



ECHOES

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Why We Do What We Do...

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

The pages of this magazine are full of stories and pictures of what we do at Smithville Christian High School. But perhaps even more important than what we do, is why we do it. As Christian educators, we are charged with leading the next generation, not

only with our actions, but also with the perspective that accompanies those actions. Here's a glimpse into why we do what we do at Smithville Christian High School

A couple of Mondays ago, it was my turn to lead morning devotions with our staff, and I remembered a devotional activity from a recent conference

I had attended. Based on Deuteronomy 6, the activity invites participants to reflect on our duty to never tire of showing our children how to live.

"These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deut. 6: 6-7).

Continued on page 2 ...

Continued from page 1...

I asked our staff members to quickly complete some sticky notes to fill in the blanks in this sentence:

"We _____, _____, not _____ just _____, _____ but _____ because _____."

Here's what inspires the teachers of Smithville Christian High School to do what they do:

We do school, not just to get a pay cheque or diploma but to bring God's kingdom here.

We love, not just because we want to but because Jesus loved us.

We share stories, not just to entertain but to teach life lessons.

We greet students and chat casually before starting class, not just to waste time and avoid the lesson but to care about students and set a relational tone.

We join students in the gym at lunch, not just because it is fun but because it builds relationships.

We learn, not just because we desire knowledge but because through learning we become better teachers.

We challenge students to think about their behaviour, not just because we are leaders but because we want them to become self-aware as servants to others.

We do assessments required by the Ontario Ministry of Education, not just because we have to but because it makes us better teachers.

We coach high school sports, not just because it is required but because it builds character.

We do projects, not just to learn about a topic but because we wish to inspire creativity.

We teach, not just to grade large piles of assignments but to show students the beauty of God's creation.

We get off topic, not just to waste time but because we want to get to know each other.

We pray with our students, not because it is a part of our schedule but because it is a gift given to us by a loving God.

We intentionally make time to have conversations with students who find themselves in the margins, not because our motto is Belong, Believe, and Succeed but because they are loved by God.

We encourage kids, not because we have to but because we get to.

We hang with kids, not just because we are paid to but because God's plan for them may involve us.

We create lessons, not just to be creative and clever but to show something of God's word, God's love, and God's world.

Smithville Christian teachers in action. From left: Mrs. VandenDool in food and nutrition class, Mr. Harris, Mr. Lammers and Mr. Bender playing intramural sports with students in the gym, and Mrs. Slump-Houwer at Welcome Week. Front page from left: Mr. van den Boogaard and Mr. Fluit.



You are invited to Smithville Christian High School's
Open House & Celebration of Learning
Thursday, January 18, 2018



7:00-7:30 pm

Grade 8 students' and parents' Information Session

7:30-9:00 pm

Open House and Celebration of Learning

Find out about our MacBook-for-every-student program, plus art, worship, praise team, student testimonies and more.



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The Finnish Factor:



Why does excellence in Europe matter for Smithville Christian?

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

As our school continues to pursue excellence in our instructional practices, it is critical that we investigate schools and school systems where excellence is happening. During the last week of September, Vice-Principal Fred Breukelman and I had the opportunity to travel a bit further than usual. Finland's education system is frequently ranked as the best in the world, and conversations we have had at our Ontario Christian Schools Administrators Association (OCSAA) meetings evolved into a visit to this country. This group of 34 educators from around Ontario (and even one from Manitoba) studied Finnish Lessons 2.0, by Pasi Sahlberg. Pasi is perhaps the most highly respected educational leader in Finland. He has served as a director at the Finnish Ministry of Education and, among other things, as a visiting professor at Harvard University. He is also an avid hockey fan. Our group was blessed with a daily opportunity to tour schools and engage in follow-up sessions with Pasi. You would not be surprised to hear that we learned a great deal.

Mr. Breukelman (left) and Mr. Harris (second from right) with renowned Finnish educators Mikko Salonen, educational leadership consultant, and Pasi Sahlberg, director at the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.



When we visit schools which model excellence, there is a tendency to look for the "special sauce" or secret ingredient that enables this excellence. There is no special sauce; in fact, the Finns were quite surprised by their initial top ranking and wondered about it themselves, a sentiment which recurred when they got their next top ranking. That being said, there are factors at play in Finnish schools from which we can learn. Here are a few of them:

The teachers: Teachers are highly regarded in Finland. The baseline for training is a master's degree, involving extensive experience under the tutelage of other teachers. Ongoing training involves vigorous requirements for collaboration with school colleagues.

The students: Our observations of students in Finland indicate students who are highly motivated and self-directed. There seems to be a prevailing understanding among Finns that education is to be valued, which is seen in the focus of the learners.

The Less is More Paradox: The Finns somehow manage to find great success in a system that requires

fewer learning hours of students and less teacher time in front of a class. They also manage to achieve these high results while at the same time committing to limited homework and fewer standardized tests as a means of holding schools and teachers accountable for school improvement.

Here are some themes for us to continue to explore:

The need for teachers to collaborate to develop skills and programs at the school level. Our teachers need every bit of time we can give them to work with each other, which validates our need for weekly R&D sessions (Thursday mornings), occasional PD days and other professional development opportunities that our teachers pursue throughout the year.

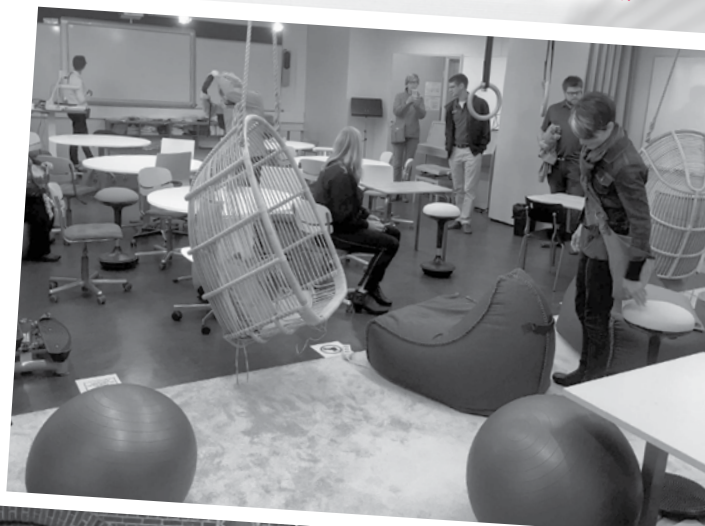
The need for students to take charge of their own learning. Even though the self-direction of the Finnish students may be a cultural tendency to hold schooling in high regard, we need to continue to enable our own students to take responsibility for their own success as learners.

In many ways, the schools we visited in Finland resembled what we do here. Thus one major realization from our visit was that Smithville Christian is a school where teachers already collaborate extensively and vigorously pursue excellence. We also work with young people who are motivated and who desire to create a positive learning culture.

Lastly, visiting schools where learning does not centre on Christ leads us to return home with a great appreciation for what it means to be a part of a learning community where Jesus is recognized as Lord over all. This truth provides the context for all our effort in giving our students an excellent experience in which they find belonging, belief and success. We are always seeking to improve, but at the same time we are richly blessed.



Top, Mr. Breukelman is an attentive student. Centre, a Finnish classroom with innovative student seating: swivel stools, rocker stools, swings, rings, balls, and beanbag chairs. Bottom: Visiting Canadian educators on the steps of the National Square in Helsinki, Finland.



WELCOME TO THE CLASS OF 2021



Mackenzie Bezuyen



Nathaniel Boks



Calvin Boorsma



Ryan Bos



Claire Buys



David Cook



Brittany Damm



Alexandra DeBoer



Samantha DeHaan



Jana DeKlerk



Connor DenBak



Kaitlin Doornbos



Annastasia
Droppert



Gavin Elzinga



Madelyn Felvus



Nathan Gerrits



Brad Gilpin



Kenya Gordon



Kendra Hamill



Travis Hessels



Esther Kok



Samuel Korvemaker



Katharine Lee



Elijah Lessard



William Liu



Domanik Lodde

WELCOME TO THE CLASS OF 2021



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Ryan Meinders



Emily Moraal



Ayobami Oludairo



Cassandra Pacquin



Sophia Pot



Hannah Richardson



Silken Ricker



Josiah Salomons



Ashley Scholman



Caleb Tourangeau



Joseph Vahrmeyer



Loren
van den Boogaard



Janice VanderHeide



David VanderMolen



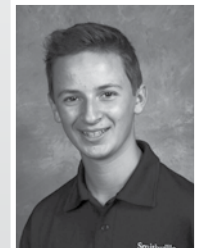
Jacob Vanderwal



Makayla VanderWier



Nicholas VanderWier



Noah VanderWier



Ethan VanHuizen



Nathan VanMarion



Isaac Van Tuyl



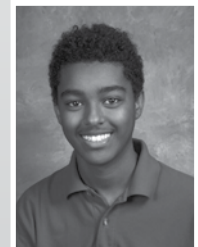
Sophie Vellenga



Haily Waters



Tyler Woodland



Finhas Yohannes

9 BIKE TRIP



The annual Smithville Christian High School Grade 9 Bike trip is a key community-building, creation-enjoying and educational experience for students. The day-long, 40-kilometre trek along the Niagara Parkway – from King's Bridge Park in Chippawa to Fort George in Niagara-on-the-Lake – incorporates learning goals for physical education, science and geography. The trip also includes a hike down and up the Niagara Gorge. The trip is made possible by round-trip bicycle transportation, graciously provided for many years by Smithville Christian alumni at Slappendel Greenhouses.





Recognizing the whole person: devotions to begin a school year

BY LINDA BOOY-KORVEMAKER, HEAD OF STUDENT SERVICES

In addition to praying with and for their students every day, teachers at Smithville Christian High School begin each school week with staff devotions, taking turns to lead. Here is what guidance counsellor, Linda Booy-Korvemaker, shared with her colleagues on the first day of school.

Today I am going to share briefly with you some wisdom you already know, yet perhaps, like me, it's something for which you can use a reminder. Here is a simple analogy that I hope encourages you this school year.

Please, consider an onion.

Onions have many layers, and, as a teacher, it reminds me of the many students who cross my path during the day, the semester, the year. People, too, have layers: some we choose to share, some we choose not to share, some are for show and some just happen because of how life goes on this side of heaven. Sometimes we can't help it and we peel right in front of others. Sometimes we stink and other times we carry an irresistible aroma. We are practical at times and other times we are decadent. Sometimes we think we know the onions around us and what's good for them and then we learn something new about onions. The point is that all the layers are part of the onion.

All our students, staff and parents are part of our community, and we all belong here. All the layers of the onion matter to the whole onion; see for yourself and make something with it for dinner tonight.

So as we get on with the business of our school year, may we hang on to Jesus and his example. May we love all the layers of all the people put in our path.

Prayer: *Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 12: 20-21*



How we spent our summer vacation

Students and teachers are always happy to be back at school, but teachers often take advantage of the summer break to experience interesting and exciting things. Match these Smithville Christian staff members to their summer adventures.

1. Built a hangout for teenagers in a barn loft
2. *Went on a cruise to Alaska*
3. Cycled the Kettle Valley Rail Trail between Midway and Penticton in British Columbia
4. *Sailed a section of the Trent Severn waterway*
5. Cycled the Great Allegheny Passage between Pittsburgh and Washington DC
6. *Learned how to throw a pot*
7. Entertained Hungarian relatives
8. *Took up yoga*
9. Caught the smallest fish
10. *Circumnavigated Lake Huron*
11. Posed for a photograph with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
12. *Met a new grandson*
13. Lost to his father at golf
14. *Went to a high school reunion in Dublin (Ohio)*
15. Water-skied in Lake Michigan
16. *Made it to the finals of a club tennis tournament*
17. Attended a wedding in the Dominican Republic
18. *Added 14 more lakes to life goal of canoeing in every lake in Algonquin Park*
19. Survived a tornado in a campground
20. *Visited Gros Morne and L'Anse Aux Meadows National Parks*
21. Swam 100 lengths of the pool every morning
22. *Kayaked and explored several bodies of water*
23. Planned a lovely autumn of retirement travel



- Mr. A. Korvemaker
- Mr. D. Wonder
- Mr. F. Breukelman
- Mrs. M. Slump-Houwer
- Mr. G. Park
- Mr. J. van den Boogaard
- Mrs. L. VanderHeide
- Mr. J. Vanderlinde
- Mr. M. Fluit
- Mr. N. Robb
- Mr. R. Gerrys
- Mr. S. Antonides
- Mr. S. Bender
- Mr. T. Harris
- Mr. W. Lammers
- Mrs. A. Vanderveer
- Mrs. G. VandenDool
- Mrs. K. Greenham
- Mrs. L. Booy-Korvemaker
- Mrs. M. Horvath
- Mrs. W. DeHaan
- Ms. A. LeBlanc
- Ms. M. Bergsma

Answers on page 15.

GRADE 12 RETREAT



The Grade 12 Class Retreat in September provides Smithville Christian students entering their senior year an opportunity to reconnect with one another, get acquainted with new friends, and engage in a variety of experiences designed to build a stronger sense of belonging and belief within the class. Getting away from the routines of school and spending time together in a camp setting, working on group trust exercises, playing games, learning new skills, enjoying meals and campfires, sharing devotions, and having evenings of worship and exploring God's word, all work towards class unity, and can certainly have a positive impact upon each student, the class as a unit and, of course, the entire school. — Gord Park, Spiritual Life Director





GRADE 12 RETREAT

student council

2017-2018



Members of the Smithville Christian High School 2017-2018 student council, from left: Jordan Van Herwynen, Esther Kok, Patrick Ghaly, Micaela Felvus, Josh Moraal, Mark Sharobim, Eden Griffin, Spencer Damm. At their kick-off retreat, student leaders planned a theme for the year, "Take the Next Step," and spirit days, cash for change days, and other community-building events.



How We Spent Our Summer Vacation

Answers for page 11.

Mr. R. Gerrys built a loft
Mrs. M. Slump-Houwer cruised to Alaska
Ms. M. Bergsma cycled in BC
Mrs. L. VanderHeide sailed in a canal
Mr. T. Harris cycled in DC
Ms. A. LeBlanc threw a pot
Mrs. W. DeHaan caught a fish
Mrs. M. Horvath's relatives came
Mr. J. Vanderlinde took up yoga
Mr. S. Antonides went around Lake Huron
Mr. S. Bender met the PM
Mr. N. Robb met his new grandson

Mr. G. Park lost at golf
Mrs. L. Booy-Korvemaker hung out with high school friends
Mr. A. Korvemaker water-skied
Mr. J. van den Boogaard played tennis
Mrs. G. VandenDool went to a wedding
Mr. M. Fluit paddled
Mr. D. Wonder survived a tornado
Mr. W. Lammers went to Nfld
Mr. F. Breukelman swam
Mrs. A. Vanderveer paddled
Mrs. K. Greenham thought she was retiring



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