



The KNIGHTLY NEWS

Columbia Christian School • PreK-12th Grade

November & December 2021

Life Skills: Preparing Students Well



Elementary students receive recognition and incentive for demonstrating characteristics of a "self-manager".



Middle school students develop interpersonal skills to communicate effectively and build healthy relationship.



In their Connections class sessions, high school students learn many practical skills – like simple sewing techniques.

Important Dates:

January 14-20

High School Finals

January 17

No School, MLK Jr. Day

January 21

No School, Grade Day

January 22

Homecoming Event

January 24

High School CDL Day

No School PK-8th Grade

Teacher Professional Development

January 30

Open House & Parent Rally

February 7

PTF Meeting

February 12

High School Winter Formal

When a student walks across the graduation stage, receives his/her diploma, and turns the tassel on their cap, are they ready for what lies ahead? Most parents' hope is that their children will grow up to be successful, stable, happy, and positive contributors to society. At Columbia Christian School, that hope is shared. Each student is being prepared daily for the next phase of their journey!

Developing a variety of life skills is a critical piece of the education process and deserves to be prioritized. In addition to grade-specific standards, and establishing a foundation of Biblical truth, Columbia faculty are focused on helping children develop skills. Columbia students, from pre-kindergarten through high school, are learning problem-solving, organization, and healthy communication. They are trained in cooperation, critical-thinking, and being good citizens. As they advance in the upper grades, students are also introduced to many "hands-on", practical tasks that are needed in adulthood.

Make sure you read "Vensel's Voice" on the last page of this newsletter for more insight about Life Skills at Columbia and the ways they are introduced and reinforced at all grade levels!



Columbia Christian senior Makena Houston placed 1st in the state for 1A/2A/3A Girls Cross Country! Way to go, Makena!

Winter Drama: Little Women



Audiences were captivated by Columbia Christian Drama Department's production of *Little Women*. Including nine performances over three weekends in December, it was truly an exquisite show that brought the viewers to laughter, tears, and lots of warm fuzzies. Twenty talented students were part of the cast and crew – including a few recent graduates.

Director Danielle Valentine reflected on the program, "It was truly a magical experience for me, but even more so for the kids. It was some of the best acting that I've witnessed at Columbia. I feel so blessed to get to direct shows here." Special appreciation is extended to volunteers including (but not limited to): Lindsay Reed, Carolin & Fred Thompson, Isaiah Thompson, Pearl Howarth, Nicole & Geoff Adams, Michelle Bresee, Bart & Becky Valentine, and Barry & Denise Capps.



Christmas Programs



Music instructor Zach Frunk directed two Christmas events to get Columbia's family and friends in the holiday spirit. The Elementary Music Program included songs from pre-kindergarten through 5th grade students. The Middle & High School Christmas Performance featured a few vocal and instrumental ensembles from 7th through 12th grade. The spring shows are sure to be a delight as well!



Enrollment Growth

Despite the ongoing struggles of the pandemic, God has blessed Columbia with strong enrollment numbers. After continuing to add students through the course of last year, the school has also seen an increase this fall over 15% from last spring. More than 100 new students joined the family at Columbia this year, and families continue to visit, apply, and enroll!

Big Buddies, Little Buddies

The Buddies program at Columbia partners classes across grade levels so students can build connections within the school community. The teachers facilitate monthly activities that help develop these relationships.

November - Elementary students took turns enjoying a special holiday activity with their big "buddies" in the high school student center. Popcorn, pretzels, jelly beans, and toast were all part of the Charlie Brown Thanksgiving feast while they watched the classic film!



December- Two service projects were hosted this month. First, high school classes, along with their elementary buddies (2nd, 3rd, 4th, & 5th), collected many bags full of warm winter gear for at-risk children in the community! Second, middle school classes, along with their elementary buddy classes (PreK, Kindergarten, & 1st) raised over \$900 to provide a great Christmas for two families through Portland Family Housing Solutions.

Alumni Spotlight



Aly (Prepchuck) Salz
Class of 1985

Aly Salz enrolled at Columbia in 10th grade and graduated with the class of 1985. Reflecting on her years at Columbia, Aly shared, "The small class sizes allowed me to get to know my teachers and all the staff. It was a family atmosphere. I still can't believe that we didn't lock our lockers. I guess you could call them unlockers. Everyone was trusted and I never heard of anyone breaking that trust." When asked about her favorite teachers, Aly responded, "I have three favorites - Mr. Hess for science. He asked hard questions that often had nothing to do with the course curriculum; Mr. Roberts for his matching socks and polos, and regular rounds of logic games; and Mrs. Davidson the art teacher for her constant encouragement of my artistic development."

After high school, Aly started as a journalism major but quickly pivoted to a ministry/pastoral degree program, graduating with a degree in Bible. She went on to study leadership development in post-grad at APU and graduated with an MBA from George Fox University. While in college, she and her husband started a promotional/advertising business that morphed into Righteous Clothing Agency, Inc., the business she has been leading for almost 32 years. She also serves as Vice Chair of the board of the US Foursquare Church, a denomination with close to 75,000 churches in 150 nations around the globe.

Aly stated, "A Christian education is essential for knowing the why and the Who behind our faith. It is not enough to know the "what" only. A solid Christian education should never be lived in a bubble, but it should provide a safe place to explore faith, share doubts, and grow in our discipleship."

Vensel's Voice



President Ami Vensel

Not Just Academics

Science, mathematics, reading, writing, sports, history, and the Arts – all are important. What about cooking? Or sewing? Or building things? Or changing a tire? Life skills. Life skills – how well-equipped students are to make good decisions and solve problems – should also play a vital role in education.

Columbia is dedicated to providing an education that fully equips students. This includes practical life skills that prepare students to become resilient, independent, and capable of navigating everyday life.

At the elementary level, the Self-Manager Program encourages students in responsibility and integrity. It is designed to encourage all students to work toward becoming Self-Managers: be in the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time. Columbia staff provide opportunities for students to practice and develop skills in cooperation, responsibility, flexibility, focus, integrity, problem-solving, respect, perseverance, organization, friendship, effort, patience, and initiative. The Self-Manager program

empowers students to become active, responsible contributors in their education and in life.

At the middle school level, students develop cognitive skills with a focus on growth mindset – shifting emphasis away from outcomes and toward efforts and process. Students learn time-management, communication, positive self-image development and self-improvement, as well as interpersonal skills to make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, and build healthy relationships.

Life skills at the high school level are not only integrated into the curriculum, students also participate in weekly Connection courses to engage in hands-on experiences. Home maintenance and care, budgeting, meal-planning, career exploration, taxes, electrical circuits, job applications and crafting a resumé, car maintenance, and virtual citizenship are just a few skills covered throughout the year.

Academics are important. And, equipping students with life skills is essential in building confidence and training students in sound judgement and good habits for wellness and success.



Newsletter Staff

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