



SCHOOL BELL

HIGHLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL PUBLICATION



**NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
ANNUAL REPORT
SCIENCE CAMP**

HCS MISSION STATEMENT

In order to honor God, we nurture and guide students to see the Father's creation, to sense order in a world saved by Christ, and to serve God through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

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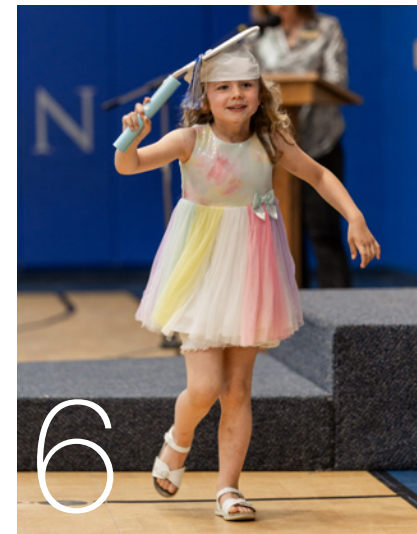
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PRIDE IN THE MUNDANE

written by Dr. Kyle Weener, Principal



For generations, the community of Highland Christian has prayerfully worked together to see that our vision to academically equip, Biblically ground, and spiritually nurture to impact the world for Christ can be achieved. Getting a daily behind the scenes look, it is an incredible blessing to see how students from Christian homes from Gary to Cedar Lake and Chicago to Valparaiso have the opportunity to grow in the Lord, His word, and Christian centered relationships.

While Highland Christian continues to achieve excellent academic outcomes, claim league championships, and shine on the stage, my greatest pride comes from the mundane moments throughout each day where students are noticed for their individual gifts, character is developed, and when members of the community embrace God's word and directly apply it to their lives.

This year, I have observed:

- A male student who struggled to find friends was able to connect with another boy in his class. He now has a best friend at school.
- A student who previously struggled with behavioral challenges successfully used strategies provided by staff to ensure he had a great year.
- Two teachers met daily before school to spend time in prayer for each other and the students at HCS.
- Students rallied around classmates who were not the "star" of the team and got excited when each member of the team scored during the season.
- Special letters were written by students to teachers, fellow classmates, shut-ins, and those in need of encouragement.
- Students going before the Lord in prayer on behalf of others.

As we close the 24/25 school year, it is my prayer that God will continue to work in and through Highland Christian to ensure that Christian families throughout Northwest Indiana and Illinois continue to grow in His word through the life-changing experience of a Christian education.

Kyle



HIGHLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

UPCOMING EVENTS

ICE CREAM SOCIAL
August 15

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL (K-8)
August 18

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL (SEC)
August 19 & 20

GOLF OUTING
August 25

PASTORS CHAPEL
September 26

GRANDPARENTS' DAYS (SEC)
October 8-9

GRANDPARENTS' DAY (K-8)
October 10



SCAN THE QR CODE TO SIGN UP FOR THE HOWLER!

The Howler is a monthly email publication designed to inform the community of the next month's events and recap the previous month at HCS. Within editions there will be photos, links, and information regarding admissions, fundraising, athletics, fine arts, events, and more!



PREPARED TO IMPACT THE WORLD FOR CHRIST: CLASS OF 2025 GRADUATION

written by Vicki Huizenga, 8th Bible Teacher & Homeroom

As the Class of 2025 prepares to leave Highland Christian School and continue their journey into high school, we celebrate not just a moment of completion—but a Deep Hope built of the truth of God’s promises.

The mission at HCS has always been clear: **to nurture and guide students to honor God by helping them see His creation, sense order in a world saved by Christ, and serve God through the Holy Spirit.** Over the years, this graduating class has grown not only in knowledge, but also in wisdom and faith.

These students have learned to approach academics with curiosity and excellence, to explore the world through a Biblical lens, and to see every subject—math, science, literature, history—as part of God’s creative and redemptive story. They’ve been equipped to be **academically prepared, Biblically grounded, and spiritually nurtured**, and now, they’re ready to make an impact beyond the walls of HCS.

The 2024/25 school theme, “**Creation Caretaker**,” from **Genesis 2:15**, reminded us that God entrusts us with His creation: *“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”*

Our students have embraced this role. They have learned to plant and care for a garden, cared for others through

Impact Week and Bigs & Littles, and grown in faith through chapels and classroom discussions. Whether on the field or court, on the stage or in the band room, in Quest or in the art room, they have pursued their God—given gifts with passion and purpose. These graduates have grown into leaders who are ready to love and honor God with their hearts, minds, and strength.

As they move forward into high school, we are confident that each of them carries with them a heart that seeks to honor God, a mind that understands the beauty and order of His world, and a spirit willing to serve in bold and humble ways.

To the Class of 2025: your journey is just beginning—but you are ready.

Keep your eyes on Christ, trust in His Word, and step forward in faith.

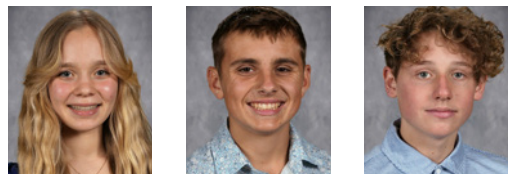
Congratulations, graduates! May you go forward to **impact the world for Christ.**



Vicki

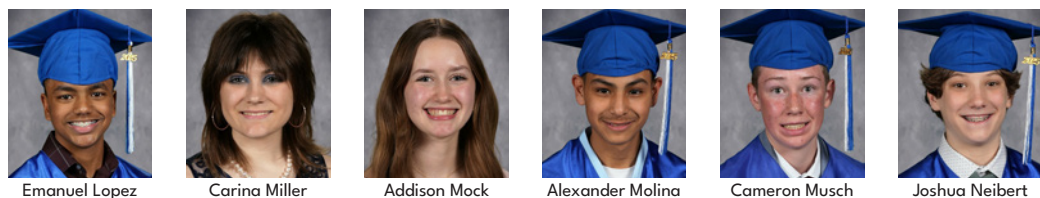


Chloe Aardsma Hope Aardsma Brelynn Blauw Olivia Boender Annika Burney Melina Casares Isabella Casillas Leilani Celio



Adelia Eriks Jake Evers Trey Evers

CLASS



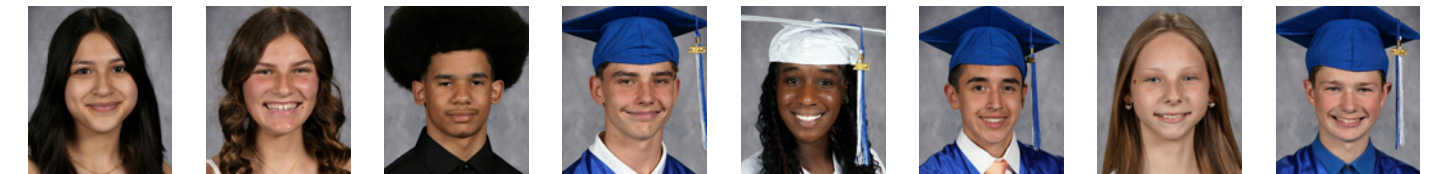
Emanuel Lopez Carina Miller Addison Mock Alexander Molina Cameron Musch Joshua Neibert



Marcus Somerville Jayden Thompson Logan Tucker Danica Vander Meyden Jonathan Vander Woude Rosalind Vantler Woude Jiraiya Van Til Allyanna Vela



Christian Childress Miriam Christoffels Deshawn Clay Nelson Contreras Cody DeBoer Rowan DeBoer Kellan DeVries Logan Downs



Angelyn Galvan Addyson Haitsma William Henderson Tyler Hutton Favour Izuora Daniel Julian Taylor Kinkade Evan Kuzmar



Owen Ooms Jason Oostman Joshua Oostman Madigan Poortinga Caleb Porter Mason Powell Giselle Rivera Kennedy Roberts



Belany Vazquez Abigail Wieringa Bode Wogum Liberty Yates

2025



WE'RE ON OUR WAY...

written by Karen van Belle, Preschool Director & Teacher

Preschool is the beginning of an educational journey for many children. It's also a reminder that we need to stop and celebrate accomplishments! Our preschool graduates learned a lot this year and we congratulate them – we're so proud of you!

Our final song at graduation this year mentioned many ways in which the preschoolers have grown. There was academic growth – these students now have the skills they need to succeed in Kindergarten! Letters, numerals, literacy skills, shapes, and so much more. They grew physically: they're taller and their shoes might not fit as well as they did last September! They can run, jump, cut, and color. They also grew socially and emotionally. They learned about getting along with others, solving problems, and doing their best. And we all grew spiritually: we talked about God and His love for us, we prayed together, and we served others.

Another line in that final song said that their “teacher was a little bit prouder”. This is absolutely true, but we can never take all the credit for the students’ learning! The work families do at home is foundational and our partnerships with parents and families are vital to our work in preschool. We are so thankful for the families we have worked with this year and we pray God’s blessings on all of you as you continue to support your child throughout their school years.



One of our Bible memory verses this year came from Philippians 4:13. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!” We have already seen Jesus do amazing things for these children, and we pray that His hand will continue to be evident to them as they take the next steps in learning. Congratulations, SEC Graduates!

Karen



FOLLOWING THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD!

written by Judy Zandstra, Librarian

It was a long satisfying play season preparing for and presenting “The Wizard of Oz Youth Edition.” 30 actors, 17 backstage crew, and 4 tech crew made up the whole production! That is a lot of junior high students invested in bringing the best production to the stage.

The actors earned a Testimonial for giving their hearts to a wonderful performance, the Tech Crew earned a PHT – Doctorate of Technology for making sure all the microphones, lights, and sound were coordinated, and the backstage crew earned a Medal of Courage for arranging sets and props “just so.”

As a director, it is always a gift from God to see the many talents and gifts bestowed upon these students come together for great entertainment. Together, we are so grateful to all the parents and supporters of the play who make it all worthwhile.

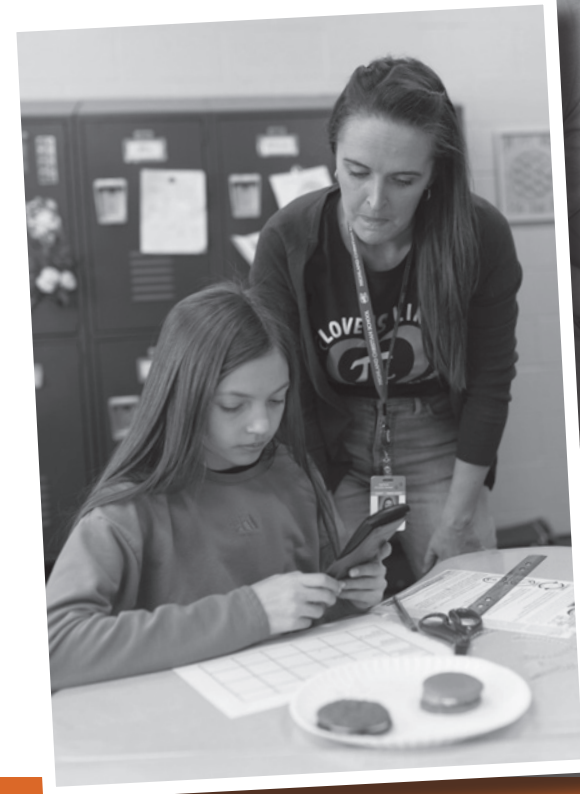
We say a sad goodbye to our 8th graders who are moving on to high school:

- Chloe Aardsma, Taylor Kinkade, Ally Vela, and Abby Wieringa who all acted their way into hearts
- Bella Casillas, Carina Miller (make-up), Belany Vazquez, and Liberty Yates who worked backstage providing us with sets and scenery to make the plays come to life
- Logan Tucker who, for three years, brightened our lives with stage lights

We pray all of you may continue to experience God’s Blessings and use the gifts He gave you for His purposes!

Judy Zandstra





NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, MS. KIMBERLY JULIAN

written by Andrea Harvey, Assistant Principal

We are excited to announce that Ms. Kimberly Julian has been named HCS' new Assistant Principal - effective July 1, 2025.

During her time at HCS, Ms. Julian has served as a Jr. High math, Spanish, and English Language Learner (ELL) teacher. Prior to working at HCS, she taught high school math at Calumet Christian and supported ELL students at School City of Hammond. Growing up as a missionary's daughter in Mexico, she became fluent in Spanish and learned the importance of having a mission-focused mindset.



Recently, Kimberly completed a master's degree in Teaching and Learning. She and her three children-Evelyn, Daniel and Katelyn- are residents of Schererville, IN. Katelyn has finished 7th grade and will be an 8th grader this fall, and Daniel was a member of the HCS graduating class of 2025, who will join his sister, Evelyn, at Illiana.

In her role as Assistant Principal, Kimberly will be the school testing coordinator, work with teaching teams throughout the school, lead WIDA testing (for ELL students), evaluate teachers, lead the Jr. High team, and teach a few Jr. High classes. Her expertise as a bilingual speaker will also be utilized to support families within the HCS community.

Andrea

Christian education is a beautiful and complex gift, housed and kept by the people of the community it serves. Highland Christian School has one of the most significant, selfless, God honoring communities I have ever witnessed. There are bright, bold stories and silent, sacred moments in communities like ours as we each step up and take our place as co-laborers and stewards of the vision and mission God has entrusted to us.

As we approach the end of this fiscal year, we wish to thank you for your partnership in the work of Christ-centered education at Highland Christian School. You have equipped us with the resources we need to advance learning, strengthen discipleship, and pursue growth for each student we serve. May these highlights and testimonials bring you joy as you consider God's faithfulness to bless these efforts.

— Jodi Lineburg, Development Director

A YEAR IN REVIEW AND A YEAR TO LOOK FORWARD TO!

In 2024, we announced the Literacy Cadre, Pulse, and Saturday Serves as initiatives for 2025. Here are a few quotes highlighting them.

LITERACY CADRE "As we continue to improve our reading instructional practices, the Cadre has provided Highland Christian School with valuable resources, quality professional development, and expert advice. I have learned so much from this experience and have been able to pass the knowledge on to staff during late starts, coaching cycles, and PLC meetings."

— Kristin Freel, Reading Specialist

PULSE "I saw a group of kids who didn't really know one another and didn't have much of any comfortability with these new instruments, songs, dances, and styles of learning all come alive and have an absolute blast together! These kids grew more comfortable, then friendly, then bonded and enjoyed one another so much as we shared such a variety of musical experiences with one another. The more they became comfortable experiencing new expressions of music, the more our creativity would blow up and we'd spend whole class periods making new original music collaboratively together. The class started with the development of beat, expression, tonality, and ensemble skills. The class ended, however, with a team of musicians learning how to creatively function as an artistic community. As far as they're concerned, they perhaps thought they were just having musical fun together. From an educator's perspective and professional musician's point of view, these kids learned new skills and developed new proficiencies that will serve them well the rest of their lives as they hopefully seek out future opportunities to be a part of various musical communities."

— Mr. Nate Shelhaas

SATURDAY SERVES "Saturday Serves is an unique opportunity to come together as a whole family and live out what we try to teach in our home — loving neighbors, using our skills and health to physically serve, giving of our time, offering friendships to our community as well as the school families working along side us."

—Stephanie Evanson, Parent

ANNUAL BUDGET NUMBERS	2024/2025 Based on 560	2025/2026 Based on 600
K-8 Tuition Rate	\$8,500	\$9,150
Budget	\$5,835,251	\$6,596,848

GIVING HIGHLIGHTS	Gifts Received
Expansion Loan Repayment	\$631,217
Foundation	\$117,127
Supporting Church	\$94,152
Tuition Assistance & Hope Fund	\$29,157
Wish List	\$16,262

EXPANSION DEBT SERVICE	2023/2024	2024/2025
Starting Balance	\$3,690,000	\$2,455,277
Ending Balance	\$2,455,277	\$1,900,000
Pledge Balance	\$472,803	\$ 240,265

FAMILY LEGACY FUND DISTRIBUTIONS

Distributions received in 2024/2025 totaled \$ 36,058

GRANTS & SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS	2024/2025 Awarded	2025/2026 Estimated
Title Funds	\$204,329	\$120,000
Safe School Security Grant	\$20,579	\$87,500
Project Lead the Way	\$10,000 for FY26	
Robotics	\$2,500 for FY26	
Summer School	\$1,089	\$2,750

* Financial data reflects transactions through May 31, 2025

THINGS WE'RE CELEBRATING IN 2024/2025

Academic Highlights

- Eight students completed their 10th grade Geometry requirement at HCS this year!
- Our 3rd grade class celebrated a 95% IREAD Pass rate and eclipsed State wide results!

Student Development Highlights

- Our 5th Grade class enjoyed a rich community building and hands on learning experience at our first overnight Science Camp at Camp Roger.
- Junior High students explored personal finance, strategy & social skills, gardening, music ministry, and the creative arts during through our expanded elective periods.

Program Highlights

- We appreciate the impact of our participation in the Indiana Literacy Cadre on reading instruction!
- Saturday Serve! These opportunities blessed recipients and participants alike.
- Student Services identified & implemented a school wide system for early identification and effective support of students' social emotional development.

Advancement Highlights

- We enjoyed another record-breaking Auction!
- We celebrate the launch of our Planned Giving Legacy Society.
- We appreciate the continued generosity & vision of our constituents.
- Etc... contributed \$225,000 to the Foundation this year!

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO IN 2025/2026!

- Measureable student gains as we adjust staffing in Jr High Math to allow for smaller classes and greater differentiation in instruction.
- Increased discussion and opportunities to encourage FAITH FORMATION as we continue to develop resources and actively embed faith formation in all areas of instruction and student experience.
- A continued emphasis on SERVICE TO OTHERS as a core value and habit in faith formation.
- The opportunity to add COMPUTER SCIENCE, a high school requirement that can be fulfilled at HCS!
- As we near the end of our preschool accreditation process, we look forward to the ways this process will strengthen SEC.
- More hands on learning in K, 1, and 2 as we implement additional Project Lead The Way modules!
- After school Robotics!



LONG-TERM FUNDS REPORT

Principle gifts in these invested funds remain in perpetuity with an annual disbursement available for the named project area. Growth in these funds is dependent on market performance and new gifts received.

FUND	PROJECT AREA FUNDED
ABC Family Legacy Fund	Teacher Wish Lists
Case & Rosemary Van Til Family Legacy Fund	Private Music Lessons/Band
Choice Contingency Fund	Alternate to State Program
Feikema Family Memorial Tuition Assistance Fund	Tuition Assistance
Frank & Gladys Van Til Family Legacy Fund	Greatest Need
Future Large Project Fund	Capital Improvements
Harold & Jennie Palmboos Scholarship Fund	Innovate & Inspire Teacher Grants
Joseph Jonkman Family Legacy	Greatest Need
Lineburg Family Legacy Fund	Advancement /Matching Gift Fund
Marilyn Gossman Memorial Library Fund	Library Books, Materials & Equipment
Sonshine Fund	Preschool Needs
The Principal's Fund	Tuition Assistance/Priority Needs



SPRING SPORTS RECAP

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

written by Luke Hillegonds, Athletic Director & 3-8 PE Teacher

The 7th grade boys volleyball team had a great season. The team competed well against the other schools in our league and showed great improvement throughout the year. The highlight of their season came in a win over Crown Point Christian in three games. The boys were coached by Brandon Boomsma and Mike Kramer. Throughout the season, the players and coaches represented Christ well through their play and sportsmanship.

The 8th grade boys volleyball team had a successful season. The boys earned the number two overall seed for the league tournament in which they made a great run to the championship game. They lost a close final game in the championship, but battled hard and showed great resilience in the tournament and throughout the season. Caitlin DeBoer coached the team and helped the team improve throughout the year.

Scribe



CO-ED TRACK

written by Luke Hillegonds, Athletic Director & 3-8 PE Teacher

The boys and girls track season took place from early April until the second week of May. Cambrie Van Roekel, Tracy Summers, and Ashley Kruihof coached both teams this year and did a wonderful job of helping each athlete improve as athletes and as people of faith. The team participated in four total track meets with three of them taking place at Chicago Christian High School and one of them at Illiana Christian High School.

The highlight of the season came in the conference meet at the end of the season. The boys' team improved

dramatically from the beginning of the season and earned fourth overall. Tyler Hutton took first place in the 100m and 200m while also breaking the school record for both events earlier in the season. The boys' 400 relay and medley relay both earned a first place finish as well. The girls' team had their best meet of the year and took home first place overall. This is their first conference win in eight years. Braelynn Blauw secured second place in the 100m and 200m

with Naomi Ajayi finishing third in the 200m. Danica Vander Meyden won the 1600m and high jump, while Ellie Oostman took second in the long jump and Emma Zoeteman took third in 100m hurdles. Finally, the 400 relay team finished second with the medley relay team finishing third.

Thank you to each athlete and coach for competing and representing Highland Christian. We are very proud of all our track participants.



7TH GRADE VOLLEYBALL
COACHES: BRANDON BOOMSMA & MIKE KRAMER

8TH GRADE VOLLEYBALL
COACH: CAITLIN DEBOER

TRACK TEAM
COACHES: CAMBRIE VAN ROEKEL, TRACY SUMMERS, ASHLEY KRUIHOF

Brody Boomsma, Aidan Brouwer, Cole Dykstra, Joshua Friend, Xavier Hughes, William Jellema, Noah Jones, Caleb Katz, Collin Kramer, Israel Reyes, Sammy Rich, Leo Smit

CJ Childress, Cody DeBoer, Daniel Julian, Evan Kuzmar, Josh Neibert, Josh Oostman, Caleb Porter, Mason Powell, Jonathan Vander Woude, Bode Wognum

BOYS' TRACK: Jay Aardsma, Tyce Blocker, Adam Book, Aiden Brouwer, Zeelan Constantino, Noah Cubelo, Eddie DeVries, Logan Downs, Ryker Evanson, Sawyer Groot, Xavier Hughes, Tyler Hutton, Noah Jones, Jonathan Kotynski, Collin Kramer, Evan Kuzmar, Alex Molina, Matthew Neibert, Cameron Parks, Brandon Pierce, Caleb Porter, Noah Ravesloot, Andrew Schutt, Josh Skrabutenas, Leo Smit, Sam Thompson, Paxton VanderPol, Bode Wognum, Levi Yukon
GIRLS' TRACK: Hope Aardsma, Naomi Ajayi, Braelynn Blauw, Olivia Boender, Melina Casares, Allison Clark, Isabella Corral, Kobi DeVries, Gabby Dobyne, Briar Dotson, Lia Eriks, Angelyn Galvan, Addy Haitsma, Ezra Hammersten, Camila Harris, Hayden Hiskes, Grace Jackson, Kayden Johnson, T'Mai Matthews, Addison Mock, Norah Natelborg, Ellie Oostman, Madigan Poortinga, Shayley Summers, Lae'Lah Swain, Danica VanderMeyden, Rosalind VanderWoude, Vivian VanderWoude, Amiya Wright, Emma Zoeteman

MR. RICK VANDER WOUDE, AKA “THE SHERIFF” IS HANGING UP HIS COAT

written by Jodi Lineburg, Development Director

Having taught at Highland Christian School for 45 years, Mr. Vander Woude impacted several generations in his role as teacher, coach, and mentor. While good teachers inspire learning, great teachers impact lives!

I’ve had the distinct privilege of serving alongside Rick for 20 of these years. In addition to the impact he’s had on my life as a colleague and friend, I’ve witnessed his impact on students, families, and our community as a collective whole. We reached out to a few of these folks and asked them to share some key memories as we say an official farewell to Mr. Vander Woude in this School Bell.

A cherished teacher!

“In the ‘80s, Mr. Vander Woude was one of my middle school teachers. At that time, he was not my favorite (Ha!), but he quickly became a favorite when it was my kids’ turn to be his students in the 2000s! How comforting it was that he was still on staff, always at the corner for school pick-up, and always prepared with a greeting and reply of “Super Duper” when asked how he was doing. Rick’s constant presence has made Highland Christian School a better, comfortable, and safe space.

He was an amazing history teacher and also a great tech teacher! Mr. Vander Woude instilled a love of all things history and government for both Lauren and Donny. He was always available to help the kids when needed.

Finally as a coach, wow! My Lauren was new to cross country running and Mr. Vander Woude took the time to support her through 3 years of the sport as she strived to learn and improve. Due to conflicts with other sports, there were times when she was the only student at practice. Not only did he run practice – just for her, he would run alongside her the entire time! As a parent, it’s difficult to put into words how much that meant. Thanks, Mr. Vander Woude for the impact you made on my family!”

— Mrs. Christina Woo, Class of 1986

“A good and faithful servant”

Rick VanderWoude personified the good and faithful servant during his career at HCS.

He dedicated himself to engaging curriculum like the 6th grade castle project. He championed technology literacy through programs like the typing class (which was as fun as physical therapy but just as impactful). He fostered Godly excellence by mentoring students through programs like National History Day.

Much of my academic and personal success can be traced to the work Rick VanderWoude did as the hands and feet of Christ. I am grateful for the time I spent as his student and wish him good health and ample access to loved ones as he celebrates his career dedicated to training up generations of students at HCS.

— Mr. Ethan O’Riley, Class of 2013



A teacher who cared about the individual.

“I have a lot of memories about Rick, but my fondest one would be in 8th grade. HCS had a banquet dinner for all the 8th graders. Rick gave a little speech talking about how most of the class has been together since kindergarten. He pointed out that I left in 3rd grade but came back to graduate, and then he started rattling off all the nicknames he gave like “Tail gunner Joe”, “Joe Montana”, “Joe-to-joe”, and a few others. I was red in the face from laughing, and Rick still calls me by some of those nicknames when I see him at church.”

— Mr. Joe Jacobs, Class of 2006

SOCIETY RECAP

written by Dr. Kyle Weener, Principal

On April 29, 2025, the Society of Highland Christian gathered together for its annual meeting. Presentations were made from board members and school employees to highlight advancements that have occurred over the past year. Outside of the standard updates from the Education, Finance, Transportation, and Building and Grounds committees, the board also presented three items for Society vote - three school board nominations, the 2025/2026 budget, and the opportunity to expand Christian education in Hammond, Indiana. After tabulating all votes, each of the three items on the ballot passed.

Board Slate	327 Yes / 27 No (92.37%)
Budget	252 Yes / 103 No (70.99%)
Expansion of Christian Education	233 Yes / 123 No (65.45%)

THANKS, MR. VANDER WOUDE, FOR SERVING THE LORD WELL AT HIGHLAND CHRISTIAN SCHOOL!

RETIRING AND MOVING ON TO NEW ADVENTURES



RETIRING
JEFF SCHAAP
Custodian

MOVING ON
GLEN DE YOUNG
SYDNEY SCHURMAN
JEFF SCHAAP
MEGAN KRYGIER

We’re grateful for all the dedication and care you’ve given— your presence will be missed, and wish you nothing but the best on your next adventure!



RETIRING
RICK VANDER WOUDE
Director of
Instructional Technology

MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

5 YEARS

Melissa Brouwer
Andrea Harvey
Abby Jacobs
Ashley Kruithof
Carly Murphy
Sara Sluiter

10 YEARS

Dawn Kuiper
20 YEARS
Sara Jabaay
Jodi Lineburg
Kathy Vant Hoff

45 YEARS

Rick Vander Woude

RETIREMENTS, ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & NEW STAFF



NEW
Sherry Hiatt & Becca Trepton

T.R.I.P.

RETIRING
Shelly Witham & Ann Lynch

NEW STAFF



MEGAN BENNETT
3rd Grade & Special Education Teacher



SIMONE GILLS
3rd Grade Teacher



ISMAEL RIVIERA
Bus Driver



PEGGY RYLANDER
Before & After Care



AMY WIERINGA
Director of Instructional Technology

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Joe Jonkman

HCS alum (*78), member at Oak Glen URC, Logistical and Inventory Manager at Ozinga Brothers Middle River Marine Terminal

John Vander Pol

Member at Faith Church in Highland, Serves on the HCS Technology Committee, and is Professional Software Engineer

Taylor Boice

Member at Faith Church in Dyer, Financial Planner at +1 Group, Serves on Elim Christian Services Foundation Board

OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS

Shawn Evers

Board President, Finance Committee, Former Finance Chair, Vice Finance Chair, and ETC Board

Jenn Neibert

Education Committee Chair, Governance, Former Finance Committee and Board Secretary

Karen Sherwood

Education Committee, Buildings & Grounds Committee, and Transportation Committee



FIFTH GRADE'S FIRST ADVENTURE AT CAMP ROGER

written by Madalyn Schaaf,
5th Grade Homeroom Teacher

This year, our fifth-grade class experienced something truly special - their very first trip to Camp Roger in Belding, Michigan. In the towering trees and quiet trails, Camp Roger gave students a chance to explore, learn, and grow in ways that stretched far beyond the classroom.

Over the course of the week, students took part in exciting outdoor activities like compass navigation, archery, rock wall climbing, and nature hikes. They explored the pond during a hands-on study, tried fishing and canoeing, and let their creativity shine during arts and crafts. Each activity not only built confidence and teamwork but also encouraged students to appreciate the beauty and wonder of God's creation.

One of the most meaningful aspects of the trip was the chance to deepen their faith in a unique and peaceful setting. Camp provided quiet moments for reflection, prayer, and connection with God. On the first night, students took part in a night hike, walking under the stars and learning to trust and listen in the stillness of nature. The week concluded with a beautiful candlelight chapel service on Thursday evening, where students gathered together to sing, pray, and share how God had been present in their experiences. It was a powerful and emotional moment that brought everyone closer together.

This unforgettable trip would not have been possible without the amazing parent volunteers and staff who gave their time, energy, and hearts to support our students. From guiding hikes to encouraging kids on the rock wall, their presence made all the difference.

Our first visit to Camp Roger was more than just an outdoor adventure - it was a time of faith, friendship, and growth. We are so grateful for the memories made and the deeper connections formed, and we look forward to many more trips in the future.

Madalyn



PHILADELPHIA TRIP

written by Vicki Huizenga, 8th Bible Teacher & Homeroom

At 5 am on Tuesday, May 13, the 8th grade class and eight chaperones embarked on an educational and exciting journey to Philadelphia. After a full day of travel, we arrived in Gettysburg late in the evening, where we enjoyed pizza and games before heading to our hotel.

Students had the option to swim, play games, or unwind in their rooms before settling in for the night. An early wake-up call prepared us for a full day of exploring Gettysburg National Military Park with a licensed Battlefield Guide.

In the morning mist, we climbed a tower to view the expansive battlefields, posed for a picture by the monument dedicated to Indiana soldiers, and participated in meaningful lessons about this pivotal Civil War battle site.

From Gettysburg, we continued our journey to Philadelphia. Over the next few days, we immersed ourselves in Revolutionary War history, walking in the footsteps of our nation's founders. We touched bricks dating back to the 1700s as we explored Ben Franklin's home, post office, printing press, and museum.

We stood in the very room where history was made - the site of the signing of the Declaration of Independence- and listened to the powerful story behind this pivotal moment in history. We explored the

galleries of Constitution Hall, posed beside the Liberty Bell, and took selfies with the lifelike statues of our founding fathers at the National Constitution Center.

Our exploration continued along Penn's Landing where we enjoyed time at the wharf. We also visited Valley Forge, touring George Washington's home and walking through the historic encampment where his troops endured a harsh winter while forging a path to independence.

A visit to Philadelphia wouldn't be complete without a stop for an authentic Philly cheesesteak, a run up the iconic Rocky steps at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and a moment at LOVE Park for photos by the famous sculpture. One of the most memorable experiences was interacting with people from Poland, Lithuania, and Ireland through a real-time portal. We were thrilled to wave and connect with others around the world, making our trip not only a lesson in history but a celebration of the global community.

After a final night in Philadelphia - complete with a surprise 3:30 a.m. fire alarm - we departed early Saturday morning to return to Indiana.

Thanks to all who made this trip of a lifetime possible!

Vicki





IMPACT WEEK 2025

written by Vicki Huizenga, 8th Bible Teacher & Homeroom

At Highland Christian School, our mission is to nurture and guide students in a way that honors God. We seek to equip them to see His creation, sense order in a world redeemed by Christ, and serve Him through the leading of the Holy Spirit. We pursue this mission by providing a Christ-centered, high-quality education that fosters academic growth, Biblical understanding, and spiritual development empowering students to impact the world for Christ.

One of the key ways we live out this mission is through service opportunities that allow students and staff to engage with and bless both our local community and the world. Impact Week is a special example of this commitment in action.

During Impact Week, students and staff actively demonstrate Christ's love through hands-on service, including:

- Raking leaves at **Ross Reformed Church, Flourish Church, and The Old Firehouse**
- Weaving placemats for seniors at **Park Place**
- Delivering “cups of cheer” to local pastors and church staff
- Sorting and hanging clothes at area thrift stores
- Preparing meals for families in need
- Folding and sorting baby clothes at **Fair Haven**
- Sharing songs and stories to encourage seniors at **Park Place**

Beyond our local community, students also extend Christ's love globally by:

- **Filling shoeboxes** for *Operation Christmas Child*, sharing the Gospel through the gift of a Christmas box
- **Making fleece blankets** for *Phil's Friends*, providing comfort to those battling cancer
- **Packing food boxes** at *Feed My Starving Children*, helping to fight global hunger

Through these acts of service, Highland Christian students experience the joy of giving, develop hearts of compassion, and learn what it means to serve as the hands and feet of Jesus. Impact Week displays the living witness of Christ's love and grace.

Vicki



YOU OUTSHINE THEM ALL!

written by Jodi Lineburg, Development Director

You all know how to SHOW UP!! Once again, we're amazed to witness the generosity, school spirit, and commitment to Christ-centered education that's on display when we gather together for the Auction. Held on Saturday, April 26, Auction 2025 exceeded our expectations thanks to the overwhelming support and involvement of our amazing auction committee, 8th grade parents, students, and staff volunteers, wonderful donors, and all our event attendees.

As a result of your efforts, we raised over **\$184,000** for Highland Christian School!! While the Board has further allocations to make, we know that a significant portion of these funds will be used to:

- Purchase and install a **NEW PA SYSTEM!**
- Make an additional payment on the **EXPANSION LOAN**
- Install a **NEW SINK** in Mrs. Kooyenga's Preschool Classroom
- Purchase additional furniture
- Contribute to each of the 8th Grade Class Trip, Bus Replacement, Foundation, Choice Contingency and Computer/Technology Funds
- Invest in **LIVE STREAM &** other technology improvements
- Invest in the 2026 **MUSICAL** production

While the Auction is our capstone fundraising event, it is so much more than a fundraiser! It is a celebration and demonstration of what we can achieve **TOGETHER**. If you've been around for a few or more events, I'm sure you recognize names and can observe faithfulness in action. We're truly grateful for the alumni, grandparents, parents and friends who fulfill the role of "Creation Caretakers" as they care for both younger and future generations in their stewardship of Highland Christian School!



Jodi

As we celebrate the incredible provision that was made for HCS this Spring, we celebrate you-our community. Thanks for turning this year's event into another meaningful milestone, while you lay the foundation for greater things to come. To God be the Glory!

**HCS
ALUMNI!**



SCAN ME

Moved?

Married?

New Baby?

New Job?

New Life Achievement?

We want to know!



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