



The BEACON

News for family and friends of Ann Arbor Christian School 2022-2023 No. 2

HEADS UP by Wayne Sit, Head of School

Join Us During a Critical Season



The school had quite a gathering of rising 9th graders and their families at a social evening at the Upper Campus.

We are in what I would call one of the most historic seasons in the school's 30+ years of existence. This milestone moment is the launch of our high school in August 2023 with our first 9th grade class and the beginning of our journey to become the first Pre-school-Grade 12 interdenominational Christian school in Ann Arbor.

Between this issue of the Beacon and the next one that will arrive at your home in late June, several critical months are before us, and we are calling on the entire AACCS community to have the school on your minds and hearts.

Over the next few months, we could use your prayer and support for the high school in these specific areas:

- The recruitment of 50 ninth graders to join the pioneering first class, which includes several new ad campaigns on social media, digital billboards with targeted digital ads being pushed to vehicles that drive by them, and an email campaign. We do not need 50 students to open, but that is our goal.



- The hiring of new high school teachers and staff who are passionate about our mission and our vision for a new Christian high school and love the uniqueness of high schoolers.
- Targeted efforts to raise an additional \$300,000 in designated funds for the start-up of the high school.
- Continued planning of curriculum, extracurricular programs, student life, spiritual formation, policies, transportation, and other key areas.
- Finding ways to maintain our identity as one school on two campuses.
- Protection in a season which we sense heightened spiritual attacks on the school community.

While many of these items will be ongoing tasks throughout the summer and into 2023-2024 school year, the next few months are important in making significant progress. The journey to launch our high school will be a marathon, not a sprint, but bursts of momentum can greatly help. As a result, we earnestly seek your financial support, active prayers, and telling others about God's expansion of Christian education at AACCS. Please see p.2 for more ways to help.

In addition to launching the new high school, critical initiatives are also happening for our current campus, which is virtually at capacity with strong enrollment. Most significantly, this summer marks the installation of our new maker space and industrial kitchen. Contracts have been signed for the work to begin immediately after school gets out, specialized equipment has been ordered for delivery, and a schedule has been set to complete the work by early August.

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MISSION

In partnership with Christian families, 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.

HEADS UP

Continued from page 1



With those two spaces in place, a host of new opportunities will open for our students and our broader community. The new opportunities include: a large space for science activities; new equipment for STEM and arts projects; the ability to properly host large community events with food-grade appliances; and the possibility of starting a hot lunch program. Many tasks and items need to line up in the coming months to help us stay on schedule and within already increased costs, so your prayers would be greatly appreciated.

It's an exciting time for AACCS. The school has never been stronger in many areas. At the same time, it is a delicate season in which we need to lean on God to make wise, strategic decisions to continue the amazing growth and progress we are experiencing and to rally together as God's community to ensure the success of the school we all love. It will take people eager and willing to stick by the school's side and with each other for the long-haul, but I believe we have the community to do this!

WAYS TO JOIN IN: HIGH SCHOOL/GIVING UPDATE

By Wayne Sit, Head of School

As mentioned in recent communications, we wish to provide opportunities for you to learn more and to support this pioneering venture that the school is preparing to launch in six months. Here are a few ways for you to stay informed and to find out how you can support the Ann Arbor Christian High School. *Please scan the QR codes to RSVP or to participate.*



Upper Campus Tour & Worship Times: We will be hosting two community gatherings at Huron Hills Church (soon to be Grace Ann Arbor North) on Saturday, April 15 and Saturday, May 6 - both from 3:30-5:30 pm. During this time, there will be a mingling/appetizer time, a time for worship and prayer for the school, Q&A time, and a tour of the wonderful facilities. Please RSVP.

Join our prayer calendar with this new link: We are doubling down on the need for prayer during this season - for provision and protection. One way to pray is to sign up for our prayer calendar through August. Please consider signing up as an individual or with your family and friends.



Participate in the golf outing: Please mark May 22, 2023, on your calendar as the date for the AACCS Golf Outing at Lake Forest Golf Club in Ann Arbor. Proceeds from this great event will be used to strengthen the school's well-loved athletic program, including supporting our current program and helping to launch our high school sports. Participation and sponsoring information are at annarborchristian.org/golfouting. Sign up now!

Personal tour: Schedule a personal time with me to visit the Upper Campus for a tour. Virtual tours are also available to those who are not local.



Financially, between now and December, we specifically seek to raise an additional \$300,000 of designated funding to support the start-up cost of the first year of our high school. Before you give, we hope you can come to one of the on-site events above to see firsthand the high school site and what your giving will support (annarborchristian.org/give).

God is clearly moving with our second site and providing the pieces: We know the need for Christian education in our community. We have an eager church partner who has provided a great location and space. We have some start-up funds from the 30th Anniversary Gala from this past spring. There is tremendous support from within the Christian Schools International community and leadership. We have eager Christian teachers who want to join, and we already have our first 9th grade students enrolled. If He can do the impossible task of feeding 5000 people with a few pieces of fish and bread, then we can truly believe that He can finish the work He has started with our second campus. We can trust He has so much in store for Ann Arbor Christian School's future beyond our best laid plans.

Please join us as we move together with God.

AACCS Contacts 2022-2023

SCHOOL STAFF

Wayne Sit, Head of School
head@annarborchristian.org
734.741.4948 x116

Cheri Lubbers, Administrative Manager
office@annarborchristian.org
734.741.4948 x115

Jan Musch, Finance Manager
finance@annarborchristian.org
734.741.4948 x120

BOARD MEMBERS

Daniel Bingham
Ann Deckert
Karen Eekhoff
John Nadzam
Erin Perry
Ryan Peterson
Nik Spasovski
Michael Yankonis
board@annarborchristian.org

COMMITTEES AND CHAIRS

Buildings and Grounds: Mike Myers
Curriculum: Renée McKeone
Finance: AACCS Board Member
Information Technology: Paul DeKraker
Public Relations/Development: Wayne Sit

THE BEACON

Laurie Campbell-Nuñez, Editor
PR/Development Assistant
prdevelopment@annarborchristian.org
734.741.4948 x122

A COMMUNITY GATHERED

MLK Day Reflection

By Margaret Mayoros, Second Grade & Elementary Lead Teacher

On Monday, January 16th, the Ann Arbor Christian School community gathered to spend the morning "on" rather than "off" to reflect on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This tradition of a day "on" has become one of the highlights of our AACCS year.

Our chapel theme for the school year is "Created for a Purpose," through which we have reflected on the ways young people in Scripture stood up "in faith, in life, in love, and in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). Inspired by this theme, our MLK celebration this year was focused on the peaceful and courageous role of young people involved in the civil rights movement.

We began the morning with worship as we joined as a community for chapel. Together, we reflected on the story of the boy, Samuel, from the Bible, and how God had placed him in the right place at the right time to serve Him in a difficult way.

After chapel, the school was divided into multi-age groupings. During this time, our youngest students learned about Ruby Bridges, who, at six years old, was the first black student integrated into a white school in Louisiana. She is the girl immortalized in the famous Norman Rockwell painting of her being escorted to school by U.S. Marshals who were there to protect her. Students were moved not just by her courage, but also by her daily prayer of forgiveness for those who opposed her. The third through fifth graders gathered to learn about the peaceful "Children's March" and were inspired by their bravery and determination. Finally, the middle schoolers learned about the disparity in the education systems in the south at that time, and the role and courage children had in integrating schools.

Our vision and prayer, as we came together to celebrate Martin Luther King Day, was that we all be salt and light in our world as Jesus commanded, and that our students will be inspired to "Not let anyone look down on you because you are young but set an example for the believers; in faith, in life, in love and in purity." (1 Timothy 4:12)



“Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”

— 1 Timothy 4:12 (ESV)

G I A A S E

Your gift ensures more children will be able to receive an education rooted in the Gospel.

5500 Whitmore Lake Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48111

Online at www.annarborchristian.org/give

Mail a check to Ann Arbor Christian School

Scan QR code with your phone to give online



BOARD UPDATE

Fishers of People

By Nik Spasovski, President, AACCS Board



I was struck recently by how many different people contribute with their vast amount of experience and giftings to the overall mission and daily

functioning of our school. I had also just read in Luke 5 about the calling of the first disciples when Jesus says to Simon/Peter, “Don’t be afraid, from now on you will fish for people.” To carry the metaphor a little further, in fishing, there are many different tasks, and some may be better at certain tasks than others. One might be good at mending the nets, while another is good at casting them; one might be good at remembering the best places to fish, while another is good at reeling the nets back in; another could be good at rowing the boat, while another is best at steering it. Similarly, in the kingdom of God and in our school community, it takes quite the team effort to raise up the next generation of young disciples. A big thank you to all of you who pour out your time and talents for all our students and for one another.



At the board level, we also have different backgrounds, gifts, and abilities that we try to use to help the school stay strongly focused on our mission of, in partnership with Christian families, offering Christ-centered, academically excellent education that challenges students to live and act in society as committed followers of Jesus Christ. To that end, the board recently approved a new part-time position for high school planning, decided not to have a second middle school and focus on the high school grades for the new Upper Campus, and approved a new task force led by Spiritual Life Coordinator Becky Johnson for gender/sexuality position and policy formation that reaffirm and strengthen a biblical and traditional position while ensuring a posture that adopts love without compromising truth and convictions. We are thoroughly excited as a board for the bright future of our school and doing our part to see the next generation of “fishers of people” disciples raised up!

WELCOME TO THE AACCS FAMILY!

Welcome Our New Teachers & Staff

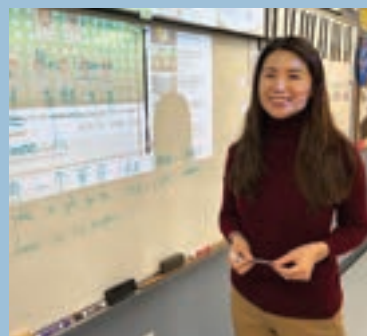
The school is thrilled to share that well-respected and seasoned educator, Brian Baird, from Dexter High School joined the Ann Arbor Christian School staff in February to help with the planning of our new high school. With his 30+ years of high school experience and often praised as one of the best teachers at Dexter High School, Brian will bring invaluable insights and advice as we continue our planning between now and summer. In addition, he spent several years teaching in an inner-city high school, which gave him new perspective and heart for students.



Brian Baird
HIGH SCHOOL PLANNING
COORDINATOR

B.A., Psychology, University of Michigan;
Teaching Certification, Eastern Michigan
University; M.A., Mathematics, Northeastern
Illinois University

We are so grateful for God’s provision of people like Brian who feel drawn to our school’s vision to expand strong and Christ-centered education for the community. In his application, he wrote: *“To be at a new beginning and to help shape a school and a culture is about the biggest dream a life-long teacher could ask for.”* What an amazing sentiment! Brian and his wife attend 2142 Community Church in Ann Arbor.

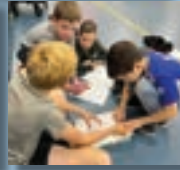
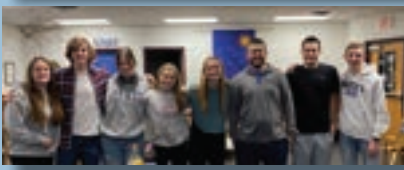
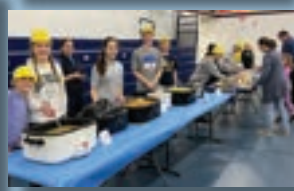
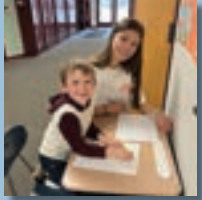


Hongli Giszczak
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
CHINESE TEACHER

We are excited to welcome Hongli Giszczak to Ann Arbor Christian as our part-time elementary Chinese teacher. Hongli was born and raised in China, moving to the United States in 2019 with her husband, who is from

Ann Arbor. Her educational training was completed in China, where she graduated from Changchun Normal College with a degree in educational methodology. Since that time, she has worked in various other fields, including telecommunications. She is eager to return to education and share her love and knowledge of Chinese language and culture with the students at Ann Arbor Christian School. The students have been very excited to resume Chinese class, which began on February 27 and will continue for this semester. Hongli and her husband, John, have three children and attend St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Ann Arbor. We are thankful and grateful for God’s provision in connecting Hongli with our school!

#AACSLIFE



Check out photos like these on Instagram & Facebook

BEYOND THE BASICS

Service Learning

By Renée McKeone, Curriculum Director & Student Support Coordinator

Ann Arbor Christian School's mission statement has a line that encapsulates our goal of developing students who will make a difference in the world by living and acting in society as committed followers of Jesus Christ. Such disciples are Kingdom builders, and one of the ways we nurture that goal is through regular service projects that enable students to make a difference in the world. This fall, we embarked on one of our larger scale service projects, the Multiplication Project. Staff members on the Multiplication Project selected Shepherd's Foundation, a charity that focuses on Christ-centered service to the people, especially children in Ukraine. Since the beginning of the war, Shepherd's Foundation has concentrated on supporting refugees and addressing the humanitarian crisis in their country.

This project allowed students to use their gifts and talents, offer those to the Lord and allow him to multiply those talents and use them to serve others. This project is modeled on the story of the Multiplication of the Loaves, which the students first explored in chapel. Students saw how a young boy offered what he had and allowed the Lord to use it for His purposes and glory. In this way, students were encouraged to think about what gifts and talents they have and use those to create a project or service that they could offer to the Lord. Students were given the opportunity to apply for "seed money" of \$5 or \$10 to fund their project. Approximately 120 students were commissioned to complete projects with \$535 of seed money invested in their work. They were sent with these words during a special commissioning ceremony held on Grandparents' Day:

The most famous commissioning is when Jesus commissioned his disciples saying "Go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . and lo I am with you always to the very end of the age. He blessed them as he sent them."

Today Jesus and AACS are commissioning you, we are sending you. Here the blessing Jesus wants to give you.

- Go – use your talents to bring a blessing to others.
- Go – knowing that you are not alone. Jesus is with you.
- Go – knowing that with God all things are possible.

Another 30 students were commissioned as prayer partners in the project with these words, "You have the opportunity to be a prayer partner or a prayer warrior. Remember, Jesus first prayed to the Father before he did the miracle. So, we are depending on you to pray for the multipliers asking God to bless their "loaves and fish" their project and multiply it."

Students, with the help of their families, then embarked on the challenge to carry out their projects. Finally, during the week of Dec. 19th, students began to bring in their projects and prepare for our craft fair. We were amazed by the creativity, diversity, and quality of projects made by the students. We had



everything from handmade stress balls, an amazing assortment of baked goods, wood projects, handmade jewelry, jams and jellies, pickles, etc. Students loved sharing their talents and then "shopping" the craft fair for Christmas gifts for families and friends. Additionally, older students served younger students as shopping buddies, helping them to select and make purchases.



Through the efforts of the students, the support of the families and the multiplying power of God, the investment was multiplied tenfold bringing in over \$5,200 in proceeds.

On March 3rd, AACS students "presented" our fund to Shepherd's Foundation and were able to be thanked via video by a representative from the Foundation to hear the impact that will be made through our contribution. We captured our students offering this gift and our prayers for the gift to continue its multiplication power in Ukraine in a video we shared back with the ministry.



Through projects such as this one, AACS fulfills our mission and key school learning goals of developing "faithful stewards" who use their resources to build God's kingdom and "willing servants" who put the needs of others before their own and give freely of their time and talents.

Science Fair

AACS scientists showed off their work at our annual Ann Arbor Christian School Science Fair on February 10. Fifty-eight projects were submitted, including projects that were both curricular requirements and voluntary projects - all showcasing a high level of curiosity and through scientific investigation better understanding the world God created. Students in third and seventh grade spent class time learning how to complete scientific investigation and develop a science fair project, which was largely completed at home. Both Mrs. Wiland, the middle school science teacher, and Mrs. Charlton, the third-grade teacher, were impressed with the quality of projects their students created.

In celebration of all things science, the students were treated to an assembly by the Michigan State University Science Theater, who performed several science demonstrations using physics principles. Students loved their show which increased the excitement in science. Additionally, we were blessed to gather as a school at our "Annual Soup Supper" to view the projects and celebrate the students' work. The soup supper has not been held since February 2020, so this year's gathering was extra special.

As a Christian School committed to academic excellence, developing a love and interest in science is one way we foster disciples who will "live and act in society as committed followers of Jesus Christ". As our students grow and use their gifts and talents, we expect to see future engineers, doctors, scientists and other leaders ready to impact the world in amazing ways...and it all starts with curiosity.

LASTING SIGNIFICANCE

Mark Doorlag's Memorial

By Wayne Sit, Head of School



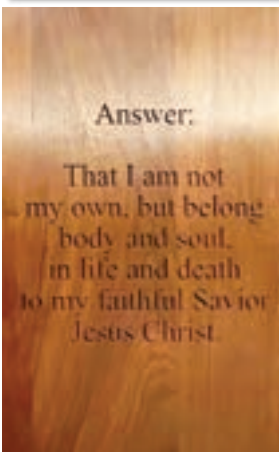
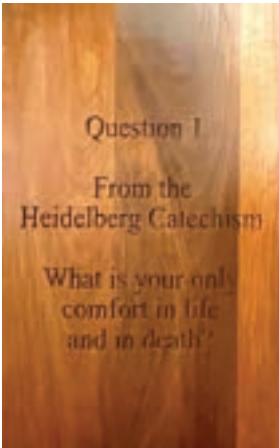
In January, the school unveiled a memorial piece for alumni parent, Mark Doorlag. Below are the words on the plaque. We hope you will have the opportunity to see it in person and to touch the stone yourself. In talking with Leslie Doorlag, she and Wayne Sit had the idea of Mark's memorial

piece being interactive. Leslie asked Wayne if he might be able to find a stone from Jerusalem. Through his connection with another CSI (Christian School International) administrator, he was able to locate a stone from Jerusalem. We pray that the memorial piece's significance will impact generations of future students.

Mark Doorlag

September 6, 1967 - December 22, 2021

Coming from Christian education himself, Mark attended Kalamazoo Christian Schools for K-12 and then Calvin College in western Michigan. He was passionate about education centered on Jesus Christ. When he and his wife Leslie had their own children, he knew that he wanted them to attend Ann Arbor Christian School. In that spirit, the Mark Doorlag Memorial Fund was used to help fund the pioneering start of the AACS high school so that Christian education can have an even further reach in the community.



At AACS, Mark was known for many roles in addition to being a father of three students. Perhaps most visible to the community, he coached both boys' basketball and soccer for AACS, with a special love for soccer as the head coach for many years. He was a devoted classroom parent helper, always taking pictures on field trips, a carpool driver for 15 years, and known for the big ski trips that he organized for school families. He also came most mornings to get his coffee from the Gathering Space.

Behind the scenes and most visible to the staff, Mark loved doing technology work for the school as the IT committee chair. In this role, he spent most of his volunteer time - countless hours - helping to provide the technology resources that the teachers, staff, and students use every single day. He always wanted to help the teachers and often felt like part of the staff because he was on-site so regularly every week. He often rode his bicycle from downtown Ypsilanti to AACS in the evenings and on the weekends to work on technology. He had a servant's heart for AACS and those around him.



Lastly but most importantly, Mark loved the Lord, and that best manifested itself in how he loved his wife Leslie and his children Eva, Jack, and Cole. At his funeral, it was shared that this Question and Answer #1 from the Heidelberg Catechism was deeply on his mind and central to his final earthly words to his own children.

For those of you who read this memorial piece, please touch the Jerusalem stone below to affirm Mark's and our collective belief that Jesus Christ is our own source of comfort in life and death.

Welcome Bob Ause to AACS!

Bob Ause, the recently retired chair of the Science Department at Greenhills School, is currently serving at AACS as the long-term substitute for 8th grade science this year. Bob has also volunteered to consult and be a resource for the high school leadership team as they continue to develop the AACS High School science curriculum. With a passion for science and languages, Bob has 28 years of experience teaching high school and middle school students, mainly teaching biology, chemistry, AP chemistry and physical science.



Bob Ause

HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE CURRICULUM CONSULTANT

B.A., Chemistry and Classics, Williams College; M.Div., Fuller Theological Seminary; M.A., Education, University of Michigan

Bob says his favorite age group to work with is high schoolers. He served on Young Life staff from 1987 to 1994 doing youth outreach in Vienna, Austria and Hungary, where he learned to speak Hungarian and met his wife Tammy in Vienna in 1989.

With his unique professional background, his concern for high school youth, and his understanding of the stressors and challenges facing high schoolers today, Bob will be offering insight and expertise to the high school leadership as they continue to create a healthy AACS High School environment and a strong science curriculum.

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The BEACON

Ann Arbor Christian School
5500 Whitmore Lake Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48105
annarborchristian.org
734.741.4948

ALUMNI PROFILE: KARISSA KAO

Year of graduation from AACCS: 2012

Grades you attended AACCS: Kindergarten, 3rd-8th grade.

What high school did you attend? Skyline High School

Post-secondary educational plans? B.S. in Public Health and MPH in Nutritional Sciences from the University of Michigan (2020, 2022), currently working as a Clinical Research Coordinator in Hepatology at Michigan Medicine

Favorite memories or experiences of your time at AACCS: Having reading buddies, 3rd-grade bug collection, 5th-grade wax museum and scrapbook units, learning to juggle, medieval feast, and leading chapel families.

Special personal accomplishments since graduating AACCS? During my freshman year at the University of Michigan, my synchronized skating team was selected as Team USA by the U.S. Figure Skating Association to represent our country at an international competition in Sweden. After a decade, I was so blessed to be able to fulfill my dream and to meet skaters from all over the world. Upon landing in Sweden, however, my entire team came down with norovirus and we were faced with the dilemma of whether or not to withdraw from the competition. Despite the odds, my team was determined to compete, and we placed fifth overall. This is an experience I have carried with me and applied to not only academic challenges but in everything I do. Anything is possible with Christ.

How did your experiences at AACCS impact you? Growing up at AACCS provided a foundation for me to grow in my faith as well as my character. This foundation also allowed me to find ways to integrate my faith into both my schoolwork and my career. The support and love from friends, families, and teachers/staff have given me a lot of courage to overcome obstacles, such as entering public school after graduating in 2012. I would love to create this same community I felt while at AACCS for others in the future.



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