitor water quality.

Middle-school teacher Mark Wiersma and 44 of his students spent a couple warm November days at local streams.

The 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders weren't there to picnic or canoe or fish—though they did get a great chance to enjoy and appreciate God's creation. Their purpose was to practice good stewardship by caring for the water the Creator has given us and to observe and appreciate the other life forms—besides themselves—that depend on that water.

In the morning, the middle schoolers recorded dozens of measurements at key points in Horseshoe Creek near Hamburg. They not only gained an appreciation for the importance of healthy, clean water, they also saw the beauty of the river's environment, including many varieties of water plants and a snacking muskrat. The afternoon flew quickly by at the Ann Arbor Waste Treatment Plant near Dixboro Road. Water-quality specialists helped students realize how each of us influences water quality. Mr. Wiersma said the outing was a great way to learn to take care of God's world, to sustain life and beauty, and honor our Creator.

Water-quality data the students recorded will be entered into a huge database being built through the Adopt-a-Stream program, coordinated by the Huron River Watershed Council. By monitoring water quality, the program helps to catch and prevent damage to this important ecosystem. 🙌

## Writing the kindergarten way

By Pamela Gossiaux, AACCS mom



Photo by Marcia Mitchell

Kindergartners Robert and Emily use their imaginations to write and illustrate stories.

One of the most magical moments for a kindergartener is when he or she learns to read. Suddenly a whole new world of adventure, fairy tales, and knowledge opens up!

That's why kindergarten teacher Barb Dick puts so much emphasis on writing.

"Writing relates to learning how to read," says Mrs. Dick. "It is good experience because the kindergartners are writing, and then they read what they write."

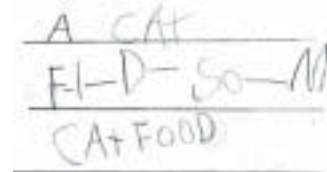
Mrs. Dick put together a Writer's Workshop, using several fun and creative ways to encourage the children to write. Once a week they write journals, making up a story of their choice. They try their best to write words using "kindergarten spelling," where kids spell phonetically. Then they draw a picture to match and read it to a friend.

They also read their books to their 5<sup>th</sup>-grade reading buddies.

For more story writing, Mrs. Dick has other fun ideas. At Halloween, she stapled papers behind a holiday napkin to create a little book. At Christmas, she did the same with the front of a Christmas card, and children were asked to write a story about the picture on their card.

"Another thing we do is called 'Writing Around the Room,'" says Mrs. Dick. Using a clipboard, students write down words they can read in the classroom. They share them with a friend, type them on the computer, and take home a printed list as their final product.

"All of these activities get them comfortable with putting letters on paper and develop the beginning of a comfort zone for expressing themselves through words and pictures," says Mrs. Dick. "When they go into 1<sup>st</sup> grade they have a good idea of what writing is about." 🙌



"A cat finding some cat food" wrote Haylee who agreed to share this recent entry in her January snowman-shaped journal.



## Hearts for the homeless

By Marcia Mitchell, Beacon editor

People from all over the nation gathered to pray for the homeless in November. Our student body was no exception. Tiny hearts thanked God for the provisions he has blessed us with, while older students prayed for strength and courage to help those in need through our hands, our hearts, and our attitudes.

During National Homeless Awareness Week, middle-school students worked together to help their AACs schoolmates become more aware of the homeless problem that exists in our world, our country, and even our own communities. Student-designed posters hung in the school hallways to raise awareness. Each child received a prayer pamphlet, reminding them to pray for this important cause. At a chapel service, middle schoolers performed a drama even the youngest students could relate to. It was about a boy who worked hard to earn money to buy a bike but still could not afford it.

To contribute in an even more tangible way, middle schoolers helped support Avalon Housing, a non-profit community-based organization. They raked leaves and worked in the gardens at many housing units. Avalon Housing develops supportive and affordable housing and services for those at risk of homelessness, and has helped more than 400 people achieve housing stability and improve their quality of life.

This experience was a meaningful way for our

middle schoolers to experience how every contribution, no matter how small, is of value in the effort to provide high-quality, affordable housing.

Let's all remember our community's homeless during this cold winter season. To volunteer, donate, or receive information about Avalon, please visit [www.avalonhousing.org](http://www.avalonhousing.org). 🙏



Photo by Melanie Bolhuis

Sixth graders Urie and Eric experience the fulfillment of helping others in need at Avalon Housing.



Photo by Sue Crittendon

Sergeant Crittendon, father of 2<sup>nd</sup> grader Miranda, lets Chris and Danny sound the siren in his police car.

## Second graders examine community life

By Marcia Mitchell, Beacon editor

Have you ever been to "Jamieville?" The 2<sup>nd</sup> graders have!

In fact, designing and creating this imaginary place was one of the highlights of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade unit on communities. Their imaginary town made of shoeboxes occupied most of the classroom, and included a hospital, library, and Coca-cola plant.

To bring the roles of a few community members to life, four 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade parents shared their careers.

Through a power-point presentation, Kim Garber

*"The students learned the value of each community member, and how much we depend on each other."*

*— Second-grade teacher Mrs. Bella commenting on her class' interactive unit on communities.*

illustrated the responsibilities of a Ford Motor Co. engineer. The students then designed and built their own "concept" cars out of play dough.

Tess Fil, an enthusiastic homemaker, brought in a hamper full of items that keep her busy, including a diaper, a pan, a telephone, and homemade chocolate chip cookies to share with the class.

Dressed in his sergeant uniform, Kevin Crittendon captured the students' attention by placing 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade Teacher Diane Bella under arrest (complete with handcuffs) for not giving the kids enough recess! He emphasized that his primary job is to help people in the community. Students explored the inside of his police car and were clocked running 13 miles per hour with his radar gun — but no tickets were issued!

Lastly, Lynne Smith helped the students elect the mayor of "Jamieville." Using her campaign-manager knowledge, she explained how candidates work to convince others to vote for them. After a successful election, the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders enjoyed a victory celebration.

Students discovered it takes many people doing a wide variety of jobs to sustain a community. 🙏



## In Brief



### Science fair/soup supper coming

The annual science fair and soup supper is planned for February 23 at AACCS. Every middle-school student and many elementary students will display their experiments and demonstrations. Come at 5:30 PM to start the evening with a bowl of warm soup.

### Instrumental concert scheduled

Middle school band students will perform at a special concert March 23 at 7:00 PM. Instrumental Music Teacher James Wagner will lead a variety of orchestral favorites. Come enjoy a relaxing evening and hear the progress our musicians have made since the program began three years ago.

— compiled by Marcia Mitchell, Beacon editor

## Committees work hard for AACCS

You may be aware of the committees at AACCS that support our school and staff. But do you know the responsibilities of each committee? In this issue of the *Beacon*, we have included a description of three of the six committees. Look for the remaining three in the next issue.

The **Technology Committee** supports and enables the use of technology at AACCS. With significant input from teachers and office staff, it helps provide solutions to their needs and looks for opportunities where technology can help. Specifically, the committee supports the many computers in the school, internet access, local networking, online report-card entry, phone and sound systems, and much more. If you have skills to contribute to this committee, please contact chair Darren De Zeeuw.

The **Finance Committee** oversees money matters at AACCS, including budgeting, operational and capital spending, and cash flow, as well as debt and investment management. The school board treasurer serves on this committee and keeps the board apprised of the committee's actions and recommendations. Please see chair Ken Fil if you would like to help with this committee.

The **Education Committee** serves as a voice for families, and a resource and sounding board for teachers and administrators. It also assists the school board in education-related matters by raising and researching issues, and making recommendations to the board. In sum, the committee considers all educational programs, practices and policies of the school. If there is any way this committee can serve you, please speak with chair Katherine Gottschalk. 🙌

### Fundraising Totals

#### School Year 2004-05

(does not include general donations)

Scrip	\$6,899
Apple Pies	\$5,163
Pancake Breakfast	\$2,170
Pizza Sale	\$2,105
Flower Sale	\$2,058
Poinsettia Sale	\$1,223
Soup Supper	\$ 668
Boxtops for Education	\$ 462
Target Take Charge of Education	\$ 456
Cookbooks	\$ 230

2004-05 TOTAL \$21,434

#### Completed Projects for School Year 2005-06

Apple Pies	\$5,106
Pancake Breakfast/Bake Sale	\$4,775
Poinsettia Sale	\$1,274

— compiled by Jan Musch, Administrative Assistant for Finance



Photo by Jen Boes

Parent volunteer Karen Stark hands out tokens to 4<sup>th</sup> graders Brittany, Caitlyn, and Kristi during mileage club at lunch recess. Each day our parent volunteers encourage the warm sense of community that makes AACCS a special place to learn and grow.

## Fundraisers: fun & functional!

By Kathy Ann Moilanen, Beacon copy editor

The word "fundraiser" starts with the letters F-U-N for a reason!

Sure, fundraisers raise money. And they can involve hard work. But they also help to spark friendships and connections within a school community.

Making apple pies or flipping pancakes guarantees you'll rub elbows with the greatest number of volunteers (potential friends) at once. As part of the pie-making crew, you get to don a dorky hairnet and plastic gloves, laugh with the parents, and get covered in sticky apple juice. AACCS makes \$5,000 selling hundreds of apple pies annually. You, too, can be part of the race to see which day's crew can make more pies per hour!

You can again don those fashionable plastic gloves to dole out yummy blueberry, cinnamon, and chocolate-chip pancakes, pour coffee and juice, or bus tables at November's combination bake sale/pancake breakfast. This event earned \$4,775 for the school last fall.

Or, if you are into a more intimate setting, try helping with the poinsettia, pizza, or flower sale. This usually involves a one-time commitment to quietly unload a truck, sort the items, and help folks get their goods into their vehicles. Depending how many people you already know at the school, you'll meet at least *someone* new! These sales can bring in up to \$2,000 per event.

Ours are not the huge fundraisers some schools sponsor. In fact, most of AACCS' non-tuition income comes from flat-out generous contributions, which Principal Kathy Broege says shows the dedication of AACCS' fans. (Folks gave \$44,500 non-fundraiser-related gifts last school year.)

"These are people who genuinely believe in Christian education and believe in what the school is doing for their children, grandchildren, neighbors, nieces, nephews, etc.!" Miss Broege says. That's not to downplay the role of our fundraisers.

"Every little bit helps!" she says. 🙌



## 100s of things to be thankful for

At the Thanksgiving chapel in November, Miss Jungkuntz challenged students to list 100 things they are thankful for. Eighteen students rose to the challenge, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grader Josiah Kim thanked God for 251 things! Here are just a handful of the things our students are thankful for:

Kindness	Self control
The ability to think	Uniqueness
Dragonflies	Gravity
Tastebuds	Prayer
Imagination	Oxygen
Diverse cultures	Half days
Medicine	Faces
Washing machines	The Bible
Tooth brushes	Jesus

## Blitz moves accreditation forward; 100s of hurdles passed, only 7 to fix

By Kathy Ann Moilanen, Beacon copy editor

A 4½-hour evaluation “blitz” gave Ann Arbor Christian School passing grades in hundreds of categories and showed the school lacking in only about seven areas.

What does this mean?

AACS has about seven items/areas to pull up to standard before handing in our accreditation “homework” to Christian Schools International, a group that accredits many Christian schools in the United States and abroad. Our “homework” – due in February – was to compile a notebook of information on AACS showing how well we meet our mission statement and other standards.

As part of this process, volunteers gathered in the gym November 4 to go through hundreds of categories to see if AACS passed muster. Volunteers in this “blitz” graded the school on a 1-5 scale in each category, ranging from finances to curriculum. CSI requires a minimum “2” grade in hundreds of what it considers “essential” standards. Other areas also were evaluated but are not considered crucial for accreditation.

The finance committee is working to correct two of the issues the blitz exposed. The school board is working on the remainder. The issues should be fixed by the February deadline, according to Dottie Elliott, chair of the accreditation steering committee. CSI will use the resulting notebook of information to “grade” us and to help determine whether we are worthy of accreditation.

This spring, CSI representatives will observe our school and do interviews. Finally – hopefully – we’ll get a document affirming our accreditation and pinpointing suggestions to further improve AACS.

Stay tuned...

## Come cheer the Eagles on!

By Melanie Bolhuis, physical education teacher and athletic director

Have you noticed the action taking place at AACS after school? Since September, our middle-school sports teams have had lots of fun practicing and competing against other local middle-school teams.

We are embracing the changes, challenges, and rewards of having a sports program, which is new territory for AACS. At this time, we may lack a few of the “essentials” – like uniforms, a scoreboard, and official volleyball standards – but what we’re not lacking is enthusiasm and team spirit. We hope to eventually have a booster club to bring fresh ideas and financial support to the program. It’s awesome to see the dedication and integrity of our coaches, and watch the students pull together as a team, demonstrating yet another way we bring glory to God at AACS.

The fall sports offered at AACS are boy’s soccer and girl’s basketball. Winter sports include boy’s basketball and girl’s volleyball. In the spring, look for coed track. Each team has two practices weekly and a game about once a week. We welcome your support on the sidelines. Look for the sports schedule in the blue newsletter and come cheer on the home team! GO EAGLES! 🙌



Eighth grader Greta Bolhuis takes a jumpshot!

Photo by Melanie Bolhuis



At the Family Christmas Gathering this year, many school families joined students in presenting the Christmas story through music and visual arts. Here the kindergartners sing a song after enacting a tableau of the nativity scene.

Photo by Sue Crittendon





Photo by Jen Boes

## Upcoming AACCS Events

### February

- 16 Open House for Prospective Families 7:00-8:30 PM
- 23 Science Fair & Soup Supper 5:30 PM
- 27-28 Winter Break -- No School

### March

- 23 Instrumental Music Concert 7:00 PM
- 29-30 Kindergarten Parent/Teacher Conferences

### April

- 11 Parent/Teacher Conferences -- evening
- 12 Half Day of School -- 11:35 AM dismissal  
Parent/Teacher Conferences -- afternoon & evening
- 13-21 Spring Break
- 24 School Resumes

*Students let loose during a lively (and loud!) dramatization of "The 12 Days of Christmas" during the Christmas chapel service.*



Ann Arbor Christian School  
5500 Whitmore Lake Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
Phone: 734.741.4948

