



The KNIGHTLY NEWS

COLUMBIA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

PRESCHOOL-12TH GRADE

SPRING 2026

EVENING OF SCHOLARSHIP: ACADEMIC SHOWCASE

By Pearl Howarth

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

IMPORTANT DATES

July 3

Office Closed,
Independence Day

July 9

Playground Play Day

July 20-21

Local Mission/
Service Days

July 21

Playground Play Day

August 12

Playground Play Day

August 31

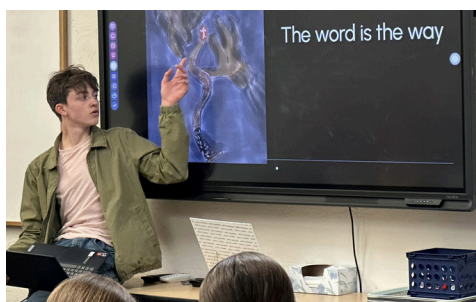
Orientation Day

September 1

First Day of School -
Middle & High School

September 2

First Day of School -
Elementary



Columbia Christian School's first annual Evening of Scholarship was a meaningful and memorable celebration of student learning, growth, and achievement. On Thursday evening, April 16th, our high school students shared presentations representing months—and in many cases, years—of growth in communication, critical thinking, creativity, and academic exploration.

Families, staff, and community members filled classrooms across campus as students confidently presented projects connected to their coursework and personal interests. From science and history to literature, business, engineering, and the arts, the evening showcased the wide variety of talents and passions represented within our student body.

What made the evening especially powerful was not simply the quality of the projects, but the growth demonstrated by the students themselves.

Many students stepped outside of their comfort zones to speak publicly, explain complex ideas, and answer questions with professionalism and poise.

One student reflected afterward, "I was nervous going into it, but once I started presenting, I realized how much I actually knew about my topic. It made me feel more prepared for future presentations."



Parents also expressed appreciation for the opportunity to see students engage academically in such a meaningful way. One parent commented, "You could see the growth in these students—not just academically, but personally. It was encouraging to watch them communicate so thoughtfully and professionally."

The Evening of Scholarship was designed to give students authentic experience in research, preparation, presentation, and reflection—skills that will serve them well far beyond high school.

The event also highlighted Columbia Christian School's commitment to developing students who pursue excellence in faith, character, and academics.

We are deeply thankful for the many teachers, staff members, parents, and volunteers who helped make the evening possible, and especially proud of our students for the way they represented themselves and our school community.

We are already looking forward to next year's Evening of Scholarship and the continued growth of this meaningful Columbia Christian tradition.



Going for Gold:

Elementary Literacy Olympics

By Carrie Rude

ADMISSIONS DIRECTOR

Surprise! Students arrived at school in mid-February to find the hallway transformed into a "snowy" mountain landscape. This wasn't just a normal school day; the children were entering a special immersive learning experience created by our talented elementary team. Fun literacy skill activities were paired with events from the winter Olympics – and the décor and costumes complemented this theme as well.

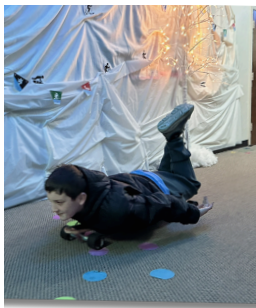
Excitement was high as students paraded around the Eastside auditorium at the Opening Ceremony to the sound of the Olympic music before heading out to the courtyard for the lighting of the cauldron. Students then traveled with their mixed grade-level team to participate in five literacy-related Olympic activities before gathering again with the whole elementary school for the Closing Ceremony.

Reflecting on the day, Elementary Vice Principal Angela Poole shared, "Events like our Literacy Olympics Day provide many benefits for our students. In addition to the learning that takes place through the hands-on games,



the children have opportunities to interact with kids from other classes, to learn from other teachers and staff members, and to build relationships within our school community. Some of my favorite parts of the day were seeing the joy on students' faces as they engaged in learning and witnessing students help one another through the tasks."

We are grateful for the all the parents who volunteered their time, and for the many hours staff put into making this a memorable day for our students. We're already dreaming about the secret event we'll put together for next year!



Lower Elementary Stations

- Kindergarten Classroom - Biathlon - Rhyming
- **1st Grade Classroom - Bobsledding - Fluency**
- 2nd Grade Classroom - Ski Jumping - Verbs/Nouns
- **Music Room - Relay Race - Making Sentences**
- Indoor Recess Room - Hockey - Predicting

Upper Elementary Stations

- 3rd Grade Classroom - Curling - Juicy Words
- **4th Grade Classroom - Biathlon & Luge - Comprehension**
- 5th Grade Classroom - Speed Skating - Academic Vocab, Spelling, Idioms
- **Tutoring Classroom - Figure Skating - Adjectives, Adverbs, Figurative Language**
- Library - Hockey - Storytelling

COLUMBIA CHRISTIAN'S
Literacy Day
2026



FROM CLASSROOM TO COASTLINE

By Nancy Dawkins
High School Math & Science Teacher

Providing an opportunity for our high school Environmental Science students to apply their learning in the “real” world, we embarked on an overnight field trip to Newport, OR, this spring.

Visiting Hatfield Marine Science Center and participating in two extended hands-on labs allowed students to connect directly with educators working and teaching in Oregon State University's Marine Science program. Data from the shrimp that the students collected in the mud flats was entered into the OSU database as part of a long-term study of a parasitic invasive species that has infected coastal shrimp. In the afternoon, the students employed their engineering skills by designing, building, and testing their own submersible model ROVs (remotely operable vehicles). They then enjoyed competing to see which team's ROV could retrieve the most silverware from the bottom of swimming pools.

After a full day at Hatfield, the group spent the night at the Lincoln City Church of Christ before venturing to Otter Crest Beach and Devil's Punchbowl for an intertidal zone study. While there, the students were able to observe unique species that are only exposed during extreme low tides, in addition to spotting seals basking on the rocks. We highly recommend the view from inside Devil's Punchbowl!

Our class extends a huge “thank you” to Dustin Vensel (minister), and the congregation of the Lincoln City Church of Christ for allowing us to sleep at their building. There were even homemade cookies prepared for students to enjoy!



WINTER SPORTS RECAP

By Kevin Yaws

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

It was a historic winter on the court! For the first time in four years, both our boys and girls varsity basketball teams fought their way into the first round of the League Playoffs.

League Individual Honors

We are incredibly proud of our athletes who earned All-League recognition for their outstanding play.

Boys Basketball:

- First Team: Hayden Arthur
- Honorable Mention: Zach Carmean

Girls Basketball:

- Second Team: Sophia Reed

Middle School Dominance

The future of our program is bright!

7th & 8th Grade Boys: Capped off a perfect, undefeated season by bringing home the MCL Championship!

7th & 8th Grade Girls: Put on a stellar performance to secure a 3rd place finish in our league.

Elementary Skill-Building

Our 5th and 6th-grade boys and girls played hard this year and had lots of fun. They continue to develop a foundation of skills that will serve them well in the years to come!



YOUR KNIGHTS!



VARSITY KNIGHTS



JV KNIGHTS



Alumni Spotlight

Excerpts from an interview with Zach Hailey

How would you describe your experience at Columbia? I attended CCS from 1998-2012! All the way from Jr. Kindergarten to senior year. CCS to me was a second home. Everyone knew everybody, and the teachers were considered our mentors and friends. Even the staff and upper faculty were “within reach” if we ever needed advice or counseling.

What opportunities did Columbia offer that you may not have had elsewhere? As I grew up at CCS, I could try my hand at anything. I acted in several musicals (You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown, Charlotte’s Web) and plays (Treasure Island, All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten) as well as tried track & field, soccer, and basketball. I got every opportunity to play on the court and field.

What is your favorite memory? This is too hard to choose just one, but if I had to it would be our Choir Tour Mission Trip to New Orleans my sophomore year in 2010. Hurricane Katrina had ravaged the city about 4 years or so prior, and we went down to sing to the churches, but also to help with some remaining clean up. This was the first time I had ever seen a community truly brought to tears to see young people still helping all those years later. We had many people stop by and shake our hands as we swept up broken glass in dilapidated buildings, and even one family – in tears – gave our group a few hundred dollars to pay for our lunch out that day. It was the first time I realized how much the Kingdom of God can impact a community through service – especially in times of disaster.

What was your favorite class/teacher? I feel like I am about to do a disservice to all of my teachers by not including every single one of them, as they were all tremendous! Mrs. Dawkins, Mrs. Gillaspie, Mr. A, Mr. Chandler, Mr. Wells, Mr. Williams, Landon Lynn – just amazing people who poured into me even though I was a fool half the time! But I have to say my top (two) teachers were Mrs. Brenda Gentry and Mrs. Jamie Foland.

Mrs. Gentry was one of us! She had a sense of humor that would make you belly laugh in class. There were so many times we would get her off track and she was always so forgiving. Her standards were very high, however, and I very much appreciated that about her – though she always extended grace – through effort – if I ever needed a little extra credit. She was marvelous!

(Continued on page 5)

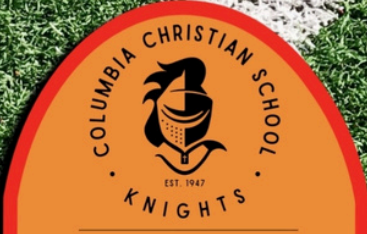


Zach Hailey - Class of 2012

COLUMBIA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



Summer Soccer Camp
Build your skills with us!
JULY 14-16 9AM-12PM



COLUMBIA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
EST. 1947
KNIGHTS

BOYS & GIRLS

ENTERING GRADES: 3RD-8TH

SIGN UP NOW!



\$100
PER STUDENT

INCLUDES T-SHIRT

Alumni Spotlight Continued

Zach Hailey - Class of 2012

Mrs. Foland was one of the most challenging teachers at the time, and her standards and tests were always very difficult, but she had a way of making history come alive that you wouldn't believe. She was also our choir director at the time, and she was professional about how she conducted her class and the choir when we would go to competitions. She additionally had a very soft spot in her heart for her students. I have memories of her crying over a graduating class, or after a great performance. She was always very emotional about her service to the school and I very much admired that.

What did you do after high school graduation? I went to Harding University and met my wife and graduated with a degree in public relations. I moved to Washington DC and worked in the administrative medical field there. Now, I am the Co-Director for Project Antioch at the Northwest School of Discipleship in Tigard, Oregon. I run a gap year program for students who desire to be better, bolder, and stronger disciples of Christ.



Any special accomplishments or specific things you are proud of?

I honestly cannot boast at all. Anything good that has come to me is only by the grace of God. There are so many moments of my life where I should have slipped off the deep end, and God alone brought me back. I have a wife and 3 beautiful children (a fourth due in July!) and it's a mercy from heaven that I have the family I have. God is so very good, and it's because of Him that I have the opportunity to serve the greater Churches of Christ around the Portland Metro area.

Why is a Christian education important?

The goal in life is only to worship Jesus Christ and serve God faithfully. I know that seems too simple, but that is really it. The amazing thing about Christian education is that in life, you need to be taught how to practically thrive. Learning math, science, language arts, current events, economics and more gives you insight as to how you might serve God's Kingdom with these gifts. Being surrounded by likeminded brothers and sisters and faculty that all see this truth as paramount is worth its weight in gold. God has designed all of us to be workers for the Kingdom, and in our efforts in the workforce, in our homes, and in our marriages and families, we see that "workmanship" played out. Christian education is the foundation and springboard to adulthood for the future years of graduating students.

What advice do you have for the current students at Columbia?

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Do not forsake the Church, for it is the bride of Christ. Honor the authorities in your life, for God has allowed those people to hold those offices for His purpose. Stand firm in the Gospel that you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved. God is so very good, and He will guide your every step! Do not forget to look to the left and right while you walk the halls at CCS to see if there is someone waiting to be encouraged or brought into the fold of friendship. Read the Psalms and Proverbs every day!

COLUMBIA

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

**Invites you to our summer
Come & Go
PLAY DAYS**
PreK-6th Grade

Enjoy a FREE Treat!

ALL PARENTS/GUARDIANS MUST STAY ONSITE DURING PLAY SESSION

- ✓ Thursday, July 9th 10:00AM-12:00PM
- ✓ Tuesday, July 21st 4:00PM-6:00PM
- ✓ Wednesday, August 12th 10:00AM-12:00PM

Questions?
Contact us: 503-252-8577
413 NE 91st Ave. Portland OR 97220

Teacher Feature

MR. SAM SCHULTZ

HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY

CURRENTLY TEACHES:

SPANISH, ENGLISH,
THEATRE



THOUGHTS ON TEACHING:

Teaching is the ultimate fulfillment of purpose, not just for those in the classroom but for everyone. We live that we may learn, and we learn that we may help others who are on the road with us.

BACKGROUND:

Sam was educated at Western Washington University, earning a Bachelor's in Theater Arts. He spent some time teaching acting and music before coming to Columbia to put his Spanish minor to work. Outside of school, Sam enjoys writing, playing music, and spending time with his wife, son, and daughter.

EXPERIENCE:

9 years total, 7 of which have been at Columbia

FAVORITE VERSE:

"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:4-5



WINTER SPORTS RECAP CONTINUED...

KNIGHTS IN THE MAKING...



7th & 8th Grade Boys



7th & 8th Grade Girls



5th & 6th Grade Boys



5th & 6th Grade Girls

Smile, You're on Camera!

Spring 2026



Middle school students showcased what they learned at our inaugural Science Fair this spring.



An abundance of books were purchased with funds raised from our Elementary Read-A-Thon.



Students stayed on campus late at night to play games and have fun at the Middle School Midnight Madness event.



Winter Formal Mystery Bus took high school students to Top Secret locations for dinner and socializing.



A small group of juniors and seniors were sponsored for a College Visit Tour including Harding and Oklahoma Christian University.

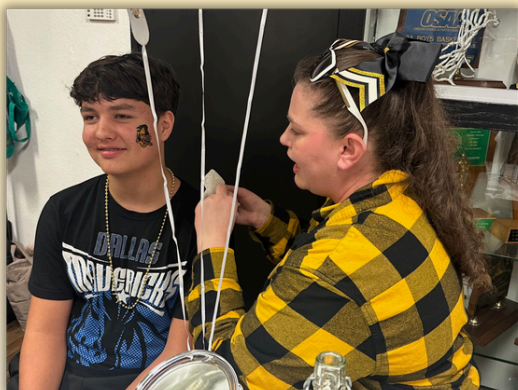


7th and 8th grade students explored and learned during their OMSI Field Trip.

Faith
Character
Academics



Our new Pep Squad inspired our Knights fans to keep the energy going at basketball games.



New families were invited to check out the school during our Black & Gold Night Open House.



Kindergarten students celebrated 100 Days of School in February.

A Knight Under The Stars:

2026 Partnership Dinner & Benefit Auction

By Mark Beekman
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

What a spectacular evening! This year's Annual Benefit Auction & Partnership Dinner was truly a star-studded success. Embracing the enchanting theme, A Knight Under the Stars, the Farris Johnson Center was beautifully transformed into a space glowing with twinkling lights and a radiant crescent moon above the stage.

Friends, family, alumni, and community members all came together in joyful reunion to support Columbia and the mission of Christian education. Following the silent auction, excitement filled the room during the highly-competitive dessert dash and spirited oral auction bidding, all kept at a lively pace by our energetic auctioneer, Dan Friess. Moving vocal performances punctuated the evening – including solos by Emrie Riske and Ember Wojcik, and a group number by the Columbia Choir.

Thanks to the immense generosity of our community, the evening raised over \$67,000! We appreciate everyone who made this magic happen. Go ahead and mark your calendars now to join us again next year on April 10th, 2027, for even more fun!



"Columbia Christian School, established in 1947 as the only accredited Restoration Movement K-12 school in the Western United States, has stood as God's preserved mission outpost for nearly 80 years.

CCS faithfully shapes generations for His Kingdom, sowing seeds for a continuing harvest of faithful leaders and community builders."

Andrew Martin- Spiritual Life Director



Day of Service

By Carrie Rude
ADMISSIONS DIRECTOR



Columbia launched a new Day of Service program to foster student character development through active, hands-on service in the community – once in the fall semester and once in the spring semester. By stepping outside the campus to connect with the community, students are exposed to people, needs, and circumstances they may never have encountered or thought about in their daily life. Through these experiences, students develop empathy and compassion while completing tangible projects that bless our neighbors.

Mrs. Dawkins, coordinator of the program, shared, "At the Northwest Childrens Outreach where my group volunteered, the lead person was thrilled that we were there to help. The students worked very hard organizing huge trash bags of donated clothing by size and season."

Mrs. Brandt, high school lead teacher, commented, "My group assembled about 15 pieces of furniture which will raise about \$3,000 through the Gresham Habitat for Humanity Restore."

Mr. Schultz, high school lead teacher, added, "I led the group that served at the NE Food Pantry where we gave food to close to 300 people."

Other projects this semester included neighborhood trash clean-up and restoring native vegetation in local parks. In all, it was an impactful day for both our students and the people they blessed through their service.

Do you have connections to an organization we could support for our next Day of Service? Please email info@columbiachristian.com to share your suggestion.



OUR HANDS AT WORK



Vensel's Voice

By Ami Vensel

SCHOOL PRESIDENT

Columbia Christian welcomed students, families, and staff to our first annual Evening of Scholarship this April. The evening was filled with meaningful conversations, thoughtful presentations, and a shared celebration of student learning.

The Evening of Scholarship was created to celebrate the meaningful learning taking place in our classrooms while helping students strengthen essential academic and communication skills. Through this experience, students practice research, writing, critical thinking, and oral presentation skills that prepare them for college, careers, and life beyond high school.

We couldn't have imagined a more fitting way to begin the evening than with our friend and keynote speaker, Dr. Brian Simmons, whose enthusiasm for communication and engaging presence perfectly set the tone for a night centered on learning and connection. Families had the opportunity to enjoy the showcase, ask questions, provide feedback, and experience firsthand the creativity, effort, and critical-thinking taking place in our classrooms each day.

Every high school student participated by presenting a project, performance, or piece of work from one of their past or current classes, transforming classroom assignments into engaging presentations with the support of their teachers. Students demonstrated confidence and poise as they shared their research, ideas, and discoveries, reflecting both their learning and the tremendous growth they experienced throughout the process.

The evening provided a wonderful opportunity for connection and celebration within our school community, bringing students, families, and staff together in a truly meaningful way. We are grateful for the encouragement and support shown by families and staff, and we are incredibly proud of our students for the hard work and dedication they displayed. We are excited to see this special event grow into a cherished tradition that will continue to highlight and celebrate the accomplishments of our students for years to come.



Newsletter Staff

Christy Barrett
Mark Beekman
Eli Dukes
Pearl Howarth
Andrew Martin
Angela Poole
Carrie Rude
Ami Vensel
Laura Walthinsen
Kevin Yaws



**Follow us on
Social Media!**



/columbiachristianschools
/columbiachristianathletics



@letsgo_knights



@columbia_christian_schools