

Fall 2016

Guelph Community Christian School

IN TOUCH

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Recently I spent some time looking through the GCCS school photo archives. Photos are taken for all sorts of reasons. They are not taken for even more. As I was looking, I was reflecting and observing what we, as a community, in these particular archive files, deem photo worthy. With each picture I looked at, I couldn't help but think about all the before and after moments that surround these images. The creativity, planning, prayers, coordinating, and practical work that hands and hearts have done to make such times come about. This is what I value most.

I want to thank each and every one of you for the ways that you have contributed to our school and to encourage you to continue being active amongst us. Within the last two months alone, I can think of hundreds of ways we have been blessed by volunteers. From setting up coffee that facilitates conversation, to standing in the rain cheering on our beloved school teams. There are those who network us to organizations and people in order to progress our school, those who give blenders to support our vermicomposting, and people who spend hours deliberating around a Board or Committee table.

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Pausing to realize the variety of support we have amongst our school humbles and inspires me. God's faithfulness, as seen through our engaged community, places me at His feet in worship. Thank you GCCS community. Please stay connected with us.

Tanya Pennings,
Interim Principal

Our Mission: To
Nurture, Educate and Inspire
in Christ-centred learning and serving



From Consumers to Citizens

“You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household...” Ephesians 2:19

We live in a consumer society. The benefit of this is that unlike some societies where there are few or no choices, we have plenty of goods, services, institutions, and communities where we choose to engage. The difficulty arises when we are overloaded with choices, and we spread ourselves too thin. Or worse yet, we see ourselves merely as purchasers, not makers, builders, or contributors. We become passive, disengaged, and even just spectators. Strangers.



St. Paul made spreading the gospel his life mission. His message was that God reconciles all people—and all creation—through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Those who trust this good news are not strangers to each other, but fellow citizens in something much greater—God's global project of love and justice and peace.

What does it mean to be a citizen rather than a consumer and stranger? Citizens are people dedicated to the common good of their society. They get informed about their community and its needs, take ownership of the issues, and collaborate with others to enhance the welfare of the whole. I was recently at a Guelph Civic Leadership Prayer Breakfast, and I saw hundreds of people dedicated to praying for our city and working in our emergency services, governments, health care agencies, businesses and schools for the welfare of the whole. This kind of leadership, I thought, is what we train our GCCS students to aspire to.

We want to see our students grow up not to be strangers to their communities, focused on simply consuming for their own needs, but full-fledged active citizens. This is why we lead our students into the neighbourhood for an Earth Day clean up, and why we take them to Guelph University's Arboretum to enjoy the trees. This is what is behind our Salvation Army Teddy Bear drive, our Beginnings baby item drive, and our Community Valentines, which recognizes citizen-leaders in our city for their dedicated work. Our school choir sings the national anthem at Storm games because we value athletics, music, and participation in our town.

Our parents and society members are models for our children. The volunteers who read, bake, watch, clean up, repair, donate, phone, drive, record, meet, deliberate, and plan for our school demonstrate what citizenship means. Members who get informed, come to meetings and vote are enriching the culture of our school for all.

Are you a stranger, a consumer or a citizen of GCCS and/or Guelph? To paraphrase a popular politician of the last century, “Ask not what your school can do for you, but ask instead what you can do for your school.” As a Christian school, we honour a warm, welcoming community and we consider the welfare of our city. We have a new Strategic Plan launched that highlights the cultivation of citizenship both within and outside our school doors, and we are looking for a new principal to champion this vision next year and beyond. It's an exciting time for our school! Don't be a stranger.

Peter Schuurman
Board of Directors, Chair

GCCS Family Profile – The Wilsons

It is an honour to take a few minutes to introduce you to our family. We are Daryl, Shellie and Alexis Wilson. We have had the privilege of being part of the Guelph community for a little more than a year now. We previously lived in Burlington, where we shared our home with our daughter Alexis (who is now in SK), our niece and her fiancé and baby, and my father, who was undergoing cancer treatment. We had never lived as a “traditional” family with just the three of us together – since Alexis was born we had other family members living with us, and we really felt it was the season in life where we wanted to really establish our own routines and be together as just the three of us.

We prayed about what to do, and felt that God was prompting us to sell our home, pay off our debt, and downsize. We listed our home in Burlington and it sold within 24 hours. We had no intention of even considering Guelph, but really felt led by God to look here. Immediately we fell in love with the city. After two offers on homes that fell through, we found our current home and knew that it was the one God wanted us to have. We discovered during the home inspection, that the owner was a Christian and part of the CRC community and was thrilled that we were going to live in the home she had loved. My family, who had lived with us in Burlington, were very happy at their new home in Cambridge, and they lived only a few minutes away. Our move enabled us to pay off the bulk of our debt, and to focus on being the stewards that God wanted us to be with our finances, as well as allowing us to really focus on being Godly parents to our daughter.

We had begun to attend Lakeside Church, as it was very important for us to move to a city with a church much like the one we attended in Burlington – Lakeside fit the bill for us! Within a month of moving to Guelph, my father’s health failed rapidly and we were once again so blessed as we found an immediate opening in Hospice Wellington. He passed away just one week later. The hospice is only a few blocks from our home, so we again saw God’s hand in all that was happening, as the location made it so easy for me to be with my father every single day during his last week with us.



I have spent the last year building a leg of my wellness business here in Guelph, and it has blessed me with new friendships that will be here for a lifetime. We have been involved in the small-group program at our church, and I am in a regular Bible study, and also participate in the Griefwalk program. Daryl has joined the Program Committee at GCCS and is thoroughly enjoying having input into Alexis’ education. Our entire family comments each day how much we love Guelph, and what an incredible community it is. We have found the community to be so overwhelmingly inviting, the people to be so down-to-earth and real, and we absolutely love our church.

The final cherry on top is having the great privilege of sending Alexis to GCCS where she is thriving, has made incredible friendships and is growing in her faith daily. We are so grateful and thankful to God for allowing us to be a part of the Guelph community and look forward to many years of contributing and growing in this amazing city!



GCCS Staff Profile – Eric Dettweiler

My name is Eric Dettweiler. I teach grade 7/8 instrumental music and grade 5 science at Guelph Community Christian School. My work at GCCS is centered around exploring creation and creativity. In science we get to know God by studying his creative work (the universe). In music we get to connect with God and learn more about Him through engaging with our own creativity. My hope for the music program at GCCS is that students will engage with a variety of music through creating, listening, and discussing. I would like students to develop a lifelong relationship with music and through this they will grow closer to the Creator.

Outside of GCCS I am the worship leader at Elevation Waterloo. I play trumpet with the Wellington Wind Symphony, the KW Chamber Orchestra, and the Stratford Symphony; I am also a juggler/entertainer. I volunteer with a couple different street outreach ministries through Ray of Hope and some refugee initiatives through Welcome Home.

I believe that God's call on my life is in music and art and worship. I am passionate about connecting music and worship to mission and service. Good art is transformative; it changes the way people think and interact with the world. So when we bring music and art into worship, it should also be transformative. I'm not interested in getting together and singing songs about God that just make us feel good and let us leave the same as we came. When we truly encounter God through the worship and the Arts, then we will be changed. We will care about the things that God cares about and become uncomfortable with the way things are in the world. I believe my calling in life is to lead people into worship – a kind of worship that calls people out into the world to serve at the feet of the poor, the broken, and the outcasts.



News and Upcoming Events

- Our new website was launched on October 1st! Please visit www.guelphccs.ca to take a look.
- December 21st (1:45 pm & 6:30 pm)
GCCS Christmas Concert

