



The KNIGHTLY NEWS

Columbia Christian School • PreK-12th Grade

Summer 2023

Onward & Upward CCHS Grads



Important Dates:

September 15

Back to School BBQ

September 20-22

KnightFest High School Retreat

September 29 - October 2

Japanese Exchange Weekend

October 3-6

6th Grade to Outdoor School

October 13

Elementary Jog-A-Thon

October 20 & 23

No School, Fall Break

October 27

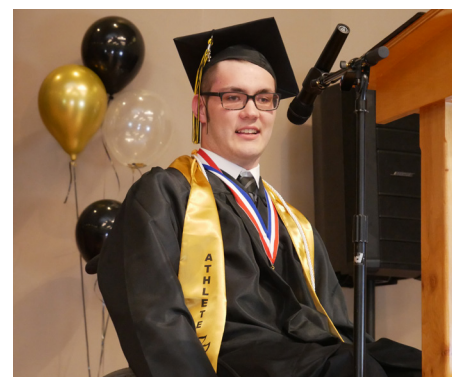
Buddies Pumpkin Fun Day

November 2

HS Band & Choir Concert

On Friday, June 9, the tassels were turned and the class of 2023 officially completed their high school career. The graduation ceremony was held in the Eastside Church of Christ auditorium; a dessert reception followed in the Upper Johnson Center. Student Government President Dawson Vensel welcomed the audience and shared the class scripture: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. Valedictorian Frank Adams and Salutatorian Braden Lawrence each shared words of wisdom. Spanish/English teacher Sam Schultz was selected as the speaker, and a vocal duo performed "The Blessing" (sophomores Elizabeth Adams and Ariel Howarth). Special awards were presented by Principal Deborah Miller including the Timothy Award (Frank Adams & Fiat Thaweesuksathian), Spiritual Leadership Award (Frank Adams), Mr. CCHS (Dawson Vensel), and Miss CCHS (Lisa Hartwich). Diplomas were conferred by Dr. Miller, President Ami Vensel, and Board Chair Robert Gentry.

The fourteen graduates were a small and diverse group. Some of the seniors had been part of the Columbia Christian family since preschool, while others joined at various times through elementary, middle, and even high school. One student was from Germany; one was from Thailand. Considering academics, there were two distinguished scholars, six honor students, and five scholar athletes. From artists to athletes, and from talented musicians to dramatic performers, each student contributed his/her gifts to the school community. Congratulations, Class of 2023!



Senior Luncheon

A memorable tradition at Columbia Christian is the Senior Luncheon. This year it was hosted on campus on the same date as the graduation ceremony. Each grad invited their parents/guardians, or other special adult in their life, to enjoy a meal together in the Upper Johnson Center. The adults were given an opportunity to share a message to their senior (and the audience) and each senior responded with their own words of appreciation. There were few, if any, dry eyes by the end of the celebration.

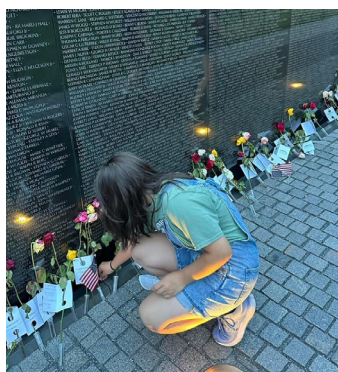


East Coast Trip 2023



With stops at many historical sites in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington DC, a group of 22 Columbia students from 8th and 9th grade enjoyed an 8-day trip to the East Coast in June.

The travelers hit the ground running after a red-eye flight across the country. Their first two days were in Boston, featuring Beacon Hill, Boston Tea Party Museum, USS Constitution, Harvard Square, Boston Marathon Memorial, Old North Church, Lexington, Concord, Boston Public Library, and Candlepin Bowling. Days three and four were spent in New York – Central Park, Rockefeller Center, Times Square, Top of the Rock, Ellis Island/Statue of Liberty, Battery Park, 9-11 Memorial, Broadway Show, and more! On the fifth day, they visited many notable spots in Philadelphia: Independence Hall, Liberty Bell, Betsy Ross House, Elfreth's Alley, Christ Church, and the Rocky Statue. The grand finale was spending days six, seven, and eight in Washington DC with highlights like The Capitol Building, Mt. Vernon, Old Town Alexandria, Smithsonian Museums, Supreme Court, Arlington National Cemetery, Library of Congress, Holocaust Museum, National Archives, and many monuments and memorial sites.



Natalie Bishop, one of the faculty advisors for the excursion, has gone on trips like this since 2003. She said, "Every year I have gone there are new things to discover and learn. My favorite part of the trip is seeing the students get super excited about all the historically important things we see. One of the most important places I've seen change was 9-11 Ground Zero into the beautiful memorial that it is now."

End-of-Year Events



Elementary
Banner Knight



Elementary
Field Day



Night of Knights
Athletic Awards Banquet



High School
Art Show



Biology Canoeing
Field Trip



8th Grade
Promotion



Jr./Sr. Banquet
at Bullwinkle's



Middle School "Lock In"
Late Night Party



Middle School
Oaks Park Day



Senior Class
Trip to Seaside



Pre-K & Kindergarten
Honor Night



High School
Blue Lake Park

Track & Field Recap

Kevin Yaws, who has been coaching close to thirty years, headed up Columbia's Track & Field program once again in 2023. This past year, twenty athletes participated in high school Track & Field and forty-nine in middle school. According to Yaws, "Track & Field is the ultimate team sport, as all students of varying abilities and talents join together to score points in different events to make up the overall team score. We also strive to build closer relationships with Christ and each other while sharing His example."

He shared further, "The highlights of the season were our three athletes who qualified for the State meet in Eugene. It was a joy to have Frank Adams qualify for his third straight State competition and score for the team. Landon Reid qualified with the discus and placed 6th while Logan White scored by placing 4th in the 300 hurdles. Besides these significant accomplishments, other memorable aspects include all of the personal records that our athletes set throughout the year, our team growing closer together, and learning to encourage and support each other."

In conclusion, he commented, "I could spend a lot of time talking about the sports history at Columbia. We have one state record that was set in the 3000m by Makena Houston at the 2A State meet in 2022! However, I'll choose to focus on the future of our Track & Field team – it looks very bright as I see the students who are coming up through our elementary and middle school!"



Benefit Auction & Partnership Dinner 2023



What an evening! On May 13, more than 160 friends of Columbia gathered for the Annual Benefit Auction & Partnership Dinner. After an exciting silent auction in the Lower Johnson Center, the party moved upstairs for two more hours of bidding fun, with drama department performances and presentations from President Ami Vensel and Principal Deborah Miller. Roberta Davis won a night at the Oregon Coast during the heads n' tails game and everyone won during the dessert dash event. Auctioneer Dan Friess rallied the crowd throughout the evening – raising more than \$85,000!

Development Director Mark Beekman commented, "Thank you to all of our community of donors, supporters, and volunteers! Mark your calendars for next year's Annual Benefit Auction & Partnership Dinner on April 6, 2024."

Summer Projects

Although in many ways the campus is quieter in the summer months with all the students away, there are still a number of facilities projects that keep Columbia's crew busy. This year, there were four particular areas of focus:

Digital Network Upgrade



Thanks to a generous grant from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, our IT department – headed by Donnie Alcatraz and assisted by Erik Walthinsen – undertook the massive task of increasing the campus Wi-Fi coverage and speed. Included in the project was the pulling of old wiring (500lbs worth!) and replacing it with about one mile of new Ethernet cable and optical fiber. Fourteen wireless access points in classrooms were replaced with thirty-one newer access points, ensuring strong signals in every space. The old equipment was donated to Free Geek, an organization that provides computers and tech to people in need. One of the humorous aspects of the project was the infamous bird's nest in a junction box at the Outlaw Center.

Cooking Class Kitchen



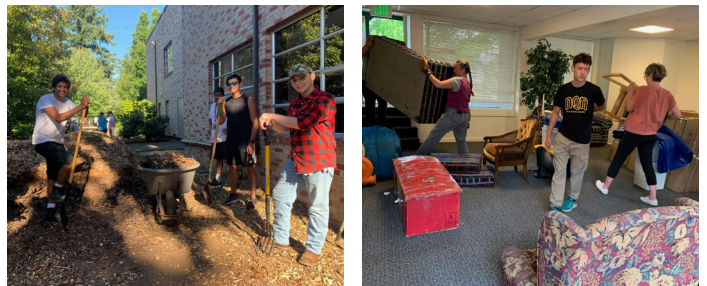
Ever heard the expression “too many cooks in the kitchen”? It may have originated from Columbia's elective cooking course last year! Students learned that it can be challenging to whip up a delicious dish or a magnificent meal when they are elbow to elbow with their classmates. The small working space our students could utilize in the Upper JC didn't accommodate many chefs at one time, so a search began for other options. An alternative was identified in the Lower Landreth dining area – downstairs in the former dorm building just north of the Johnson Center. Some new and restored equipment, as well as fresh paint and flooring turned the space into a functional classroom with much more space to create a full menu! Thanks to Mr. Thomas Carter for recarpeting the classroom area.

7th/8th Grade Knights Nook



If you've been in Sanders Hall in recent weeks, you likely heard the buzzing of a saw or pounding of a hammer. The new Knights Nook was constructed in the upper south end of the building as a special zone for our 7th and 8th grade students. Inside they have extra storage for their gym/sports bags as well as an area to socialize and spend time with friends. Much appreciation goes to Mr. Terry Franceschi and friends who worked tirelessly to complete it in time. It's a great space – come check it out!

Volunteer Work Parties



Many parents, students, faculty, and staff members grabbed their gloves and gathered for two work party opportunities this summer. The first session on Saturday, July 8, included twenty volunteers who moved furniture and drama equipment, painted, weeded, and cleaned up the campus. The second session on Tuesday, July 18, involved more than thirty helpers who were busy moving a mountain of bark chips, painting, weeding, washing windows, and more. The Eastside Church of Christ was very generous in providing a free BBQ dinner that night for everyone involved. Many hands made light(er) work!

Snapshots of Summer



Agape Village
Service Mission Week



Elementary Summer Program:
Kitchen Science



Playground Play Dates:
3 Sessions



Summer Nights
Youth Rally



Japanese
Exchange Program



Youth volleyball
camp

School Spirit Store!



Calling all Columbia Christian fans! Our BRAND NEW 24/7 Sideline Store is officially open. Start shopping online now to score the latest fan wear and accessories: <http://sideline.bsnsports.com/schools/oregon/portland/columbia-christian-high-school>. Our Athletic Department receives 10% of all net sales! Questions?

Contact: athletics@columbiachristian.com.

Supporter Spotlight



Columbia Bookkeeper Dixie Bever announced her retirement this summer. The school wishes to express its immense gratitude for her work to support Christian education.

Although Dixie never personally attended Columbia, her connections to the school and the campus run deep. She was originally introduced to Columbia in 1985 when her family moved to Vancouver. She shared, "The church we attended (Vancouver Church of Christ) had several families with children enrolled at Columbia. When it came time for our own children to start school (1987 & 1991), we weren't sure if we would put them in private school or public school. I had planned to observe both Columbia and the elementary school that was in our district. However, after meeting with Mrs. Ort (the 1st grade teacher at the time) we decided to not look any further. Our children remained at Columbia through the 6th grade (1993 & 1997).

Another important connection with this campus developed when Dixie's husband, Ralph, worked as the Maintenance Supervisor for Cascade College from 2003 to 2009. At that time, Cascade was occupying the south part of the campus where Columbia Christian now has high school classes, the gym, cafeteria, rehearsal hall, apartments, etc. When Cascade College ceased its operations in 2009, Dixie, Ralph, and Joe (their son) managed the property during the interim before it was purchased by Columbia Christian in 2012. That is the same year that Dixie was hired by CCS as the Bookkeeper. She skillfully served in that role for eleven years until announcing her retirement as of this summer.

When asked about her favorite memories at Columbia, Dixie commented, "Mrs. Ort said, 'I teach children, not subjects', entering the school and feeling God's presence of peace during the 'COVID Chaos'. Walking the 'Jericho Walk' around the campus, praying over it, and releasing the concerns and dreams for the campus to God. This walk was implemented by Kevin Reed during his time as President. What I appreciate about Columbia were the teachers who encouraged our children in their understanding of God, gave them a strong academic foundation, held them accountable, and cared for them."

New Athletic Director



***Ian Hutchins
Athletic Director***

Columbia administration is pleased to welcome Mr. Ian Hutchins as Director of Athletics.

Ian writes: Please let me introduce myself. First and foremost, I have to give all the glory to God for this amazing journey. I am extremely blessed to join and serve the Columbia Christian Community as Athletic Director and to have the trust and commitment of Mrs. Vensel and Dr. Miller. I come to Columbia with five years of high school coaching experience, most recently at Blanchet Catholic of Salem as their head varsity basketball coach. I also spent three years at North Marion High School as an assistant football coach, junior varsity head basketball coach, and assistant golf coach. Shortly after high school, I joined the Army National Guard as an infantryman (11B) and spent one year studying political science at Chemeketa Community College. I believe that my military background has taught me the importance of integrity, respect, accountability, and leadership, along with my coaching experiences, to strive in this role to continue Columbia's rich traditions of faith-centered athletics. I currently spend my summer on the east coast in Massachusetts as a basketball camp director at an all-boys summer athletic camp. I am extremely blessed to be able to work with great staff members from all around the world and to be able to teach 400+ kids. In my freetime I enjoy going to the beach, playing sports, and rooting for my Denver Broncos.

"I am looking forward to working with the amazing staff at Columbia, our great coaches, and our wonderful student athletes. I look forward to helping bring joy to everyone at Columbia through Christ and athletics."

Vensel's Voice



President Ami Vensel

... *And that's a wrap!* We are excited to celebrate the closing and success of the 2022-2023 school year!

As with tradition, our closing ceremonies highlight the accomplishments of our students in their journey of faith, character, and academics: Elementary Banner Night, High School Blue Lake trip, PreK & Kindergarten Honor Night, 8th Grade Promotion, Awards Ceremonies for High School and Middle School, Middle School Oaks Park trip, Senior Luncheon, and Senior Graduation. We sure do know how to celebrate!

At Columbia, the summer months provide opportunity to reflect, plan, and prepare for the school year ahead. The long list of TO DOs continues to grow and becomes somewhat overwhelming. Though there is work to do and preparations to be made, might we consider God is calling us to a season of rest?

Rest. Elusive to many, desired by all. The word rest conjures images of peace, quiet, and stillness. Resting is a theme throughout the Bible, starting in the very earliest chapters. After God creates the world, on the seventh day, God rests. When Jesus teaches his followers, he promises, *"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest"* (Matthew 11:28). In a world that elevates busyness and normalizes never-ending productivity, God invites us to get off the treadmill of activity, and simply rest. Rest is an act of resistance to the empires and kingdoms of this world and within our own lives. Resting allows us to quiet ourselves before God and restores and refreshes our minds, bodies, and spirits.

Take time to rest and remember: "The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary; His understanding is beyond searching out. He gives power to the faint and increases the strength of the weak" (Isaiah 40:28-29).

Rest.

Hosts Wanted!



We are looking for host families!
September 29-October 2
2 Students minimum per home
\$210 Host Stipend for the weekend!

Shukutoku Yono school in Japan is sending 40 11th grade female students to Columbia for a weekend cultural experience!

We would love to have families willing to host a minimum of 2 students for this weekend.

Hosts provide a room, 3 meals a day, transportation to/from Columbia, and the integration of your students into your family life.

Contact Laura Walthinsen
 LWalthinsen@ColumbiaChristian.com

Columbia Christian's



Enrichment Clubs FALL 2023

Gospel Choir

8th-12th grd.

Robotics

8th-12th grd.

Knitting

7th-12th grd.

Portrait Painting

8th-12th grd.

Chess

3rd-7th grd.

Crafts

3rd-7th grd.

Embroidery

3rd-10th grd.

Sketch & Water Color

3rd-7th grd.

These NEW after-school clubs are going to be a blast!

Ten Sessions, Over 10 Weeks * \$150 * On-Campus
 Contact the school office for more information! 503-252-8577



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