

MODUS VIVENDI

A Way of Life

IMAGO DEI

BUILDING BRIDGES—CHANGING LIVES

TREACHERY, INTRIGUE, AND
CORRUPTION: WHY SHAKESPEARE?

FACULTY PROFILE: PAM ERICKSON

THE BEAR
CREEK
SCHOOL
MAGAZINE

WINTER 2017



MODUS VIVENDI

Winter 2017

Modus Vivendi is translated as a way of life or a manner of living. The Bear Creek School seeks to develop individuals for whom the classical ideals of excellence in all things, love of learning, spiritual commitment, and self-discipline have become a way of life.

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The mission of The Bear Creek School is to provide a high-quality, Christian liberal arts education in a nurturing environment that will enable each student to become the individual God intends.

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THE BEAR FACTS

Each Friday during the school year, *The Bear Facts*, Bear Creek's weekly newsletter, is emailed to current parents, faculty, and staff. *The Bear Facts* contains news and announcements from each of the school's divisions and from the athletics department. Back issues are archived and searchable on the school website at tbcs.org/bearfacts.

PARENT PAGE

Visit the Parent Page on our website to see the latest announcements, upcoming events, and a complete list of parent resources.

SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS

Stay up-to-date on the latest news and events by visiting our Student Life page on www.tbcs.org.

ON THE COVER

Freshman Kennedy Mott builds an Estes model rocket which she later launched from Cape Owens (aka Owens Field). Bear Creek freshmen study Newton's Laws of Motion in their Conceptual Physics class, and after building her rocket, Kennedy estimated the height her rocket would achieve using kinematic equations. The rocket launch brings Newton's laws to life, especially the third law: "For every action, there is an equal and opposite re-action."

PHOTO BY DANA ROBINSON

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MESSAGE FROM THE HEADMASTER

By Patrick Carruth

In *Orthodoxy*, Chesterton says that “imagination is perhaps the mightiest of the pleasures of man.” But what is the purpose of imagination if not to make us more like our Creator. Made in His image, we are gifted with imagination and its limitless bounds within our limited human minds. As sub-creators made in God’s image, what then is to be the true use of our imagination.

Fairy tales may be our first foray into the world of imagination. Chesterton writes, “Fairy tales do not give a child his first idea of bogey. What fairy tales give the child is his first clear idea of the possible defeat of bogey. The baby has known the dragon intimately ever since he had an imagination. What the fairy tale provides for him is a St. George to kill the dragon.”

As we move from the nursery into the world, we begin to match imagination with logic and reason. With a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other, Nehemiah’s builders used the sword as an instrument of defense while the trowel was the creative tool; or as Chesterton surmised, “The imagination, the constructive quality, is the trowel, and argument is the sword.” Imagination and reason must work



together—we must have a reasonable imagination and imaginative reason.

“Imagination,” Chesterton posits, “is a thing of clear images, and the more a thing becomes vague the less imaginative it is. Similarly, the more a thing becomes wild and lawless the less imaginative it is.” Consider the opposite—if the more a thing becomes lawful or obedient, then the more imaginative it is. As created beings, the more we are connected to the Creator, the more our attempts to sub-create are reflective, clear, creative, and full of imagination.

“The function of imagination,” says Chesterton, “is not to make strange things settled, so much as to make settled things strange; not so much to make wonders facts as to make facts wonders.” When we use our imagination, we enter into a strange and wonderful world. Creativity comes from the Creator, and, in creating, we worship our Creator. In this act of worship, we hear “the trumpet of imagination,” as Chesterton writes, “like the trumpet of the Resurrection, call the dead out of their graves.” Called to be alive in the *imago* of the One who is truth, goodness, and beauty.

At Bear Creek there's a cozy, hidden corner called Hamlet's Hamlet. Drama students will know exactly where this is, but they may not be too quick to share their little secret. Back during the 2007-2008 school year, Dr. Ron Lynch, Bear Creek's drama director was discussing the Skull and Dagger Dramatic Society with a few of his thespians, describing how and why this secret college honor society was founded in 1928 at San Diego State University. These actors were excited about the idea of having their own club; and it's no small wonder, this was a very close group of easily excitable dramatists after all. Students (now alumni) such as Alex Patterson, Morgan Bader, Carolyn Heine, Taite Pryor, Jesse Wetter, Jimmy Rehfeld, among others got to work to make this honor society an official group on campus—the secret is out.

With Dr. Lynch's help, these students developed a charter and purpose statement for their infant club. But what to call it? Not wanting to borrow the name Skull and Dagger, they decided on something softer, with a nod to The Bard himself—their baby had a name—the Avon Society. The purpose of the Avon Society is to honor students who demonstrate exceptional dramatic skills and dedication to the theater. Dr. Lynch shares that “a family of unity has grown within the drama group over the years with the program.” And that's where Hamlet's Hamlet comes in. This family needed a home, their own special place to gather together. So drama students set out to retrofit one of the dressing rooms into a place for drama students to hang out—Hamlet's

Hamlet's Hamlet

By Alicia Williams



Esther Gere performs with JD Lambert in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Hamlet. On any given day, Hamlet's Hamlet might be serving up tea and crumpets or gallons of coffee (with special treats courtesy of Mrs. Lynch), and always with uproarious laughter.

Alumna Ellie Probus '12 recalls, “The drama crowd serves as a tight, supportive friend group for a lot of people, and those in the Avon Society were striving to keep that community going. Bear Creek drama was a source of lasting friendships for me and my brother Cole '09.” Ellie says she is really thankful for the Avon Society and hopes it can be the same for other students.

Members are nominated by their peers, and each year little traditions are added according to the group

dynamic, with the intention of always being welcoming and uplifting to all interested in joining. Over the years, members of this honor society have consistently become leaders in ASB, National Honor Society, and various school projects. Within the classroom, members take on leadership responsibilities such as mentoring younger actors, leading classroom activities, and assisting with scenery projects. Dr. Lynch says that “members set an example for their classmates on the meaning of commitment and responsibility, which combined, is the foundation of their performances.”

Senior Esther Gere was inducted into the Avon Society last year and reflects on her experience in the drama program and with this group of leaders. “Being a part of it has really challenged me. It makes me want to have a positive effect on the underclassmen and be a role model to them. I've realized that now I am one of the ‘big kids’ and I have to take on responsibility.”

And that legacy of leadership, responsibility, and role modeling was what inspired Esther as a freshman. “Kat Gibbs '14 had a huge impact on me personally. I was a little freshman, and every day when I would walk into drama class, she would instantly greet me with her witty personality and warm humor. I knew I wanted to be like her when I became a senior—I wanted to be a person who underclassmen could look up to.”

And that legacy lives on—in the classroom, on the stage, and out into the world. And to think, it all started with a family, gathered 'round for a cup of tea in Hamlet's Hamlet.

LOCAL ARTIST SHARES HER GIFT



BY CHRISTINA GLASS

Her daughter is Bear Creek's Associate Director of Academic Advising. Her daughter-in-law is a Bear Creek preschool teacher. Her son-in-law is an Upper School teacher. Her granddaughter is a newly-enrolled preschool student. Her husband, now a retired Deputy Chief from the Seattle Fire Department, was once a temporary Bear Creek bus driver. Now, she is the artist behind refreshing Bear Creek's Valley Campus. Her son was the contractor on this project.

"I remember the first time I heard about Bear Creek. I was volunteering in the nursery at Bear Creek Community Church." Rewind twenty-five plus years, when The Bear Creek School was only an idea in founder Nancy Price's head. "I was sitting in a rocking chair next to Nancy who began talking about her dream to open up a Christian liberal arts school. I thought it was a fantastic idea!" Little did KC know that her family would be so closely connected to that vision brought to fruition.

KC Fletcher grew up in Seattle and attended West Seattle High School. After graduation, she studied graphic design at Praxis School of Art. KC smiled, "This was back when graphic design meant drawing specs on a piece of paper." KC has always gravitated towards artistic roles. "I would rather be behind

the scenes creating the set than to be on stage performing." She confessed, "When I attend plays, I usually miss the first fifteen minutes of dialogue, because I have been scrutinizing the set trying to figure out how they built it."

After art school, she started a family. When her eldest, Emily, was young, they moved to the Eastside. Even though her three kids did not attend the school, she remarked, "I feel as if our family has always been connected to Bear Creek." Her husband Paul was the first member of the family to be employed by the school. In the early years of Bear Creek, they really needed a bus driver. As a Seattle firefighter, he had a flexible schedule. Conveniently enough, he also happened to have his Commercial Driver's License. So for years he drove classes to their field trip destinations.



Her future daughter-in-law, Allison, was looking to move to the area and got a job as an administrative assistant at Bear Creek. “It was a perfect fit for her. She is so friendly and organized.” Working in the school environment, Allison was quickly inspired to pursue her teaching credentials. Once she received her degree, she became a preschool teacher at Bear Creek.

When Emily returned to Washington State after living in D.C. and Peru, she took a job at the school. She then transitioned into college and academic advising. Last school year, Emily’s husband, Mark, joined her at Bear Creek. He teaches history and government in the Upper School.

When KC was asked about why so many of her family members are involved in Bear Creek, she responded, “I think it is because Bear Creek is a non-apologetic Christian school. Yeah, it is a rigorous liberal arts school too, but there is such a great balance between the two. They not only teach facts, but values. They model how we can make the world a better place and to be ‘others-focused’.”

Over the summer, KC made her own contribution to

Bear Creek’s mission. The school wanted to give the preschool at Valley Campus a new look. Considering KC’s artistic talent and close connection to the school, Bear Creek recruited her services. “It was a lot of fun. I mean who lets you create giant things and hang them on their walls?” The design committee for the campus refresh had a clear vision of what they wanted. They described their vision of colors, trees, and woodland creatures. They wanted it to be intentional and to correlate with the curriculum. Since the design included trees, teachers requested a representation of seasons. It would help illustrate their lessons. Instead of just having mammals, birds, and fish, the teachers wanted to include insects and amphibians too. They would be able to discuss the different kinds of animals as they walk their classes through the breezeways.

KC took it from there. First she illustrated the plans in a journal with watercolor designs. There was a red fox perched behind tall trees, quaint window boxes filled with colorful blooms, and other beautifully painted natural flora and fauna. After receiving approval from the committee, her next steps were

to decide what materials she would use. She picked wood cut-outs, since they would be easier to paint on. She asked her son Colby, a general contractor, for help. He talked her through ways to accomplish what she wanted and then started cutting wood. KC admitted, "I am an artist, not a carpenter! His remarkable carpentry, finishing skills, and advice made this project work."

Now it was time for the tricky part. KC had to translate the inch-sized illustrations from her journal into a seven-foot-tall piece of art. Unfortunately, the challenges did not stop there. "Another hurdle I faced was finding fish." In her designs, she drew a school of three-dimensional fish swimming in the preschool's courtyard. She searched and searched. She finally found a couple on the Saint Lawrence River in New York who made wood decoy fish used for ice fishing. They were so thrilled that their fish were coming to the Northwest and even requested pictures of the finished product.

KC enjoyed seeing the excitement surrounding this fun project. "I had sixty pieces that needed to be painted. It can be difficult to find vibrant, colorful exterior paint." Fortunately, she already had a reliable source, Daly's Paint & Decorating in Bellevue. KC laughed, "They were so happy to work with such bright colors. They usually only receive orders for neutrals."

"It was a lot of hours. There was one point in August when all the pieces were coming together and I thought, *this might actually get done on time.*" She added with gratitude, "I did have help." Thanks to her husband, son, and the facilities team, she was able to complete the project on time.

Her three-year old granddaughter, Maggie, witnessed the project unfold in her dad's workshop, and she also played a key role in its completion. KC purposefully

tried to create simple-looking animals so preschool students would be able to identify them. So she enlisted her granddaughter's help. "If she could tell the frog was a frog, I was safe." However, there was one instance, when she was working on the bunny and Maggie had remarked, "Cute deer!" KC covered her eyes, "I thought to myself, okay, I have to continue working on that one."

KC wondered what Maggie would think when the creatures that had lived in her dad's shop were now hanging at her school. So KC and Maggie made a special field trip to take pictures in the woodland hallways of Valley Campus. KC thought it would be fun to name the animals. So she asked Maggie what they should name the frog. She confidently responded with "Bob." They moved down the hallways, "What about the bunny rabbit?" Again she responded, "Bob." KC paused and nodded acceptingly, "So all the animals are named Bob."



Allison, Maggie, and KC Fletcher

On Maggie's first day of school, she was surrounded by the familiar friends created by her family. Her classmates gathered around the painted bear to take their first day pictures. Parents and faculty marveled at the new additions as they walked students to class. Preschool Division Head Tressa Parker commented on the campus refresh, "Though the changes are external and tangible, the effect is internal and intangible. The outside now matches and reflects back to the amazing things that have already been happening inside the classrooms. These changes are already having such a positive impact on the community. I see KC's art installations creating bonds and excitement going into a new school year."

KC had no idea when she first listened to Nancy Price's aspirations that her own family would help carry that torch years later. They drove buses. They advise. They teach. They paint. They inspire.





Adesuwa served hot chocolate to fellow classmates during December's Student Council First Friday event. PHOTO BY CHRISTINA GLASS

Reader, writer, speaker, leader.

BY SINI FERNANDEZ

SENIOR ADESUWA AGBONILE came to Bear Creek in first grade back in 2005. My first memory of her is in the library at Valley Campus; I worked behind the desk, and she came in nearly every afternoon to check out books and take AR tests. She is a voracious reader. And although she has attended school in a rather Caucasian area, she says she never paid much attention to her skin tone until as a freshman, she moved with her family to Nigeria for a year. In Nigeria, having light skin is a status symbol among young people.

Adesuwa writes voluminously. She is a member of the Young Writers Cohort at Hugo House in Seattle, a competitive year-round program for young writers.

She writes, studies, reads, and critiques with a group of teens similarly committed to their craft. In Middle School, Adesuwa was introduced to the work of Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Adichie, specifically her 2009 TEDGlobal talk entitled *The danger of a single story*. Adichie's work has inspired Adesuwa to write about things she actually knows, and that led her to tackle Boko Haram and the atrocities the group committed in northern Nigeria, including the mass abduction of 276 schoolgirls in April 2014 while Adesuwa was living in Lagos (in the southern part of the country). Adesuwa's short story "Light Skinned Luck" about just such a kidnapping was honored with national recognition from the 2015 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, receiving a Silver

Medal after earning a Gold Key award in the regional competition.

Adesuwa speaks competitively, and since returning to Bear Creek and joining the forensics team, has brought home State Championships in both Impromptu Speaking as a sophomore and Duo Interpretation (with partner Tolu Sobande) as a junior. In grade 7, prior to Bear Creek forensics, she got a taste for public speaking when she was asked to speak at a TEDx Redmond event that was organized by kids for kids. This year, she's competing in Original Oratory, Interpretive Reading, and Lincoln-Douglas debate events and kicked off the season with a first place finish in Oratory at Bear Creek's own fifth annual Grizzlies Forensics Invitational. By the time this magazine goes to print, the season will be half over, and Adesuwa will be anticipating another exciting postseason. Speech coach Bob Gomulkiewicz says, "While some students specialize in one event in competitive speech and debate, Adesuwa has mastered them all. We have had many talented students on the Bear Creek forensics team, but Adesuwa is on track to graduate as perhaps the most accomplished in her three years on the team."

Adesuwa leads Bear Creek's student body. She loves having a hand in her community, actively trying to make it better and giving back to it. She's been a part of student leadership since grade 6, when she was a member of the student leadership team under Mrs. Dineen's tutelage. Even in Nigeria, she was elected prefect at her school in Lagos. At Bear Creek, she was elected sophomore class representative and Student Relations Committee Head as a junior. This year she is serving in the Executive Cabinet as Student Council President. Dean of Students Dr. Jeff Gephart remarks, "Adesuwa is the kind of leader who, while ambitious and clear about her own priorities, does not stay front and center. Instead I see her leading from consensus as she attempts to get buy-in from everyone. And yet, she has a nice balance of being willing to express her opinion at key and decisive moments." She believes that every student is a leader and that there are many more quiet ways to lead than the public way she has chosen. "Bear Creek cultivates good listeners by using Socratic circles in class, and teachers demonstrate how to be a good follower of Christ by treating students with

dignity and respect." Her goal as president this year is to learn to delegate and distribute responsibility, creating space for class representatives to be useful and heard. She wants to ensure that the student body sees Student Council as an organization that has a concrete, positive impact on student life.

Adesuwa's other accomplishments rival those already mentioned. She's an excellent math student, currently enrolled in Multivariable Calculus, the most advanced class taught on campus. She was named a semifinalist in the 2017 National Merit Scholarship program. And, she plays on Bear Creek's girls tennis team. It is a privilege to watch as the voracious young reader I met back in 2005 becomes the individual God intends, engaging the world with wisdom, compassion, and courage.

Excerpt from "Light Skinned Luck"

Dami was much too scared to cry. Instead, she listened to the footfalls of men outside of the bathroom door. She listened to them walk down the same hallway where she hugged her friends and helped them with difficult homework questions, the same hallway where she had laughed with Adesuwa about Mrs. Onabalo's triple chin just two hours ago. *Boko Haram*, she thought again, then thought, *No. Never. Impossible, impossible, I am in Lagos. There is no way. No way.*

Yet there she was. Crouched in the boarding house bathroom, cream in one hand, terror in the other. Although many people enjoy using the phrase 'cold fingers of dread', that night, Dami learnt that the fingers of dread were hot as hell, humid and stifling, a heat that refused to let you breathe as you sat in a puddle of sweat, motionless, hearing nothing but the blood rushing through your ears and the bloodcurdling shrieks of the girls that were laughing and wishing each other goodnight an hour ago.



FACULTY PROFILE: PAM ERICKSON

By Christina Glass

“MRS. ERICKSON, I LOST A TOOTH!” One of Pam Erickson’s kindergarten students walked in proudly with her mouth opened wide. “Oh how exciting! You will have to write about that. Next week you can put it on the tooth rack, okay?” The girl nodded, but remained still. Pam acknowledged the cue and then asked, amused, “Do you want a tooth necklace to take with you?” “Okay!” the student replied instantaneously followed by a large grin. “So precious,” Pam remarked after the girl left. “It is such a blessing to bless others.” That is one of the many reasons why she teaches. She feels so blessed to invest in the students and families here at Bear Creek.

Pam Erickson is in her twentieth year of teaching kindergarten at Bear Creek. She received her bachelor of arts in elementary education and special education from Washington State University. Before attending college in Spokane, she grew up in Wenatchee and looks back on her childhood with fondness. “We were, and are, a close-knit community.” She met her present best friend in kindergarten. She commented on how many people from her childhood hometown are still a part of her life. For instance, Bob Gomulkiewicz, a parent of Bear Creek alumni, used to play football with her brother in high school. Years later Bob was volunteering in her classroom

when his daughters were in school. Community has always been very important to her, which might have pushed her in the direction of teaching.

“I have wanted to teach since the fifth grade.” That is when she had an excellent teacher. He created an environment that allowed her to relax in the classroom. His nurturing approach and his jokes during math lessons put her at ease. She felt as if she could learn more quickly and better still, she thrived. That was when she knew she wanted to fill that role for someone else. Pam wanted to be that catalyst for inquisitiveness by providing a safe atmosphere for students. “I want them to feel comfortable and loved no matter what kind of questions they ask.” In sixth grade, her desire to teach was solidified when she had the opportunity to read to first grade students. “I would read Dr. Seuss’ *Green Eggs and Ham* with them, and they were just so precious.” She knew then she wanted to teach young children.

This was around the same time Pam became a Christian. Her best friend invited her to a Billy Graham movie. She chuckled, “Wenatchee didn’t get Billy Graham in person, but we did have video of his sermon.” At the conclusion of the film, Pam made the decision to follow Jesus. All

throughout high school she had strong Christian friends who helped shape her faith. In her youth group, they compiled a list of local individuals who were on dialysis or who had medical needs. "We would help do yardwork for them, paint their bedrooms their favorite colors, or anything that would help them in that season of life. It only took a little time and energy to do something that meant a lot to them." Making that small difference blessed her so much. "Being able to see my faith lived out in such tangible ways, not only grew me as an individual, but brought the group closer together."

Although Pam originally intended to pursue only elementary education in college, Washington State University highly encouraged students in that field to also take classes in special education. She eventually took enough courses and decided to double major. While she was in college, she volunteered in preschools throughout Pullman. There she was exposed to a special needs program. She worked with students who had Down Syndrome. "I found it very fulfilling to work with parents and help them see their children's strengths." She was able to come alongside them in this journey. "I learned so much more by volunteering in the classroom than I did in lecture." By working with students with special needs, Pam became good at discerning the talents and strengths in each student. Some of the students she worked with had tumors which impacted vision or neurological damage that affected color recognition. By focusing on their strengths, she was able to teach in a way that the student was able to understand.

When she and her husband moved to western Washington with their three boys, she knew she wanted that same kind of partnership with their sons' teachers. Bear Creek came into the picture when a friend in Bible study mentioned her daughter was attending the school. At the time, Pam had her son in public school. After more inquiries, prayer, and discussions with her husband, they decided it would be a good fit for their family. Pam exclaimed, "I loved it immediately!" The teacher who was supposed to be teaching her son's class was leaving. "She was the model kindergarten teacher. I was so sad when I discovered she was relocating." One of her friends nudged Pam to apply for the position. And she did! "I was offered the job two weeks before school started. I walked into an empty room with empty files." Pam knew she had a lot to learn, but with the help of her fellow kindergarten teacher she was soon able to fill the room with her talent.

"My time at Bear Creek has been wonderful. It is such a joy to work here." Pam channels her own love of reading into the classroom. "One of the biggest reasons why I wanted to teach is that moment when the light bulb goes on when students read." One of her students recently had an "aha" moment during their routine reading time. "She just looked down and with excitement in her eyes she exclaimed, 'I can read this! I can read this!' That wonder and excitement is such a blessing to see." She also expresses her unique situation of working at a preschool through grade 12 school, where she is able to witness her students grow from kindergarten students to high school and eventually graduate from college. "It is so wonderful to see them grow up. Some of my students struggled in kindergarten. I get to see them work through that and grow confidently into these individuals who are independent in their studies. And most importantly I see them happy. I get to see that investment unfold." She is always so blessed when Middle School and Upper School students who she taught, stop by her door to say hello.

Pam treasures the community at Bear Creek and the comradery of the teachers. She sees how they love the students and love God.

"The families have such a place in your heart and in your life. Even when they have left for college, they are still a part of you."

How can they not be? They are a part of her every day. They come in each morning excited to tell her about how they lost a tooth or how they fell off a bike. They learn together in Bible lessons, math stations, reading and writing time, science, lessons about different countries, art lessons, and more. Most of all they see how God is present in each of those things. "They are so tender and in awe of Him." She uses an example of one of her students who took the seeds that Mrs. Matson gave her students during a science lesson. The student took her planted seed to the corner of the room and started to pray for it to grow. "These students have such gratitude for life. They each have natural gifts that begin to unfold during these formative years. One will love to organize, while another will lead their peers in an activity." Although they are each unique, they have a shared desire to please their parents, teachers, and God. "Their joy is contagious. There are many hugs involved, too!" The blessing keeps cycling through. As Pam blesses and serves her students, she receives the joy of witnessing their wonder, hunger to learn, and love.



IMAGO DEI

BY DONNA DUNN
SCIENCE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Imago Dei. It's a Latin phrase that somehow captures more than the English correlate "in the image of God." *Imago Dei.* We are made in His image, the Author and Architect of the Universe and all it contains. And so, in His image, we write and sing and paint. And so, in His image we STEM.

STEM is an acronym for Science—Technology—Engineering—Math. It combines the hacker/lab coat/nerdy fields, which my students assure me are no longer nerdy. Oh, if only my high school story could be re-written! Here at Bear Creek, nestled within our high-quality liberal arts education, is a series of experiences that equips students to excel in math and science while introducing them to computer programming and engineering. What does this provide for our students? STEM-learning promotes exploration and innovation, and the intellectual virtues of curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking.

But the longer I teach science, the more clearly I see how learning can transform the whole person. As students challenge themselves in STEM classes, they are shaped into young men and women equipped to

embrace the future with wisdom, compassion, and courage.

WISDOM

Greek *sophia* (wisdom) was translated by Cicero into *scientia* and *sapientia*. "*Sed sapientia est scientia rerum divinarum et humanarum.*" Now wisdom is knowledge of things divine and human, he wrote in *De Officiis*. Thus the goal of a high-quality Christian liberal arts education: transformational knowledge of both Creator and created.

The STEM disciplines are not an isolated component of that goal. Some schools around the country are adding STEM classes at the expense of other disciplines, such as history or foreign language. But the history classes at Bear Creek are amazing at, for example, teaching evidence-based reasoning, and foreign language imparts openness to other cultures and ways of thinking—freedom, as the *liber* in liberal arts intended—freedom to think, freedom to become the individual God intends. Perhaps He intends a STEM career for a student...or perhaps not. I can't see

ahead. As a teacher, I balance the future welfare of my students with their present dignity. I equip them to follow their dreams, but at the same time I want them to experience joy in being fully present in the *scientia*.

Integration across the disciplines has Bear Creek teachers working in concert—the bioethics project shared by my students and Kevin Davison’s Christian studies students, as a good example. And very often our incredible students are led by gifted teachers to creatively think across the disciplines until it becomes habit, where original and profound connections are made.

COMPASSION

The STEM disciplines share a problem-solutions approach to discovery and invention. Problem-solving has many advantages—it teaches disciplined thinking and decision-making, and is often a communal enterprise. But the emphasis that lends meaning to scientific endeavor is found in the answer to the question—*for whom* are we solving problems?

In his 1605 treatise, *The Advancement of Learning*, Francis Bacon wrote that science should not be driven solely by “a natural curiosity and inquisitive appetite” but should rather be “a rich storehouse, for the glory of the Creator and *the relief of man’s estate*.” Compassion and evidence-based reason go hand-in-hand, according to the father of the scientific method.

How can problem-solving in the STEM classroom lead to the development of compassion? First the problem is acknowledged—there is a hole to be filled, a broken, bent world to, in some small way, be restored. A hurricane is drowning a country still recovering from a massive earthquake. One in ten people on this planet lacks a feces-free water source. The hands of an arthritic grandmother can’t operate her camera.

In the classroom of a good teacher, our good-hearted students press in to the problem. They research and analyze, ask questions and design. In Linda Graham’s engineering elective, students work in teams to design pinhole cameras that can be operated by bent and broken hands.

This is compassion-in-progress, an introduction to the scientific art of paying attention. Author Robert Farrar Capon encourages us to “look the world back to grace.”

To see our neighbor is to begin to love our neighbor, and to love our neighbor is to love God.

COURAGE

High school students are admirably courageous when it comes to computer technology. They are quick to explore a DNA database by trial-and-error, finding within minutes what took the teacher with her user’s guide much longer. And when combined with temperance and prudence, they use even their social media skills for a humanizing connectedness.

In the science classroom, opportunities abound to courageously pursue technology and techniques new to students. Think of Bunsen burners. Do you remember how good it felt to light one on the first try? Or how frustrating to use a poor flint? The tools of math and science, from calculator to remote infrared sensor, are hand-held. The body then becomes not merely the object of our scientific studies; it is the studier, the recipient of the knowing. From this bodily rootedness emerges, according to covenant epistemologist Esther Lightcap Meek in her book *Loving to Know*, “a sense of self that can grow within, and that cultivates a relational rather than manipulative engagement with the world.”

One student holds a micropipette frozen in hand and says “What if I get it wrong?” while another student blindly blunders forward and blithely attributes human error in the post-lab report. The wise teacher corrects both. Don’t be afraid to step forward. Fail, be embarrassed for a moment if you must, but keep perspective. Practice until you are confident you will get it right. Thus there is virtuosity to the simple act of pipetting or even scooping water from the creek without falling in. Small steps of instrumental bravery may lead to poet Jack Gilbert’s definition of courage: “the normal excellence, of long accomplishment.”

STEM learning provides students with a powerful composite of critical thinking and virtue. “Character,” says N.T. Wright, “is a slowly-forming thing.” A slow-forming thing. His workmanship. And doesn’t it delight the Artist to share His pleasure with us? Science-technology-engineering-math. Measure, analyze, design, build: above all, build character in pursuit of loving well—oneself, neighbor, and God.

Treachery, Intrigue, and Corruption: Why Shakespeare?

BY KAREN BEMAN

The dialogue is difficult. The themes are complex. The era is distant and faded from memory.

Is the study of Shakespeare relevant for today? Absolutely! Without question!

Students by nature are highly curious and observant. As they mature, they become more and more discerning about the world around them and begin to question the complex human themes that surround them. By examining the great works of William Shakespeare, we are able to thoughtfully cultivate a deep understanding of human virtue and frailty. By immersing students in his great works at various grade levels, we encourage students to investigate and theatrically experience how aspects of character, culture, greed, power, and social status affect us and potentially alter life outcomes. This window into the “world of others” is an exceptional platform to teach and expose the condition of the human heart while making substantive connections to biblical themes.

Shakespearean immersion actually begins in kindergarten, though not in the way that some might assume. Strengthening vocabulary and memorization skills are key to developing foundational literary and theatrical tools. Students begin to explore the meaning of various character traits and are offered an introduction to rhyme, meter, and syntax of language. Kindergarten students performing nursery rhymes may appear elementary, but the opportunity to perform at such an early age is an excellent building block for mental focus, rhetorical and creative expression, and developing a comfort level on stage. In grade 3 and beyond, students are given

a broad exposure to Elizabethan culture through English history, issues of loss, socio-economic status, and class structure, the life of William Shakespeare and the historical significance of his plays. In grade 4, students participate in a full stage production of *A Comedy of Errors*. By grade 6, students have explored a number of vignettes culminating in a full cast performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Additionally, drama performances are tied to Greco-Roman social studies, Latin content, and biblical history.

“When you have lived the beauty of Shakespearean language at an early age on stage, you fall in love with the beauty of language.”

LENA WHITLOCK, GRADE 4 TEACHER



A Comedy of Errors, Grade 4

The entire Lower School and Early Middle School immersion experience is foundational to the Middle School and Upper School curricular preparation in music, drama, literature, and history. Students in Upper School are afforded a richer and more intense exposure to the Shakespearean lens through annual drama productions. Past performances have included *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *Othello*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*. In January of 2017, our Upper School drama students will perform *As You Like It*.

Dr. Ron Lynch, Upper School drama director is no stranger to the profound insights of the Shakespearean world. In preparation for each production, he intentionally guides students through an analysis of each character in the play and the critical decision points and earthly and eternal consequences that each one faces.

“Inherent in our curriculum are deeply held intrinsic values. What determines or illustrates these values? For one, great literature that has stood the test of time. The stories of William Shakespeare are as relevant and applicable today, as they were when they were written, even though the audience is different. Shakespeare is a mirror for our students to learn and deal with the realities of mankind.”



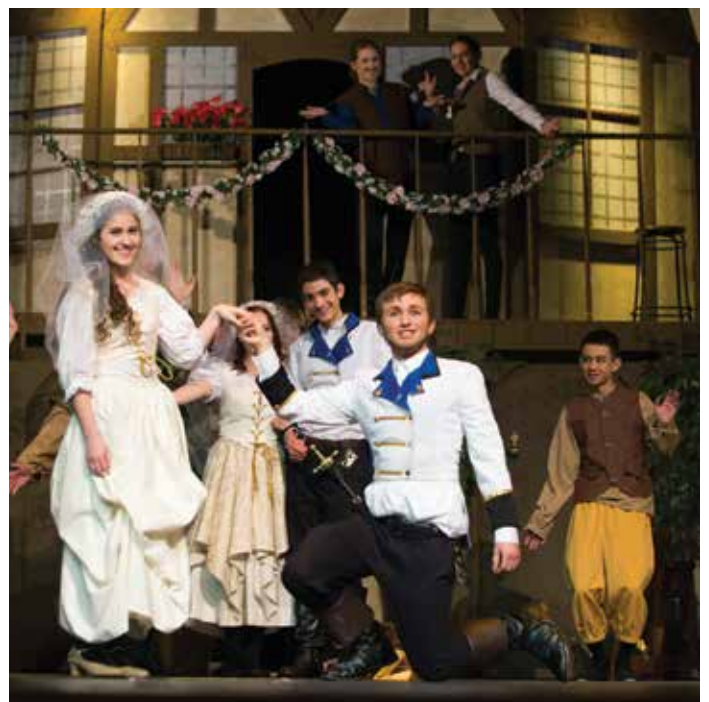
A Midsummer Night's Dream, Grade 6

By the end of the high school journey, students have experienced a substantial repertoire and developed a deep appreciation for the beauty, emotion, tragedy, comedy, treachery, and conflict illustrated throughout all his great works.

Vast memorization, linguistic appreciation, expansion of vocabulary and root meaning, stage presence, and, most critically, the exposure to man's inherent fallen nature are achieved through the intentional sequence of Shakespearean immersion opportunities.

One could argue that exposure to any theatrical work will serve a valuable purpose for today's students. But concentrate that experience into the rich realm of William Shakespeare's world, and you can almost guarantee student outcomes: an intellectual awakening, refinement of oratory precision, a wrestle with worldview, and confidence gained by exercising sheer determination to tackle something difficult. The experience of “trying on” a character's strengths and foibles, all artfully crafted by a master, can have immeasurable value in shaping life choices and informing the Christian worldview.

Is the challenge worth it? Absolutely. The beauty, insight, and artistry of the language alone are worth the investment.



Much Ado About Nothing, Upper School



In January, 2016, Colegio Seminario and Bear Creek students toured Seattle together during the Uruguayans' visit to the U.S.

BUILDING BRIDGES CHANGING LIVES

BY DEBBIE MARCHIONE

When Bear Creek Spanish teacher Gabriela Llanos took a vacation to Uruguay in 2009, little did she realize that her trip would have a lasting impact on students and families on two continents. In the course of her travels in Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay, Llanos met Julio Fernandez Techera, S.J., who at that time was the Director of Baccalaureate and Academics at the Colegio Seminario, a private Catholic (Jesuit) school serving preschool through high school students.

Fr. Techera shared with her his dream of sending students to visit a U.S. Christian school, to be

exposed to American culture and education and meet American students. Llanos shared his vision, and they quickly agreed to explore it with their respective institutions. Techera gave Llanos a gift of the Colegio yearly planning journal. When she opened it, she saw the theme for that year: Building Bridges. Thus, the name and the program began.

The first group of six Uruguayan high school students arrived at Bear Creek just six months later, along with Fr. Techera as their chaperone. They attended classes here for three weeks then traveled around the region for an additional two weeks,

including visiting Canada, establishing a successful model for the program. Colegio Seminario students have been visiting Bear Creek every January since.

The Colegio students find their lives significantly impacted by the program. Juan Luis Panizza who visited Bear Creek in 2015 states, “The Tolkien class I took during JanTerm was simply mind-blowing. The fact that we are living in such different conditions allows us to re-examine our whole lives, to see them from a different perspective. We get to really see what we have as a society but also as members of a family and as persons.” Today, Panizza is studying for the priesthood.

To the Uruguayan students, one of the most surprising aspects of the United States is the smaller role of the extended family in the everyday lives of children here. In Uruguay, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and cousins frequently live near one another and interact on a daily basis. Many have also never seen snow, making the ski lessons a particular highlight of the trip.

As the Uruguayan students learn about American culture and lifestyle, our Bear Creek students are also expanding their horizons. Bear Creek students learn compassion as they help their counterparts adjust to an entirely new culture. They also begin to see the world through a broader lens and understand in a new way the importance of knowing another language in addition to English, even if they never leave the U.S. Parent Millie Snook, whose family has hosted a student every year since 2013, loves how quickly the students become part of their American host family. “For both my own boys and for the Uruguayans, the experience opens our hearts to God saying, ‘You have brothers and sisters everywhere.’”

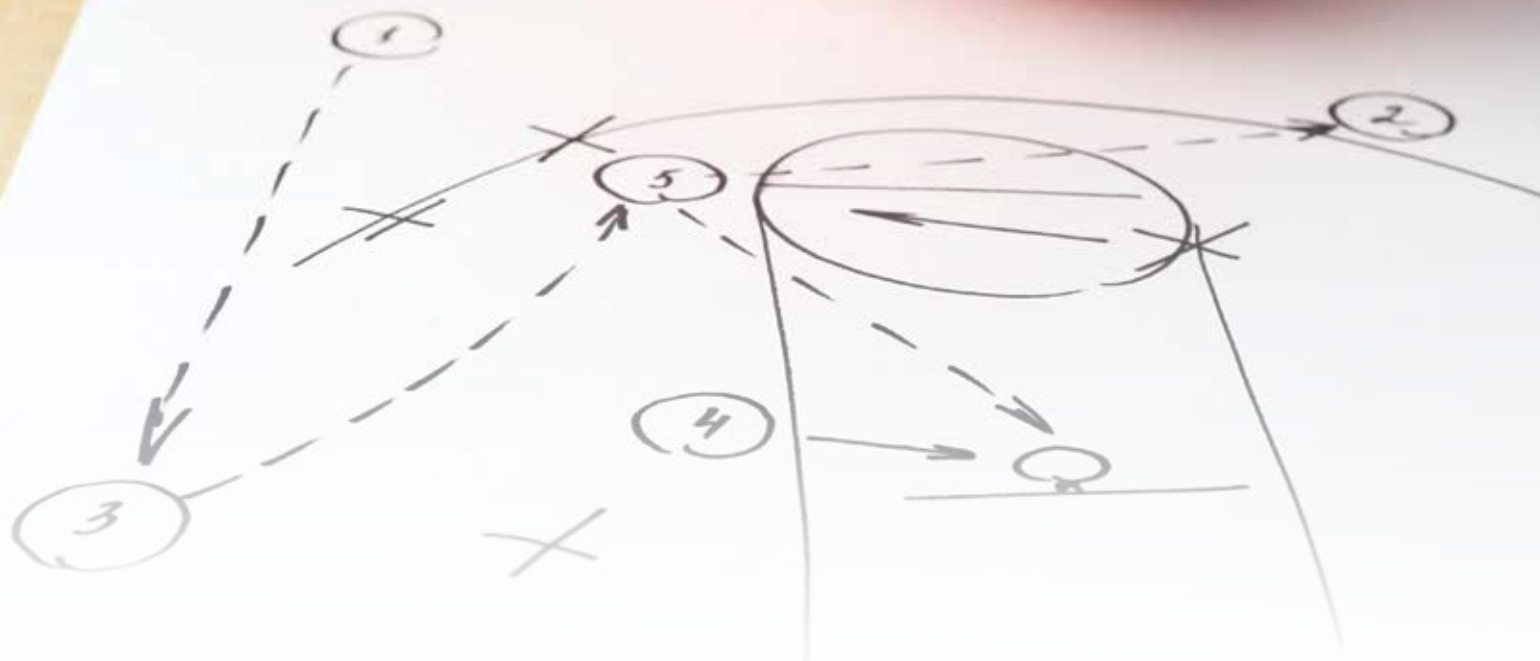
Cameron Kesinger '11, wrote to Sra. Llanos that the Building Bridges program “was a very formative experience in my intellectual, personal, and ethical development.” Kesinger worked with migrant children in Texas after graduating from college, and is now living in Brazil as a Fulbright Scholar. For Emily McBride '14, the program inspired her senior project, which involved exploring the meaning

of community service by volunteering alongside Uruguayan students from the Colegio for three weeks in a variety of organizations in Montevideo.

Our teachers also appreciate the perspective brought by the Uruguayans. Kenny Norris, Bear Creek English Department Chair commented, “I really enjoyed working with Juan Luis. He tracked with everything occurring in AP Language and Composition. In fact, there were days when he set the bar for enthusiasm and initiative, participating in such a way that my students could not help but see what genuine, passionate learning looks like. We did not want to let him return [to Uruguay] until our students had caught this same passion from him.”

From its modest beginning, the Building Bridges program has grown, nurtured by Gabriela Llanos and her Uruguayan counterparts. Several dozen students have visited Bear Creek in the past seven years, living with Bear Creek host families. More than 50 Uruguayan students apply each year, competing for just 12-14 places. Students are chosen based on their English proficiency, academic performance, and behavior record. The rigorous application process includes student essays, interviews, and recommendations from teachers, tutors, and administrators. In 2015, Llanos recruited The Overlake School to become a part of the program, thus increasing the number of students from Uruguay who can participate each year.

As you might imagine, it is costly for families to provide this experience for students. To help offset the costs and make it more accessible, as well as support the U.S. programming, the Building Bridges program is funded by The John B. Kilroy and Nelly Llanos Kilroy Foundation, which was started by Llanos' father-in-law to support education. Recently deceased, Mr. Kilroy was thrilled with the program and the impact it has made on students' lives. We are very grateful to Gabriela Llanos and the foundation for their continued dedication to this program that forges lasting cultural, linguistic, and emotional connections, and builds cross-cultural understanding and friendships that will last a lifetime.



IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY

BY SINI FERNANDEZ

The Mendezona family loves basketball, and Bear Creek's basketball program is fortunate to be led by a brother-sister "Mendo" family duo.

Tyler Mendezona, Bear Creek's varsity boys basketball coach, attended ten different schools in his K-12 years and through it all basketball was the common ground, helping him fit in and find a niche at each new school. His father, Wayne Mendezona, has been a basketball coach for over 25 years and the game took Tyler and

his family all over the world. During elementary school, he lived overseas with his family while his dad was coaching in Bahrain and Kuwait during the Gulf War. When they returned to the States, their travels took them to Oregon, Washington, California, and back to Washington. No matter where they lived, Tyler and his

sisters played basketball. He and his two oldest sisters, Jessica and Domi, all played basketball at Northwest University. During college, Tyler played for John Van Dyke, whom he still considers a mentor, and helped lead his team to two straight NAIA National Tournaments, making it all the way to the Elite-8 his senior year.

Before coming to Bear Creek, he coached at King's HS with Rick Skeen, another coaching mentor, helping lead that team to two 1A State Championship appearances.

Coach Mendo, as Tyler is usually called, is excited about building Bear Creek's basketball program with his sister Ali. Ali is the youngest of the Mendezona siblings. She played basketball at both Issaquah HS and Skyline HS, where her teams won three 4A KingCo Conference Championships and made two State appearances. Ali relates, "My dad started Quick Handle Basketball before I was born, so basketball was all we knew. Every summer, from beginning to end, we were in camps. If it wasn't a camp, then it was a clinic, training, or team practice. Basketball is something the whole family takes pride in and is heavily involved with." Although Ali was also offered a position on the basketball squad at Northwest, she elected to follow a different path and is pursuing a business degree online through DeVry University which gives her the flexibility to coach. Ali began coaching at Bear Creek three years ago as an assistant varsity girls coach and took over leadership of the girls' program last year. In addition to coaching at Bear Creek, she has been a coach at Quick Handle along with Tyler and her sisters.



PHOTO BY CINDY MCCAHILL



PHOTO BY SINI FERNANDEZ

Tyler says he and Ali support one another through the Xs and Os of coaching and emotionally as well. They are excited about building Bear Creek's basketball program through their relationships with the players. Tyler's goal is that the boys know he cares for them whether they are first or last off the bench. Playing basketball requires

a special "big picture" mentality since only five players can be on the court at any time. By building relationships, he helps all players embrace their roles on the team and strive to improve in those roles. The team has lots of opportunities to build relationships as they participate in summer league, team camp, and off season practices (as allowed by the WIAA).

There are also optional spring and fall training opportunities and a fall league option. Team-building activities like a Christmas practice with the girls team involving a costume gift exchange

or the annual trip to Silverwood Theme Park in Idaho followed by team camp at Gonzaga University are highlights. Ali's enthusiasm for the program is infectious. She says, "My goal is to build the girls basketball program into something that the younger girls will look forward to and anxiously want to join, an environment that the players are excited to be a part of. We always say this is our basketball

family, good or bad we stick together! Outside of winning or losing games, I want the girls to have an amazing team experience and grow together. Some of my best memories are with my basketball family, and I want to give these girls the same experience."



What's Next?

SO WHAT'S NEXT in the lives of our students, beyond senior year and graduation? *Modus Vivendi* recently interviewed Bear Creek's Director of College Advising Frances Carhart and seniors Sean Gallagher and Esther Gere to gain a little insight into the college preparation journey.

MV: Explain the philosophy of the Office of College Advising at Bear Creek.

FC: Bear Creek has always maintained a "best fit" philosophy when it comes to assisting students in the college search and application process. "Best fit" translates to listening closely to each student and helping him or her identify and reach

his or her long-term goals. For some students, this is preparing applications for highly rigorous colleges, or, it can be finding a college that will allow them to shine in a less competitive environment. Further still, some students seek a gap year experience before launching into their college experiences. As the college advisor, it's my job to come alongside each student in this journey and help decipher his or her best post-high school path.

MV: What motivates you to work with students as they navigate this "best fit" philosophy while planning for college?

FC: In fact, it was my own college application experience that

motivated me into the challenging and fulfilling career in college advising.

A week into my senior year of high school, my house burned to the ground. All of those weeks laboring over the dreaded college essay during my summer, crafting it into the perfect writing specimen, evaporated before my eyes. With the resulting mayhem in my life, I hastily rewrote my essays and submitted the early decision application for Wellesley College without another thought. As a result of my naivety and poor planning, I didn't consider applying to additional colleges nor did I organize a backup plan. However, the first day of

Christmas break brought my senior year to a grinding halt when I received the college deferral in the mail. Needless to say, the next few months were highly charged with stress until I finally received the offer of admission from Wellesley College in April. I was lucky.

Because of this experience, working with high school students on this critical decision has been a passion of mine. After teaching middle school and high school students, promoting my *alma mater* at college fairs to prospective students, and helping Skyline High School develop its college counseling office, I started my own private college consulting business which I ran successfully for several years. I desire for students to take responsibility for this process so that when senior year arrives, they are confident about their college lists, well-prepared with strong applications, and organized with thorough plans. I am thrilled to help students in this important journey and help alleviate their stress through careful planning.

What I have come to realize and appreciate is that the skills learned and refined in the college application process are important life skills that will follow students beyond Bear Creek. Knowing how to research an important decision, feeling confident during interviews, making the best out of unpredictable situations, and moving forward knowing God is overseeing it all—these are the critical skills that all students need to recognize in themselves. I am privileged to help them along

this journey.

MV: Share your thoughts on some of the trends you have been seeing over the past couple of years with regard to college preparation and launch.

FC: Applying to colleges is considerably harder today than it was twenty years ago. More students are applying to college, averaging 6-8 college applications each. Colleges are looking to diversify their student population, drawing from a worldwide applicant pool, in order to prepare them for our global world and economy. The profile of the most competitive applicants astounds me; when I read over Harvard, Yale, and Stanford applications, I wonder how high school students these days are able to maintain balance, have fun hanging out with friends, or just curl up with a good book. Caught up in the “college frenzy,” high school students are increasingly sacrificing their own health, sleep, and integrity to get ahead. Two books that have addressed some of these concerning trends include Frank Bruni’s *Where You Go Is Not Who You’ll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania* and *How to Raise an Adult: Break Free of the Overparenting Trap and Prepare Your Kid for Success* by former Stanford Dean of Students Julie Lythcott-Haims. Both of these books remind me about the importance of encouraging our students where they are, not driving them to be something they are not. The Office of College Advising is committed to enabling each of our students to becoming the individual God intends.

MV: What nugget of wisdom would you impart on our seniors, teachers, and parents during this process?

FC: Applying to college is often the most overwhelming task our seniors have experienced. Teaching students how to break down these tasks, plan out a strategy, effectively use all of their spare time, and be happy with their best effort is part of the college planning and application process. The most difficult meeting is trying to tell a distraught senior that a rejection from his or her favorite college might actually be the best thing that happens to him or her.

MV: Sean, now that you’re a senior, what have been some of the surprises you’ve encountered while preparing and applying to colleges—pleasant or otherwise?

SG: The greatest surprise has been how much I learned about myself in the process. It can get difficult at times. I feel like I had this image in my head of personality traits I wanted to have, and I had to force myself to let them go. But at the same time, I thought more deeply about experiences that I’ve had and how they shape me in my day to day life.

MV: And for you, Esther? Any surprises?

EG: I’ve been surprised in many ways during this process. There have been many pleasant ones, and a few not so pleasant. One of the most pleasant has been the feeling of achievement when you finish an application. Even though the process is long and tiring, it

definitely feels like it pays off. Another pleasant surprise was the helpfulness of the Common Application. Although it initially feels long, it's super helpful when you don't have to fill out the same questions for each individual school.

MV: As seniors, how have you been able to balance your academic, extracurricular, and social life while working through the application process?

“If you can figure out what you are passionate about, the rest will come much easier—you can find the right college with the right program, and if your passion shines through, getting in will be a breeze.”

EG: I've been balancing academics, extracurriculars, and my social life by scheduling things out. I like to be very involved so I try to keep things in balance by scheduling things out and utilizing my resources. Even if I get off schedule, I just redistribute the time. It makes things a lot easier when I have a lot of commitments. I also use my 'resources' as much as possible. I talk to my teachers when I need help with something, I ask my parents to help me memorize my lines for the school play, and I always make sure to talk to Ms. Carhart as much as possible when I need help or have questions about college applications.

SG: It's really easy for me to balance my academic, extracurricular, and social life, because I have no social life! But actually, during the application process, things can get incredibly

stressful. In the end, I just drink more coffee and get less sleep, and it somehow all works out!

MV: What advice can you give to underclassmen with regard to preparing for college advising during their senior year?

SG: The application process is as difficult as you make it. Honestly, if you start your applications in August and have a decent record in school, you're going to get in somewhere. Spend your fun years

as an underclassman trying to find out what your passion is. If you can figure out what you are passionate about, the rest will come much easier—you can find the right college with the right program, and if your passion shines through, getting in will be a breeze.

EG: Well, my biggest piece of advice would be to start early. The Brown Bag sessions during lunch are a great way to get your foot in the door. Even if it's not a school that's one of your top choices, it's great to be able to hear what they have to say and see what you like and don't like about the school. This allows you to narrow down and find what you're actually looking for in a school. Go to the Wednesday morning sessions. Establish good relationships with not only your teachers, but also coaches and youth pastors or Young Life leaders outside of

school as some colleges might ask for an extra reference who is not a teacher.

MV: Any last thoughts or advice? What do you really want our readers to know about college advising and the whole process?

SG: I love the internet as much as the next person, but for the college admissions process, it can sometimes be awful. Yes, it can be good to get a general idea, but just talk to as many people as possible.

Not only does Bear Creek have a great college advising program, if you contact college reps and go to college fairs, you can find out most of what matters in the admissions process.

EG: The college application process is long and the due dates are stressful, but it all comes down to managing your time and then your work will pay off. All of the work that was completed in high school shows when you get an acceptance letter. When you're applying to colleges, it's a time when you realize that you are growing up, and I would say that it's one of the biggest steps in a person's life. This is one of the most important events of your life, and you are the one in charge of it. You are the one who is filling out the applications. It's really a time when you grow and is a big step towards becoming an adult.

ASK A BUSY PERSON

By *Debbie Marchione*

“IF YOU WANT TO GET SOMETHING DONE, ASK A BUSY PERSON.” This old adage rings particularly true with volunteer Christie Malchow. In addition to being the mother of two active young girls, Shannon, grade 1, and Marin, preschool, who keep her on her toes, Christie serves on the Sammamish City Council and fills multiple volunteer roles at Bear Creek. This year alone, you can find her in a preschool classroom as an art docent or classroom helper, supporting other preschool parents as a mentor mom, serving as a grade 1 room mom, and contributing her time and ideas to the Auction Committee. Beyond her parent and volunteer roles, Christie is an avid runner, squeezing several miles into an already packed daily schedule.

Christie and her husband Tom began their Bear Creek journey when they enrolled Shannon in preschool. The convenient location, combined with the strong character development and faith integration aspects of the program, drew them in, and the more they learned about the school, the more convinced they became that Bear Creek was the right place for their girls. “One of the first events we went to at Bear Creek was the auction, and the sense of community that Tom and I found there is what cinched the decision for us. People who send their kids to Bear Creek are truly invested in kids, and that makes a big difference.”

Christie feels passionate about Bear Creek and the education her girls receive here. She loves spending time with them in the classroom and watching all of the children make new connections. “Especially in preschool and kindergarten, they learn by leaps and bounds, and it’s rewarding to know that you can help in that process.” Reading aloud to the children brings her great pleasure, and she hopes that she can help spark a love for books in them also.

She particularly relishes the art docent role. “It’s as fun for me as it is for the kids. The set curriculum makes it easy, but there is room to do some new things as well. Growing up in Colorado, I remember how much I enjoyed having my mom spend time in my classroom serving as an art docent.”

Christie finds that her service helps connect her to other parents as well. “I see volunteering as a benefit to the kids but also as a nice way to bind myself to the community,” she reflects. She also appreciates the school’s cross-divisional opportunities to meet and talk with other parents, like the auction or State of the School, and get a glimpse of the educational experience ahead for her family.

Generous with not just her time, but her financial resources as well, Christie and Tom strongly support the Annual Fund and auction each year. She notes that, “The extras that fundraising pays for really enrich the girls’ experiences at Bear Creek. It is important to us to give because the opportunities the school provides to Shannon and Marin are truly outstanding.”

Through her work at Bear Creek and her service on the City Council, Christie hopes to model for her children the importance of being invested in your community. She has taken them to local charities like the Issaquah Food Bank so they can see the impact of doing something good for others in a tangible way. “I want them to learn that they are blessed, but they still have to work hard in life. I hope that Bear Creek will help us instill compassion and respect in them, and that they will choose to give back to their community someday.”

We are so grateful that Christie has chosen to share her considerable talents with Bear Creek in such a wide variety of ways, despite a very full schedule. Her model of service stands as a wonderful example of someone working to lead a life of wisdom, compassion, and courage.



The Malchow family hiking together at Big Rock Park in Sammamish



CELEBRATING THE SPECIAL BOND

THE BEAR CREEK SCHOOL welcomed more than 350 grandparents for Grandparents Day on October 19, 2016. Coming from as near as Redmond Ridge, and as far away as Brazil, grandparents converged on the school for a special time of sharing with their grandchildren and an opportunity to experience the extraordinary nature of Bear Creek first hand. Excitement filled the air as Lower School and Early Middle School students proudly introduced their teachers, read to their grandparents, and participated in special classroom programs. Middle

School students enjoyed a selection of short classes showcasing their unique curriculum, and then worshipped at Chapel with their grandparents. Our Upper School grandparents visited four different Bear Creek classes and participated in a special Chapel featuring senior Tadd Perkins interviewing his grandmother, Mrs. Anne Westburg. We love the opportunity to celebrate the special bond between grandchildren and grandparents, and hope to see many grandparents again at our next Grandparents Day in 2018.





Prophecy, Progress, & Repentance:

The Role of the INDIVIDUAL in Human History

By Jake Casale '13

Editor-in-Chief *The Dartmouth Apologia, a Journal of Christian Thought*

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The idea of progress exerts a powerful pull over the Western cultural imagination in the present era. This attraction is the culmination of a century of societal flirtation with the notion that the rapid development of technology and scientific methodologies has given mankind the tools that will eventually, with enough trial and error, construct solutions to the seemingly ineradicable injustices of society. If humanity is always in a state of positive refinement and forward movement, then it is only logical to assume that one day we will arrive at a utopic state. Such a belief emerges from the epistemological foundations that undergird modern conceptions of progress: the idea that man is able to apprehend, on his own power, all that can be known through the tools that history has bequeathed to him.ⁱ The fact that these assumptions have been forged alongside the decline of religious institutions in America is not surprising, though it is curious that systems of belief—Christianity in particular—are often characterized as enemies of progress, as if they are primarily concerned with blind adherence to archaic and oppressive structures. Given the disproportionate attention that cultural commentators afford to particular eras of church history (such as the oft-mischaracterized trial of Galileo), it is not unreasonable that many Americans conceive of Christianity in this way.ⁱⁱ But this unfortunate reality does indicate that general society has lost familiarity with many of the core concerns that characterize over two thousand years of Christian tradition—including a commitment

to progress, though perhaps of a more expansive type. In fact, the Christian worldview provides a notion of personal and societal progress that purports to address the deepest fractures in the human condition and seeks to provide restoration that is rooted beyond the limitations of human maintenance. Indeed, it is rooted beyond time itself. Yet to understand what defines progress in the Christian vision of reality, it is necessary to understand the way that progress is brought about within that vision, which involves a different set of assumptions about the nature of man and what is considered possible as a result of his actions. Central to these notions is a concept often relegated to the fringes of modern church dialogue, but vitally important to the construction of a framework for the operation of the individual believer within history: prophecy.

Unfortunately, the biblical idea of prophecy has been subverted in recent decades by watered-down, overly mystical applications of the term in popular fiction. The collective characterization of prophecy that emerges is dominated by verbal portents of generally dismal future events, either exact or vague but always ominous, and usually prompted by an unknowable spiritual force that the speaker either seeks out or is arrested by. Most of these attributes are twisted renderings of the Christian understanding of prophecy, which rests on a stronger base of knowledge than mystical premonitions and is grounded in the relational and

personal interactions between man and God. Yet this conceptualization also includes the paradoxical acceptance of a mystery that can never be penetrated by the human mind due to our fundamental nature as finite beings that know and perceive existence in terms of boundaries, from the endpoints of our own bodies to the restrictions of a temporal moment. Prophecy is undoubtedly concerned with the future, but this concern is ensconced within prophecy's primary nature as a vehicle for drawing mankind back to right relationship with God through acts of repentance *in the present*.ⁱⁱⁱ By seeking to curate hearts in specific moments, it safeguards the future that the will of God brings about.

In this sense, prophecy has a wider view than is often ascribed to it—it does not always, particularly in the case of predictions of destruction that within the Old Testament, seek to provide a definitive picture of what will occur in the immediate future,

Any prophetic reference to previously unknown future events within the temporal progression of history must be viewed in light of what the Christian faith has already revealed as certain about the impending shape of the world.

but rather to shape the present in response to the eternal. Any prophetic reference to previously unknown future events within the temporal progression of history must be viewed in light of what the Christian faith has already revealed as *certain* about the impending shape of the world, and how God claims the heart of each individual is impacted by that shape. Therefore, prophecy is primarily concerned with what *may* occur if the errant currents of the present are allowed to flow unaltered into the local or temporally proximal future. If God is certain to bring about his will for the ultimate future of the universe regardless of whether or not mankind tries to work against that will, it follows that he intends to definitively remove all barriers to this will's realization. The Christian understands these barriers to be universally rooted in sin, which is endemic to the fallen human condition, therefore placing mankind in discordancy with the will of God. Yet God's love for humanity,

willing and able to overcome all discordances, offers man the option of participation in the goodness that God is bringing about; the choice, however, does not remain open indefinitely. Thus, the content of prophetic communication is animated by what God has revealed about the endgame of his plan for history and his desire to call people to repent from the sin that threatens to displace them from participation in this endgame.

The discussion has focused to this point on instances of verbal prophecy because they have received the most damage from popular culture's appropriation of the term, but there is still greater territory that must be reclaimed, for even notions of what falls into the category of *prophetic* are often too narrow. While biblical instances of prophecy often involve human actors delivering messages from God to a specific audience, Christianity identifies a type of character that these events emerge from—a way of

living and being that is opened by the foundational narrative of the faith and how it sketches mankind's relationship with history. In fact, a rich comprehension of this pattern of being—which can be variably referred to as a prophetic attitude, character, or posture—precedes a truly robust understanding of prophetic messages and events. Thus, developing a framework for this pattern of being will be the focus of this discussion, which will ultimately contextualize prophecy's redemptive purpose in the transition between structures of reality that Christianity claims is the ultimate goal of history: the imminent “breaking through” of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Before continuing, it must be stated what this discussion is not: an exploration of the spiritual gift of prophecy as referenced in the Scriptures, which is theoretically not discontinuous with a discussion of the prophetic attitude but requires a different set of analytical tools that is beyond the scope of this

article. For now, it suffices to say that there is debate about whether such a gift continues to be actively manifested among Christians today or whether it ceased once the apostles had established the church in the two centuries following Christ's resurrection. There is a rich and ongoing dialogue on the hermeneutics for identifying manifestations of prophecy as a spiritual gift, but this is not the place to sift through its intricacies. The present concern is to trace the characteristics and conditions for a pattern of prophetic being that the Christian vision arguably opens for any individual to cultivate.

All people, regardless of belief system, can readily acknowledge the human situation as both temporal and progressive—meaning that each individual passes through life until some sort of destination is reached, which appears at first glance to be death. Indeed, according to philosophical naturalism—the belief that matter is the ultimate reality, precluding the existence of any external input or force that influences the things that happen to arrangements

The common characteristic shared among all human destinies is the steady march toward a plane of existence that is free of the restrictions imposed on mankind by time.

of matter—death is the inescapable end that every life-form is bent toward. Yet very few individuals, even those who affirm all the tenets of philosophical naturalism, would claim that the aging of the biological organism until it ultimately falls into disrepair and ceases to function is the *only* sort of progression that occurs over the course of a human life. Moreover, even fewer individuals live as if that progression is the most *significant* progression they experience.

One of the most reliable and consistent characteristics in the midst of the vast diversity of human experience is the stance of pursuit. We have enduring records of humans persistently and often single-mindedly seeking a number of things: power, love, status, culture, and art, just to name a few. Research in social psychology has linked the relationships that humans establish with one another, with intimate objects, and with personal

pursuits to a drive toward self-expansion.⁴ This concept exposes crucial clues that aid the creation of a rough portrait of the ends of human existence: there is a self, it is central, and it is somehow unfinished. Whatever current state the self is in seems perpetually diminished compared to what it could be—and there is an endless stream of “could be” that the mind is able to envision. Moreover, no mind is able to fully resist the allure of the “could be.” Thus, man is bound to walk some sort of path in order to achieve a change of being, which is variably cast in modern Western terms as self-discovery, self-actualization, personal growth, or identity formation, although other cultures and historical eras would employ a different set of vocabularies. Nevertheless, everyone is inexorably tied to the path—and moreover, all sense that there is a conceivable end that provides an overarching meaning to the journey, though different people may construct disparate ideas of this end. Even those who resign themselves to the fact that life has no

discernible meaning will often turn the perpetual search for meaning into its own end, which testifies to the near-impossibility of truly living as if the path does not matter.^v

Christianity joins the diverse assembly of worldviews that affirm the instinctual knowledge that the journey of life matters, but it uniquely grounds this intuition in the concept of destiny, which is at once unique to each individual and tied to the overall movement of the entire race.^{vi} Christianity sharpens the context surrounding modern notions of self-actualization by locating the incomplete self within a framework of brokenness; the self has an ideal (indeed, an original) form that it no longer embodies, the result of a decision to trade the Creator's vision for another vision that seeks to ascend beyond the human frame. Paradoxically, this choice led to the debasement of the self, though part of the self-deception enacted at the decision

is an enduring denial of this reality. Thus, for the believer—made aware of her state through grace—the journey of life is a complex, mysterious, and unceasingly demanding process of “the temporal and free unfoldment of [her] essential being,” or the discovery of her true self in accordance to the vision of her Creator.^{vii}

Already, one can see how prophetic contours—a sense of incoming, inalterable eternal realities—distinguish this understanding of personal progress from the modern language of identity formation. The destination, while generally obscured in mystery for the traveler, is not unknown from the vantage point of the divine. Indeed, the knowledge is in the hands of one who also promises to see the traveler through to her destination. Thus, the journey is shaped by the assurance that each step is unified by a concrete meaning that will soon take coherent shape, though it may only be presently discernable in a fragmentary and unsatisfying

If the destiny of every individual, be they a king or a victim of the most wretched poverty, is equally significant in God’s estimation, it follows that each is equally purposed within the vast network of destinies that compose human history.

manner. Yet the act of steadily apprehending the overall arc, and how each moment experienced fits into the arc, is a crucial part of growing into one’s destiny. This lifelong process can be thought of as learning to grasp the overall end of one’s personal history while still existing within the temporal progression of that history. Such a conception underscores the ontologically bounded nature of human experience, yet simultaneously suggests that history is made significant precisely because it is bent toward eternity.^{viii} The common characteristic shared among all human destinies is the steady march toward a plane of existence that is free of the restrictions imposed on mankind by time—restrictions that, in a fallen world, are dominated by the unavoidable fact that finite beings are ultimately extinguished in death. But according to the central claims of the Christian faith, a different reality is near at hand, one that man has already glimpsed

through the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ. This seminal event shatters existing notions of possibility and reveals, in vivid and unambiguous terms, the core ontological markers of the forthcoming Kingdom of God: a domain where the power of death holds no sway, and the people of all nations live in a state of both individual and corporate wholeness that is animated by boundless, other-centered love.

This revelation has several implications for the individual human who currently remains within the confines of time. The first is that, beyond the unique lives that populate every nation and era, all of human history is subject to one categorical destiny. At a minimum, then, it follows that each person’s destiny is indissolubly bound up with the ebb and flow of history, foundationally shaped by the burgeoning knowledge of the realm that all individuals will one day inhabit. Yet how one perceives the exact nature of this connection is

crucially decisive in opening or closing pathways to cultivating a prophetic character, and is canalized according to what one understands to be the primal causative forces that drive the course of history. Even within a basic Christian framework, it is natural to observe the stream of events that continuously remolds current world affairs and arrive at the conclusion that a relatively small spectrum of human actors, often arranged into hierarchies and institutions, control the decisions that shape the lives of general populations. Moreover, these authorities are not consistent entities; as years turn into decades, they undergo significant changes in ideology, emphasis, values, and structure. Thus, if the average man is simply adrift in the vast seas of political and ecological activity that define the development of human civilizations, he lives in a stance of perpetual reactivity to the whims of institutions far larger

and staggeringly more complex than he. He cannot hope to be an active agent in history. The efficacy of his actions will be determined largely by the utterly random flux of circumstances that define his situation and choices. The individual's relationship to history is therefore preeminently unpredictable and, indeed, nearly uncontrollable.

In the face of this potential conclusion, it is significant to note that the tenets of Christianity—while not denying the reality that history is built on one level through human action—paint a picture in which neither the arc of history nor the dynamic nature of human affairs are ultimately ruled by the chances and limitations that should necessarily follow from human authority. Instead, ultimate authority takes the form of the will of God, which is sovereign over the entire progression of history. Moreover, St. Augustine of Hippo clarifies that this sovereignty is not solely manifested in events that might be categorized as explicitly

True prophetic character is defined by a posture of hopeful yet soberly enduring expectancy, waiting for God to act in history and then responding to those actions from a place of “steady attentiveness and availability to God in Christ.”

supernatural (such as miracles), but “through the normal course of historical events and the lives of individuals as historical actors [...] God does not act as a cause in history alongside other causes of historical events, but rather in and through those events themselves.”^{ix} This dovetails mysteriously with several implications of the notion of destiny, for Christianity holds that each human being, created in the image of God and granted “glory, or participation in the goodness of all that has been created,” has an inestimable value in the eyes of the Creator that accordingly eradicates any categorizing power ascribed to inequalities that are visible to the human eye (such as variations in intelligence, physical prowess, moral intuition, and the like).^x If the destiny of every individual, be they a king or a victim of the most wretched poverty, is equally significant in God's estimation, it follows that each is equally *purposed* within the vast network of destinies that compose human history.

Put another way, each person carries historical responsibilities that are directly connected to the realization of God's will for his creation—yet which are intimately defined for the individual according to her unique self and situation.^{xi} Thus, the realization of shared historical responsibility does not imply that all people are meant to produce an equivalent degree of impact on the progression of the ages. Indeed, it seems likely that human ideas of impact—defined in recent decades primarily in terms of quantification, data, and empirical measurement—contrast sharply with God's emphasis on the qualitative worth of the individual.

Instead, what is indicated is the imperative resting on each person to cultivate a prophetic posture: a stance of attentive, critical engagement with his or her immediate circumstances and the larger historical forces that define them, while maintaining an awareness that his or her responsibilities proceed from the exigencies of the world to come. Thus,

nurturing a prophetic character necessarily involves continuous, disciplined, and intensely personal negotiation of the tensions that must arise when one seeks to be both detached and involved.^{xii} It means that one be relationally available to the demands of the moment and yet always seeking to discern the will of God amidst a tangle of internal and external rhetoric that, while largely attractive, is fully capable of subverting and contradicting divine wisdom. Indeed, the persistence of man's brokenness suggests that some degree of crookedness, whether subtle or overt, is to be expected in the systems and plans that he constructs. Paired with the recognition that “the Christian doctrine of sinfulness does not enable us to know in advance just where our limits will be found to lie,” the process of a finite individual becoming a vehicle for divine work hinges on her developing deep capacities for patience and receptivity.^{xiii} True prophetic character is defined by a posture of hopeful yet soberly enduring

expectancy, waiting for God to act in history and then responding to those actions from a place of “steady attentiveness and availability to God in Christ.”^{xiv} Thus, though there is always potential for responsive human action to be discolored by the fundamental misdirection of fallen motivations, the opposite potential—the ability to discern and effectively fight for the concerns of the heart of God—is activated and steadily developed.

At this point, it becomes clear why prophetic manifestations throughout history are calls to repentance for wrongdoing, even if such calls in secular contexts do not explicitly address the full metaphysical weight and stakes of the situation. In the Christian worldview, repentance is essential for the new reality of the Kingdom to break through the existing structure of the universe, but it is a challenging concept that is usually associated in popular consciousness with tragic instances in which the church has sought to incite unreasonable, disproportionate, and damaging levels of guilt and shame in both its own assemblies and society at large. Such an understanding casts repentance as the sorrowful reaction to punishment for an infraction of religious rules, which reflects a characterization of the faith that is inaccurately skewed toward legalism over grace. While genuine repentance does involve a sense of remorse, that sense is not meant to be confining nor scarring, but to motivate the reorientation or “re-becoming” of one’s heart away from its own designs and toward the pursuit of a relationship with God and his good vision for the human life.^{xv} So, when one considers that the course of history is enacted through the decisions that spring from human hearts, repentance must be part of the story if the macro-destiny of history is to be realized—which, in turn, explains the prevalence of prophetic communication in addressing and rectifying social ills at key points throughout history. There are numerous well-known examples within the last two hundred years alone of individuals and groups that unify prophetic spirituality and tangible engagement with the atrocities of the day, such as Abraham Lincoln’s transformative words and deeds during the American Civil War, Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s costly resistance to the Third Reich, and the role of black church leaders in condemning

the South African apartheid and mobilizing efforts to eradicate it.^{xvi} What ties them together is their shared commitment to advancing the common good through rooting out the sources of injustice and oppression in society and seeking, within their circumscribed humanity, to first discern and then act according to the will of God—a will that seeks to expose what is broken and to spare no effort in bringing about redemption. This, ultimately, is the type of progress that was intimated for humanity through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and is the purposive goal of prophetic being within the progression of human history.

i. Glenn Tinder, *The Political Meaning of Christianity: An Interpretation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 169.

ii. See Macy Ferguson, “Conflicting Interpretations: Debunking Galileo’s Science v. Faith Controversy,” *The Dartmouth Apologia* Vol. 8 No. 2 (2014) and Trevor Davis, “Faith and Learning: Does Christianity Pose a Challenge to Intellectual Inquiry?,” *The Dartmouth Apologia* Vol. 10 No. 1 (2015).

iii. Mark J. Boda and Gordon T. Smith, *Repentance in Christian Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006), 49-50.

iv. Sara Konrath, “Self-Expansion Theory,” *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2007), 827.

v. Os Guinness, *Fool’s Talk: Recovering the Art of Christian Persuasion* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 215.

vi. Tinder, 27-29.

vii. Tinder, 28.

viii. Tinder, 76.

ix. Raymond Plant, *Politics, Theology, and History* (Cambridge: University Press, 2001), 53.

x. Tinder, 27 (and other).

xi. Tinder, 68, 77.

xii. Tinder, 69-71.

xiii. Tinder, 163.

xiv. Tinder, 224.

xv. Ellen F. Davis, *Biblical Prophecy: Perspectives for Christian Theology, Discipleship, and Ministry* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 216.

xvi. See Tinder, *Political Meaning*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, and Richard Elphick, *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*

ALUMNI NEWS AND CLASS NOTES

Class of 2002

Shannon (Baker) Coughlin

Shannon and her husband are currently in the process of becoming foster parents. They have two adolescents placed with them, ages 15 and 13. They are enjoying the experience; it has been eye opening for them with all the court hearings and drama that fostering brings. They are thankful to have the ability to open their home up to kids who need a place to go.

Class of 2004

Lydia Imhoff

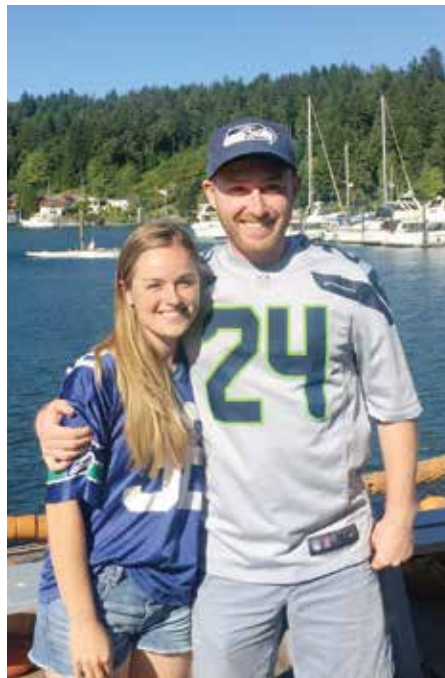


For the past year, Lydia has been living and working in Madrid,

Spain. She works with a church and a non-profit through Every Nation Ministries, teaching English classes, working with the kids, and generally connecting with people in order to share the love of God with them. In May she became engaged to Warren, and they are excited to be married this coming year and continue working together to spread the love of God in Madrid!

Class of 2005

Ansel Sanger



This year Ansel started a business helping people buy and sell homes; he also leads Young Life at Bear Creek and Overlake with Alex Higinbotham '07 and Mac Graham

'07. He and his new wife, Josie, like to throw dinner parties, run, watch football, and help people find their dream homes.

Class of 2007

Alex Higinbotham

Alex is in the midst of wedding planning for his upcoming nuptials in April!

Class of 2008

Todd Lien

Todd is currently a music teacher and an actor, mainly working commercials and theaters. His short film has been presented at several festivals, and he is currently working on several projects as director, actor, and writer.

Class of 2009

Beth (Graham) Patterson

Beth is in her third year of medical school at the University of Colorado in Denver.

Thoughts from the Alumni Leadership Committee

By Alex Higinbotham '07

Working in medical sales, I spend many of my days on the road, driving between Seattle and Spokane to visit customers in various hospitals. During that drive there are several stretches of road where there is no cell coverage. The network doesn't reach down into some valleys, and my calls drop, my Spotify stops working; I'm basically cut off from the world. Having no network is not very fun.

The same thing goes for life after graduating. Without a network of friends, family, colleagues, and customers, life is not very fun or rewarding. We as humans were created to be in relationship with one another, and those relationships create a network. Hearing the word "networking" can sometimes conjure feelings of dread, but networking at its most basic is just building relationships. Who doesn't like having friends? Networking is really nothing more than making new friends, and professional networking is just making friends in a professional context.

Professional networking is a necessary skill in today's competitive world. Recent studies have found that 70-80% of all job placements occur due to networking and are never advertised. However, networking isn't just helpful for job placement. Networking can help you succeed in your performance once you've landed a job. Networking can help you grow and learn more about your interests and industry; it can broaden your horizons and deepen your knowledge to help you become an expert in your field. Networking can even help you be more creative and innovative in your job (Eric Barker, TheWeek.com).

So how do you get started? Here are four tips.

1. Show up! In the words of the Woody Allen, "80% of success is just showing up." For many of us, we just need to take that first step and show up at social gatherings, interest-based meet-ups, professional networking events, informational

interviews, church, basically anywhere that you can build relationships will help you to grow your network in breadth and depth.

2. Don't just connect, reconnect. Connecting with new people can sometimes be intimidating, so instead start by reconnecting with old friends. It could be as simple as reaching out to someone on Facebook or the Bear Creek Alumni LinkedIn Group. Or take it a step further and reconnect face-to-face at one of the many alumni events that Bear Creek hosts: the fall gathering at Flatstick Pub the night before Thanksgiving, Homecoming, the spring brunch and service project, the annual alumni vs varsity soccer game, class reunions, etc.
3. Ask the Three Golden Questions. While all networking should be friendly and personal, asking the Three Golden Questions can help your professional networking meetings to be mutually beneficial: How can I help you? What ideas do you have for me? Who else do you know that I should talk to? (Judy Robinett, "How to Be a Power Connector").
4. Don't be shallow. It's important to keep in mind that at the core of professional networking are relationships with real people. These real people have real lives with real interests and real families. So be genuine, be warm, ask questions about personal lives, and be generous with your time and favors.

As Bear Creek alumni, we are uniquely blessed to have received an elite-level education that has put us on track to be among the best and brightest in our fields, so our network of high school friends is a great place to start. Furthermore, the greater Bear Creek school community is full of brilliant and successful people including parents of alumni. We're all in this together, so let's help one another in our personal and professional lives!

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Matt Kaiser, Class of 2014

The summer of 2013 was an interesting time for soon-to-be Bear Creek senior Matt Kaiser. While Matt's friends were planning their senior year and putting the finishing touches on college applications, he was dreaming. He wasn't dreaming of attending a top university, playing college sports, or even getting a secure job with a good retirement fund. Instead, Matt was dreaming of something different: of becoming the top real estate broker in Washington state.

Matt's unconventional journey began on a brisk morning when, with his resume in hand and wearing a freshly pressed shirt, he approached the front door of the top Windermere agent in Kirkland. He knew that if he wanted to be the best, he needed to learn from the best. After leaving his resume with the man's assistant, Matt waited, hoping for some sort of a response.

A few weeks later, the agent invited him in for a meeting. Matt shared his goals and desire to be successful in real estate, and the agent liked what he heard. Unfortunately, the agent became busy and months went by without further communication. Refusing to let his dream go, Matt continued to search for a real estate position. His persistence and courage paid off in the form of a meeting with the CEO of Keller Williams Bellevue, followed by an invitation to attend their "Ignite" course, a program designed to help new agents succeed in real estate. Despite having to miss school for the course, Matt jumped at the opportunity.

Matt soon realized the next hurdle would be getting his real estate license. Obtaining the license would take a lot of what many high school kids don't have: time and money. Gifted the tuition for the course, Matt studied 2-3 hours every night for six months, in addition to juggling a demanding senior year schedule which included his schoolwork and varsity basketball and baseball team commitments.



In the spring of his senior year, Matt called the Kirkland agent he visited initially and told him that he was about to graduate and would have his real estate license shortly thereafter. Impressed that Matt had continued to pursue his goals, the agent offered him a position. Matt worked closely with the agent, learning as he went along. A month into the summer, their team's experienced manager quit and Matt received a sudden promotion. He relished his new role prospecting for leads, setting up listings, tracking transactions, and making sure clients were happy.

A few months later, he departed for Baylor University. While most of his fellow students were thrilled to be starting college, Matt was frustrated he had to leave a job he loved. Every day at school, Matt longed to return to real estate. While home for Christmas break, he wrestled with what to do next. In January, Matt flew to Texas as scheduled, but rather than opening his suitcase, he packed everything up and moved back to Seattle.

After his return, Matt threw himself into his chosen career, not regretting his decision to leave Baylor. After two years, Matt's mentor told him, "I've taught you pretty much everything I can, what's left to learn will come with experience." It was time for Matt to strike out on his own.

In the latter half of 2016, Matt opened up his own real estate business, Matt Kaiser Realty, in association

with Realogics Sotheby's International Realty, in downtown Kirkland. With his own business, Matt loves helping his clients achieve their real estate goals.

Matt credits The Bear Creek School with helping him achieve his dream. "Bear Creek instilled in me the ability to think critically, and to know how to think, not what to think,"

he reflects. Matt believes that the world-class education he received at Bear Creek helped him develop his talents for processing challenges quickly and creating unique solutions to real world issues. He adds, "I have a passion for excellence that was nurtured at Bear Creek."

Matt notes that he has learned firsthand that taking risks can

bring great reward if made intelligently and backed up with hard work. A line from one of Robert Frost's most famous poems, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference," sums up the way that Matt chooses to approach his life.

CLASS NOTES CONTINUED

Class of 2010

Eli Sanger

Eli continues to work at Boeing, recently receiving a promotion to a lead role in his group. In September, he and his fiancée Briana were married.

Class of 2010

Michael Davisson

Michael spent much of 2016 working for the Bernie Sander's presidential campaign and is continuing his involvement, working to get progressive congressional candidates elected.

Class of 2012

Paisley Showalter

Paisley recently began her career in human resources as a Human Resources Assistant at the Center for Infectious Disease Research in Seattle. This organization is a non-profit which focuses on malaria, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis and the interaction between these diseases and the human pathogen. She enjoys working alongside the scientists who are tackling these infectious diseases.

Nick Van Baak

Nick's been working as an assistant debate coach for Bear Creek's forensics team while pursuing a psychology degree at SPU. He plans to put that degree to use as a counselor, ministering particularly to the depressed and suicidal populations. As far as we know, he has not yet taken over the world.

Class of 2014

Jon Kok

Over the summer, Jon had the opportunity to partner/ intern with Jacob Imam '12 at Ignition Partners, producing video interviews of Bellevue HS football players, parents, and alumni about recent events regarding bullying, harassment, the Academic Institute, and other issues relating to the football team. He is currently pursuing a bachelor's of music with elective studies in media. The summer project developed his skill sets in sound mixing and mastering, video editing, and music production in a professional environment for a major cause. He continues to play percussion in Wheaton College's Symphonic Band and serves the Lord fervently through children's ministry, youth group, AWANA, and worship services at Bethany Chapel.

FORGING A CAREER IN THE BIG APPLE

Kira Geiger, Class of 2011

“THERE ARE SO MANY STORIES happening around you; it is just a fascinating place.” With these words, Kira Geiger sums up her love for living in New York, as well as revealing her passion for sharing the stories of others through acting.

Upon graduation from Bear Creek in 2011, Kira enrolled at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts in acting. After visiting both New York and Los Angeles as part of her program’s culminating showcase, she knew that New York was the right place for her to launch her career. Taking advantage of both stage and screen opportunities, Kira has embarked on what she terms “a marathon, not a sprint.” So far she has had a supporting role on a Discovery Channel syndicate crime show, acted in a short play for a festival, participated in developing a new musical, which is now being workshopped off-Broadway, and perhaps most exciting, is producing a 1991 play entitled *Spike Heels* along with three classmates.

Written by Theresa Rebeck, the play explores the issues of sexual harassment in the workplace, women’s role in politics, and the relationship between the sexes. Kira comments, “Even though the play was written 25 years ago, it still feels relevant today.” She goes on to reflect that at Bear Creek, the focus on classic theater, from Shakespeare to Oscar Wilde, helped her learn how these writers revealed essential truths about our humanity. “When you take the time to look deep enough, humans were the same then as they are now. The same elements—like love and redemption—run through all of our stories and bind us together.”



In addition to focusing on the philosophical implications of the play, as producer, Kira must organize the many details involved in “creating something out of nothing.” Kira finds all the behind the scenes work, from organizing the actors and rehearsals and coordinating the costumes, set design, and theater use, through managing the promotion and business aspects of a play challenging, exciting, and a big learning opportunity.

As Kira looks ahead, she hopes to be able to make a living acting both on stage and onscreen. She loves the connection to the audience and her fellow performers offered by the theater. “We go through an experience together during a play, and it is different every night.” While the screen work is more

technically challenging and has a less organic feel, the opportunity to shoot on location and take advantage of special effects adds an interesting twist to the work. She noted that in today’s world, many actors forge successful careers moving back and forth between the two media.

Kira credits her experience at Bear Creek with igniting her curiosity and passion for performance. She participated in both choir and drama, as well as sports, beginning in eighth grade.

“I always wanted to do it all,” she remembers. “I’m grateful to my teachers for creating a balanced environment where good grades were important, but not all that mattered. What was more important was the ‘why’ of the course—the material we were learning.”

By nurturing a real desire for learning and a drive for excellence, Bear Creek continues to impact Kira’s daily life. “I still can’t get out of those khakis,” she chuckles. “Even though it’s not something I have to do for my day-to-day needs, I still do some math study and am teaching myself French.” We look forward to seeing Kira performing the many varied stories of our lives and reflecting their deep human truths for years to come.

ALUMNI EVENTS

The ninth annual all-alumni gathering at Flatstick Pub in Kirkland on November 23 was once again a success, drawing more than a decade's worth of Grizzly graduates!

Since Bear Creek moved from 2B to 1A, the league basketball schedule has become much less flexible which necessitated moving our Homecoming games from January to December when we can schedule a home game on the last Friday of the semester. We were happy to see so many alumni come out to cheer on the Grizzlies during Bear Creek's Homecoming basketball games against Orcas Island on December 16. Those attending received free snacks, courtesy of the Grizzlies Booster Club, and enjoyed half-time free throw contests with great prizes.

Go to tbc.org/alumni to update your contact information so you can be sure to receive invitations to alumni activities throughout the year. Or follow us on our private Facebook page: Bear Creek Alumni.



PARENTS OF ALUMNI STAY CONNECTED

More than 60 parents of alumni gathered in late September for the annual wine tasting and social at the Woodhouse Winery in Woodinville. In addition to gourmet appetizers and excellent wine, the room was filled with reminiscences, laughter, and fellowship. A special thanks goes to the Parents of Alumni Leadership Committee: Holly Alleva, Mary Matthews, Cindy McCahill, Clare Mehta, and Deb Perry for spearheading this event.





DO YOU MISS YOUR BEAR CREEK FAMILY?

There are many ways to stay connected.

Come to a Parents of Alumni event like the upcoming Spring Brunch and Service Project on Saturday morning, March 11.

Serve on the Leadership Committee to help plan and organize Parent of Alumni activities.

Join our private Facebook group. (Search for Bear Creek Parents of Alumni and request to join.)

Update your contact information so we can stay in touch. Go to tbc.org and click Parents at the top of any page, then click on the Parents of Alumni tab.

Contact a Parent of Alumni Leadership Committee member or Debbie Marchione, Vice President for Philanthropy and Community Engagement, at dmarchione@tbc.org to learn more.



8905 208th Avenue NE
Redmond, WA 98053

www.tbcs.org

Once upon a Time

The Bear Creek School
Annual Dinner and Auction

Westin Bellevue
Saturday, March 18
5:00 p.m.

Silent Auction
Gourmet Dinner and Live Auction
www.tbcs.org/auction

