



# The Beacon

News to family and friends of Ann Arbor Christian School  
2007-2008, Number 2

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

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March 2008

## Teachers' impact never ends

Dear friends of AACS,

The first semester is finished already! We are excited about the rest of the 2007-2008 school year and already are making plans for 2008-2009. One major focus surrounds what we want children to learn about God.

You may not be aware that I attended Christian schools from kindergarten through college - Westside Christian School, Grand Rapids Christian High School, and then Calvin College. I learned a lot in those 17½ years at the hands of some 40+ phenomenal Christian teachers. What did just a few of them teach me about God? Here are some highlights:

- **Mrs. DeMott (kindergarten):** the unconditional love of God through Bible stories.
- **Mrs. Ophoff (fifth grade):** God's story, as we sat at her feet while she read the Bible to us.
- **Mr. Myers (junior high science):** about God's order and sovereignty in the universe and in our lives.
- **Mr. Boelema (junior-high history):** we can trace God's hand in history through challenging and even tragic events as well as through times of apparent blessing.
- **Mr. Steenwyk (junior-high grammar and Bible):** the nuts and bolts of being a Christian - we are sinners, chosen and adopted by God into His family, redeemed by His Son, given new life by the Spirit, and preserved by God for service in his kingdom. He also emphasized memorizing scripture for our short-term and long-term spiritual health.
- **Mr. Van Ee (kindergarten to ninth-grade music and art):** that music and art are beautiful expressions of God's world and can bring God joy.
- **Mrs. Klomprens (junior-high grammar and literature):** that a firm walk with God is critical to the Christian life (she taught us how to diagram sentences, too).
- **Mr. Visser (high-school swimming coach):** that Christian leadership is important in all areas of life.
- **Mr. Geerdes' (college music):** that we should develop God-given musical gifts. His encouragement still impacts my life today.

Those are just a few of the dedicated Christian teachers who helped shape my faith and my understanding of God. Their influence continues to impact me and now is impacting you. As the saying goes - teachers impact eternity, one can never tell where their influence stops.

In Christ,

Thom Ritzema, principal



Take a long look at this youngster....yes, it's Mr. Ritzema with his kindergarten teacher, Mrs. DeMott!

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## Student-created brochure captures childlike honesty

By Marcia Mitchell, *Beacon* editor

What is the best way to find out what Ann Arbor Christian School is really all about? Ask the kids! And how do we share their unedited, unscripted thoughts with others? Let them create a brochure – all by themselves!

This winter, with a little encouragement from Principal Thom Ritzema, 13 third through fifth graders did exactly that from start to finish. The idea, sparked by a Christian Schools International conference attended by Mr. Ritzema, development coordinator Sue Postema Scheeres, and Finance Committee chair Bill Vander Meulen, is a creative new way to give others a glimpse into AACS – as experienced through the eyes, ears, and hearts of its students.

Because Mr. Ritzema wanted the brochure to be completely student created, he gave the kids the reigns. He was just the “secretary” who guided them through the challenges and decision-making process. The kids made the final decisions.

Students independently wrote their thoughts

about AACS and compiled them into a list long enough to fill two brochures. Together they thoughtfully decided which quotes to keep and which to remove. The group made decisions about graphics, colors, fonts, format, and lay out. They dug into the scriptures to find the most effective verse to express what AACS is all about. Students even chose expressive and unique poses for their photos, which, not surprisingly, were taken by their peers.

Mr. Ritzema says the students “got fired up about the school, and engaged in making the brochure.” They still exude an energy and excitement about the experience.

The brochure, appropriately entitled “What I like about Ann Arbor Christian School,” will be placed in information packets given to families interested in AACS. It also will be a wonderful promotional tool at preschools and other public relation venues.

A copy of the brochure is included in this edition of the *Beacon*. Enjoy!

## What is that Thursday morning meeting?

By Jeanette Brooks, *AACS* mom

Drop by the AACS parent room on a Thursday morning around 8:30 and you’ll notice a group of moms joining together for a powerful 60 minutes. It’s not a Bible study, a social outlet, or a volunteer meeting – it’s a time they’ve purposefully set aside for prayer. Each week, they intercede for our school, teachers, and individual families. The group is one of the thousands of “Moms In Touch” groups that meet across the nation to pray for their children’s school communities.

After a short devotional led by one of the moms, Principal Thom Ritzema shares specific school-related praises and prayer concerns. The group moves through a time of praise, silent confession, thanksgiving, and then prayer requests. They specifically pray for four school families each week, allowing them to cover each family at least once by the end of the year. They also welcome special prayer requests. Pam Gossiaux, who coordinates the group, says they’ve seen many prayers answered in amazing ways, and stresses that every prayer request shared with Moms In Touch is kept strictly confidential.

“That one hour a week is a connection point with us and God, like nerve central,” one of the members noted. “We find out what God’s doing and can be a part of it.” Another mom said: “Prayer ushers us into a place of trust, so we’re not alone and are not relying just on ourselves.” Mrs. Gossiaux adds: “Praying for our children and our school is one of the most important things we can do. If we’re a praying community, God can move in our school in a powerful way.”



Photo by Marcia Mitchell

*AACS* parents Pam Gossiaux, Monika Lamine, and Adrienne Royce believe in the power of a praying mom.

If you or your family has special prayer needs, leave a note in the Moms In Touch mailbox at school, or contact Pam Gossiaux (Zachary, second grade) at 734-449-1526 or pam@pamelagossiaux.com. Please come join the group in prayer – you don’t have to be a mom!

### Winter

Leaves have fallen off  
Winter snow lands on the trees  
And icicles form

### Spring

Spring trees are budding  
Dressed in beautiful round buds  
Waiting to open

By Julia

*During a unit on trees, fourth graders enjoyed writing Haiku, an expressive form of poetry, written to create a picture in the mind of the reader.*

# A unique celebration of MLK's life & goals

By Kathy Ann Moilanen, Beacon copy editor

While others took the day off, Ann Arbor Christian School chose to honor Martin Luther King Jr. in the classroom and during chapel with lively music, prayer, teaching and birthday cupcakes.

"We honored him because he was an educator - to be in school would be his wish," explained kindergarten teacher Barb Dick, who helped organize the Jan. 21 MLK Day celebration chapel.

Entitled "Made in God's Image: Different Faces of God," the chapel was opened to the public and more than five home-school families and many AACs parents joined the celebration. The alumni band "Glory Bound" had the crowd dancing and clapping along. "Be Bold," appropriately, was one of their featured songs.



Rev. Postema and his grandchildren, Annaka (eighth grade), Elly (second grade), and Sam (fifth grade), share a choral reading about Martin Luther King Jr.

The guest speaker was the Rev. Don Postema, retired campus minister at Campus Chapel in Ann Arbor and grandfather to AACs students Annaka, Sam and Elly. Rev. Postema also has marched in equal-rights rallies. He called his talk: "He had a dream - do we share it?"

Rev. Postema explained how dangerous it was to stand up for your beliefs during

the Civil Rights Movement when he was a teen. "WHITES ONLY" signs were everywhere. Black and white people were not even to use the same restrooms or drinking fountains.

"That wouldn't make you feel very good, would it? It might make you angry?" he asked the audience. And despite the cruelty of the signs, anyone who protested the ill treatment of African Americans risked being beaten,



Kindergartners Earl, Grant, Keegan, and John give thanks for a wonderful feast at their Thanksgiving celebration last November.



Photos by Marcia Mitchell

Kindergartner Lindsey and seventh-graders Alissa and Hannah teach motions to "We Shall Overcome" at the MLK chapel service.

arrested, sprayed with fire hoses, or chased by dogs. King's own peaceful protesting ended when a gunshot took his life in 1968.

"Yet Martin told people not to act out of anger but to act out of dignity and love," Rev. Postema said. King taught that all people are made in God's image and instructed listeners not to become bitter or hate their white brothers and sisters.

Rev. Postema lamented that he was taught to be a racist, even in church, and had to unlearn it. A picture of a black baby and a white baby has graced his office for 35 years along with the words: Daddy, what did you do in the fight against racism?

"It really helps to have an African-American son-in-law and biracial grandchildren," he said. "When people say things, they're hurting my family," he said, encouraging us to share King's dream of black and white children holding hands.

Those in the AACs gym joined hands, swaying while singing "We shall overcome," the Negro spiritual that gained cross-cultural notoriety during King's lifetime.

The crowd separated into small groups to share a book about King and discuss questions like "What laws needed changing?" and "What words might describe how he felt?" The groups then enjoyed birthday cupcakes.

In a paper written by eighth-grader Annaka Scheeres, Rev. Postema recalled people stoning an African-American's home near his boyhood neighborhood.

"I remember riding my bike past that house and being so mad that people would stone a house...Equal rights are something everyone deserves, no matter what their skin color is."



# Go in my name....

The students and staff at Ann Arbor Christian School continue to find a variety of ways to help those in need. This year, students from every grade have used their time and talents to show love to people in our own community and even across the country. The photos and stories on Pages 4 and 5 of this edition of *The Beacon* highlight some of the ways God is using AACCS to bring glory to His name.



Photo by Becky Jungkuntz

## Offering song

Emotion filled their voices as Doug and Cherie Egedy (parents of eighth-grader Eric and fifth-grader Lindsie) described their unexpected visit by some Christmas carolers – namely Miss Jungkuntz’ fifth-grade class – pictured here in the Egedy’s home. The students blessed Mr. Egedy, who had just returned home hours earlier after two months of rehabilitation following a serious auto accident. We rejoice as a school family that Mr. Egedy is home, and continue to pray for complete recovery and healing! Students also sang at Huron Woods, a dementia care facility in Ypsilanti where Miss Jungkuntz’ mother resides.

## Gifts of love: books & heat

By Marcia Mitchell, *Beacon* editor

In years past, Ann Arbor Christian School students bought small gifts to exchange with classmates at their class Christmas parties. But a few years ago, recognizing that AACCS kids are blessed with so much and could really do without another \$5 trinket, the staff suggested that students pool the money that would have been spent, and make a Christmas donation to a worthy charity.

This has become a meaningful tradition at AACCS. This year, it only made sense to give to the Ogala Sioux living in the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

AACCS’ relationship with the Ogala Sioux began in the fall during our school’s annual reading week. While searching for an organization to which the school could donate books, middle-school science teacher Mark Wiersma became aware of the need for new and gently used books at Wolf Creek Elementary School on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The reservation, home to as many as 40,000 Native Americans, is in one of the poorest counties in the country.

Students collected 13 boxes of books, which were hand-delivered by Dale Dieleman of Worldwide Christian Schools. The delivery also included two Macintosh desktop computers that were no longer being used, and a letter and photos containing information about our school.

So for the Christmas donation, it just made sense to offer even more help. Mr. Wiersma discovered that a number of elderly Ogala Sioux cannot afford propane to heat their homes, and sometimes even perish from the winter cold. Students were challenged to collect enough funds to purchase seven, 100-pound propane tanks to give the gift of heat. Generous hearts donated more than \$1,337 – enough to fill and deliver at least 13 tanks! Through this project, AACCS hopes the residents will not only experience warm homes, but also open their hearts to the love of Jesus.



Photo by Mark Doorlag

## Giving art

Enthusiasm was contagious as the kindergarten and first-grade students sang for residents at Sunrise Assisted Living Center in Ann Arbor. Each resident was given an art project lovingly created by students. Here, first-graders Dane and Katie proudly deliver their hand-made treasures.



## “Leaf” the raking to 5<sup>th</sup> graders

By Kathy Ann Moilanen, Beacon copy editor

The fifth-grade class worked up a sweat to earn \$300 for various charities this fall.

With rakes of all shapes and sizes in hand, they set out in three different cars to three different homes to clear fallen leaves from three huge yards one mild November afternoon.

“I wanted to do a service project to raise money where the kids actually DO something – not just ask their parents for money – and experience sacrificing,” said fifth-grade teacher Becky Jungkuntz. She started this annual event more than 10 years ago at Ann Arbor Christian School.

In class, students learn about Christians in history who were persecuted, about people who face disabilities, and about caring for folks who can’t help themselves. The leaf-raking project benefits charities related to these lessons.

Generous people who request that their yards be raked offer a donation, choosing between several charities. Among them: Voice of the Martyrs (which benefits persecuted Christians worldwide), Joni and Friends (benefiting people with disabilities) and Pregnancy Counseling Center (saving unborn babies from abortions).

The service project also coincides with the students’ unit studying Pilgrims. Miss Jungkuntz points out to the students that while they rake for less than two hours, the Pilgrims worked that hard all day long!

## Growing a friendship to fight homelessness

By Joan Bailey, community relations coordinator for Avalon Housing, as posted on [www.avalonhousing.org](http://www.avalonhousing.org) Nov. 14, 2007

“What we really need to do is solve the problem of homelessness. Giving money and food are good, but they are only a temporary patch.”

–From an essay by a seventh grader at Ann Arbor Christian School

Ann Arbor Christian School is a friend of Avalon. They’ve volunteered as families, created centerpieces for holiday parties, and for a second year in a row, helped fill the Thanksgiving tables of our tenants. This morning, I joined them for their weekly chapel service. Organized by teacher Xan Morgan, the service marked the culmination of their Homelessness Awareness Week. Part of their activities for the week included raising funds (more than \$600!) to purchase turkeys for Thanksgiving dinner, gathering together some of the traditional fixings (I could almost smell the pumpkin pie and green bean casserole!), and other useful items for Avalon households.

As I watched a skit performed by the seventh grade comparing the lives of two children – one homeless and one not – and listened to the discussion afterwards, it became clear to me what an



Photo by Brenda Vyletel

After raking leaves into large piles, fifth graders Sophia, Rebecca, Jonathan, Kara, and Michael use a tarp to haul them away.

Sometimes it rains; sometimes it snows. This year, kids were peeling off layers due to the balmy weather! Workers do get a snack break and often find jumping in the resulting leaf piles refreshing! Inevitably, they return to school tired and sore.

“And the kids have a lot of fun doing it,” Miss Jungkuntz says.

Anyone within a 15-minute drive of the school interested in having their yard raked next fall? Contact Miss Jungkuntz.

## Preparing treats

Middle-school advisory groups went into action to serve the residents of Avalon Housing. Students frosted cookies and created centerpieces to make Christmas a little more special for families supported by the Ann Arbor-based non-profit organization. Avalon Housing develops and manages housing for those at risk of homelessness. Pictured here, sixth-grader Paul puts the final touches on some cookies.



Photo by Sue De Zeeuw

impact another person can have on their community. The students of Ann Arbor Christian heard the stories, saw the problem, and know a solution exists. They know that it’s not an easy answer, but they did what they could with what they had to make someone else’s life a little better, a little easier.

And more, most likely, than just an Avalon tenant. Like those I shared my morning with this Friday, Avalon tenants open their homes and share their tables with friends and family from near and far. The simple gifts received today make supportive housing something for so many to be thankful for.



## Jumping through hoops to host tourney

By Brenda Vyletel, AACS parent

A basketball tournament at Ann Arbor Christian School? That'd never been done before! Could we pull it off? Without bleachers? In less than two weeks?

Never say the AACS staff isn't up for a challenge. The concept of hosting a tournament was the brainchild of first-season boys basketball coach Jeremy Loudon. The Concordia alumni conceived a two-day tournament at his alma mater. The schools invited would be from the current league plus teams AACS had played in the past. A goal would be to maintain historic relationships and further develop new relationships with the schools.

While best intentioned, this exciting idea proved difficult to arrange at the nearby college. As the scheduled date crept closer with no commitment from Concordia, AACS Athletic Director Melanie Bolhuis made a leap of faith. AACS would hold the tournament in our gymnasium.

With only two weeks before the games, unexplored territory loomed. Will enough parents volunteer in this short

timeframe? Where will attendees sit without bleachers? What is needed for concessions? Satisfying the hunger of 100 people for 12 hours over a pair of days was not in AACS' repertoire. The staff believed in the school, though, and within days, five local teams were signed up: Ann Arbor Spiritus Sanctus, Huron Valley, Keystone Academy, Plymouth Spiritus Sanctus, and Rudolf Steiner.

With God's blessing, the answers fell into place. On the heels of a plea for help, AACS families volunteered to work the admissions table, concessions booth, and scoring table. Sue and Darren De Zeeuw and Mrs. Bolhuis simultaneously fell upon the best seating answer - use our tiered choral stage as bleachers. Mrs. De Zeeuw stocked up on hot dogs, soft drinks, fruit, and candy for concessions, while parent Cindy Hefner helped obtain Subway sandwiches to sell.

Principal Thom Ritzema recognized the event's outreach potential. "I'm thrilled that we can open our doors to families from other schools - getting the word out about the great things that God is doing at AACS."

Mrs. Bolhuis opened the Friday competition with prayer. The varsity boys from AACS played with heart, and although they didn't win, they displayed true sportsmanship and came away ready for more.

Saturday evening, Coach Loudon sent an email: "I received many compliments from the referees, parents, spectators, visiting coaches, and players about all aspects of the tournament, the staging...concessions, admissions, and organization. All around, everyone did a fantastic job and it was a lot of fun to be a part of."



Photo by Greg Vyletel

Eighth grader Urie gives it his all on the basketball court.

## Fundraising Update

July 2007 - Jan. 2008

(does not include general donations)

Boxtops for education: \$323

Target: \$408

AACS Shirts: \$1,228

Apple Pies: \$4,163

Pancake Breakfast weekend: \$4,054

(\$3000 went toward outdoor basketball hoops)

Poinsettia sale: \$646

Scrip: \$4,800

TOTAL: \$15,622

Designated Gifts

Library Books: \$810

## Join our giving legacy

By Sue Postema Scheeres, AACS development coordinator

Last fall, we launched an ambitious giving campaign. Thanks to all who have already contributed! If you have not had the opportunity to give, please consider supporting this school with a financial gift. Tuition does not cover all the costs of educating our students or running this school. Without the generous donations of our supporters, we would not be able to meet our financial needs.

Here's an update on contributions this fiscal year:

- **Debt reduction.** We hope to dramatically reduce the principal on the remaining portion of our facility loan before the next rate adjustment in 2009. Our goal is to raise \$250,000 by Jan. 1, 2009. We have received \$62,280 in pledges or donations to pay down the \$850,000 principal we still owe on the loan. *Please remember to mail in your pledge if you haven't already!*
- **Close the gap.** Tuition does not cover the cost of educating our students. We have raised \$54,055 toward the \$156,000 we need to close that gap. That includes \$38,433 from private donations and \$15,622 from fundraisers.
- **Tuition assistance.** We have received donations of \$90 for tuition assistance.

If you have questions about giving, please contact AACS development coordinator Sue Postema Scheeres at [development@annarborchristian.org](mailto:development@annarborchristian.org) or (734) 741-4948, ext. 117.



## Alumni Corner

### Jammin' for Jesus

By Marcia Mitchell,  
Beacon editor

If you think all high schoolers sleep in on a day off, think again. When eight AACS alumni – now students at Ann Arbor's Pioneer and Huron High Schools and Dexter High School – had Martin Luther King Jr. Day free, they got themselves out of bed to enthusiastically lead AACS in lively praise music at our chapel service (see related story, page 3).

Juniors Andrew De Zeeuw and Matt Vander Roest, along with sophomores Kelsey Boes, Greta Bolhuis, Peter Geldermans, Ian Gottschalk, Kelsey Hofman, and Callie Svaan, make up the praise band "Glorybound." Most Sunday afternoons, after the teens attend services at Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church, they continue their worship with band practice. The kids bring in song ideas, and a few parents find the music and help keep the group organized.

Glorybound has led worship for a number of events, including the "30 Hour Famine" and the "See You at the Pole" rally. The rally, at Huron Hills Baptist Church this year, was

intended to motivate students to meet at school flagpoles to pray for the nation and schools on national "See You at the Pole" day. Greta Bolhuis said leading music for the event was powerful.

"It was really amazing," she says. "Everyone around me was just praising God. I felt so close to God and connected to Him through the music."

The group occasionally plays for church services and hopes to lead music in their youth group. But even without a "gig" lined up, they enjoy just jamming together. "It's really fun to just hang out with friends on Sunday to worship and praise God," says Kelsey Boes, who sings with the group.

*From the back page:*  
Second-graders Julia, Melia, and Elly lift their voices for grandparents and friends.



AACS alumni continue to be role models as they lead praise and worship during the Martin Luther King Jr. chapel service. Pictured left to right are singers Greta, Kelsey, Kelsey, Callie, drummer Andrew who is hidden, Peter, Ian, and Matt.

Photo by Marcia Mitchell

## No taxation without representation!

During the fifth-grade American Revolution unit, Miss Jungkuntz "taxes" her students so they can relate to the colonists who were unfairly taxed. Each homework assignment is taxed 25 cents to pay for class parties. This year, the class took it very seriously and peacefully protested. The following excerpt was independently written by Brittany Bonine in response to the unfair taxation:

*"We the people of the fifth-grade class feel your taxes are unfair and too expensive. We already pay tuition and buy our own school supplies. Our parents donate snacks and supplies for our parties. If you do not have enough money to throw parties then there should be no parties at all. We should not have to pay for our homework, because you are paid a salary by the school to be a teacher. Taxes are good but we are only kids and should not have to pay them. Taxation should be voted on by the whole class. If you do not stop taxes we will revolt and a new revolution will begin!"*



Photo by Sue Crittenden

Fourth-graders Maranda and Jenna giggle while Maranda's grandpa, Dick Crittenden, has some fun at Grandparents' Day. This year, grandparents and friends donated over \$3,000 to purchase much needed outdoor basketball hoops. Thank you, grandparents and other supporters!

## Happy Anniversary AACS!

As of Feb. 12, we have been in our new Whitmore Lake Road facility for FIVE years.

What a blessing!



Photo by Sherry Dao



Second graders sing their hearts out! (details on page 7)

**Other upcoming  
AACCS events you  
won't want to miss:**

- March 27 AACCS Open House  
7-8:30 pm
- April 25 Broken Record  
Grille
- May 2 Fine Arts Festival  
(5th - 8th grades)
- May 15 All-School Art and  
Music Program
- May 22 Kindergarten  
Round-up

Visit us on the web at  
[annarborchristian.org](http://annarborchristian.org)

Save the date: April 25 **Broken Record Grille**, a '50s style diner at AACCS 

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**Ann Arbor  
Christian School**

