



ECHOES

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What it means to be a 10 out of 10 school

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

Being considered a 7 out of 10 is not all that encouraging. Most students, when given a 7 out of 10 on an assignment, will wonder what they could have done better. I will not invest my time in a film that someone gave an equivalent to 7 out of 10. Even if I sink 7 out of 10 free throws in basketball, I am not viewing this as a success.

So what does this have to do with Smithville Christian?

It would be very unfortunate if Smithville Christian High School were a 7 out of 10 school.

This spring, we have been emphasizing our need for a vibrant bursary program, which has got us thinking about what it would be like if three of every ten students were not in our building. Why three? That's the percentage of students whose families receive bursary support, without which in many cases these students would not be here.

So what would we be without the three?

Less diverse: If we didn't have the three, we would not

have representation from as many churches as we now do, which is over 45. We would not be as racially or ethnically diverse as we are now. We are blessed with as colourful array of students from a diversity of backgrounds, which is critical to a wider understanding among our students that the image of God is manifested in a beautiful array of people. We are far less frequently referred to as "the Dutch school," and though we are proud of our school's history, we can never be what we were.

Smaller: When people ask whether we are a growing school, I will usually respond by saying that every year it seems

we are bigger than we thought we would be. We have grown in recent years, and the percentages of students coming from our traditional partner Christian elementary schools is high. I am also pleased to say that the number of students from other elementary school backgrounds has increased dramatically; we have seen significant growth in the number of students from homeschool, public and Catholic school settings. We are pleased to have over 235 students, a number that would not have been possible without bursary support for many families.

A school for the wealthy: Just as it is critical that our

Continued on page 2 ...



“It is critical that we enroll all the families who desire to bless their children with a Christian high school education.”

Continued from page 1 ...

students learn and form community with students from different church and ethnic backgrounds, so too it is important that our school not be comprised of only those families with the financial means to afford a tuition-based Christian school. Our school would be hard pressed to achieve its mission if considerable financial means were a requirement to attend.

Less connected to our supporters:

Our bursary program actually blesses those who want to support Christian education by giving them a tangible way to be connected to the school. I constantly hear from supporters that they feel good about giving when all of the funds bless a family with a chance to send their kids to our school. If they have been blessed, there is joy in being able to give the gift of Christian education to a community hungry for it.

For the sake of the Kingdom of God and for the sake of all local Christian families, we strive to be a school that

many would consider worthy of a 10 out of 10. If we are to be that school, it is critical that we enroll all the families who desire to bless their children with a Christian high school education.

I am happy to report that the results of the Annual Bursary Campaign, combined with funds from our Foundation and a surplus carried over from last year, have given us sufficient bursary funding for the 2017-2018 school year. Thank you so much to all who contributed. We need all of you to be a school that works for all – 10 out of every 10 families who desire to be part of our school community.

Cash for Change: Alumni have a chance to pay it forward

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

No matter how rich or poor you are, if you attended Beacon or Smithville Christian high schools, you benefited from financial aid.

The first few decades of Christian education in Niagara saw all students receiving a tuition discount through the fundraising done by support communities. Spring drives, annual fundraising auctions or penny boxes helped to reduce the tuition cost for everyone.

Today, at Smithville Christian High School, financial aid continues to benefit everyone, but in a different way. Today's financial aid is in the form of bursaries that flow into the hands of a few students, which has the effect of enriching them all.

As the previous article indicates, Smithville Christian's size, diversity and growth are a direct result of the school's ability to offer bursaries to families who choose this school. Some bursaries are big and some are small, but three out of every ten students at this school wouldn't be here without them and everyone's experience would suffer. Students and staff don't know who the bursary recipients are, but chances are the leader on a sports team, praise team or class project is a bursary student.

Where would we be without them?!?!?

Smithville Christian is now asking all Christian high school alumni – and there are thousands of them – to commit to making sure the next generation of students continues to receive financial aid. This spring's Ignite Bursary Bash kicked off a new approach to fundraising – the Annual Bursary Campaign.

During their four years in high school, Smithville Christian students regularly participate in Cash for Change Days – opportunities to change out of uniform in exchange for a minimum \$5 donation to a worthy cause. If all our alumni could be counted on for even a small gift towards the Annual Bursary Campaign each year, we could reach our \$200,000 annual goal in no time.



This is how we know God is here

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS



Close to 200 people attended Smithville Christian High School's first bursary bash this spring, organized to kick off the school's new fundraising initiative, the Annual Bursary Campaign.

Guests were treated to a delicious four-course meal with sparkling beverages, candlelight and flowers, organized and implemented by a team of dedicated parent volunteers. Students provided the musical entertainment and table service, while Emcee Garret VanderWal reminded people of the importance of supporting a cause that has dramatic kingdom impact.

And guests saw first-hand how God is at work in the lives of Smithville Christian students as they listened to a testimony from Grade 12 student Mariah Ellis.

As Mariah told her story on stage at the gala, St. Catharines artist George Langbroek, who had read Mariah's script a few days in advance, was on stage with her, creating a painting inspired by her tale.

Mariah shared how she had been motivated to action by a chapel talk given in October 2016 by Grade 11 student Lau Mussa. Lau had recounted the story of a dream he had had about being stuck in a pit and calling out for help. In his dream, Lau heard a voice telling him to look up. When he did, he saw a hand reaching down to rescue him. Lau didn't know what the dream meant, but a week later he met some Canadian visitors to the orphanage in Tanzania where he lived. After serving as a translator for the visitors, Lau was eventually invited, and sponsored, to come to Canada to attend Smithville Christian High School, where the visitors' relatives – Gemma, Owen and Shasta Ricker – went to school. At the October chapel, Lau told the students the dream was prophetic, that being a student

at Smithville Christian was the rescue he had dreamed about.

Mariah told the dinner guests that after she met Lau and learned of the lack of food and education that Lau's family was experiencing in Tanzania, she launched a series of fundraisers at Smithville Christian to raise money for his family. With the help of her mother, Mariah made and sold candy apples, brownies and apple crisp to fellow students at lunch – earning enough money through sales and donations to pay a year's worth of school fees for Lau's brothers at home.

Meanwhile, on stage with her, Langbroek was painting Mariah's story. She spoke of bake sales and school fees, but she did not talk about Lau's dream.

Yet, what was appearing on Langbroek's canvas was an astonishing image of a person in a pit, being rescued by someone else reaching down, against the backdrop of a third figure with arms outstretched in crucifixion or joy.

Langbroek said afterwards he had no idea he was painting the scene from Lau's dream. Langbroek said he had interpreted Mariah's bake sale story as evidence of the power of Godly people and Godly community to help each other, but he had no idea that the metaphoric





image he had chosen was exactly the same as Lau's dream. For guests at the gala, this was a spine-tingling revelation.

At a subsequent Wednesday morning chapel at school, spiritual life director Gord Park told students that Langbroek's painting tells each of their stories too.

"This is not just Lau's dream," Park said. "This is all of us." Each of us is the person in the pit, mired in our own sins and shortcomings and needing to be rescued by a Saviour. But

each of us also has the ability to be Christ to others, to reach out a hand to help someone else – whether it's selling brownies or leading in worship as part of a student praise team.

"And we are all part of the celebration," Park said, referring to the third figure in the painting, "or this is God behind all of it. We are the ones being rescued, we are God's hands and we are the ones worshipping him.

"God is good and God is here."

The joy of choosing Smithville Christian for your child

Parents who apply for and receive bursaries for their children experience tremendous joy. At the Ignite Bursary Bash, guests heard the testimonies of several parents. Because bursary recipients remain anonymous, the testimonies were read by "actors" – other parents who agreed to be the voices of recipients. Here is some of what they had to say.

"Having attended a public school her entire life, our daughter went into Smithville Christian knowing only two students. However, within the first week, she immediately felt a sense of belonging. The Staff have done such an amazing job establishing community. She has already made a wonderful, core group of friends who share her Christian values and beliefs. As parents, this is an amazing answer to prayer."

"We have also been impressed by the level of communication between parents, students and teachers. It is so evident that the teachers are genuinely interested in the personal success of each student."

"Being new to Christian education, it continues to amaze us that prayer is an everyday part of the curriculum, scripture is taught and woven into the lessons and our daughter is continually encouraged and challenged in her faith. Although faith has always been part of her home life, we have never enjoyed these "privileges" in our children's education."

"We are so thankful that our daughter has been given the opportunity to experience a Christian education."

"Our prayers were answered - Thank you Jesus! And thanks to everyone who so generously donated to the bursary fund."

"My family has been so tremendously blessed by the bursary program that has enabled my children to receive a Christian education. As a single mom, from a mostly unbelieving family, I will never forget the day that I was told that I could send my children to a Christian school. This was a true answer to prayer, for which I give thanks every day!"

"Being welcomed into the larger family that makes up Smithville Christian High School has been one of overwhelming love and joy. My daughter's growth in her faith and her ability to see God in everything that she does and learns has been so remarkably evident as she has matured."

"I am filled with joy as I get to know the new friends she has made and is making, who encourage her to live well by living for Jesus. It is also such an encouragement to know that she is surrounded by teachers and staff who genuinely care for their students, who get to know them and are invested in their lives. Knowing

that my children are being mentored and taught by adults who care about them and are pointing them to Christ at all times, is what sets Smithville Christian High School apart. I am so thankful to God, and to everyone who has made Christian education a possibility."



Strategizing for the future at Smithville Christian: What do we value most?

BY MARLENE BERGSMA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

Planning for the future of Smithville Christian High School – so that students can best be prepared for their futures – takes discernment and strategy.

That's why the board and administration of the school have been participating in regular strategic planning activities for the past 15 years.

The latest strategic planning session was conducted as a review and update to the five-year strategic plan that was launched in 2016.

The review started on a Saturday

morning in April, with members of school leadership participating in a day-long event which was facilitated by Ray Hendriks, the executive director of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools. Hendriks began the session by asking participants to reflect on their core values "because where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21). Hendriks said individuals have



core values, but so do organizations, and it's our core values that often give us the most joy and cause us the most stress.

Many of the participants identified integrity, truth and faith as their core values. Hendriks said an organization's core values, along with its mission and vision statements, inform the policies and practices of an organization. All of these combine to create Smithville Christian's "integrity of brand" – or the way the school is spoken of in terms of its Christian identity.

Participants were then invited to consider five key elements of organizational flourishing: identity, public relations, growth, stewardship and programs, and to perform a SWOT analysis on them, identifying Smithville Christian's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in each of these areas.

The strategic planners moved around the room in pairs, providing their SWOT comments on chart paper and reviewing the comments made by others. The participants then identified key themes that emerged, and compared them to the themes of the 2016 strategic plan. Several areas for further activity were found:

Growth potential

Diversity

Deepening our faith expression

- Internally
- Externally

Bursary planning

Hendriks returned to Smithville Christian in May for a follow-up session with teachers, who devoted one of their Thursday morning research and development sessions to performing a similar SWOT analysis on the five key elements of organizational flourishing. The results of both sessions are now being compiled and several targeted areas for ongoing research and reporting will be finalized by the board of directors.

Stay tuned.

Expect to see and hear about ways in which this school will be positioning itself to grow in size and diversity, deepening the expression of its faith, and emphasizing ways to make Christian education accessible to all who want it. Smithville Christian values inclusion, diversity, and training young people to be faithful citizens in the kingdom of God.



Why we're happy when the sun shines

BY TED HARRIS, ADMINISTRATOR

Our Solar Project, officially named Son Power, has been doing very well. 2016 was a very sunny year and Son Power reaped the benefits by grossing just over \$200,000. A significant percentage of these funds is spent to pay back the initial costs of the project, which totaled almost \$1 million for reroofing costs and the cost of the panels, equipment and installation. The remainder of the income is for the benefit of our school. Here's how the board and finance committee are ensuring effective stewardship.

For starters, our board has determined and made clear that in keeping with our commitment to cost-based tuition, Son Power funds will not be used in the normal operating budget. Therefore we have created what we call our Pursuit of Excellence Fund. Its purpose is described as making "funding available to enable our teaching staff to pursue instructional excellence in ways that our normal budget allotments would not allow."

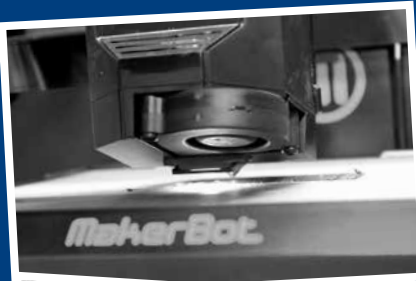
The criteria for use of these funds is articulated as follows:

- **The initiative must have clear connection to the experience of our students.**
- **The initiative must have a clear connection to the mission of the school.**
- **The initiative must not give undue or imbalanced funding to the projects of one teacher or a small group of teachers or students.**

- **The initiative must not be something that could be accomplished within the constraints of normal budget activity.**
- **The initiative must allow for program activity that could be considered "remarkable" or "innovative."**
- **Occasional allowance can be made for an exceptional professional development opportunity for one or more staff members if such an opportunity connects with the above criteria.**

One could summarize the above by saying that the Pursuit of Excellence Fund allows for technology, travel, training and tools that bring us closer to excellence in our instructional practices.

It is beautiful to see what has been made possible by the Pursuit of



Excellence Fund during the last two years. Here is a glimpse:

- **A class set of iPads available for all students**
- **Software for our 1:1 MacBook program**
- **A trip to the Royal Winter Fair for our Culture Club**
- **Partial funding for the New York City trip for our grade 12 Geography class**
- **A new 3D printer**
- **A class set of guitars for our music program**
- **New cameras and tripods for student projects**
- **Funding for shop projects for students who could not afford all of the materials**
- **Funding for the grade 11 English class magazine**
- **Teacher MacBooks**

- **Costs for the recording of a choir CD**
- **Costs for participation in the national Music Fest for our praise team**
- **A City Harmonic concert and workshops with professional musicians for praise team members**
- **Robots for our educational program and for our Technology Club**
- **Rocket equipment for our science program**
- **Equipment for the construction and small engines shop programs**

It is a blessing to see programs flourish with the help of our Son Power project. We are grateful to God that we do not have to view our program as second-rate in any way. In fact, we are blessed to embrace possibilities and dream big with our students. If you would like to see first-hand some of the things we are doing to pursue excellence, send an email or give us a call; we would love to show you around.



Smithville Christian by the Numbers 2016-2017

Number of students

235



Number of staff

24



Teaching staff

20



Support staff

4



Number of international students

28



100%

Percentage of new domestic students (from new families) who attend an admissions & orientation interview with their parents

100%

Percentage of international Grade 12 students enrolled in the new Investigating Christianity course

100%

Percentage of domestic Grade 12 students enrolled in the new Capstone course

100%

Percentage of Grade 9 students enrolled in the new Exploring Technology course (computers, wood shop, and food & nutrition)

100%

Percentage of Grade 9 students enrolled in the new Integrated Arts course (music, drama and visual art)

100%

Percentage of Grade 12 students who passed their portfolio interviews

100%

Percentage of Grade 9 students with MacBook Air Laptops

100%

100%



Edsby

(online learning management tool)

18

Percentage of parents active on Edsby on a weekly basis

35

Percentage of parents active on Edsby on a monthly basis

99

Percentage of students active on Edsby daily

Impact on Household Budgets

Tuition as a percentage of the Canadian median family income
(from Statistics Canada)

Year	Family Paying High School Tuition Only	Family Paying Double Tuition: Both High School & Elementary
2011	17.72	28.5
2012	17.17	28.3
2013	16.72	27.6
2014	16.23	27.0



of Thursday morning research & development sessions attended by staff

36

Percentage of Smithville Christian families receiving some form of financial assistance:

30%

Amount of money disbursed annually in bursaries:

Between \$180,000 and \$200,000

Approved operating budget for 2017/2018:

\$2.4 Million

What are Families Paying Elsewhere?

High school tuition comparison for 2016/2017
(single student rate)

Smithville Christian	\$14,000
Other Ontario High School A	\$14,390*
Other Ontario High School B	\$13,390
Other Ontario High School C	\$14,900
Other Ontario High School D	\$15,450*
Other Ontario High School E	\$12,228

**includes transportation*

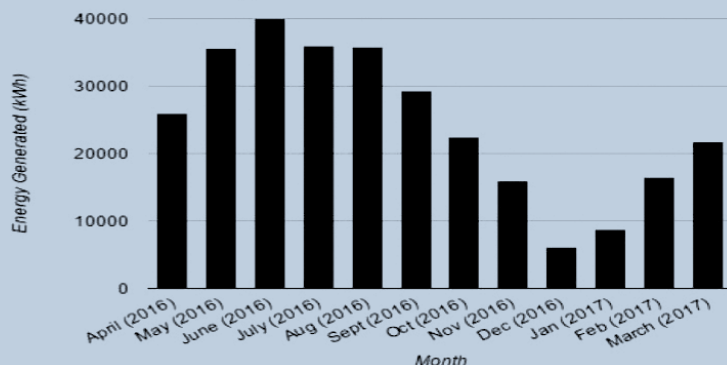
Next Open House & Celebration of Learning

Thursday,
January 18, 2018

When the sun shines, we're helping to reduce global warming

Grade 12 Data Management students Ian Kang and Ben Schat provided these images and visual representations of the environmental impact of Smithville Christian High School's roof-top solar array.

Energy Generated Each Month



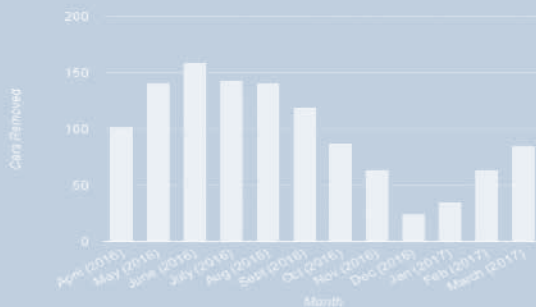
FUN FACT #2 - Our Solar Panels

In one month, the solar panels effectively reduced carbon dioxide emissions almost equivalent to the amount that planting 420 trees would!



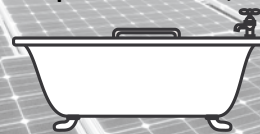
FUN FACT #1

Cars Removed from the Roads



FUN FACT #3 - Our Solar Panels

The amount of carbon dioxide emissions reduced by the solar panel system in one year could fill the equivalent of 287,355 bathtubs!



FUN FACT #4 - Our Solar Panels

In one year, the amount of carbon dioxide emissions the solar panels saved in kg is equivalent to the weight of an adult blue whale!



WHAT IF?

BY TONY KAMPHUIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION

WHY HAS THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION DECLARED 2017 "THE YEAR OF THE WILL CLINIC"?



Across Canada, the pace of estate and planned gifts that are coming into effect is increasing quickly. In Smithville Christian High School's support community, those who were heavily involved in the establishment and operation of Christian schools in their early years are coming to the end of the earthly phase of their walk with God. These are people who love the positive impact Christian education has had and will continue to have. They love Christian schools. But are they among the 60% of Canadians who don't have a **current** will?

If they are asked, many of these supporters would happily leave a gift to our Christian school in their final estate arrangements. Are they being asked?

We believe our school is doing our faithful donors a favour by asking them to attend a will clinic, or participate in a similar kind of activity.

A will clinic can show them how they can make difficult decisions easier for their children – decisions that will otherwise need to be made in a very emotional time. This peace of mind is a precious gift.

A will clinic gives supporters the chance to think through and discuss IF they would like to bless a charity and HOW they would like to bless a charity – and it can show them ways to do so in a tax-wise manner that avoids unhappiness among their children!

WHAT IF: By the end of 2018, we identify 50 people who have left a

planned gift for Smithville Christian High School that we weren't aware of previously?

WHAT IF: We helped 50 others make that kind of arrangement in a simple, no pressure, straightforward manner?

WHAT IF: The average gift for our school was \$25,000 [Note: Christian Stewardship Services says that in their history, the average gift left for charities is \$200,000 – but that is often shared among several charities.]

How would it change what we do if we knew there was \$2.5M set aside to bless and enable our work?

Hosting a Will Clinic is just one of the ways we can work towards these goals. Watch for other ways we will arrange to have this conversation together.

Planned giving and Estate Giving are amazing ways that we can together bless our schools and their Kingdom

work well into the future. We know our donors and our school share a vision of advancing the Kingdom of God. We are excited to draw them together to accomplish this important work.





CHRISTIAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION

2017 Goals



Strategic Plan Formalized
and Implemented



15 Will Clinics
Hosted



12 More
Member Schools

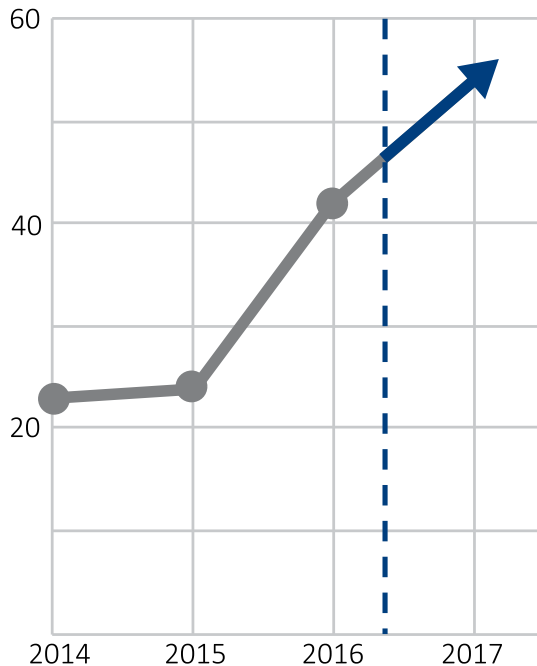


2 'Faithful Donor to Planned
Giver' Campaigns Completed

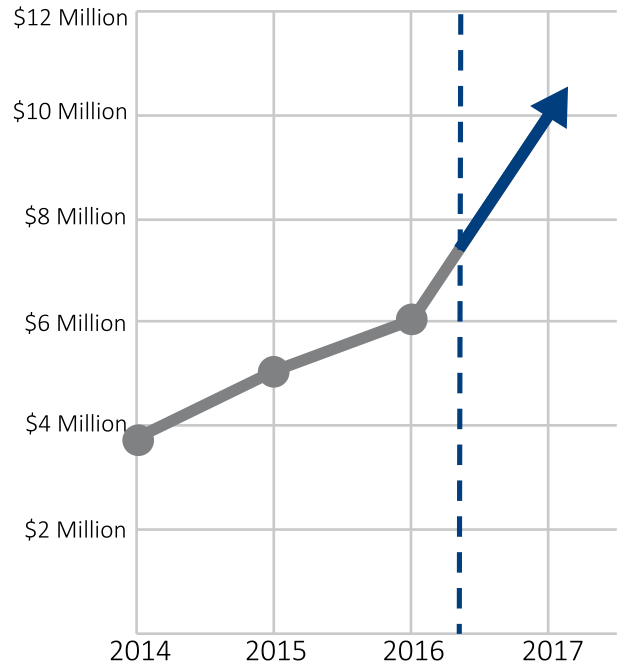


Increase of \$4 Million
Assets Under Management

Member School Growth



Asset Growth



Strengthening our support base

BY TONY KAMPHUIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION

Pictures are worth a thousand words. And graphs can be worth even more! The Smithville Christian High School leadership recognizes that a variety of income streams — beyond a reliance on tuition — is very important to a flourishing future for this school.



Smithville Christian's partnership with the Christian School Foundation is intended to create an increasingly important income stream for the future. For that to happen, the Foundation needs to continue to grow and to be seen as a helpful and natural means for people to support this school. For Smithville Christian High School, it is a source of great joy when supporters see the Foundation as the natural 'go to' place for gift planning questions. So how is the Foundation doing?

When the Christian School Foundation was launched in 2014 as a merger between three existing foundations, it had 24 member schools and \$3.7M in assets under management. Now, in under three years, it has grown to 49

member schools with several more considering joining. It has more than \$7.1M in assets under management. But the real story is one to which we cannot easily attach a number. How many Planned and Estate Gifts have been arranged through the Foundation? While we can't put a definitive number on how many, or on what these gifts will total, we do know they will be in the millions of dollars, and we do know that they will be a tremendous blessing to the upcoming generations of students and families connected to Smithville Christian.

Check out the infographic on page 14. It tells the story of where the Foundation has come from, where it is at, and where — by God's grace — we see it heading!

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