



The KNIGHTLY NEWS

Columbia Christian School • PreK-12th Grade

January & February 2023

Accreditation Visit



Important Dates:

March 27-31
Spring Break

April 6
Conferences & Learning Fair

April 10
Easter Break

April 18
MS & HS Spring Music Show

April 20
Elementary Music Program

April 21
8th-12th Grade Career Day

April 25
NHS Inductions

EXPLORING EDUCATION OPTIONS

Do you know someone considering school choices for their children this fall? Some classes at Columbia Christian have waiting lists, while others still have open spots. Contact the office to learn more: 503-252-8577 or admissions@columbiachristian.com.

Columbia recently completed their self-study and site visit for re-accreditation with ACSI (Association for Christian Schools International). Columbia's commitment to accreditation assures parents and the community that there is a genuine focus on raising student achievement, providing a safe and enriching learning environment, and maintaining an efficient and effective operation.

Accreditation through ACSI is a voluntary method of quality assurance designed specifically for private schools. To demonstrate educational quality, accreditation is recognized for its ability to effectively drive student performance and continuous improvement in education. Accreditation engages the school community in meeting high-quality standards, implementing a continuous improvement process, and engaging in external and internal engagement reviews.

The accreditation process has been a tremendous opportunity for Columbia to conduct a thorough examination of every aspect of the school based on recognized quality standards. Accreditation involves staff, parents, administrators, and students. The process consists of a comprehensive self-study and a site visit by educators from other schools who are trained evaluators to review the action plan, visit classrooms, conduct interviews, and then issue a report with a recommendation for re-accreditation.

The visiting team for Columbia was made up of four school leaders who came from Oregon, Washington, and California. They arrived to campus on a snowy February afternoon to share a meal with Board members and the school's leadership team. The following two days were filled with meetings with teachers, interviews

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Accreditation Visit (Cont.)

with students and parents, classroom observations, a board meeting, and conferences with department heads and others who served on the Accreditation Steering Committee. At the conclusion of the site visit, the team of educators reported that their time at Columbia was a blessing and that they were impressed with the time and effort that was obviously poured into the self-study.



Dr. Deborah Miller shared, "The accreditation process was a lot of hard work but it did what it was supposed to do: it helped us to critically examine virtually every aspect of our school to see if and to what extent we were offering an excellent education to our students. We were able to improve processes and procedures, address areas of need, spot areas



where we need to continue to grow, and celebrate the amazing things God is doing in us and through us as a school. While I definitely would not want to go through it every year, it certainly is a worthwhile and very beneficial process that resulted in our recognition as an outstanding school. I am very proud of who we are and glad our excellence was recognized by others!"

Special recognition goes to Pearl Howarth, who served as the school's coordinator for the entire accreditation process. Appreciation is also extended to the members of the Steering Committee: Ami Vensel, Deborah Miller, Dixie Bever, Sam Schultz, Cheri Davis, Angela Poole, and Donnie Alcatraz.

Elementary Bible Day (Surprise!)



On an ordinary Tuesday in January, Columbia elementary students arrived at school surprised to find that their whole building had been transformed into a time machine! The hallway of the Outlaw Center for Academic Excellence was completely darkened and filled with a variety of neon images and special effects to "transport" the students back to the Biblical era. Each classroom became a scene from a notable account from the Bible; teachers and special guests were part of the story.

The entire elementary team – comprising faculty, staff, assistants, and volunteers – is to be commended

for their extra efforts to organize and execute this comprehensive learning experience. Bible Day was unforgettable for the children and it taught them in ways that go far beyond any textbook lesson. From Abraham to Paul, students witnessed the Bible coming to life.

About the program, Administrative Assistant Christy Barrett reflected, "It was a truly wonderful experience for the kids. For one incredible day, teachers transformed their rooms into a simpler time. NO STUDENTS came to the office to see me – they were having too much fun learning about Biblical times and the impact of the Bible on their lives today. One parent reported their child said: 'Bible Day was the best day ever!'"

This unique educational activity is part of a series that Columbia hosts annually. Other memorable themes from years past have been "Passport Day," "Literacy Circus," "Great Artists Day," and "Mad Scientist Day," to name a few.

Winter Memories: Snapshots of Fun



Portland experienced some inclement weather in February which meant "Snow Days" for students!



High school Biology class conducted water chemistry tests and planted trees during their field trip service project at Kelley Point Park.



4th graders and their families enjoyed a Potlatch as the culmination of their Native American studies -- including projects, presentations, and foods that are typically eaten by local tribes.



Once per month, the entire student body gathers for "All School Chapel." Big-Buddies and Little-Buddies sit together for this time of worship and devotion.



PreK and Kindergarten enjoyed a field trip to watch a performance by the Oregon Children's Theater.



During Read-A-Thon, elementary students clocked a total of 76,217 minutes and brought in \$8,340 to support their library and classroom resources. Great job!



On the 100th day of school, students enjoyed dressing up as centenarians and participating in a variety of math activities.



High school students came dressed to impress at their Vintage Hollywood Winter Formal this year.



Middle school students enjoyed a movie and popcorn reward in the Student Center at the end of semester one.

International Student Program Updates

For a couple of decades, Columbia has welcomed students from around the globe to be part of its international program. With approval through SEVP (Student and Exchange Visitor Program), part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the school is blessed to partner with a variety of schools, agencies, and families from different parts of the world. The various experiences that come from hosting foreign visitors are enriching to both the travelers and the “host” students – providing opportunity to learn about language, culture, customs, and expanding worldviews.

FULL-YEAR STUDENTS



During the pandemic, international travel became challenging – even impossible at times. Now that things have opened up again, Columbia has been pleased to welcome back more international middle and high school students for the full-year “traditional” school experience. Eight students are currently part of this program; countries represented include Germany, Japan, China, Thailand, and Vietnam.

KOREAN WINTER CAMPS



Two groups of students from South Korea joined the Columbia family for “Winter Camp” programs this year. Through the facilitation of Gide USA, the children enjoyed visiting Columbia classes, going on field trips, and spending time in their host homes. Bethel International Christian School brought 23 students in early February, and King’s Kids / Shema Elementary brought 18 students in mid-February. Special appreciation goes to the teachers who welcomed the children into their classrooms and the families who hosted them in their homes!

JAPANESE EXCHANGE



Through a partnership with two local agencies, Columbia currently has students visiting from Japan for a short-term exchange experience. Four students are part of this program from January through March, and they are fully immersing themselves in the Columbia community!

MOU SIGNING CEREMONY



During a high school chapel session in January, students participated in the formalization of a partnership between Columbia and two schools in South Korea. Representatives from Miraldure Christian School and Vision Classical Christian School were part of that ceremony. Columbia is excited about the opportunities this brings its students in the future!

Winter Sports Recap



Varsity Boys Basketball

The Varsity Boys Basketball season ended in Medford during the first round of the OSAA 1A State Playoffs as they fell to Rogue Valley Adventist. The Boys finished 3rd in the Valley 10 this year and saw breakout seasons from both senior captains, Christian Chapman and Dawson Vensel. Sophomore Colby Getting also had himself a tremendous year averaging nearly 10 points and 10 rebounds per game. We had three players earn all-league honors: Dawson Vensel earned 1st Team All-League and 1st Team All-Defense, Christian Chapman earned 2nd Team All-League, and Colby Getting earned All-League Honorable Mention. Congrats to the boys on qualifying for the state playoffs this year!



Varsity Girls Basketball

Coach Jeff Ahrend led our Girls program into the league playoffs for the first time since 2016. This year was a tremendous success after not fielding a girls basketball program at all a year ago. The team was led by senior, Lisa Hartwich, and juniors, Tabitha Kinga and Angelina Truong. We had two student-athletes earn all-league honors: Lisa Hartwich earned 1st Team All-League and 1st Team All-Defense, and Agelina Truong earned All-League Honorable Mention. The Knights finished 5th in the Valley 10 this year! Congratulations on a great season!



7th/8th Boys Basketball

The 7th/8th Boys Basketball team saw tremendous growth from the season start to the season finish. With 15 boys out for the team, it was a battle to find playing time for each player, but the coaching

staff was thoroughly impressed with how hard each one worked to improve their game. The team was led by ten 8th graders, with offensive standouts such as Lex Pon, Evan Bamford, and Zach Thibedeux, and defensive standouts such as Oliver Rude and Tommy Roberts. The current 7th graders will look to add to the success next year as they take on the responsibility of leading the team and will be led by players such as River Zimmerman, Henry Nyugen, and Nazar Hirenko. The 7th/8th Boys ended their season with a well-fought loss in the league finals against North Clackamas Christian.

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PRESCHOOL - 12TH

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Winter Sports Recap (Cont.)



7th/8th Girls Basketball

The 7th/8th Girls Basketball team gave us a lot to cheer for this year as they finished with only 3 losses on the season! Coach Bishop worked hard to develop the fundamentals with each player and create a competitive and fun atmosphere on the basketball court. It translated into a lot of victories and even caught the eye of our Varsity Girls Head Coach, Coach Ahrend. Coach Ahrend is extremely excited to see this 7th/8th grade group get up to the high school ranks and make an instant impact on the Varsity program! This year, the team was led by 8th graders Sophia Reed, Caeley Saunders, Nadya Pimentel, and Eva Salmon. Next year, the team will be led by players such as Emrie Riske, Merveille Uwera, and Piper Espinoza. The 7th/8th Girls ended their season with a gritty win over Open Door!



5th/6th Boys and Girls Basketball

Columbia Christian basketball was proven to be in good hands with this year's group of 5th/6th graders. Led by Coach Partlow, Coach Haney, and Coach Connor, our 5th/6th Graders worked hard everyday to develop better fundamentals and began learning some basic offensive and defensive concepts. As a team, we saw success on all three teams this year. On the Girls side, we had one team and they were very successful at accomplishing their goals. On the Boys side, we divided the group into two equal teams to allow for more development opportunities for each student-athlete and that led to a much more enjoyable experience for all!

COLUMBIA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL PRESENTS

Benefit Auction & Partnership Dinner 2023

You're invited to join us

SATURDAY
MAY 13, 2023

ORAL AUCTION
BEGINS AT 6:30 PM

GATHERING AT THE
COLUMBIA CHRISTIAN
JOHNSON CENTER

**GET YOUR
TICKETS NOW!**

Early-bird pricing is
available through April 15.

Visit the school website
for details: [www.columbiachristian.com/
support/annual-auction-
partnership-dinner.cfm](http://www.columbiachristian.com/support/annual-auction-partnership-dinner.cfm).

Alumni Spotlight



**Roxanna
Johnson**
Class of 1997

Starting at Columbia Christian School in Kindergarten, and graduating from the high school in 1997, Roxanna Johnson is another student who is proudly on the list of Columbia “lifers.” When asked about her experience at the school, Roxanna shared: *Columbia felt like a family to me throughout my school years. Our teachers were approachable and genuine. They were always rooting for us to succeed. We saw them at our plays and sporting events cheering side-by-side with our parents.*

While at Columbia I kept busy with student government, volleyball, basketball (first girls basketball team at CCS!), track (as the slowest person running the 3000 when nobody else wanted to do it), band, and theater ('Little Women' & 'Much Ado About Nothing' were most memorable). I'm not a natural athlete or orator, but nobody ever tried to discourage me from trying something new and just working hard to improve. I don't think I would have had these opportunities at a larger school.

Some of my best memories include: making stone soup in kindergarten, learning about music and singing folk songs in elementary school, when our 9th grade class won "Most Improved" award because we were such a handful the year prior, singing in chapel, dressing up for Banquets,

practicing for plays until late at night, 3-hour road trips to basketball or volleyball games on the coast, and so many fun field trips! Honestly, my very best memories are of the Class of '97. We were rowdy, precocious, smart, driven, we were very, very loud (especially when we sang 'The School of Brotherly Love')...and we were a family.

When it comes to favorite teachers, it's hard to narrow it down, but here are my top 3: Mrs. Ferris, Kindergarten, who made us wish we could go to school all day. Miss Sims (Roulette), third grade, who we all thought was the most beautiful and gentle teacher around. Our class severely tested her first-year teaching skills on the day half of the class threw up, but she was always patient and kind, and Mrs. Gentry, Jr. High and HS English, for somehow always being able to laugh with us, but still keep us on task.

After my years at Columbia, I graduated from Oklahoma Christian University with a degree in History, then moved to Japan where I lived for five years to teach English in local middle schools. During college and my time in Japan, I was fortunate to get the opportunity to travel the world during school breaks. I visited 25 countries by the time I turned 25. After my daughter was born, we moved back to the US, and then eventually back to Portland where I started a career in banking. In fact, my first job in banking came as a referral from one of my CCS classmates.

I've held a number of positions across my institution including a manager position in Wealth Management, and now Product Management. In all of my roles, I've been thrown into something I've never done before and had to learn new skills from scratch. My time at CCS and OC presented

many opportunities to hold leadership positions and to always try new activities, so I believe that helped me develop confidence entering the corporate world where one has to constantly adapt and try new things in order to progress in their career. Last year I was proud to help launch a bank-wide employee resource group that promotes immigrants telling their stories in a safe place, in order to foster understanding about their journey and culture. Outside of work, in our free time, my husband, daughter and I enjoy playing tennis and hiking. Our daughter has inherited my 'wanderlust' and is plotting ways to live abroad in the future.

In response to the question “What advice do you have for the current students at CCS?” Roxanna replied: *Take every opportunity to try whatever activity is available in school. There's no other time in your life you can sample so many sports, arts, music, and theater. It's a great way to get to know your fellow-students on a deeper level, and perhaps develop a hobby that will last you throughout your life. These extracurricular activities help develop adaptability, public speaking, how to work with a team, and leadership. Stay curious and try new things, not just in high school but anywhere life takes you from there.*

Christian education and small private school education gives students the opportunity to learn and express themselves in a safe space where they won't get lost in the shuffle. Parents and educators interact and have similar goals, to see these children grow to be not only successful in careers, but also to become good citizens. The friendships they make at a school like CCS can last a lifetime. In fact, I had dinner with one of my fellow graduates last night!

Vensel's Voice



President Ami Vensel

Our high school chapel meets every Wednesday morning, just prior to lunch break, which can make it somewhat challenging to keep minds and hearts focused on devotion, rather than the reality of stomachs growling and minutes ticking until the mass exodus to chowtime.

For me, it's about connection. How do I make a personal connection with students – that the words I speak are not simply gonging symbols or white noise, but rather meaningful and hopeful words of encouragement.

Recently, I shared a chapel message from Acts 17:24-28. For the purpose of this writing, I narrow my thoughts to verses 25 and 26, "And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands."

What a beautiful description of the true and living God. The God of the universe who gives life and breath created you with a purpose and for a purpose. You are not an accident; you are not here by coincidence! God gave you breath of life and appointed your time. It's a gift. God sustains you. God gives you life. God gives you everything. You are breathing right now because God said so. You are living right now because God said so. You have everything you have because God said so. That is who God is. God is the giver of everything. Nothing in the world is happening outside of God's control or knowledge. The

God of heaven gives breath of life. He is present in this place.

Will you humble yourselves – open your minds and hearts – and say, "God, I'm open. Will you please show me your purpose for my life?"



Newsletter Staff

Luke Moody	Joey Chapman
Ami Vensel	Eli Dukes
Carrie Rude	Deborah Miller
Mark Beekman	Pearl Howarth

FUN FAIR & OPEN HOUSE

From Admissions Director Carrie Rude...

We want to offer a heartfelt THANK YOU for all the hard work that went into our Open House & Fun Fair event in February. From planning and set-up, to facilitating the event and cleaning up afterwards, the efforts of our faculty/staff, parents, and students, truly made it a successful and memorable event. What a blessing to be part of the Columbia team!



EVENT STATS

- It had been **3 years** since Columbia hosted an "in person" Open House (thanks to the pandemic)
- More than **4 years** had passed since we hosted an indoor carnival (remember Family Fun Knight?)
- Bringing these 2 major events into **1 big party** was quite the undertaking!
- Over **300 people** came to campus for the event
- More than **7 new families** participated
- At least **10 other new friends** came to the event with current students
- Also in attendance were **6 younger siblings** who are looking at Fall enrollment
- The FUN was immeasurable!



If you know a family who is looking at school options – it's not too late. They can contact us today to schedule a personal appointment to get a campus tour, receive a packet of information, and have all of their questions answered: 503-252-8577 or admissions@columbiachristian.com.

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