



The

KNIGHTLY NEWS

Columbia Christian School • PreK-12th Grade

Spring 2025

Wild West: Elementary Artisans & Craftsmanship Day



By Angela Poole, Learning Specialist

Important Dates:

June 9-16

Washington DC Trip

July 3-4

Office Closed, Independence Day

July 7-11

Local Mission / Service Week

July 7-11 & July 21-25

Elementary Summer Program

July 15

Playground Play Date

July 25 - August 4

Japanese Camp #1

August 7-19

Japanese Camp #2

August 27

First Day of School - High School

August 28

First Day of School - Elementary & Middle

Students were surprised to find Mrs. Vensel dressed as a schoolmarm and ringing the school bell as she welcomed them one morning in February. Throughout this special day, the children explored art through the lens of craftsmanship as they traveled from one "shop" to another in our simulated American frontier. Students rotated in groups of mixed grade levels to visit various locations in our Wild West town. The younger students created stained art windows at the Church, designed hats at the Haberdashery, decorated birdhouses at the Feed Store, made butter at the Bakery, and mixed scented playdough at the Apothecary. The older students created bead animals at the Bead Shop, stamped leather at the Livery, did some weaving at the Textile Shop, and made candles at the Candle Shop.

During their activities, students were quick to spot the "outlaws" around town and worked to ensure they were captured and put in the town jail. These bandits (middle and high school teachers) had nefarious titles like Dastardly Doug, Swindlin' Schwartz, and Mean Green. The elementary staff is grateful for the support of the secondary staff as we decorated the building together; many of them also made appearances on the day of the event. We are also thankful for the many wonderful parent volunteers who provided extra hands throughout the day. It is a joy for the teachers to have a supportive team that works together to create lasting memories for our students! The smiles say it all!



Auction 2025



By Mark Beekman, Development Director

What a wonderful evening! On April 12th, Columbia hosted its 32nd Annual Benefit Auction and Partnership Dinner in the Farris Johnson Memorial Center. This year's theme, *NW Corner of Heaven*, celebrated the blessings of Columbia's special location in the beauty of God's creation in the Pacific NW. The event opened with competitive bidding among family, friends, and community members in the lower Student Center with the silent auction. After a sufficient fill of locally-inspired appetizers catered by Boma Foods, the fun transitioned upstairs where the evening kicked off with the lively "Heads or Tails" game. One of the many highlights of the night was senior Elizabeth Adams singing a number from Columbia's spring musical production, "Singin' in the Rain, Jr". Alumnus Steve Partlow closed the evening with the school song, *The Steadfast Love of the Lord*.



Overall, the event was filled with excitement and the bidding was electric between supporters and friends of the school. The auction always provides a wonderful opportunity for people who believe in Columbia's mission to gather and demonstrate their generosity. We are thankful for all of the volunteers who made this a special and profitable evening. Special appreciation goes to our corporate and event sponsors: PDX Cart Builders, SeaStar Senior Services, Heritage Bank, Roland Havens Insurance: A State Farm Agent, Jason Preuit Real Estate Broker, Gentry and Gentry CPAs, Oklahoma Christian University, Womack Autobody, and Metro Church of Christ.

Career Day

By Pearl Howarth, Guidance Counselor

Columbia Christian Schools recently welcomed more than 15 guest presenters as part of its annual Career Day on April 3rd. Students signed up to learn about various career paths according to their individual interests and then attended sessions during the regular school day in multiple locations on campus.

Career Day is always a valuable opportunity for 8th-12th grade students to learn about different professions. The event includes guest speakers as well as Columbia teachers and staff members who encourage students to start envisioning their future and developing realistic goals. Career Day also tangibly connects academic learning with real-world applications.

Columbia's dedication to student growth, demonstrated through programs like Career Day, is notable. When students are able to hear directly from professionals about their respective careers and what it takes to find joy in their jobs, it can significantly impact their confidence, self-awareness, and ultimately, their motivation to pursue future goals.



JULY 7-11
July 21-25
8:30AM - 12:00PM

***JOIN US FOR A WEEK BRIMMING WITH
CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION!***

COLUMBIA CHRISTIAN'S CAMP CREATION

MAKE IT MONDAY

Craft some incredible art
and creations

TASTEFUL TUESDAY

Get ready to cook up a
delicious treat

WET WEDNESDAY

Enjoy playing creative
and cool water games

THINK IT THURSDAY

Tackle various
problem-solving challenges

FUN FRIDAY

Prepare for a day filled
with exciting and
imaginative activities



\$200



**REGISTER
& PAY**



Who is invited? Children who completed Kindergarten through completed 5th Grade

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Kickin' It at Elementary Spring Soccer Camp

by Jenna Heath, Band Instructor

More than 30 elementary students participated in Columbia's much-anticipated annual Spring Soccer program. With eight after-school sessions in April and May, the goals of this camp were for kids to have fun and work on fundamental soccer skills such as dribbling, passing, shooting, and defending. Participants worked well together and things flowed smoothly throughout the sessions. We had a good mixture of games and skill drills and the kids had great attitudes – participating to the fullest extent despite the heat we had for a couple of days.

One moment that stood out to me was when I saw a kindergarten student put into practice something that we had been working on during camp on the last day! I was so excited to witness how much they learned and grew. Soccer is something I've been passionate about for most of my life and it brought me so much joy to see students out there having fun and enjoying this sport that I love.

I want to thank our student volunteers, both middle and high school, for coming out to lead the groups. I especially appreciate Kevin Yaws, Danielle Zapp, and Clara Brandt, for their unwavering support and for volunteering their time and energy to help the students. I'm already looking forward to next year!



Black & Gold Night: Open House 2025



by Carrie Rude, Admissions Director

Columbia's Open House took on a new format this year. Hosted on a Friday evening in early February, we decided to invite prospective families (and current CCS families) to one of our high school boys' home basketball games. In addition to watching the athletic competition, we incorporated fun elements like raffle prizes, face painting, free refreshments, info displays, and a few half-time games for the kids. Teachers and other staff members circulated in the gym, lobby, and Lower Johnson Center to mingle with visitors and answer questions. Overall, the event provided a low-key opportunity for new folks to come to campus and experience a taste of the Columbia community. We appreciate everyone who was part of it!



**High School Spring Fling
"Diamonds Are Forever"**



Snow Days!



**Biology Field Trip
with Mrs. Dawkins!**



President for a Day!



**4th Grade Field Trip
McLaughlin House & Ematinger House**



**The Sun is Out...
Class Outside!**



**The PPB Showed Students
Their Vehicles and Equipment!**



**Rock, Paper, Scissors Played in
the Gym During Career Day!**



**Alumnus Sasha K
Taught About Oral Health**

SPRING SNAPSHOTS

2025

Winter Sports Recap

By Kevin Yaws, Athletic Director

We appreciate everyone who supported our athletes and teams through another successful season of Knights basketball.



5TH/6TH GIRLS

Ben Hoerth and Alisha Jones coached the 5/6 girls team this year. They focused more on the fundamentals of the game than victories in the books. Each player honed her individual skills and they grew together as a team as well.

5TH/6TH BOYS

Steve Partlow returned to coach the 5/6 boys. We are proud of these players for the growth that they showed this year. They each developed new skills, worked hard, and improved as a team.



7TH/8TH GIRLS

Alisha Jones coached the 7/8 girls team – helping them increase their existing skills while learning new ones. This team showed consistent improvement throughout the season and just missed qualifying for the playoffs.

7TH/8TH BOYS

Dino Tanner and Steve Partlow coached our 7/8 boys. This team played with grit and did not give up. They improved throughout the year, and due to a great team effort, claimed the title of League Champions. Great job, Knights!



HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS

Coaches Dennis Carline and Michael Bonteps, with the assistance of Steve Partlow, led the high school girls team to great improvements this year. Sophia Reed and Caeley Saunders were voted as All-League Honorable Mention players. By the end of the season, our competitors knew Columbia by our strong defensive play.

Winter Sports Recap (Cont...)



HIGH SCHOOL BOYS

Coaches Jared Ramsey and Charles Lawrence led the high school boys through a season in which we were in contention for a playoff spot until the very last week. The team was led in scoring and rebounds by Hayden Arthur who was voted onto the All-League 2nd team. While this team lacked in numbers, they played with heart. If not for a couple of late-season injuries, they would have made the playoffs. We are looking forward to better seasons to come for this team.

Singin' in the Rain, Jr.



By Carrie Rude, Admissions Director

Audiences raved about Columbia Christian Drama Department's production of Singin' in the Rain, Jr.! The Vera Johnson Rehearsal Hall was packed for seven shows over the course of two weekends in May – including one performance that featured the understudy cast. From the energetic choreography (the tap dancing was amazing!) to the fantastic singing and acting, it was truly an exquisite show that entertained viewers from young to old. Favorite moments included the appearance of the life-sized cake (and the subsequent icing-in-the-face scene), twirling umbrellas in the title number, tongue-twisters galore in "Moses Supposes", and a few humorous lifts involving Cosmo in "Make 'em Laugh." In total, 36 hard-working students were part of the cast and crew this spring.

Director Sam Schultz reflected on the program, "I think Singin' in the Rain was an exceptional show. From the get-go, my wife and I wanted to challenge these kids, especially when it came to choreography, and they rose to the occasion! I was blown away by all the effort they put in. I was especially proud of the seniors. They BROUGHT it, and I couldn't think of a better way to send them off. As always, I am extremely appreciative of all the help behind the scenes: Erik Walthinsen, Daniel Carver, Pearl Howarth, Mary Stewart, Aimee Estacio, Christine Schultz, and all the office staff: Carrie Rude, Laura Walthinsen, and Christy Barrett. We had more than 40 parents who volunteered their time in various ways – from taking tickets and selling concessions to providing dinner and cleaning after the shows. Thanks to everyone who chipped in to bless our program!"



Elementary Read-A-Thon 2025



by Carrie Rude, Admissions Director



Read-A-Thon 2025 was a blast! Decked out in her spacesuit, Librarian Megan Stangland motivated our Preschool through 6th grade students to read, read, read – with fun new challenges and prizes during this special week in March. The fundraiser was a huge success; the kids worked hard and had a wonderful time reading – clocking a combined total of over 100,000 minutes! Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, we raised over \$13,000 for new library and classroom resources. Way to go!

Mrs. Stangland shared many of her favorite parts of this year's event, "I loved how involved the students were. Overall, 37% of our kids collected donations! Students were reading a LOT in their classroom, in the hall, at recess, with their buddies... There were friendly competitions to read the most minutes between students! I appreciate everyone's support through the week: students, teachers, guest readers (author, illustrator, firemen, and policemen came!), many parents, Mrs. Heath, Mr. Dukes, and Connor Dukes. Our big winners who got to launch the rockets(!!) on our soccer field were Olivia Bekahi and Jenneke deHaan! Jenneke also received the honor of Librarian for a Day. Best of all, we've already purchased a lot of new books with the funds raised from Read-A-Thon!"



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FAITH CHARACTER ACADEMICS

Friends From Around the Globe



By Laura Walthinsen, International Student Coordinator

What a blessing it is to host students from various countries around the world each year. In addition to the full-year international students who are with us from August through June, we are also happy to host students who come for a shorter window of time.

For the third year in a row, Columbia welcomed visitors from Bethel International School in South Korea. Fifteen of their students and three teachers were on campus for two weeks in February. Their visit included lots of time in our classrooms with our Columbia students, culture classes provided by Columbia faculty and staff, and a special field trip to Disneyland organized by their agency. This group is always so much fun to host, especially as it is currently our only group that brings international students into the elementary building! Our elementary kids got to make friends with five of the students from Bethel, with one student being as young as six! She was such a brave girl to come to the U.S. with her classmates and teachers. The remaining ten students got to mix in to our middle school and high school groups, and many Columbia students were excited to reunite with Bethel students who were returning for the second or third year.

Each year, we also typically invite a few students from Japan to attend classes in either middle school or high school for a period of 2-3 months. This winter we hosted three girls – Riko, Miki, and Haruka – from December through February. They arrived during our Christmas break and attended classes overlapping quarters 1 and 2. In mid-January, we had two more students join us from another school in Japan – Maho and Nao. These ladies remained with us through mid-April. Each of the five girls said that they loved their time here at Columbia and were thankful for the friends they had made.

Welcoming international students to our school is an amazing way for our domestic students to interact with other cultures, languages, and sometimes faiths. Not every one of our international friends come from a Christian family or background. This means we have a unique and important opportunity to shine Christ's light and impact individuals all over the globe for Christ's Kingdom. What a blessing to be given that task! If you would like an opportunity to host one of our incredible students, whether for a short two-week visit or a full school year, please let us know!



HOST FAMILIES NEEDED!

We need host families for our amazing international students

Summer Camp

July 25 - August 4
August 7 - August 19

Homestay Placement: 2 students per household
Stipend: \$100/night per pair of students

What is needed from each host:

1. Provide 3 meals per day
2. Provide a bed per student
3. Provide transport to and from school and activities
4. English should be primary language

Email Laura Walthinsen to sign up!
lwalthinsen@columbiachristian.com or office@columbiachristian.com

Vensel's Voice



President Ami Vensel

Spring is in the air! A season of rain, blooming flowers, warmer weather, longer days, baseball, Easter, and (my favorite) cherry blossoms, is here. One of my other favorite things about spring is spending time with our 6th grade girls – providing an opportunity to focus on social, emotional, and spiritual wellness, healthy relationships, and our identity in Christ.

Middle school is an exciting time! Students are on their way to becoming independent, developing their own interests, growing in their walk with Jesus, and entering the teen years. However, they also struggle with peer pressure, self-image, authority, and fear of rejection. What a great opportunity to create time, space, and a safe environment to navigate some of these challenges and support students in developing healthy behaviors.

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience" (Colossians 3:12). What does it mean to be holy and dearly loved? How do we clothe ourselves with qualities and characteristics that are God-honoring? Do these things come naturally (instinctually) or do we acquire a taste and a yearning?

Our topics of conversation focus on this amazing time of development when our bodies are changing, our brains are still developing, and we experience a range of emotions. We may feel irritated quite easily, lose our temper, or feel disheartened. Relationships from elementary school may not be the same, and dynamics in friendships change as interests develop and change. It sometimes feels unsafe or lonely when people who used to be our friend no longer want to hang out. So, not only are our bodies unpredictable, but our social structure is as well. In addition to all of this, there is a lot going on in the culture around us and we want to maintain some type of control; we want to fit in, be respected, and we want to feel safe. Sometimes, when we are navigating our feelings and trying to maintain control, we can be unkind. Our bodies (brain and emotions) are not developmentally able to recognize the harm and consequences of our words and actions (cause and effect). Sounds like a perfect storm! Yet, *"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence" (2 Peter 1:3).*

Yes, spring is in the air! This season includes a special time of connection, relationship-building, and conversations with 6th grade girls. Time well spent in supporting our students as they grow and mature socially, emotionally, and spiritually; understanding their unique and beautiful identity in Christ.

"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples," John 15:8.



Newsletter Staff

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