



# The BEACON

News for family and friends of Ann Arbor Christian School 2021-2022 No. 3

## HEADS UP by Wayne Sit, Head of School

### Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow



In short, the school's 30th Anniversary Gala on May 14th was spectacular! I have even heard the word *magical* used. What made it so memorable?

**A lot of planning:** No human can probably count the thousands of hours that our anniversary committee put into the gala, especially by our co-coordinators Lisa Hawley and Dawn Geldermans. I specifically asked Lisa (a current parent) and Dawn (an alumni and founding parent) because I wanted the co-chairs to represent a cross section of the school's history. Under their leadership, a team of amazing volunteers orchestrated the best cross-generational gathering in the school's history.

**Cross generational:** The gala beautifully captured our collective commitment to the great transmission of faith from generation to generation. On one level, it captured the hopes of grandparents in attendance that the faith they passed to their children would be passed to their children's children. On another level, seeing past staff members present illustrated

the living out of our school's mission from one generation of staff and teachers to the

next generation. In the audience were also alumni students in their young adulthood and alumni parents who want to see what AACCS did for their families continue for current and future families. In short, it showed that all generations are invested and engaged today with our mission to provide strong, Christ-centered education. As one founding parent said to me, he only knew 20% of the people there, and that was a good thing.

**Our first two leaders:** For me, it was particularly special that Sue De Zeeuw and Ann Deckert were present. Sue was the school's first part-time administrator and worked closely with me for nearly all of my 12 years at AACCS, while Ann later became the first full-time principal for eight years. In different ways, both of them have supported and encouraged me immensely in my time at AACCS. While I have never worked with Ann directly, she has spurred me on through prayer, calls, thoughtful notes, and sitting next to me during the gala. Seeing her joy and delight at the growth and direction of the school is a tremendous source of encouragement for me. We represent the transmission of faith in school leadership, and someday God will pass that onto another individual to lead AACCS.

**The giving:** I almost don't have the words to capture how giving blew away our expectations. Despite last minute attendees not being to attend due to COVID-19 and shaky economic



*Continued on page 2*

# HEADS UP

continued from page 1

conditions, our community gave generously and sacrificially to raise \$200,000, which was then matched by a small set of supporters to reach a grand total of nearly \$400,000. As one set of donors expressed to me, their money is God's money, and it is meant for His purposes. In addition, giving includes the many unique items and experiences donated to the auction portion of the gala. In short, our money is God's provision at work in transmitting our mission and faith.

**The Songs:** Led by Becky Johnson, a collection of praise and worship songs from our school's history was sung, and I think it hit an emotional chord for many in attendance. It brought back memories and experiences from across 30 years of our school's history while bringing everything back to the one true constant: Our God to whom this world belongs.

**The Impact:** In the end, the 30th anniversary gala reaffirmed and strengthened our community's commitment to our mission and vision. Through it, we have a reinvigorated community behind us in prayer, service, and giving. Through our collective resources, we have significantly strengthened resources for our current site while building funds for our future.

It takes God's people moving together and investing in the long-haul to do the work given to Ann Arbor Christian in an area that desperately needs the Good News. Thank you for being with us in the past, standing by us today, and being eager to support the generations to come, even the children yet to be born.

*Prayer for AACS at the Gala by Olivia Palmbo, Class of '19*

*Dear Heavenly Father,*

*Thank you for bringing us together tonight, even in the midst of chaotic and uncertain times, to gather in fellowship with a loving and longstanding community that spans generations. Thank you for good food and good company, and for the past 30 years of prosperity that you have gifted to this school. Over the past 3 decades, you have brought together a gathering of friends and families, of teachers and students, to love one another and bring your kingdom here on earth. You have faithfully blessed us with generosity, kindness, and a loving community that has nurtured its students, grown together in communion, and fostered love throughout Ann Arbor. Please continue to bless this school and the people who have surrounded and upheld it, and help us to open our hearts to the plans that you have for AACS in the future. We look forward with anticipation for the next 30 years and beyond, as you lead AACS onto great things. Amen.*

# LASTING SIGNIFICANCE

## AACS Second Site

*By Wayne Sit, Head of School*

In addition to supporting the school today, part of the \$400,000 raised at the 30th Anniversary Gala will provide some of the critical start-up funds for our second site in which we will be creating a second middle school and begin adding high school grades, starting with Grade 9. In our April Association meeting, we officially shared our intention and vision to work earnestly to make this second site a reality as early as the fall of 2023.

**The summary of reasons include:**

- Positioning Ann Arbor Christian School to more greatly impact the city of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County for God's kingdom with two locations with a shared culture and mission.
- Equipping Ann Arbor Christian to serve more families as more Christian families seek a school that aligns with their family and church worldview.
- Serving a broader geographic range of families in the city and county.
- Retaining the strengths of being a small community on each site while becoming one larger, multi-site school (the two sites would come together for key events, share resources and some staffing, and offer possible shuttle services between locations).
- Filling the void of an interdenominational Christian high school in Ann Arbor and knowing that many current Ann Arbor Christian families are hoping for high school grades.
- Partnering alongside families in raising their children during pivotal and increasingly challenging high school years.
- Sending off the next generation of Daniels and Esthers into the opportunities beyond high school.

As you read this, we are in active conversations to secure facilities to lease this summer. This includes a primary location to host the second site for AACS and athletic facilities at other nearby locations. Please pray for the Spirit's leading in these dialogues and that the right partnerships are formed to magnify our collective impact on the city of Ann Arbor and surrounding communities for the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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# A COMMUNITY GATHERED

## AACS 30th Anniversary Celebration of God's Faithfulness

*You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you. Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever! — Psalm 118: 28-29*



### Thank You to All Who Support and Pray for AACS!





# BOARD UPDATE

## Ending One Season and Beginning Another

By Ryan Peterson, President, AACS Board

This is such an interesting time of the year. Of course, it's summertime! As we celebrate the conclusion of another school year, we also recognize the many transitions that often happen for families during these months.

Preschoolers go to Kindergarten.

Fifth graders become middle schoolers.

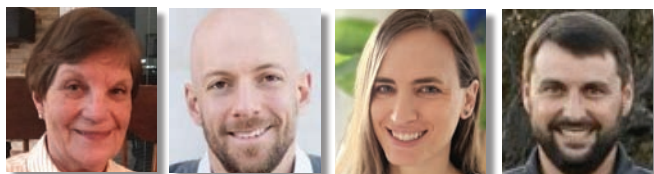
Eighth graders graduate and move on to high school.

For some families, the summer might mean a physical move due to job relocation or another life transition. In all of it, we trust in our good and gracious God to guide and direct our steps according to His will.

The summer months are also a time of transition for our AACS Board of Directors. We give thanks for those Board members who are completing their years of faithful service on the Board and also welcome new Board members who will continue to ensure that as a Board, we protect and advance the mission of AACS.

I want to personally acknowledge and thank two Board members whose terms are ending: Sarah Armstrong (having served 3 years) and Todd Redder (having served 4 years). Sarah served as the Board Development Committee Chair and Todd served as our Treasurer. Please join me in giving thanks for them!

At our April Association Meeting, four new Board members were approved. Their complete bios can be found on our AACS website, but please join me in congratulating and giving thanks for their upcoming service: Ann Deckert, John Nadzam, Erin Perry, and Michael Yankonis. As you have the opportunity, get to know these new Board members and hear more about their passion for Christian education.



Ann Deckert

John Nadzam

Erin Perry

Michael Yankonis

As the author of Ecclesiastes writes: *"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven"* (Ecclesiastes 3:1). May God continue to lead each of us in every season of our lives!

# SPORTS RECAP

## Represent and Proclaim Jesus

By Bryan Diemer, Athletic Director

AACS recently wrapped up a very successful year of athletics, competing in Soccer, Volleyball, Boys' Basketball, Girls' Basketball, Baseball, Softball, and Track and Field. The mission of AACS athletics has always been to represent and proclaim Jesus Christ in the community by the way that we play, coach, and act as fans.



The goal is to be known around the Ann Arbor community as people who are forever changed by Jesus Christ and live in light of that grace. AACS students, parents, and coaches are expected to exhibit Sportsmanship, Humility, Integrity, Enthusiasm, Leadership, and Determination, among other characteristics. In more ways than can be counted, the AACS athletic community continues to hold themselves to a standard of excellence in these areas.

That being said, while we do not measure the success of our seasons in terms of wins and losses, it is hard to overlook the athletic achievements that AACS enjoyed throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

AACS compiled a mass of league championships (6 overall), taking home first place trophies in Soccer, JV Volleyball, Varsity Volleyball, JV Boys' Basketball, Varsity Boys' Basketball, and Varsity Girls' Basketball. Both JV and Varsity Boys' Basketball teams remained undefeated throughout league and tournament play.

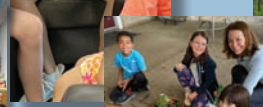
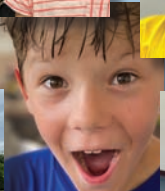
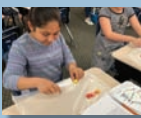
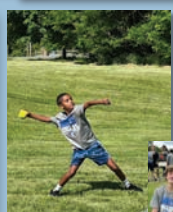
Additionally, Softball and Baseball recently wrapped up successful seasons, with the Baseball team winning their first game in program history, and Softball compiling a 3-1 record.

Participation was also at an all time high, resulting in roster sizes of 23 for soccer, 40 for volleyball (20 at each level), 44 for track, and 14 for softball. Seventy kids in 5-8th grade competed in a spring sport, which equates to 84.3% of eligible students. All of those participation numbers represent school records.

The number of students participating presented some logistical challenges throughout the year. Challenges—such as how to play 20 girls on a Volleyball team when only 6 play at a time—were met by splitting the teams equally into two teams. These teams competed in their own shortened seasons and came together for tournament play.

We are going to offer some additional sports as a way to help alleviate the number of participants, as well as provide more opportunities for students who may not be interested in the traditionally offered sports. Fall sports such as Boys Flag Football, co-ed Golf, and Girls Field Hockey are being offered for next school year, as well as the possibility of Boys Volleyball and Boys Wrestling in the winter.





PAGE 5



# BEYOND THE BASICS

## Authentic Experiences Enhance Learning

By Renée McKeone, Curriculum Director



*Eighth Grade Broken Record Grille*



With great joy, Ann Arbor Christian School was able to reinstate various school activities as the COVID restrictions were loosened. Many of these activities have been long-standing traditions that provide authentic learning opportunities for students, as well as opportunities for social and emotional development and the building up of our school community.

The first of these events, the Eighth Grade Broken Record Grille, provided the opportunity for families to gather, support the eighth grade fundraising efforts while participating in a 50's style diner. The eighth grade students served as the waitstaff while dedicated parents were the short order cooks. This well attended event showed just how much such community events had been missed by the AACS Community. The last class to host the Broken Record Grille was the class of 2019. Several alumni students, especially those in the class of 2020 who had not been able to host the event due to the pandemic in their eighth grade year, came to enjoy it. Our current students had a lot of fun and worked hard, especially with several classmates out due to illness. Several commented that it gave them a new appreciation for those who serve them in restaurants and a new understanding of how hard people in the service industries work.

As we entered May, students in several classes were able to take class field trips, again, many of these being long-standing curriculum traditions such as the third grade class trip to Lansing to visit the Michigan State Capitol and Michigan History Museum. The fourth grade class joined the class since they had missed the experience in 2021. Students were able to tour our beautiful state capitol and learn

about our state government as well as walk through the highlights of our state history in the museum. This brought the concepts of their Michigan History Unit together in unforgettable ways. Another exciting tradition in this unit is the Michigan History Musical Play which was presented by the third graders on June 3, 2022. This play highlights the key elements of the state's history along with a lively music score. Parents, grandparents, and some of the elementary students enjoyed the performance, and the third grade class loved presenting the show. According to third grade parent Lisa Hawley, "The Michigan Play was my favorite thing so far at AACS ever. It was so good, it brought tears to my eyes. I can't get enough and the songs are AMAZING. I had no idea what to expect but was blown away - everything was perfect."

On the same day, several other classes were participating in special events and trips. The fifth grade class was away at Howell Nature Center for 2 days, including an overnight. The eighth grade was away on their four day class trip to Chicago. Both of these activities had been suspended or significantly adjusted the past two



*Third Grade Michigan History Musical Play*

years, and students showed a new appreciation for being able to attend them. These two activities have become a traditional rite of passage for the students, as students in these classes are culminating their experience in elementary school for the fifth grade or their entire time at AACS for the eighth grade. The Chicago trip combines several educational opportunities that highlight curriculum areas of middle school, such as visiting Medieval Times and the Museum of Science and Industry as well as a lot of time for solidifying class relationships and enjoying some Chicago highlights such as a Cubs game, Chicago style pizza and the Lincoln Park Zoo.

June 3rd brought Bike Day for the Kindergarten students, an annual tradition that culminates the class safety unit, as well as the River Rally for the seventh and eighth graders, allowing them to have fun at Gallup Park while kayaking, canoeing, pedal boating, fishing and enjoying the beautiful park. This also serves as a way to grow these classes into the new leadership roles of the rising seventh and eighth grade classes and celebrate the school year.

Earlier in the week, the second grade class took their annual trip



*Third & Fourth Grade • Lansing Michigan Capital and Michigan History Museum*



*Fifth Grade • Howell Nature Center*





*Second Grade Trip to the Toledo Zoo*

to the Toledo Zoo as part of their life science unit. They loved seeing the amazing animals God has created up close and sharing that experience with one another. Similarly, the sixth and seventh graders recently visited the University of Michigan Natural History Museum for a Planetarium Show as part of their Earth Science Class

*Eighth grade experienced the Holocaust Museum*



Unit on Space. These events build awe and wonder, as we recognize and appreciate all God has created. Eighth grade students visited the Holocaust Museum, as part of their ELA Unit, reading the play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and learned first hand of the impacts of the Holocaust. The school sees it as a Christian responsibility to educate students in the tragedy of genocide and to recognize the dignity of every human person as given by God. Field trips can provide deeper educational experiences than what can take place in a classroom, enabling the learning to make a greater impact on the student and to last a lifetime.

These recent activities and experiences have filled our halls and classrooms with excitement about learning. Students stayed engaged in the last weeks of the school year as they prepared for and participated in well planned, meaningful activities and events. Their appreciation for these events was heightened as students were aware that some of them were happening for the first time since 2019. For our community, it re-opens the doors to community events and parental engagement in the learning process as parents accompany their children on field trips, attend performances, and celebrate a successful school year.

## BEYOND THE BASICS



The second grade Poetry Cafe, presented students with the opportunity to share their writing with their parents. The students worked very hard writing poems as well as reading poetry of different genres. The second grade room parents set up a lovely environment for poetry cafe to add a celebrative feel to the event.



*Middle School River Rally*



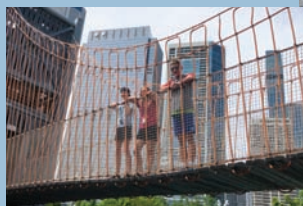
*Kindergarten Bike Day*



*Sixth & Seventh Grade Trip to University of Michigan Natural History Museum and Burton Memorial Tower*



*Eighth Grade Trip to Chicago*





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The **BEACON**

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## Congratulations to the 2022 AACCS Eighth Grade Graduates

Every year, we experience the joy of seeing our eighth class graduate to their next adventure of high school. It is indeed a time of mixed feelings as we have grown to care deeply for each of them. We have been blessed to have these students at AACCS and we hope that you will join us as we send them off with our congratulations and prayers.

Six students plan to attend Father Gabriel Richard High School, six Skyline High School, one Dexter High School, one Grass Lake High School, and one Pioneer High School.

Congratulations,  
Class of 2022!





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#AACCS LIFE





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