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## ECHOES



## If the sun is shining, why is Smithville Christian still asking for money?

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

If you have heard about the success of our Son Power solar project, it might surprise you to know that we are still always looking for donor support for our school. The fact is, despite the revenue we receive on a sunny day, there is a \$200,000 annual need for bursary support for families who choose Christian education but need help with meeting tuition costs. We also occasionally fundraise for facility improvements.

What that means is there are occasions when those who support our school might consider not giving because things seem to be "going well." Why should you give if there doesn't appear to

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be a pressing need? Aren't there other worthy causes that also need your support?

It's true, things at Smithville Christian are going well. Years ago, we had the challenge of ongoing deficits. We haven't had that challenge in over a decade. We had previous debt from building projects of yesteryear, but that debt was eliminated several years ago and then carefully re-introduced (currently \$190,000) after our last building project. We are also a growing school, which means our overall revenue is tracking higher in our operating budgets. Then,

of course, there is our Son Power solar project which does a lot to fund Pursuit of Excellence initiatives every year. These are all indications that things are going well financially.

Of course we are glad that things are going well. We are blessed with a board and a finance committee who are keen to ensure that our school is run in such a way that we honour God and our supporters in how we manage our resources

But please do not get the impression that there isn't some strain when it comes to managing the financial resources of Smithville Christian High School. One of the most significant things we undertake every year is to fill a bursary fund and then empty it back out in support of many families and students who receive assistance to be here. To support three out of every ten students in our school in this way is a big-time commitment.

And this big commitment is more than a little stressful at times. I did some graduate work on school development, and several wonderful Christian instructors who taught me plenty about giving and stewardship made it clear that God's people need to give until we "feel the pinch." Ironically, much blessing follows that kind of sacrificial giving.

# gnite: 2019 3RD ANNUAL BURSARY CELEBRATION

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There are so many members of our local Christian community from whom we can learn much about such giving. Those of us who plan the bursary campaign each year feel the pinch as well. For the sake of transparency, let me share with you the ways in which we are currently feeling that pinch:

- When we did our *In Motion* campaign, which led to a beautiful renovation of our facilities, we included funding for our bursary program. This led to a three-year interruption in our annual drive for the bursary fund. The first two annual bursary campaigns (as we now call them) have been productive but have come short of their goals. We hope that this year will be different.
- The result of the above means that we are currently raising funds in the same year as we are allocating them. Our goal in the coming year is to "get ahead" again. Getting ahead will mean that we get back to the point of having enough bursary funds each year for the following year's requests.

Solving the current challenge may mean that we allocate less funds; but to be honest, we would much prefer to draw in the necessary amount of bursary funding to continue to bless the same percentage of families each year. Three out of 10 students are able to attend our school because donors help us open the doors.

The bursary program is one of the most beautiful things our school does. And, as is often the case, sometimes the most beautiful things we do are also among the most difficult. I encourage our readers and supporters to rally with us. A Smithville Christian High School education is a blessing we offer to Christian families in our area. We want to offer it to as many

families as desire it. Our bursary program allows us to do that.

Come to Ignite! our Annual Bursary Celebration, on March 1, to see, hear, and taste how Christian education is making a difference. Contact the school to find out how you can sponsor a table or reserve your seat. If you can't come, consider sponsoring a table anyway, or making a gift. Email office@ smithvillechristian.ca, or contact me at (905) 957-3255 or tharris@smithvillechristian.ca. You can give online via our website smithvillechristian.ca under Fundraising – How to Donate.

Three out of ten kids in our school thank you for your support of our bursary fund. Lord willing, three out of ten of next year's students will do the same. Join with us as we train responsible disciples of Jesus Christ, and know that your gift is growing the kingdom of God.

We thank you for your prayerful support.



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## Going through our ABCs

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

If you are reading this, I can trust you have learned your ABCs. Let's expand on that a bit. Every year we have an Annual Bursary Celebration (this year – March 1) to launch our Annual Bursary Campaign (early April) so that we can encourage an Annual Bursary Commitment.



#### Annual Bursary CELEBRATION • CAMPAIGN • COMMITMENT

Let's explore the last of these ABCs, Annual Bursary Commitment. If you consider yourself a part of the Smithville Christian High School community, we invite you to make a commitment to support the thing we all do together: the bursary program that allows 3 out of every 10 students to attend our school.

Will you allow us to be bold? We would like to invite, even urge, every person who is connected to or has had a connection to our school to choose one or more of the following ways to support us in the coming year:

- 1) Pray commit to praying for our school and for the success of this campaign
- **2) Give an annual gift** we are encouraging new graduates to begin this routine by simply "donating-your-year." For this year's class, that would mean giving a donation of \$20.19 as a starting point every year.
- **3) Sign up for monthly giving –** we are encouraging alumni to "donate-your-year" on a monthly basis. A graduate from the class of 2002 would give \$20.02 per month. (See Page 5 for more details.)
- **4) Give a major gift –** There are donors who would like to give a one-time, major gift to support our bursary program or our

building fund. If you would like to discuss such a gift, please contact the school.

**5) Give a planned gift** – Last year we held a will clinic to help supporters move toward establishing or updating their wills. We will hold another clinic sometime soon. Whether you attend a will clinic or not, we want to be bold in asking supporters to name the school as a possible "charity child" in their wills.

#### 6) All of the above.

We invite you to think about the commitment that might fit you best and then tell us about it. To that end, please stay tuned for the distribution of the bursary campaign flyer in the coming month.

If there is anything getting in the way of your annual bursary commitment, like memories of a school situation that did not work out well for you, we need to hear about that too. If we can make amends, we will try to do that.

Please pray for us as we move as close as we can to 100% participation, and please pray about your own involvement.

#### **Donate your year**

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVANCEMENT

Are you a graduate or alumnus of Smithville Christian High School? Do you know someone who is? We have a request.

We want our alumni to donate their year.

#### What does that mean?

If you were among the 27 students in our first graduating class in June of 1981, we would like you to give us at least \$19.81 every year. If you graduated with the 52 students in the Class of 2014, which is the size of the average graduating class of our past 39 years, we would like you to give us at least \$20.14. And if you graduated with the Class of 2000, our largest graduating class ever, we would like you to give us at least \$20.00 every year.

#### Why do we want this?

If one quarter of our alumni would donate their year every month – an annual contribution of less than \$250 each – we would be halfway to our Annual Bursary Campaign goal of approximately \$200,000. And if half of the alumni from each graduating year would set up a monthly gift, donating their year every month, and the rest gave just once a year, we would exceed our goal. That would be awesome!



Every gift from every alumnus makes a difference, no matter the size. Your contribution counts.

#### Why is this so important?

We hope and pray that the students who attended this school have good memories of the time they spent here. More importantly, we hope and pray that our core purpose was met in them: that they are living as responsible disciples of Jesus Christ.

If either – or both – of those things are true of you, we hope and pray that you would be willing to help ensure that our mission continues, so that more students can experience the blessing of a Christian education. Our current students know that the bursary blesses everyone, those who are recipients and those who are not, because our entire school is enriched by the presence of everyone who attends.

How to set up monthly giving or make a one-time gift to Smithville Christian High School.

Go to the school website at **smithvillechristian.ca** and click on **Fundraising – How to Donate**. Clicking on the **Donate** button will take you to the Christian School Foundation, where you can make a secure gift by credit card. Or you can send cheques to Smithville Christian High School, P.O. Box 40, Smithville, Ontario, LOR 2AO.

# Annual Bursary CELEBRATION • CAMPAIGN • COMMITMENT Every student matters

Students whose families receive assistance to attend our school are a blessing to their classmates, to their teachers, and to the Smithville Christian community. When families go through the process to request – and receive – financial aid, it's not a hand-out, it's an investment.

As a community of learners and supporters, we know that a Christian education is an investment in the kingdom of God. Research shows that students who attend Christian schools are more generous givers for the rest of their lives, and they get involved in their communities. We trust that parents and students who accept this investment in their lives today will be paying it forward, by praying for, working for, and giving to this school, and other kingdom causes, for decades to come.

#### We're asking you to make a commitment

But what if you're an alumnus or an alumni parent who doesn't have good feelings about our school, or even has bad memories?

If there is something standing in the way of you being able to pray for or give even a small gift to Smithville Christian High School, we need to know. We would be sad about that, but we need to hear it. Perhaps there is something we could do to make it right. And if there isn't, the very least we could do is apologize, and promise to learn from our mistakes.

For those alumni for whom it would be a joy to donate their year, know that we would receive it joyfully. We would be honoured to use it, knowing that your gift, and our efforts, are serving God and growing God's kingdom, by training responsible disciples of Jesus Christ.

#### Consider being a champion

If you give to us, reach out to your classmates and ask them to give too. Finally, whether you give to us or not, please pray for us. Your gifts and your support are changing lives.

### Alumni parents –

you're invited too

Many people who have sent their children to Smithville Christian High School over the past 39 years continue to support us with prayers and with financial gifts. Some have even named us in their wills, or made plans to leave us a gift. These are all huge blessings.

Another blessing is the fact that some of our alumni parents are now grandparents, and we have the opportunity to be teaching their children's children. What beautiful evidence of God's faithfulness.

But for those parents who heaved a huge sigh of relief when their last tuition cheque was cashed and who have not yet been asked to keep writing cheques to us: we are asking now.

Would you consider donating your year? The year your youngest child graduated?

If your last tuition cheque was written in 1998, could you give us \$19.98 a month? Or could you add a zero, or two, and make a monthly gift of \$199.80 or an annual gift of \$1,998?

We need to raise approximately \$200,000 a year to enable our bursary fund to meet the annual need. Your gift, no matter the size, makes a difference. The students of Smithville Christian High School are grateful for you.

## Passionate about science, and her neighbours

BY MARLENE BERGSMA
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND
ADVANCEMENT

For Heather Eyk, Class of 2008, being a graduate of Smithville Christian High School not only shapes what she does, but shapes where she lives.

Eyk, a member of the York Regional Police Forensic Identification Unit, is pursuing the passion for science that was cultivated in high school, but she is also pursuing her passion as a Christ-follower by choosing to live in a low-income, high-density Toronto neighbourhood. As part of the Move*In* ministry, Eyk is joining other young professionals and other families of various kinds and choosing to live as Jesus did. As it says in John 1:14, The Word [Jesus] became flesh and made his dwelling among us, or as The Message paraphrases it, The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.

Instead of avoiding neighbourhoods that are inconvenient or unsafe, Moveln members choose to live communally in low-income neighbourhoods of mostly immigrant people from countries where Christianity is almost completely unknown, Eyk said. Members agree to meet weekly to pray for their neighbours and to intentionally seek opportunities to serve them and to share the gospel with them.

"We have had opportunities to share our faith," she said.

It's challenging, Eyk said, but it's a way of being the presence of Christ in the world that has resonated with her since she first learned about the ministry.

Being a student at Smithville Christian prepared her for making a choice like that. "It taught me a lot of the foundations for my faith," Eyk said. "I still remember a discussion from English class one year that helped shape my understanding about the sovereignty of God, and how we are created to glorify God; that our faith is not private but has an impact on every part of our lives."

Eyk said her science classes at Smithville Christian also prepared her for studying science at university. "I appreciated the way Mr. Lammers and Mr. Wonder taught science in a way that incorporated faith. It really helped me when I studied at a secular university, that I was grounded in my faith."

Eyk said her current job with the Forensic Identification Unit means she is often on the road and working solo, but her colleagues know



Heather Eyk, Class of 2008, a member of the York Regional Police Forensic Identification Unit, dusts a vehicle for fingerprints.



brash and abrasive

she's a Christian. Once, a co-worker known for his brash and abrasive demeanour complimented Eyk on her way of treating everyone objectively, even people who didn't deserve it.

Eyk explained to him that she believes all people are created by God in the image of God, and are therefore worthy of dignity and respect. "I told him that I have been treated generously by God, and through my faith in Jesus Christ I have received grace I did not deserve," Eyk said, and that's the way all people should be treated.

Eyk said she has very fond memories of her time at Smithville Christian, and feels the teachers prepared her well for the challenges of university, job-seeking, and work.

"I really appreciated the way they genuinely cared for their students."

#### **Heather Eyk: After Smithville Christian**

- B.Sc. in Forensic Science at University of Ontario Institute of Technology
- Erasmus Mundus M.Sc. in Forensic Chemistry completed in Spain, Portugal and England
- Forensic Identification Assistant with York Regional Police
- Volunteer with Moveln
- Member of Grace Fellowship Church, Don Mills
- Avid reader of books on theology and Christian living, biographies, and fiction

## Adding your name to the list

BY TONY KAMPHUIS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION





A friend sent me a note: "Remember all the hours we spent at the arena when our kids were playing hockey? They are building a new arena and my wife and I are going to make a donation, because it was good for our kids to have that experience and we want others to have the same opportunity. Do you want to make a donation as well?" We did.

#### Why?

Here was a couple like us, acting on something they thought was a good activity, and while they never said how much they gave, their influence was enough to move us to action too. After all, we really thought it was a good cause as well!

If somebody saw my name – the name of just a regular Christian school supporter –on a list of people who have set aside something in their wills for their Christian school,

it might motivate them to say, "Huh. We should do that too."

The people most likely to leave a gift for our Christian school in their will are not those who are most wealthy. It isn't those with many children, or those with very few children. It is



those who are the truest believers in the difference Smithville Christian High is making. It is our most loyal supporters.

Do you give regularly to our school?

Are you a loyal supporter of our mission to provide a place where young people can "Belong, Believe, and Succeed?" Would you consider adding your name to our Mustard Seed Society? This is our alphabetical listing of all those who have decided to support Smithville Christian High School through a bequest. It is your way of saying, "I understand the long-term importance of Christian education as young people explore God's world and find their place in it, deepen their faith, and, by being faithful, expand the influence of Christ in our culture."

Even if your name is "Anonymous" on the Mustard Seed Society listing, being part of it reassures others that there are enough people working together to extend the blessing of a Christian education for the next generation. God will take our mustard seed-sized gifts and make something truly remarkable from them.

Knowing you are part of something big, and positive, and strongly aligned with your faith is a very good feeling, indeed.



## Becoming a Community of Belonging

BY TONY KAMPHUIS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION

Christian schools across Ontario are building stronger "Communities of Belonging".

A Community of Belonging school is a school that includes all kinds of students and invites each one to be a contributing member of that learning community – regardless of what types of special needs may exist.

The Christian School Foundation – in partnership with Edvance, Christian Horizons, and especially Sara Pot and Ralph Pot (Smithville Christian Class of 1986) – has been helping to coordinate these efforts across Ontario, and we are thrilled at the growing support that school leaders, parents, and donors are putting forward.

The vast majority of gifts we have received for this work are an illustration of the mustard seed principle. We have been able to pool the many donations of \$500, \$1,000, or \$10,000 together to get this initiative off the ground. Soon, we hope to make an announcement about a very substantial and encouraging gift that will fund this work into the future.

God is blessing the faithful work of many in this area! Please consider how you too, can bless Christian schools in this very important part of their faithful response to a God who loves every single one of His children!







Smithville Christian High School supporters and former board members, Alice Klamer, left, and Bill VanderKlippe, right, at the 2014 celebration to launch the newly combined Christian School Foundation.

## Celebrating the growth of a vision

BY TONY KAMPHUIS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION

At a meeting held at Redeemer University College on April 4, 2014, a group of visionary leaders announced the launch of a new, combined Foundation that would support Christian schools across Canada. I was there as an interested observer, though I admit to having held a certain skepticism at the time. The core idea was a great one

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Christian School Foundation interim president and CEO, Michael Van Pelt, who served from 2014 to 2016, speaking to guests at the 2014 celebration at Redeemer University College, to launch the newly formed Christian School Foundation.

(and still is!), but the dreams expressed by the new Christian School Foundation's supporters, of how God might bless these efforts, were bold to say the very least.

Now, five years later, on April 4, 2019 we are inviting all those in attendance on that night – and everyone else who

has gotten to know this Foundation and has captured that vision of what might be possible through it – to join us at Redeemer University College for a 5th Anniversary Celebration.

We are going to look back at the past, we are going to marvel at the present, and we are going to peer into the future to consider where God might be leading us. There will

be exciting announcements, delicious food, celebratory music (featuring the Smithville Christian High School Choir), and an opportunity to join together and say, "Thanks be to God!" for all that has happened in these first five years.

For more information or to register to attend, contact Meghan Van Pelt at the Christian School Foundation at office@christianschoolfoundation.ca



Ten out of 10 students attend our school because donors like you know that a gift that supports a student today is an investment in tomorrow.

Research shows that Christian school graduates give more – to their churches, to their communities and to kingdom causes. Please consider joining us in this important kingdom-growing initiative.

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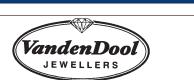
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