

# MODUS VIVENDI

A WAY OF LIFE

**COMMENCEMENT 2009**

**FACULTY PROFILE**  
RENEE MATSON

**THE CLASSICAL BRAIN**

**FAMILIES ON A  
MISSION**

THE BEAR CREEK SCHOOL MAGAZINE

## Modus Vivendi Summer 2009

*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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This page  
 The thirty-three members of the class of 2009 celebrate after their commencement ceremony on June 6, 2009.

On the cover  
 Benjamin Lee, grade 6. Over mid-winter break Benjamin and his family led a mission trip to Chile with members of their church. See story on page 26.  
 Photo by Terri Coleman



*Graduates of the Class of 2009 celebrated their accomplishments with family, faculty, and friends during Bear Creek's ninth Commencement exercises on June 6. Thirty-three Bear Creek graduates received diplomas and were challenged by Patrick Carruth, Head of School, in his farewell address, which is printed in its entirety below.*

Graduates, so here we are. Tassels have been turned. Diplomas awarded. And you now anxiously stand at the doorstep of the rest of your lives.

As I told another graduating class recently, your timing isn't very good. You guys picked 2009 to graduate, in possibly the worst economic recession this country has seen in 80 years. Colleges are cutting staff, reducing financial aid awards, and ratcheting up admissions criteria. Unemployment is near 10% and companies are laying off workers weekly, creating a market dynamic where often good employees are turned down because they are 'overqualified'. This new market dynamic may still exist when you graduate from college. For those of you entering the workforce soon, jobs will be hard to find. So, this reality raises a rather interesting question for the graduating Class of 2009, a question which you and perhaps even your parents may have asked many times before. Why did we do this? What was the point? Why have we gone through this exercise of getting this education anyway if it isn't going to make us financially secure?

Well, many of you have already discovered the answer to this question in a strange discussion we had in one of our capstone sessions together. If I remember, it was captured in a simple grocery-store-checkout-line question, "paper or plastic," because it was in that question that we confronted ourselves, our assumptions, our beliefs, our worldviews, our ideas, and our hopes. And that is really the point. Your education is about more than making you into mere economic engines of

personal financial success. Instead, it has been about forming what you know and transforming who you are becoming and about developing in you a way of living.

I know that as a class you have developed an affinity for the movie *300* and for the ancient Greek polis of Sparta, because, like the city, you are a small but mighty class. Perhaps you also know today marks the 65th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, and that heroism demonstrated on the beaches of Normandy was also demonstrated by the Spartans at the Battle of Thermopylae, in which the Spartan '300' successfully held off a much larger Persian force for three days. Appropriately, both of these battles symbolize for us, today, lives well lived as so many individuals sacrificed for the good of others.

Graduates, you too have individually and collectively shown the seeds of similar bravery, tenacity, courage, and selflessness, as you have walked the halls of The Bear Creek School. These seeds have been watered and nurtured by the faculty, and it is now time for you to begin to grow on your own. It is now time for you to continue the curriculum of life without us by your side. It is now time for you to step forward into tomorrow and leave a distinct legacy for others with your own life. A life well lived. A life centered on Christ. And so, Class of 2009, as you depart from us, I challenge you in good classical Christian fashion to exchange, "We are Sparta," with the simple yet difficult words of Micah the prophet, "Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with your God."

My sincerest congratulations on a job well done!

Patrick B. Carruth  
Head of School

# COMMENCEMENT 2009

## The Graduating Class of 2009

Michael Chase Castle\*\*  
University of Washington

Hyun Sun Cho\*\*  
University of Southern California

Paige Elizabeth Connell\*\*\*  
University of Southern California

Sydney Anne Conway\*\*  
Whitman College

Danielle Marie DuBois\*\*\*  
Whitworth University

David Allan Ersek\*\*\*  
Harvey Mudd College

Brianna Nicole Firminger\*\*  
Baylor University

Lauren Nicole Forbes ‡  
Western Washington University

John Randolph Freatman, Jr.\*  
University of Southern California

John Killian Geiger\*\*  
Central Washington University

Elizabeth Mae Graham\*\*\*  
Washington State University

Rebekah Rae Hamilton  
Westminster Choir College



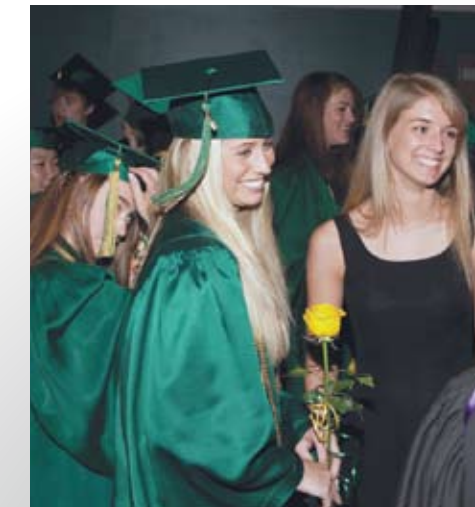
Timothy Conor Hughes\*\*\*  
Northwestern University

Sung Jin Ihn\*\*  
Cornell University

Molly Beth Kernan  
Gonzaga University

Courtney Noel Kesinger\*  
Gonzaga University

Justin Bennett Maurer ‡  
Western Washington University



William Noble McCahill  
Gonzaga University

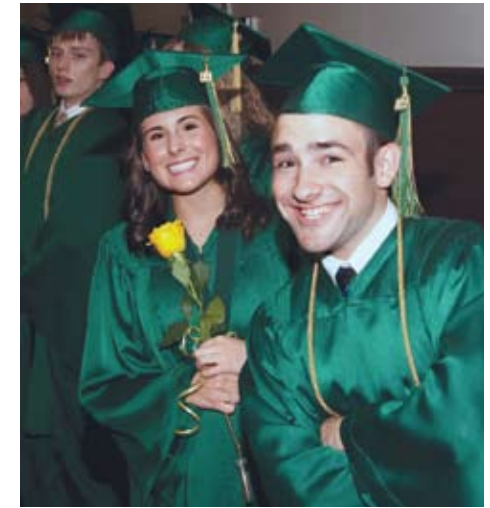
Matthew Timothy McLaughlin  
Wake Forest University

Alexis Rey Miller\*\*  
Gonzaga University

Molly Anne Miller\*\*\*  
The University of Chicago

Seung Min Oh\*\*  
New York University

Christopher Connor Pattillo\*  
California Polytechnic State University,  
San Luis Obispo



Lois Michelle Ramsay  
Western Washington University

Erik Donald Richardson\* ‡  
University of Washington

Elisha Hamilton Sanger\*  
University of Pittsburgh

Hye Yoon Song\*\*\*  
Emory University

Madison Taylor Stump \*\*‡  
Western Washington University

Anton Pieter van der Stroom\*\*  
The University of Edinburgh

Brittanie Renee Vander Weide\*  
University of Washington

Courtney Carney Wallis  
Biola University

Ryley Scott Watson\*  
Chapman University

Kathryn Marie Wolfram\*  
St. Olaf College

\*\*\* Summa Cum Laude (3.9 – 4.0 GPA)  
\*\* Magna Cum Laude (3.75 – 3.89 GPA)

\* Cum Laude (3.5 – 3.749 GPA)

‡ Legacy Honors (Bear Creek student from grade K through 12)

Lower left: Johnie Freatman  
Center: Molly Miller with Emily Kadege, junior  
Upper right: Courtney Wallis and Ryley Watson

Commencement photos  
by Nation Photography

### National Merit Scholarship Finalists

David Ersek, Timothy Hughes

### National Merit Scholarship Commended Students

Brittanie Vander Weide, Elizabeth Graham, John Geiger, Paige Connell, Hyun Sun Cho

### NCAA Athletes

Sydney Conway, Whitman College, Golf  
Molly Miller, University of Chicago, Soccer  
Kathryn Wolfram, St. Olaf College, Volleyball  
Lauren Forbes, Western Washington University, Crew

### Washington State Honors

Michael Castle, Hyun Sun Cho, Sydney Conway, Danielle DuBois, David Ersek, Brianna Firminger, Johnnie Freatman, John Geiger, Elizabeth Graham, Timothy Hughes, Sung Jin Ihn, Courtney Kesinger, William McCahill, Matthew McLaughlin, Alexis Miller, Molly Miller, Seung Min Oh, Paige Connell, Chris Pattillo, Erik Richardson, Eli Sanger, Hye Yoon Song, Madison Stump, Anton van der Stroom, Brittanie Vander Weide, Ryley Watson, Kathryn Wolfram



### Special Guest Dr. Marvin Olasky

The class of 2009, faculty, and guests were treated to remarks delivered by Dr. Marvin Olasky. Dr. Olasky is editor-in-chief of *World Magazine*, provost at The King's College in New York City, and is

a distinguished author (*Compassionate Conservatism*), speaker, and proponent of Christian worldview. Dr. Olasky challenged the class to meet adversity with a desire to seek God.

### Faculty Speaker Kenny Norris



Dear Seniors of the Class of 2009, when you asked me to speak here today, I honestly felt like a reversal of roles had occurred: my students had given me a homework assignment. Not one to let such an irony slip by me—I am an English teacher after all (and English teachers relish irony)—I decided to embrace it. If you were my teachers, how would I demonstrate mastery? The answer came in an instant: I would make use of a gimmick in the spirit of Molly Miller, Beth Graham, Ryley Watson. So I offer the following list as a review of familiar ideas, a reminiscing of our times together, and a challenge to your life's calling. If you would all get out a piece of mental paper and pencil, consider this your last lit. terms list.

*Isocolon:* You probably remember this term by way of our example in class: "I came. I saw. I conquered." Julius Caesar uttered these words to hail his own victory in front of the Roman Senate. Have you earned the right to boldly declare this same isocolon? At this point, yes. You have consistently risen to our challenges, repeatedly exceeded our expectations, and frequently brought smiles to our faces. But do not make the same mistake Caesar made with this declaration. Your victories—my victories—are never a matter of personal pronouns. They occur because we stand on the shoulders of giants with our hands clasped tightly about our support networks,

our friends, teachers, family, siblings, community. As John Donne so aptly phrased it, "No man is an island." Do not make the mistake of mindset in which you see other people as a means to an end or a hurdle to leap over in the pursuit of your dreams. Work with and for other people's pursuits. Remember isocolon by way of this example from Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in . . ."

*Epanalepsis:* We learned this second term by way of Paul Harvey's statement that "In times like these, it is helpful to remember that there have always been times like these." Harvey's maxim acknowledges our tendency to forget one central fact of life: this life is—and has always been—full of trials. Why? Time brings new challenges and the possibility of failure. Time, however, is not the enemy; it is the context within which our decisions shape us, which brings us to our next term.

*Antanaclasis:* C.S. Lewis frames our decisions within the confines of time in his book *The Great Divorce*. He writes, "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.'" With his two distinct uses of "Thy will be done"—the essence of antanaclasis—Lewis sifts life down to a poignant point of introspection. Bob Dylan phrased this same question in terms of a declaration: "You're gonna have to serve somebody." As time carries you in its current, find moments of calm to ask yourself this simple question, "Whom am I going to serve?"

Serve yourself and the following example of *antimetabole*, our next term, may characterize you. It comes from Cicero: "Eat to live; don't live to eat." How does this statement relate to living for self? When we place ourselves at the center of our world, we organize our priorities around our appetites for power, pleasure, plenty, or prestige. These appetites become the gods we serve; we are slaves to their fulfillment. But no amount of power satisfies completely; no height of pleasure lasts eternally; no degree of plenty endures unconditionally; no level

of prestige rewards entirely. Serve these gods of self if you choose, but realize their ultimate emptiness.

Serve God and the following promise, an example of *paradox*, will—not may—will hold true: "Whosoever loses his life, shall find it." Take your dreams in all of their quiriness and entrust them to God. He has the unparalleled ability to fulfill your dreams not as you wanted but as you needed.

So let's see, that's five literary terms. You'll earn a half point for spelling them correctly and a half point for writing down valid examples. I'll give you extra credit, however, if you do one thing: learn to live them out.

I know what you're wondering: when is this quiz? The answer: each day for the rest of your lives. *Carpe diem*.

### Excerpts from Student Speeches



#### Molly Miller

I decided to make a quiz called "Do You Go to Bear Creek?" The questions shed light on what makes Bear Creek so special.

*What do you do with your free time at school?*

- Sing rap songs opera-style
- Have a disco dance party
- Memorize hundreds of digits of pi
- All of the above

If you picked (d) then you are on the right track to becoming an A+ Bear Creeker.

*Your teachers are*

- Disconnected
- Undemanding
- Boring
- Never any of the above

Those wearing khakis and sweater

vests chose (d). The entire Bear Creek experience depends on our teachers. They challenged us until we reached our limits, and then pushed us just a little farther. Each of my teachers made life miserable at one point or another but I will grudgingly admit that it made me a better student. I know I will miss them all.

*What is your favorite lunch topic?*

- The latest movies
- Homework
- Philosophic discussions regarding the nature of democracy, and as to why licorice has a hole
- Baseball

Creekers chose (c). Bear Creek has taught me that it is important to have logical evidence behind every opinion, even opinions that seem trivial. My friends love learning for the sake of learning, forcing me to learn more to keep up. I am infinitely grateful for their intellectual poking and prodding.

*If you were being chased by a bear, how many of your classmates would you trust to rescue you?*

- One or two of the strongest
- One or two of the smartest
- My best friend
- They would all at least try, even if some of them got eaten

The Bear Creek answer is (d). I can look each of my classmates in the eyes and say that I would trust them with my life. Although they might not be able to rescue me from an angry bear, I know they would each try their hardest.

#### Anton van der Stroom

Our Bear Creek experience has now come to an end. We all have those individual, profound memories that we will carry from this building. . . moments that we will find ourselves traveling back to next year and beyond.

Whether we know it or not, the years spent in this building have turned us into people who have a profound understanding of the world in which we live, but more importantly a comprehension of who we are and our relevance to the greater narrative of society. The most important element is a mindset. . . It is in the intellectual

curiosity, the search for not just answers but rather a holistic understanding, and how with this understanding we have been charged to influence Creation in the most positive way. I have learned the



importance of forming a sound foundation for one's convictions. I am convinced that that lesson will be indispensable as I head out from this place to the four corners of the world. There is one major element that will set us apart from the other people who we will come across. It is that firm understanding of our identity.

The media refers to us as Generation Y, the generation who has yet to define itself. Let us be the generation that is not undefined, but rather redefined, grasping values that make the world a better place, a world of greater hope and increased possibility; where doing what is expedient is instead replaced with what is most just; where what is most profitable is instead replaced with what is most equitable; a world that is not blind but rather seeks to respect. We will make a lasting difference on the world we will inherit and the one we will inevitably leave behind. We must never forget where we came from: the teachers, fellow students, and friends who always encouraged us to not simply accept the status quo. We are part of a new generation, the compassionate generation, the ones who, when challenged by the world, will remember where we truly must stand. I can think of no better preparation for the world I will enter tomorrow, and for that I must relay my profound gratitude and appreciation for these formative years in my life.



**Beth Graham**

Start with thirty-three of the best classmates ever, *un mezcla* (a blend) of gifted, smart, driven individuals. Add caring teachers that instruct lessons in the classroom, and in life, who love and value their students and know how to give each lecture the perfect flavor. Pour in heaps of homework, tests, papers, and projects, with a generous helping of stress. Beat well. Sprinkle a clean counter with Courtney Wallis' enthusiasm and Dani's excited laughter, and knead in Johnie's voice announcing basketball games, Michael's and Erik's loud superfanning, and Brianna's faithful presence at every game. Return dough to bowl. Add three cups of volleyball domination for Katie, Alexis, and Madison, and a quart of competition for Tim and Paige. Stir. Some golf ball sized lumps may remain thanks to Sydney, Johnie, and Eli, but a generous spoonful of David's selfless service will help everything stick together. Add an ounce of wit for Yoon and Anton, a heaping teaspoon of debate for Matt and Will, and a dash of dependability for Courtney Kesinger. Whisk in a pint of musical talent for Justin, John, Rebekah, Ryley, and Chris. Throw in handfuls of goofy memories, crazy Icebreakers, tearful trips, captivating performances, exhilarating, exhausting Homecomings. Add a pinch of Shawn's magic tricks, a flawless belly flop by John, and Jin's priceless crab impression on the biology trip for a little zest. Pour in a slug of creativity for Molly M. and Molly K. and a tablespoon of artistic genius for Yoon and Nicole. Blend in long sighs and silent prayers during tests, rejuvenating Chapels, and energetic freshmen—just a

few grams of Mimi and her Black Ninjas to spice things up, and a quarter cup of Brittanie's elegant writing to round out our smooth, bold taste. Finish with a packed cup of Justin's kindness to make the whole thing sweet. Mix completely. When ready, pour into pan greased with love. Cover with prayer. Bake for two to thirteen years, depending on desired doneness. *Lo sienta, Lolita—esta no es comida basura*, assurance that this isn't junk food.

Class of 2009, grab the oven mitts and the diplomas—it's time for the world to "Taste and see that the Lord is good."



**Danielle DuBois**

*Abbreviated Alliterative Accolades for The Bear Creek School (TBCS)*

**T.** Through my Time at TBCS, I was Transformed, Taught to seek Truth, and Triumph over Tragedy. Surrounded by Talented friends who value Transparency and Trust, and Trigger my internal motivation. We Toiled through Tangential velocity, T-Tests of significance, and *The Music Man's Trouble in River City*. We learned intellectual Tenacity, and balanced our studies by Tuning in to senior Traditions. Together we are now Turning Toward the future.

**B.** Behind me is the Breath that was my Bear Creek—the Boisterous Banter during Breaks, our sixth grade foursquare Ball, our Bubbles during geometry, and the Balance of personality that my class Boldly Blended together. I look Back, remembering the Beginning of my days at Bear Creek, and it seems Brief now. Brief, but oddly Beautiful.

**C.** Here at the Creek, I had the chance to Cultivate Characteristics needed to Complete this journey. From Classmates, I

Caught onto Creativity, Constant Comfort, Compassion, and a little bit of a Capricious Calling. It is Completely impossible to Condense the Confusion and uncertainty about what may be Coming down the road. But the excitement that is Cascading from my Classmates is Contagious, and now I Cannot wait to be labeled 'Collegiate.'

**S.** I will Savor my memories from this School. The Sports, the worship Songs, the Serene Sunshine in the Student lounge. The Students and Staff make this School a place of Sincerity and Solitude. Colossians 4:6 Summons us as Christians to "let our Speech be full of grace, Seasoned with Salt." I have faith that in the years to come, this Senior class will Salt, Spice, and Season our new Surroundings, and I know it will be largely because of our foundation at this School and our relationships with these people. I pray that we will forever treasure these Significant memories, and attribute them to these four Special letters—TBCS.



**David Ersek**

The best analogy for our time here is climbing a mountain. Many of us started off as elementary students, where the slope was nice and easy. Under the guidance of our teachers, we learned the basics of climbing: how to study, how to write a paper, how to strengthen our faith.

Progressing into middle school, the path steepened. We had to rely on the tools our teachers had given us. The path became broader as opportunities like sports and electives opened up. There were emotional crevasses to jump over and cliffs of faith to climb, but through the support of and friendships with our teachers, we could continue to move upward.

We were then passed on to the next team of skilled guides. In high school, the way ahead looked much steeper and intimidating, but also more interesting: committees, mission trips, dances, math team, time to pursue interests and talents, as well as developing proficiencies in [new] areas.

The path seemed to dissolve to an incline of sharp gravel, and our lives began to feel more like that of Indiana Jones. [We could] dodge the falling boulders of mistakes by setting up study habits, getting lots of sleep, and seeking the advice of the trail experts. Senior year [brought] a feeling of resolution, a feeling of regret that it's almost over, a sense of finality, and a sense of "there's more ahead." A desire to soak in all the remaining knowledge we could, a desire to keep our heads from exploding. We ran the last stretch of the trek, yet we were able to stop to notice a pretty flower or towering tree that caught our attention. We became bolder in taking adventures along the scenic routes. We cultivated the leadership skills we had developed. [We were] able to point out a foothold to the students below. We began to realize the unity in all we had learned, about worldviews, language, God, science, history, and literature. My wish on the next mountain ... is that all of us have learned from our mistakes and ... we will trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not on our own understanding, that we will acknowledge Him in all our ways, and that He will make our paths straight.



**Paige Connell**

A little girl stuffed in some awkward navy pants, head nestled within the folds of a white turtleneck. As she surveys the world around her, she can't help but

notice the smudge in the upper right-hand corner of her glasses, her clunky, chunky, coke-bottle glasses. It is the first day of third grade, and the last thing she needs is to be stuck behind glass, like an animal in a "nerd" exhibit. Staring down at the golden threads of her crest which seemed to ordain her a special, scholarly biome, she had a feeling that this school, The Bear Creek School, would be different.

The girl, who used to fumble with her oppressive frames, now derives strength and poise from her intellect and individuality. While I no longer don the endearing, and ever embarrassing, glasses of my youth, the community I have spent these past nine years in has given me a new pair of glasses. Glasses through which the world is threaded with enthusiasm, with joy in the gifts we possess in this life. Glasses shaped from digits of pi scattered across the page, from a beloved rotting pumpkin in the biology room, from countless Skittles rolling off the desks in statistics. Glasses dependent on an exploding volatile liquids lab, an intrusive nose of Cyrano, and hundreds of stitches embedded in a Beowulf quilt. Glasses made strong by the tears of my one and only B, not to mention the tears lost as Lenny's rabbit farm faded away with the piercing sound of George's trigger. These are glasses fashioned for the enlightening pursuit of intellect, ever fueled by passionate teachers and equally passionate students. These glasses will give me strength to fervently support what I believe in, and to follow my passions, confident that my education and worldview will allow me to achieve and exceed the goals I have for myself. Looking at the future this school has allowed me to pursue, I am beginning to think these may be sunglasses. Because my future is full of potential and, well, it's looking bright.

**Tim Hughes**

As I kicked open the door, tenuously holding onto my books, backpack, and a stray binder, I strolled into the cloudy parking lot and turned around to look at the familiar clock and red brick building. It was my last full school day at Bear Creek.

Dropping a binder for at least the eighty-third time this year, I remembered



I'd forgotten another binder upstairs in the English room. I peered in the window of the English room to find Miss Dennison gazing into her computer. It reminded me of when I was younger, looking in, intimidated, and slowly opening the door and asking to come in—I'd forgotten something then, too.

I've changed a lot since I came to Bear Creek in sixth grade. I was a complete nerd, and I felt like it. I still am a nerd today, (luckily, Bear Creek hasn't changed that about me), but I don't feel limited by my nerdiness. Bear Creek helped me accept my love of learning and encourage it—to become not only a better student, but also a better person. I used to think that being geeky was different and made you an outcast. At Bear Creek I didn't grow despite my love of learning, I grew *because* of it.

In ninth grade Mr. Norris taught me a valuable lesson about writing and about myself. He persisted in showing me how I could work hard and change my entire style of writing and make it clearer. He encouraged me to try harder, to learn, and to become a better writer. If not for encouragement and persistence from teachers, I would not only remain a mediocre writer, I wouldn't be as adaptable and willing to change as I am today. Mr. Norris used my love of academics to help me see that I could change and improve.

I've learned a lot at Bear Creek. I've learned that it's good to learn, to keep learning even when you're 'good enough' as it is, and how being a nerd isn't a bad thing. Bear Creek has helped me to find an identity, one that I like and respect.

**C**hristian Mission. The very concept elicits different facial features, names of cities we cannot pronounce, the smell of food we think should never be eaten, and odd behaviors and customs we are often too quick to dismiss as just plain weird. Every year students from Bear Creek are forced to redefine their notion of Christian mission when they volunteer to extend God's love to others in practical and often risky ways. This year the mission took a more local approach aptly named City Dive. Through a three day immersion in five greater Seattle metropolitan organizations, a group of students from The Bear Creek School came face to face with the issues of poverty and homelessness.

The February 2009 City Dive mission was led by Dean of Students Rev. Jeff Gephart and chemistry teacher Elissa Bell. Both of these faculty members share a background and passion for working with those in poverty. Rev. Gephart previously led a week long City Dive and fed the homeless weekly in his former work in Chico, California. Miss Bell planned and chaperoned Bear Creek's 2008 mission trip to work with the poor in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Miss Bell has also served in the Search and Rescue ministry with Union Gospel Mission and in a medical mission in Honduras last summer.

Rev. Gephart organized City Dive with three purposes in mind. First, he wanted the students to serve where there was truly a need. Second, he wanted to expose students to issues they might not normally encounter. One such issue was to consider why poverty exists and what people are doing to alleviate or lift people out of it. Finally, Rev. Gephart wanted to get to know the students better and have fun diving into new waters with them.

By working in five locations, students encountered varied examples of poverty and gained life changing insights along the way.

#### SEATTLE FIRST COVENANT CHURCH

Students plunged into a highly diverse ethnic population at their first stop at First Covenant Church in Seattle, a church who takes seriously its outreach, "Our congregation engages in ministries of compassion, mercy, and justice as we grow toward being kingdom people who live out the Great Commandment—loving God and loving our neighbors, especially our most vulnerable neighbors...."<sup>1</sup>

Bear Creek students witnessed the practical ways this church seeks to tackle the issue of homelessness in Seattle. Freshman Joy Twentyman recalls vividly an encounter she had with one of the workers at First Covenant who was setting up a women's shelter for the night, a ministry provided regularly. "The woman running the program told a story of a runaway who came to the shelter after some sketchy encounters on the street. After speaking with the girl, and a night in the shelter, the woman sent the girl home on a train. The dad was so happy he sent a \$2000 check to the woman for helping, but she (the ministry) sent it back."

#### JUBILEE REACH CENTER

Jubilee Reach Center (JRC) is a Christian organization serving the community of Lake Hills, Bellevue, self-described as

# CITY DIVE 2009

By Kevin Davison  
Photos by Elissa Bell



Joy Twentyman, freshman

**"I'm more understanding of the causes of homelessness or poverty. It's not all drugs and alcohol. Some are there because of life circumstances. They're not just statistics; they're people with lives who want to do better."**

*Joy Twentyman, freshman*



Dominique DuBois, sophomore and Catherine Pomeroy, sophomore

**What I expected was to evangelize. I was confused and disappointed at first. But I came to realize that people with their eyes closed to the gospel don't want light shined in them. The way you live and treat others is often the first thing people are willing to see." Carson Baker, junior**

**"Forgiveness. There are people from bad situations or bad choices, but God still sends out his servants to bring them back to life. I can't be lazy with my faith." Catherine Pomeroy, sophomore**

**"God has softened my heart [since City Dive], and when I come across pain and suffering, I think back to City Dive and the preconceived notions I had of homelessness. I've changed my view a lot."**

*Jake Imam, freshman*



Ryley Watson, senior

**"Be open to new things. When you're serving people you don't always end up doing what you wanted to do, but God has his plans and wants you to be flexible with it as well." Jordan Domingo, junior**



Payum Abtahi, junior and Monique Meissner, freshman

**"I learned how to be more grateful with what God has given me. Whatever happens has purpose, even if I don't see [God's] direct results in my life."**

*Dominique DuBois, sophomore*

"Bellevue's most diverse and underserved neighborhood.... The JRC's mission is to provide educational, emotional, and spiritual enrichment to underserved youth; support and sustain families; build community; and transform lives."<sup>2</sup>

Junior Jordan Domingo assisted in an adult ESL class. However, most of the time Bear Creek students played with children who came to the center for support, food, or safe entertainment and companionship while parents worked. In hearing these young children's voices share their backgrounds, freshman Kristin Wallis realized that "they've already gone through more at age five than I have. I want to go back and help." Sophomore Catherine Pomeroy spent a great deal of her time playing with one little girl in particular and uncovered the girl's tumultuous family life. "[The little girl] opened up and we broke through a barrier." As Catherine neared the end of the day, one of the workers approached and privately told her "You have no idea what you just did! She never talks or smiles, but did with you!" Catherine continues to pray for her, and wrote the girl a letter. A month later, during Bear Creek's school-wide Community Service Day, Catherine was blessed with the opportunity to serve at JRC again. She did not see the girl that day as she was hoping to, but appreciated serving there nonetheless.

#### SEATTLE RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

The Seattle Ronald McDonald House works with families of seriously or terminally ill children being treated at Seattle Children's Hospital. Families are given lodging, transportation to and from the hospital, food, and opportunities to build memories. Bear Creek students toured the organization and assisted in serving a meal for 150 people living at the facility. Students came face to face with children struggling with cancer, lymphoma, and other terminal diseases. Sophomore Dominique DuBois recalled that it was difficult to see all the families there, thinking about families who had moved miles from their homes and lives, and the siblings who seemed to put their life on hold to care for their sick brother or sister. But even through these diseases, freshman Jake Imam was struck by how much joy seemed to be present among the children themselves. "I was surprised to see the kids completely happy and content with where they were at."

#### NEW HORIZONS

New Horizons Ministries, a Christian organization, provides a continuum of care to equip teens to leave street life and get their life back on track, and offers crisis services for those in physical or emotional jeopardy. Here, The Bear Creek School students wrestled with homeless issues facing youth involved in Seattle's street activity. Catherine Pomeroy came to understand at a deeper level how teens close to her own age end up on the streets. "It was interesting to learn that many kids are runaways from bad homes, not as a result of a bad choice. And the population is very diverse. It really challenged my preconceived notions of reasons for homelessness among teens, and I saw New Horizons give teens hope and resources." Junior Yu Na Jung's heart longed for more time at New Horizons. "If I have a chance I'd love to serve there and talk with them [the youth]."

*Continued on page 21*

# Producing *The Music Man*

By Sini Fernandez

Photos by Kellie Anderson and Sini Fernandez

In May 2009, The Bear Creek School's Fine and Performing Arts Department produced a full-length Broadway musical, Meredith Willson's *The Music Man*. The production involved three dedicated, collaborating directors: vocal director Judy Loudenback (JL), stage director Ron Lynch (RL), and orchestra director Scott Higbee (SH). Participating were 65 students from the choir, band, and drama classes as well as a number of Lower School students. Following the resounding success of this production, to which over 1000 tickets were sold, the staff of *Modus Vivendi* (MV) sat down with these directors to discuss some of the challenges and rewards of such a large undertaking at The Bear Creek School.

**MV: What were some of the most challenging aspects of putting together this production?**

**JL:** Rehearsing for the show proved to be very challenging as the rehearsals had to be fit into a 50 minute daily class period. The nature of rehearsal is that directors often do not discover what needs to be rehearsed until they are actually in rehearsal. Since our rehearsals were so short, we would carefully "guess" where the actors would be and what needed to be rehearsed ahead of time. It meant we had to know our students *and* our material really well. The rehearsals were only as effective as our guesses.

**SH:** Most of the show had to be re-orchestrated to fit our instrumentation since it was originally written for strings. For example, the original orchestration had no French horn parts but we have two French horn players. I spent at least five hours rewriting each of the 30 numbers in the musical. It was a challenge to capture the spirit of the



Scott Higbee

original music using instrumentation available in our orchestra.

Additionally, the band was focused on practicing and performing their festival music through mid-March, so we couldn't really begin concentrating on *The Music Man* until late March.

**RL:** My wife Patti and I built all the sets from scratch; we started building last spring as soon as we'd settled on the production. We have no space to store sets at school, so we break down, reuse, and rebuild the sets from scratch for every production. *The Music Man* sets

are already being reworked for next winter's drama production.

**MV: What was the audition process like?**

**JL:** Auditions take a lot of time and a lot of energy.

**RL:** In any show, casting is critical. If you miscast, I don't care what else is good, that show is going to stink. All three of us needed to agree on the casting; but, now that I think of it, I don't recall any disagreements at all.

**JL:** It's also how we approach auditions. We look at it as a puzzle. We don't know where every piece will fit, but we prayerfully enter those situations and walk in faith and trust God will lead us in those decisions.

**SH:** These aren't cold casting calls; we know all the students and know there will be disappointment. We know the courage it takes for some kids to even audition.

**RL:** It was great to see the understanding that came later when someone who was disappointed with a small speaking part realizes he or she has a large dance part and *is* an integral part of the production.



Judy Loudenback and Ron Lynch

**MV: What were some of the most rewarding aspects of producing this show?**

**JL:** Kim Douglass, our choreographer, has worked on five high school productions of *The Music Man* and commented that senior Courtney Wallis' portrayal of Zaneeta Shinn was the best she'd ever seen.

**RL:** One of the most rewarding moments for me was watching senior Chris Pattillo (who played Harold Hill) improvise when junior Emily Kadege (Marion Paroo) missed her cue. He couldn't start singing 'Til There Was You until she came on stage; and, when she wasn't there, he walked off the bridge, picked up a stick, and filled the space naturally. When Emily did appear on stage, he delivered his line, "Miss Marion, you're late!"

with perfect timing. In Middle School drama class, we spend a lot of time on improvisation which prepares the students for these productions. I always tell the kids: "We're in the business of smoke and mirrors and they need to be prepared for the unexpected during every performance."

I also enjoyed watching and listening to Emily sing *Sweet and Low* as the quartet sang *Lida Rose*. She has such a beautiful voice, and the quartet worked so hard on the close harmony. I always took off my headset, set the book aside, stood up, and cleared the kids out of the way so I could actually watch from the wings; the beauty of it made the hair on my arms stand up.

**SH:** I have the best seat in the house. I get the full force of the orchestra and the full effect of the actors.

**JL:** One of my favorite moments of the final production was watching the *Shipooopi!* dance number from out in the house because the entire cast is on stage and they are all engaged and enjoying themselves.

**SH:** I really enjoyed watching the kids relax after the Saturday matinee performance. During the two and a half hours between shows, the kids stayed at school, eating, singing, playing, relaxing, and basking in the euphoria that comes with having landed a show.

Continued on next page





Chris Patillo, senior and Emily Kadeg, junior

**MV: What did you learn from producing and directing *The Music Man*?**

**JL:** It's hard to document, to capture, to remember all that we learned because we learned so much every day and because we don't do this sort of production every year.

Most of all, I've learned that so much of the production is out of our control; it's a huge leap of faith. We have to trust each other; we have to trust our students. We need to find ways to make the students "own" the show just as much as we own it. It is hard to accomplish this with our dynamic of a 50 minute rehearsal each day. We need to find ways to help the students see the big picture. We can't be the only owners of that vision and need to find ways to share the vision with the students and let them enter into the process of getting the show to the point of taking it on stage.

**RL:** The students don't own it until performance when we cut the strings and they are on their own. Because our students want to do well, they do step up to the plate.

**SH:** I would like to do a better job preparing the students for the idiomatic qualities of a Broadway show. It's more than just reading the notes on a page. There are characteristics of Broadway, the harmonies are different and the melodies are often doubled.

However, with the re-orchestration, sometimes they didn't hear the melody until we started working with the actors. I would have started laying some of the groundwork in September, getting their ears used to the harmonies that make Broadway music recognizable.

**RL:** I would spend time with the drama students dissecting the show and showing them the importance of the music in advancing the story and in giving us insight into the characters. My students are used to sharing the stage with 16 -18 other actors, so working with over 60 was a huge change for them.

**MV: Any final comments?**

**RL:** I would be remiss if I didn't mention that Mrs. Loudenback was the one that held this whole show together. She



Ryan Baldwin, junior; Ryley Watson, senior; Jacob Hamilton, junior; Sterling Miller, freshman

organized our schedules as to who was going to work with whom and when, and we desperately needed that organization. I could always count on her which freed me up to concentrate on other parts of the production.

**SH:** It was very stressful for the orchestra students because the music kept coming. I'd realize something wasn't working and was constantly rewriting, so what the students rehearsed one day would be changed the next. But then when they tasted the fruit of all their hard work, as an ensemble and in a performance, they had really accomplished something. I was happy to be able to watch them achieve this.

**JL:** The nature of performance is to work hard on things you don't understand, and by working hard at the things you don't understand, you come to a better understanding of what you need to do. But many Bear Creek students aren't comfortable in this realm because our students tend to want to know exactly what they are doing and why before they do it. They want to know exactly where they are supposed to be. They can be very linear and quite literal.

Rehearsing this production helped the students learn to trust one another, to take risks, and to learn to work relationally. Drama and choir students learned to trust each other and then later on learned to trust the orchestra. They had to learn to understand Mr. Higbee's role and to follow him; always keeping an eye on him, since he was going to direct them through the numbers. They learned to sing at the tempo the orchestra was playing, whether they had practiced at 120 or 116 or 124 beats per minute. They learned to position themselves on stage in relation to the other performers, not at a fixed location. Our kids are so very capable that they don't often need to work outside their comfort zones. This production gave them the opportunity to do just that and it was wonderful to give them that chance and watch them succeed.

# BEAR CREEK HIGHLIGHTS

News, stories, and accomplishments from around campus

## Journalism Students Honored at WJEA

Six Upper School journalism students attended in the Washington Journalism Education Association (WJEA) State Conference in March. Four Upper School journalism students received Honorable Mention in the writing competition: Georgina Wadhvani-Napp for Newswriting; Adelaide Tillinghast for Feature Writing-Newspaper; Conner Morgan for Feature Writing-Sports; and Michael Chang for Feature Writing-Yearbook.



Kristen Sanger

Bear Creek journalism students at the state capitol in Olympia: Eli Sanger, senior; Katelyn Culbert-O'Leary, junior; Adelaide Tillinghast, sophomore; Georgina Wadhvani-Napp, junior; Michael Chang, freshman; Conner Morgan, sophomore

## ACSI District Science Fair

Every year Bear Creek fifth grade students learn about the scientific method by posing a hypothesis, designing and conducting an experiment, interpreting the results, and completing a scientific research paper. Teachers then choose students from each class to represent our school at the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) Science Fair. In April eleven students presented their projects before a panel of judges at the ACSI District Science Fair. All of the Bear Creek students earned a Superior rating.



Courtesy Photo

Bear Creek grade 5 blue ribbon (Superior) winners in a landslide showing at the ACSI District Science Fair. **Back row:** Matthew Meyer, Elsa Salido, Kevin Zhou, Hailey Vachon, Kyle Grambihler; **Front row:** Hannah Bienkowski, Jacqueline San Jule, Matt Kelleran, Sam Humphries, Grace Denniston, William Robertson.

## Music Awards

### ACSI Musicale

In March both the Middle School band and Middle School choir received a Superior rating at the ACSI Musicale held at Northwest University in Kirkland. All the students had an enriching day and learned a great deal from the experience of practicing and performing with musicians from around the Seattle area.

### Northlake Region Solo and Ensemble Contest

The Bear Creek School was well represented by our fine instrumental and vocal soloists, and small and large ensembles, who were competing with students from public and private schools of all sizes, from 4A to 1B at the Northlake Region Solo & Ensemble Contest held in February at Woodinville High School. Junior Collette Sackman and senior Rebekah Hamilton won 1st place for Womens Vocal-Small ensembles with their vocal duet. Collette also won 1st place in the region for her oboe solo. Collette and Rebekah went on to represent the Northlake Region in April at the WIAA/WMEA State Solo & Ensemble Contest in Ellensburg where they received Superior ratings for both their vocal duet and Collette's oboe solo.

### 2B State Academic Champions

Both the Bear Creek Upper School band and Upper School choir earned the distinction of 2B State Academic Champions in the WIAA's Wells Fargo Scholastic Cup competition. Band and choir both scored 100 points in the statewide competition by having the highest average GPA in the state. The band had an average GPA of 3.64 and the choir had an average GPA of 3.57.



## Math Competitions

### ASCI Math Olympics

On April 3, twelve grade 3 and grade 4 students represented Bear Creek at the ASCI Math Olympics: Adesuwa Agbonile, Molly Anderson, Scott Carlson, Gabby Coleman, Ian DeGraaf, Alex Elizarov, Victor Gill, Andy Lau, Alex Rhee, Paxton Stump, Grayson Wang, and Richard Zhang. They competed against students from nine other Christian schools and earned these awards:

- Alex Rhee – 1st place in Computation
- Scott Carlson – 1st place in Reasoning
- Adesuwa Agbonile – 3rd place in Computation
- Victor Gill – 3rd place in Computation
- Alex Elizarov – 5th place in Reasoning



Courtesy Photo

First place winners at the Math Is Cool 4th Grade Championships display their awards. **Back row:** Scott Carlson, grade 4; Katie O'Bryon, grade 4; Alex Elizarov, grade 3; Adesuwa Agbonile, grade 4; **Front row:** Cassandra Wan, Justin Buckley, Christopher Lee, Richard Zhang, all grade 3

### Math Is Cool

The Lower School math teams competed at regional Math Is Cool tournaments throughout the winter and spring months. Bear Creek competes in Division II (for small schools); larger schools compete in Divisions IA and IB.

In February Rebecca Carlson and Rachael Burch represented Bear Creek at the Math Is Cool 6th Grade Championships. This was Rachael's very first math competition, as she had just recently joined the team. Together Rebecca and Rachael competed as a team and placed 6th overall, a very high place for such a small team (the Redmond Campus grade 6 students were busy performing Julius Caesar, so these two students from Valley Campus shouldered the load together). Rebecca took 2nd place in Division II and Rachael took 14th place. Rebecca's score was higher than all the individual scores in Division IB, so she actually took 2nd place across both Division IB and II.

In March Bear Creek took first place in Division II at the Math Is Cool 4th Grade Championships. The team members included grade 3 students Justin Buckley, Alex Elizarov, Christopher Lee, Cassandra Wan, and Richard Zhang and grade 4 students Adesuwa Agbonile, Scott Carlson, and Katie O'Bryon. Scott Carlson and Justin Buckley took 4th and 5th place respectively based on individual test scores and Scott was named Bear Creek's 'Best in School'. The team won four of the five events (team problem solving, relays, mental math, and college bowl) and as a result of their 1st place finish, Bear Creek was invited to compete at the Math Is Cool Masters competition in May.

In April Bear Creek competed at the Math Is Cool 5th Grade Championships. The team consisted of grade 4 students Zechariah Cheung, George Chirapurath, Alex Rhee, and Javier Salido and grade 5 students John Lee, Dominic Mein, Elsa Salido, and Kevin Zhou. Dominic Mein also placed 1st individually in Division II and John Lee placed 6th. The team took 3rd place in Division II and was invited to the Math Is Cool Masters competition held in May.

### Grade 4 and Grade 5 Math Teams Advance to Math Is Cool Masters

"The Bear Creek School" was a name frequently heard in the packed Moses Lake High School gymnasium during the awards presentation at the conclusion of the Math Is Cool Masters competition. The Masters competition is an invitation-only event in which 16 teams from each grade from around the state compete. Bear Creek students made six trips to the podium, taking home four individual trophies and two team plaques.

In the fifth grade Division II contest, Dominic Mein took 1st place and Kevin Zhou took 4th place as individuals. Along with their teammates, John Lee and Elsa Salido, their team took 2nd place.

In the fourth grade Division II contest, Scott Carlson took 1st place and Justin Buckley took 3rd place as individuals. Together with their teammates, Christopher Lee and Cassandra Wan, their team took 3rd place.



Courtesy Photo

Bear Creek's grade 5 team took 2nd place at the Math Is Cool Masters competition: Elsa Salido, Dominic Mein, John Lee, and Kevin Zhou

### Middle School State Math Olympiad

The Washington State Middle School Math Olympiad is a state-wide, team-based competition wherein each team competes together to gain as many points as possible. Based on points scored, teams are recognized for having achieved at the levels Superior (medals), Excellent (ribbons), Very Good, or Good in each of six components: a long session problem (Session I), and five short session problems in the content areas Number Sense, Probability and Statistics, Measurement, Geometric Sense, and Algebraic Sense (Session II). Bear Creek sent four teams to the Washington State Middle School Math Olympiad in Tacoma on May 2, and all four teams received medals or ribbons for their work.

Two teams from grade 8 represented Bear Creek: The first team, consisting of Katie Cho, Kaley French, and Sarah Witt, received medals for Session I. The second team, consisting of Andrew Benson, Jay Kim, and Yoon Lee, received medals for both sessions. Together the two teams took three out of a total of seven medals awarded to eighth grade teams at this site.

In grade 7, the team of David Broaddus, Jaco Dippenaar, Anthony Tzen, and Tim Van Baak received medals for both sessions. They were the only seventh grade team at the site to receive any medals.

In the fifth grade competition, Bear Creek was ably represented by a team of up-and-coming mathematicians: Justin Buckley, grade 3; Alex Elizarov, grade 3; and Scott Carlson, grade 4. These boys were awarded ribbons for Session II. They did well, considering only six of the 34 fifth grade teams received ribbons or medals in Session II.

### Chess Club Competitions

The thirty members of the Bear Creek chess club met weekly throughout the school year to work with their coaches, Bert Rutgers and Grand Master and four-time Washington State Chess Champion, Slava Mikhailouk. The chess club is hosted by The Bear Creek School and is made up of Bear Creek students and students from the home school community. Throughout the year, the club members competed in one to four tournaments, including the 4th Annual Bear Creek Chess Tournament hosted at our school in March. Ten Bear Creek chess players qualified to play at the Washington State Elementary Chess Championships including Bear Creek students Justin Buckley, grade 3; Zecky Cheung, grade 4; Tyler Hsia, kindergarten; Gabriel Muzio, grade 3; Zachary Muzio, grade 1; and Asher Thakur, kindergarten.

### AMC-8 Honor Roll

The American Mathematics Competitions named The Bear Creek School an AMC-8 Honor Roll school for the high scores our students received on this international math test. Congratulations to these grade 8 students: Yoon Lee was our school winner and earned gold level honors; Jay Kim earned silver level honors; Andrew Benson and Tim Van Baak earned bronze level honors.

### Upper School Math Team

The Upper School math team competed in two major math contests throughout the year consisting of six tests each—a total of twelve tests were taken during lunch by 13 devoted math team members. In the Washington Math League's High School Contests team standings, Bear Creek finished the year listed among the state's "High Scoring Schools" and placed 6th in King County. Additionally, senior Tim Hughes posted a perfect score on contest #1 and senior David Ersek posted perfect scores on contests #3 and #6.

The American Scholastic Mathematics Association contests are administered by 250 schools across the country and all over the world. The Bear Creek School's math team was ranked in the 2nd place group of competing teams (schools are ranked into 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and honorable mention groups at the conclusion of all six contests). The highest scoring students were juniors Carson Baker and Nick Cho and senior David Ersek; with a perfect score on contest #5 by Carson Baker.



Claudia Campbell

Jordan Prochaska, kindergarten; Jon Campbell, grade 2; and Amy Burch, grade 3, practice their chess moves.

## Sports

### Boys Basketball

During the 2008-2009 season, the boys basketball team saw incredible success. The team concluded the regular season undefeated at home (12-0) for a second consecutive year, extending their home winning streak to 23 games, a school record. The team finished with the best regular season record in school history (12-1 in league, 19-1 overall).

In the post-season, the Grizzlies earned their second consecutive SeaTac 2B League Championship title and all-league honors for the SeaTac 2B North Division were heaped upon the team. Junior Jamie Meyer was named MVP. Junior Kyle Blankenbeckler was selected to 1st team and sophomore Lucas Peterson received an honorable mention. Additionally, the team received the league sportsmanship award and Coach Moe was named SeaTac 2B League Coach of the Year. Although the season ended on a bittersweet note when the team missed its opportunity to make a second appearance at the State tournament with an unexpected loss during the Tri-District tournament, these Grizzlies had an amazing season!

### Girls Basketball

The 2008-2009 season was a building year for Coach Dickson and the Grizzlies girls varsity basketball team. The team had a strong contingent of freshman talent on the roster and finished the regular season with a 5-6 league record (6-12 overall). In the league playoffs, the girls lost two tough games and the Grizzlies finished the season in 2nd place in the SeaTac 2B League North Division. League honors were awarded to senior Alexis Miller and junior Tajel Mehta; both were selected to 1st team.

### Boys Tennis

The boys varsity tennis team earned the 2B State Academic Championship in the WIAA Scholastic Cup competition as well as the Emerald City 1A League sportsmanship award. Senior Tim Hughes (captain) and freshman Jake Imam finished the regular season with winning singles records. At the league tournament the Grizzlies had two strong singles entries (Tim and Jake) and a much improved doubles team of juniors Alex Finkelson and Dillon Camp, however the post season was dominated this spring by freshman phenom Jake Imam.

Jake Imam won the Emerald City 1A League tournament and was named to the all-league team. Next Jake competed in the District tournament held at the UW Nordstrom Tennis Center where he won three consecutive matches decisively (6-2, 6-0; 6-1, 6-1; 6-1, 6-0). Continuing his winning ways, Jake won four more consecutive matches to claim the State Champion title for the combined 1A/2B/1B State classification. Jake's performance also earned the team a 2nd place finish at State.

### Girls Tennis

The girls tennis team experienced success on many levels in this rebuilding year as a record twelve girls turned out this spring. With only one graduating senior, the girls will look to continue the process of creating a formidable team with girls who are eager to compete. Look for the girls tennis program to elevate to new heights and experience great success in the upcoming school year.



Jamie Meyer, junior

Sini Fernandez



Alexis Miller, senior

Sini Fernandez



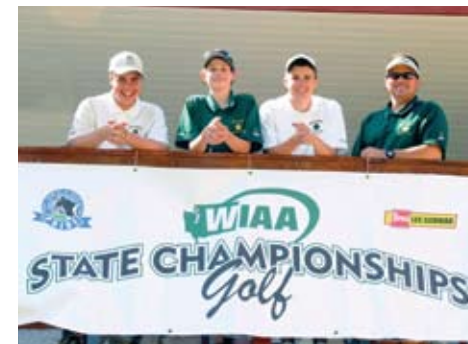
Jake Imam, freshman

Robert Munoz



Maddie Magee, freshman

Sini Fernandez



Johnie Freatman, senior; Will Stansell and Gannon McCahill, sophomores; and Coach Greg Cheever

Cindy McCahill



Gannon McCahill, sophomore

Cindy McCahill

### Track & Field

The track team saw success both on and off the track in the 2008-2009 season. Thirty-three athletes came out and competed in eight league and invitational meets, with 20 athletes qualifying to compete at the Tri-District meet. The Grizzlies produced two Tri-District champions: freshman Maddie Magee won the high jump and set a new school record with a jump of 5'4" and the girls 4x200 relay team also took 1st place at the Tri-District championship meet. Track & field team all-league honors were awarded to freshman Elizabeth Fernandez, senior Brittanie Vander Weide, freshman Morgan Rial, freshman Danielle Isbell (4x200 relay team), Maddie Magee (high jump) and junior Megan Cheever (shot put). The Grizzlies sent ten athletes to the 2B State Track & Field Championships in May and brought home medals in six events. In addition to competing successfully on the field, the boys varsity track team also earned the 2B State Academic Championship in the WIAA's Wells Fargo Scholastic Cup competition with an average GPA of 3.64 while the girls placed second in this academic competition with an average GPA of 3.65.

#### 2B State Track and Field Medalists

100 M	Josh Firminger	8th
200 M	Josh Firminger	5th
Shot Put	Erik Richardson	5th
4x200 M Relay	Elizabeth Fernandez, Brittanie Vander Weide, Morgan Rial, and Danielle Isbell	3rd
High Jump	Maddie Magee	2nd
Pole Vault	Kira Geiger	4th

### Boys Golf

The Bear Creek boys golf team completed the regular season with an undefeated league record (6-0 and 10-1-1 overall). The golf team won the SeaTac 1B/2B League Championship. Sophomore Gannon McCahill led the way, earning medalist honors. From the boys golf team, senior Johnie Freatman, Gannon McCahill, and freshman Calvin Freatman were selected to 1st team all-league. Senior Eli Sanger received an honorable mention.

Throughout the regular season, seven Bear Creek golfers earned their spot at the District match by posting scores of 50 or less during a regular season match. Unfortunately the day of the Tri-District Championship golf match was extremely windy and rainy, blowing away most of the team's high expectations. The Grizzlies golf team placed 8th despite the weather.

Senior Johnie Freatman, along with sophomores Will Stansell and Gannon McCahill, all advanced to the boys golf 1B/2B State Championships in Kennewick where the top 80 golfers in the state (2B classification) squared off. Johnie and Will ended the two-day tournament tied with a 20th place finish. Gannon finished in 30th place. The three golfers combined for enough team points to give the Bear Creek team a 6th place finish in State.

## Sports

### Baseball

Junior Josh Erickson, sophomore Lucas Peterson, sophomore Chris Pedersen, and freshman Aaron DiGenova took part in the combined baseball program with The Overlake School. The team finished second in the Emerald City 1A League standings and moved on to the Tri-District tournament where they lost a close game to Seattle Christian School.



Jill Flynn

Sydney Conway, senior

### Golf

Bear Creek senior and 2007 2B State Champion, Sydney Conway, was a member of the undefeated Redmond High School golf team this season. Sydney was named to the Kingco 4A League 1st team and contributed to the Redmond team's 6th consecutive Kingco 4A League and Sea-King 4A District titles. Sydney tied two others for the best score at the Kingco 4A League tournament. She lost the playoff for medalist but still brought in a tie for best round. She had the low nine hole total of 37 and shot 79 for the day. At the Sea-King 4A District match she placed fifth when she shot 87. At the 4A State girls golf tournament in Pasco, Sydney finished 29th out of a field of 80 extremely competitive golfers; she shot an 83-80 for a total of 163. Sydney will be playing golf for Whitman College next year.

### Swimming

Senior Will McCahill, who swam for Redmond High School, competed in the 200 free relay at the 4A State swim meet. His relay team placed 8th. Will was also named a Kingco 4A Scholar Athlete for maintaining at least a minimum 3.75 cumulative GPA throughout this school year.

Freshman Zach Alleva, who swims for Eastlake High School, reached his goal of qualifying for State in the 100 breaststroke; in fact he qualified for three events at the 4A State swim meet. His team placed 17th in the 200 medley relay and he placed 19th in the 200 individual medley and 15th in the 100 breaststroke.

### Skiing

Seventh grade students Colin Boit and Nick Wurden and eighth grade student Travis Ulvestad qualified for the Western Region Junior Olympics. Only 22 boys from 23 ski teams in the Northwest qualify for this prestigious event, and Bear Creek athletes made up over 10% of the team.

Against the 13-years-olds (44 qualified this year), Colin placed 6th in Slalom (SL) and 11th in Giant Slalom (GS). He was also 1st in SL and 2nd in GS for the 13-year-olds on the Pacific Northwest (PNNA) team. Overall Colin placed 21st in SL, 35th in GS, and 69th in Super Giant Slalom (SG). Based on his great results at the event, he was selected to participate in a summer camp at Mt. Hood sponsored by the Western Region for the top 13-year-olds across the region.

Nick placed 5th in SL, 7th in GS, and 5th in SG against other 13-year-olds from the Pacific Northwest team. Overall Nick placed 46th in the SL, 75th in the GS, and 64th in the SG.

Travis placed 4th in SL, 5th in GS, and 4th in SG against other 13-year-olds from the Pacific Northwest team. Overall Travis placed 33rd in the SL, 54th in the GS, and 54th in the SG.

Bear Creek sixth grade student McKenna Boit qualified for the Pacific Northwest Buddy Werner ski race championships which are for the top 10 - 12-year-old ski racers. McKenna represented Stevens Pass, one of the 23 mountains of Washington, Idaho, and Oregon that each send their top seven male and female athletes to compete in Slalom and Giant Slalom races.



Larry Maurer

Colin Boit, grade 7, competing in Slalom at Stevens Pass in April.

### ACSI Spelling Bee

Lower School and Middle School students traveled to Shorewood Christian School in January to compete in the annual ACSI District Spelling Bee. Here are the results of that competition:

Grade 2	Alexandra Ryan	1st place
Grade 2	Kenna Culbert-O'Leary	4th place
Grade 3	Christopher Lee	1st place
Grade 6	Benjamin Lee	2nd place
Grade 6	Rebecca Carlson	3rd place
Grade 7	Jacquelyn Archey	2nd place
Grade 7	Kendall Wyman	4th place

Additionally, Benjamin Lee placed 3rd and Jacquelyn Archey placed 8th in the combined 5th - 8th grade final round. Benjamin Lee advanced to the ACSI Regional Spelling Bee in March where he competed against representatives from three states and had a great showing through the fifth round of the contest.



Courtesy Photo

Bear Creek competitors at the ACSI District Spelling Bee.

### Wells Fargo Scholastic Cup Champions

Bear Creek is the 2008-2009 Wells Fargo Scholastic Cup Champion for the 2B classification. There are 72 2B high schools in Washington State. The Wells Fargo Scholastic Cup is awarded to the schools that compile the highest Wells Fargo Scholastic Cup points based on their participation and finish at the WIAA/Dairy Farmers of Washington/Les Schwab Tires State Championships. The top eight schools in each of the WIAA Academic State Championship categories and classifications also receive Wells Fargo Scholastic Cup points. Bear Creek Academic State Champions for the 2008-2009 school year included: girls varsity cross country, Upper School choir, Upper School band, boys varsity tennis, and boys varsity track & field.

### Johns Hopkins CTY Talent Search

The following Middle School students took part in the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth (CTY) Talent Search and were recognized at a state awards ceremony where they received a special State Award with High Honors for their outstanding performance on either the SAT or the ACT test. All of these Middle School students scored significantly above the mean score of college bound seniors in at least one section of the college entrance test.

*Grade 8:* Andrew Benson (ACT: math and reading); Yoon Lee (SAT: math)

Yoon Lee was recognized for scoring the maximum of 800 in the math portion of the SAT, earning 1st place in Washington State.

*Grade 7:* Tim Van Baak (ACT: math and reading); David Broaddus (SAT: math); Kylie Milano (ACT: reading); Alex Johnson (SAT: math); Hayden McCraw (ACT: math); and Blake Denniston (SAT: math)

The following Lower School students also were recognized at a state awards ceremony where they received a special State Award with High Honors for their outstanding performance in the Johns Hopkins University CTY Talent Search.

*Grade 6:* Rachael Burch (Reading and Math), Jesse Domingo (Spatial Reasoning), Mason Easley (Spatial Reasoning), Michael Lau (Reading and Math), Benjamin Lee (Reading and Math)

*Grade 5:* Dominic Mein (Reading and Math), Kevin Zhou (Reading)

Dominic Mein's math score earned him 2nd place in Washington State.

*Grade 3:* Andrew Lau (Reading), Christopher Lee (Reading and Math)



Cindy McCahill

The girls varsity cross country team accepting their WIAA Academic State Championship in October 2008. Brianna Firminger, senior; Jeanine Gorzalski, junior; Joy Twentyman, freshman; Maddie Magee, freshman; Brittanie Vander Weide, senior; Adelaide Tillinghast, sophomore.

## Special Reporter: Johnie Freatman

Senior Johnie Freatman was one of three high school students who were invited to blog at the World Golf Championships in Doral, Florida as part of the CA, Inc. Course Reporters Program and The First Tee National Scholars program. The First Tee is an organization aimed at positively impacting the lives of young people through the game of golf. Johnie was selected to participate based on his passion for the game of golf, his outstanding scholastic achievement, and community involvement. In addition to blogging about the tournament each day, Johnie's duties were varied, but the highlights of his experience on the tour included conducting a sit-down interview with Retief Goosen and asking Tiger Woods a direct question during a press conference.



Johnie Freatman (in red cap) meets NBC sportscaster Jimmy Roberts.

Courtesy Photo

## Bear Creek Receives Accreditation Renewal from Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools

By Karen Blankenbeckler

The Bear Creek School was reaccredited by the Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools (PNAIS) this spring. The school began the process of reaccreditation in the spring of 2007 by embarking on a self-study, which is an intense self-reflection of all aspects of the school. The self-study resulted in a comprehensive document that outlined both the ways in which the school is fulfilling its mission and the school's self-identified strengths and weaknesses.

From March 15-18, 2009, the school hosted a 14-member visiting reaccreditation team. This team, comprised of representatives from 13 different independent schools, reviewed every facet of the school's programs and operations, assessing their effectiveness in fulfilling the school's stated mission and purposes. During the visit, the team observed classes and spent time talking with community members. As they walked the hallways and watched our teachers they noted, "The team consistently observed classical education pursued in classrooms at all levels. The team was also deeply impressed with the seamless integration of faith and intellectual pursuit that was evident everywhere."

After meeting with student groups, parent groups, faculty, and administration, the team concluded that:

*The Bear Creek School community is extraordinarily warm and welcoming. From the moment we arrived, we felt a part of this community. Students of all ages, faculty, staff, and administrators, parents, and board members were all extremely generous with their time and their thoughts. The entire school community shares a remarkable unity of purpose. The mission is clearly stated and seems well understood and deeply valued by all constituencies. There is warmth, an ethos of mutual support, and a high degree of trust among and between adults and students that result in productive and easy collaboration. The school is deeply committed to the development of children; The Bear Creek School truly celebrates and sings the work of the students.*

At the conclusion of the visit, the reaccreditation team created a report that includes observations, commendations, recommendations, and suggestions to assist the school in its institutional improvement. The school will use this document to further refine and improve the program. After a time of reflection, the administration will write a response report addressing all recommendations given by the reaccreditation committee.

The most important aspect of the reaccreditation and self-study process is how well the school understands and lives out its mission statement. In the overview section of the concluding report, the team wrote:

*To a casual observer, it might appear that The Bear Creek School is not the same school that existed a decade ago. And yet, in so many important and profound ways, it IS the same school. It remains a school deeply committed to academic excellence within a Christian setting. Throughout this period of tremendous growth and change, the school has stayed true to the mission since its founding in 1988. The emphasis on nurturing and challenging each child to discover how 'to become the individual that God intends' is clearly as evident today as it was when the last Visiting Team came to the school.... Though the school exists in and must deal with a world that often sees the concepts as antithetical, The Bear Creek School is firmly committed to, sustains, and lives the belief that there is no contradiction or inconsistency between faith and reason.*

*The school has undergone tremendous change in a relatively short period of time, to a degree that might reasonably be expected to cause significant disruption in the life of the school. The Bear Creek School has not merely weathered that change but has grown and deepened through a profoundly transformative time, with its mission and ethos not only intact, but strengthened.*

## City Dive (Continued from page 9)

### UNION GOSPEL MISSION

At Union Gospel Mission (UGM), Bear Creek students worked most directly with the homeless. UGM's services range from food and shelter to the homeless, education, medical and dental assistance, drug and alcohol recovery, transitional housing, prison ministries, and career services. In fact, their services and clientele are so diverse that the stereotypical picture of homelessness and poverty was quickly shattered. Rev. Gephart characterized the experience at UGM as "a wakeup call." He noted, "Some students expected to see abject poverty, but saw all types, not just stereotypical ones." Jake Imam observed two categories of people. "You could tell who was new to the streets, and those who were



**Back row:** Joey Domingo, sophomore; Kristin Wallis, freshman; Kendall Engelstone, freshman; Catherine Pomeroy, sophomore; Sam Rongve, sophomore; Monique Meissner, freshman; **Middle row:** Jordan Domingo, junior; Carson Baker, junior; Alexis Miller, senior; Dominique DuBois, sophomore; Yu Na Jung, junior; Ashley Meissner, junior; Joy Twentyman, freshman; **Front row:** Rev. Jeff Gephart; Payum Abtahi, junior; Ryley Watson, senior; Nima Abtahi, freshman; Miss Elissa Bell

more familiar to the streets but were struggling with it. I've learned more looking back upon the experience than when I was there."

The students performed a variety of services at Union Gospel Mission. Sometimes directly interacting with individuals off the street, or serving in the kitchen alongside other volunteers and staff, and sometimes performing less glamorous support services that had been neglected for quite awhile. Junior Carson Baker explains that, "UGM was one of the more meaningful stops for me personally, because of what we did and who we helped there. We saw people face to face; talked with them and gave them food to sustain them for the day. We were also able to help the staff with difficult things and free them up for other duties."

While the issues surrounding poverty and homelessness are diverse, the students who experienced City Dive became part of the solution. Their testimonies reflect the clear and continuing work of God in their lives; and they serve as an inspiration to all of us to be service-oriented Christians looking for ways to be a part of Christ's work in the lives of others.

If you are looking for opportunities to serve, or are interested more particularly in the ministries mentioned in this article, you can find out more from the following resource list:

Seattle First Covenant Church: [www.seattlefirstcovenant.org](http://www.seattlefirstcovenant.org)

Jubilee Reach Center: [www.jubileereach.org](http://www.jubileereach.org)

Seattle Ronald McDonald House: [www.rmhcseattle.org](http://www.rmhcseattle.org)

New Horizons Ministries: [www.nhmin.org](http://www.nhmin.org)

Seattle's Union Gospel Mission: [www.ugm.org](http://www.ugm.org)

<sup>1</sup> First Covenant Church: Seattle. 30 May 2009 <<http://www.seattlefirstcovenant.org/outreach/index.html>>.

<sup>2</sup> "The story." Jubilee REACH Center. 30 May 2009 <<http://www.jubileereach.org/site/pages/thestory.html>>.

## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

### Call for Memorabilia

Help us celebrate our first twenty years. The Bear Creek School is looking for old photos and artifacts from the early years of the school. We would like printed or digital photos, videos, certificates, awards, t-shirts, and any other items that you might have from the school. We can photograph or scan items that you do not want to leave on display. If you have anything that you would be willing to donate, loan, or share, please contact Sue Sanford ([ssanford@tbc.org](mailto:ssanford@tbc.org), or 425-898-1720 ext. 328)



### 20 Year Celebration Activities

September 1  
First Day of School Meeting & Coffee

September 12  
All-School Fall Sports Kick-Off & BBQ

October 21  
State of the School

January 5 – 9  
Homecoming Week

March 20  
Annual Dinner and Auction

# GALLERY

Through education in the arts, students develop personal expression, creative thinking, imaginative communication, and intellectual curiosity. As creatures made in the image of God, we all inherit the blessing of creativity. Bear Creek students learn to express the nature of things, the reality of Truth, and the significance of beauty through art.



Clockwise from top:

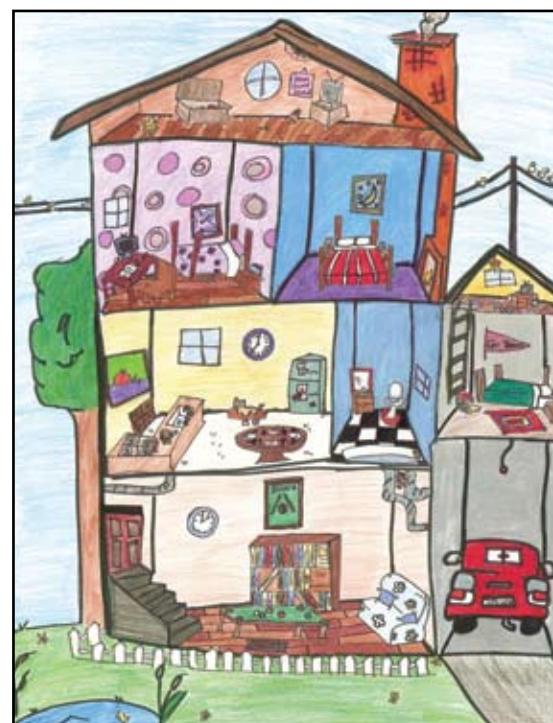
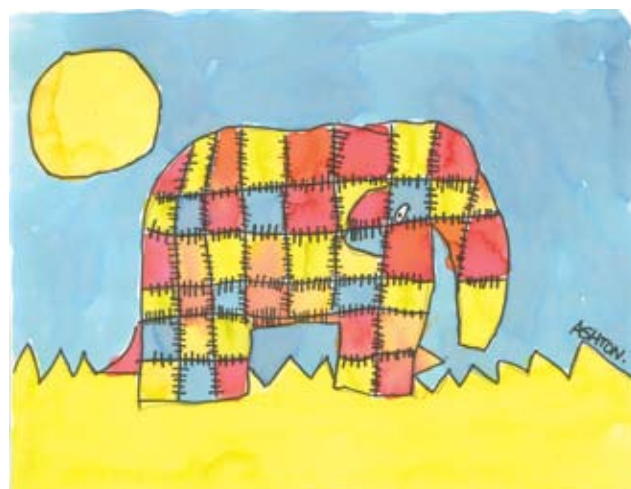
Hannah Kwon  
Grade 8  
Acrylic value painting

Sarah Behm  
Grade 3  
3 dimensional  
"funky" chair  
Sharpie and Surge  
markers

Callie Robinson  
Grade 2  
Realistic bird illustration  
Pencil and watercolor

Ashton Beeson  
Kindergarten  
Elmer the elephant with  
a "twist"  
Sharpie and ink

Brendan Kelleher  
Grade 1  
Coffee cup design  
Oil pastels



Clockwise from top left:

Halle Coleman  
Freshman  
Impressionist painting  
Acrylic on canvas

Lauren Webber  
Sophomore  
Value pencil drawing

Bethany Linnenkohl  
Junior  
Hand-tinted black  
and white photograph

Kristina Foltz  
Grade 5  
House elevation  
Sharpie, ink, and  
colored pencil

Katie Wolfram  
Senior  
Georgia O'Keefe  
painting  
Acrylic on canvas





## Faculty Profile: Renee Matson

By Sue Sanford

Photo by Sini Fernandez

**T**here is a light in her eyes when she mentions her kindergarten students, and a gentle strength that is evident when she talks about her love of education. Spend a little time talking with Renee Matson and it's obvious she is both passionate and gifted when it comes to teaching.

Mrs. Matson just finished her ninth year of teaching kindergarten at The Bear Creek School and her fifteenth year as a teacher. "Kindergarten never stays the same; that's why I like it. You never know what you are going to get at the beginning of the year. You might get a class who is already reading or a class that doesn't know its alphabet. Once you figure that out, you gauge what you do each day." Mrs. Matson reflects, "I look now at kids who wouldn't say twenty words in kindergarten, yet in sixth grade they are speaking a lead role in a play. It's just so exciting! You give

them that little push, like a momma bird in a nest, 'Come on you can do it!'"

Mrs. Matson's journey into teaching was not her original plan, but was clearly led by God. "All my life I wanted to be a veterinarian. I loved animals and I loved being out in creation. Then high school chemistry was really hard so I started to think maybe this isn't the road for me to take. Then I worked at a Vacation Bible School along with my sister, and the kids responded to me—while my sister was tearing her hair out because the kids

wouldn't do anything she wanted them to do. After another similar experience, I realized this is really fun; maybe I have something here, so I changed my direction. I got into education and I loved the whole idea of the process of learning."

After graduating from Inglemoor High School in Kenmore, Washington, Mrs. Matson went on to pursue her goal of becoming a teacher. "I became a Christian in the ninth grade, but I hadn't grown up learning Bible stories in Sunday school. I went to Northwest University for my first year to expand my Bible knowledge." Northwest didn't have an education program at the time, so Mrs. Matson applied to Washington State University (WSU) even though they weren't accepting transfer students. "I just felt like God told me I was going to go to WSU. I was accepted, and it was an amazing time in my life of growing closer to God."

At WSU Mrs. Matson met her husband Allen who, incidentally, is a veterinarian. After settling in the Seattle area, she began teaching third grade in the Seattle schools.

Her focus was "always towards elementary school but not always towards kindergarten. In fact, at that point I didn't think I would ever teach kindergarten or first grade ... they were just so wiggly." During time off from teaching when her children were young, Mrs. Matson continued taking education classes. She recalls, "I knew I wanted to continue teaching, and luckily followed the good advice to always keep my teaching certificate up-to-date." Mrs. Matson found interest and enjoyment in early childhood education and added an endorsement in that field to her degree.

As her children reached school age, Mrs. Matson began thinking about teaching kindergarten. God led the way to The Bear Creek School through Bear Creek Librarian Jan Mueller when their sons were in preschool together. When her oldest son started at Bear Creek, Mrs. Matson became a substitute teacher at the school, and then began teaching third grade in 1999.

Many who have experienced Mrs. Matson's classroom see that it is exciting but calm, joyful but managed, and her students are clearly learning, playing, and enjoying their time with a teacher who loves them. But this is a classroom of kindergartners. Isn't that a stage set for chaos at any moment? Mrs. Matson explains, "I enjoy it when people give me the time and space to go through my day. I don't like to be rushed, I don't like to be told what to do, and I don't like to be ordered around. I've always been very aware of not treating kindergarteners like little kids, speaking to them with respect and on a level that isn't putting them down. That is really important to me. Because of that, it tends to draw out a lot of good in who they are. They feel respected, they feel important, they feel valued, and I think that is a lot of why things click the way they do in my room. I have very high expectations for behavior and what students can achieve and what they need to get done; but I come alongside them, I assume the best, and I

assume they can." Mrs. Matson continues, "Kids are like adults, if someone assumes you are going to do a good job, you usually do." She laughs, "I'd love to teach a class on this as it really does make life easier!"

"The hardest part about my job?" Mrs. Matson pauses to catch the tears which come unbidden when asked this question, "It's when I feel I am not reaching a kid, usually it is behavior issues - when they continually make the same mistakes and are not choosing to do the right thing so that I need to call them on it.

Most kids buy into what you want and want to do the right thing, but they make mistakes. That is typical five and six-year-old behavior, and that isn't what I'm talking about. There are not very many kids I've come across like this, but it's when they are closing their mind and heart off from you, and authority, and just not wanting to cooperate, that is when it's hard ... I just keep trying and praying for that child."

In reflecting on her experience as a teacher at The Bear Creek School,

Mrs. Matson talks about this year's commencement, "Watching these kids was amazing. As a teacher, knowing the process from kindergarten all the way through twelfth grade, and seeing the unity that the students have and how they take care of each other was really moving. Paige Connell was one of the speakers; she came to Bear Creek in the third grade and was part of my first class. I remember her clearly, she was excited that we studied science, took field trips, and did so many activities. She was such an excellent student in third grade, so inquisitive; seeing that she still has that love for learning and that she has found her niche with it." Mrs. Matson pauses in thought, then says, "It [graduation] is why we work so hard; we don't take what we do lightly."

When asked about her future and life outside of school, Mrs. Matson smiles as she shares some future dreams for her education career, "I'd love to teach teachers at the college level some day and perhaps write a book. I've even started making notes." In her personal time, Mrs. Matson enjoys being outside in nature, gardening, walking, and especially traveling with her husband Allen and three sons (Bear Creek freshman, junior, and a 2008 alumnus). Mrs. Matson playfully states, "It's not a good vacation unless you have sand!" She also enjoys reading. "It has been a good summer if I've read at least five good novels—education books don't count!"

It is evident in conversation, and through watching Mrs. Matson in action with her students, that her ability to connect and work with students is a gift that brings joy and success to everyone involved. She says, "When you see that you are doing something that is unique to who you are—that is a gift from God and it's not something He gives to everyone. It would be wrong of me to ignore that gift and not use it." And, as she looks up and laughs you can witness that gift in her signature smile.

Watching these kids [at graduation] was amazing. As a teacher, knowing the process from kindergarten all the way through twelfth grade.... It is why we work so hard; we don't take what we do lightly.

# Families on a Mission

By Shannon DuBois

*“When can we go back?” chimed the children, a common question heard in the Lee, Stull, Alleva, and McCahill households.*

These Bear Creek kids are not begging to return to Disneyland, petitioning to see the Jonas Brothers... again, or negotiating yet another Chuck E. Cheese birthday party. They are in fact referring to family mission trips. And maybe it's because they found something in their far-off travels. Something special. Something rewarding. Something just a little bit deeper.

These families feel strongly that children can play a big role in mission work. Even children as young as eight years old help with the physical work and connect with other children in ways adults cannot. “We like to serve with our kids,” says Lori Lee, “and we want them to see us serve.”

## Missionary work in Chile

Benjamin, grade 6, and Joshua, grade 4, Lee already have a heart for mission work. When returning from Chile after their first trip, Joshua clung to his father's leg sobbing because he didn't want to go home. Neither boy could wait to return to Chile a second year. And when they did, this time with their family as mission trip leaders, the Chilean kids were right there waiting, watching, and remembering.

On their first trip to Chile, the Lees (Phil, Lori, Benjamin, and Joshua) immediately connected with the Chilean people. They worked with a local church called Oriente, in Maipu, a suburb of Santiago. This church also supports a Christian school, educating over 1,000 students. The Lees painted classrooms, scrubbed desks, and primed the school for the upcoming year. With the Oriente church's symbol being the wooden yoke, many church members worked side-by-side with the Lee family. Matthew 11:30 says, “For my yoke is easy and my burden is light,” a verse they live by.



In February Benjamin and Joshua Lee reunited with Chilean friends Oscar and Andres.

Besides preparing the school, the Lees and Oriente church members spent their evenings preparing the Chilean's hearts for Jesus. A typical evening involved evangelizing in local parks, a venue that allowed Benjamin and Joshua to use their gifts of just being kids. “My boys treasured the fellowship in the parks. They sang songs, played games, helped with puppet shows and dramatizations to aid in showing God's love,” says Lori. “Even though Benjamin and Joshua didn't speak Spanish, there seemed to be no barriers when playing with the Chilean children.” Each night the Lee family witnessed individuals making decisions for the Lord, an amazing and enriching experience.

## Missionary work in the Philippines



The Stull family visited the orphanage in Dumagete, Philippines, Christmas 2008.

Through Care International, the Stull family—Dan, Crystal, sons Ryan and Jeff, and Rachel, grade 3—spent two weeks helping out at an orphanage in the Philippines. Researching the orphanage on previous trips had inspired the Stulls to take action and become involved. Crystal says, “We adopted our daughter Rachel from China when she was eight months old. I think that is one of the reasons she has such a big heart for orphans.” The orphanage houses children from toddlers to teenagers. Many of the children were in dire need of medical care, including Susan, 14, who hiked from her mountain home after she suffered severe burns due to her alcoholic father dousing her with kerosene and lighting her on fire. Another child, plagued with cerebral palsy, needed a wheelchair and still another needed surgery for his heart. The Stulls volunteered their time and financial assistance to the orphanage for medical care and supplies; in the Philippines a little money goes

a long way to remedy these needs. Besides medical support, the Stulls brought Bibles and novelty toys like Legos to the orphanage. “Rachel loves playing with the children,” says Crystal, “and is so appreciative of her own family after seeing what the orphans have been through.”



Erin Alleva (right) made friends with other kids at Amen Ministries in Managua, February 2007.

## Missionary work in Nicaragua

Nightly, an armed watchman patrols the properties of the Amen Ministries, a Christian outreach organization in Managua, where the Allevas, Fil, Holly, Zach, grade 9, Erin and Caleb, grade 7, plus several others from First Presbyterian Church of Bellevue distributed 48 duffel bags of clothes and administered medicine as needed. These items were riches to a country where third world conditions take a devastating toll on the local people. Amen Ministries—similar to our YMCA—provides a safe place for innocent children forced to face third world realities. Malnutrition is one of the biggest issues, plus extreme dental decay. Holly, having no experience in dental work, became a dental assistant to one of the First Presbyterian members, a dentist by profession, who spent much of his time pulling the Nicaraguans' rotten teeth.

Erin related to the kids by playing with them and helping to serve healthy food. The Nicaraguans naturally have dark hair, but Erin was taught to look for hair that was lighter in color, a sign of malnutrition, so she could tune into those children's specific needs. She, along with her brothers, gained many friends and became especially close to all the children. Zach returned to Nicaragua this summer to perform more mission work.

## Missionary work in Mexico

For four years, Ed, Cindy, Will, grade 12, Gannon, grade 10, Bridget, grade 7, and Meghan, grade 5, McCahill have been taking trips to Valle Verde, a suburb of Tijuana, Mexico, to build homes and hope. According to Cindy, poverty prevails. Stealing is so rampant that many dwellings are lined with jagged glass

creating barriers to potential thieves. Four-year-olds carry their infant siblings around, babysitting while mom is at work. With no running water, the families are forced to wait for the water truck to make an appearance in their neighborhood. Most families have a dog, but a pet it is not. Its sole purpose is guarding the family shack. In order to keep the dogs mean, their owners provoke, kick, and half starve them. Unfortunately, bloated bellies and insects are visible on the children, as well as the bug-infested dogs.

Besides constructing two-story houses for the Valle Verde people, the McCahills assist Armor of God Church with Vacation Bible School. Sometimes it's not only the children who come to the Lord, but adults too. “Once a man came wandering by,” says Cindy. “He wanted to know what we *gringos* were doing. I told him we were helping the church and families. Then, he wanted to know why, so I told him God loves everyone, even him.” Moments later the man met with the local pastor and began weeping. Soon he became a Christian and now attends Armor of God Church.



Meghan McCahill poses with VBS students on a mission trip to Tijuana, February 2007.

## Why make missions a family affair?

Cindy McCahill says, “Our children see that the life we know is not what the rest of the world knows. They don't take things for granted and they learn to appreciate the small stuff like paved roads and flushing toilets.” The McCahills also want their children to understand that God is everywhere, even in poverty. Several times, the McCahill kids witnessed the Valle Verde church members worshiping God with gusto by dancing in the streets and singing their thanks to God as if through a microphone. They have nothing, yet they have everything.

It's not unusual for Christians to take missionary trips, but for many, it's a one-time experience. For the Lees, Stulls, Allevas, and McCahills, it's much more. It's short-term missions with long-term results. And if asked, “Why do you keep going back year after year?” I think these Bear Creek families would all agree: “It's simple—to them we give riches, to us they give wealth.”



By Rev. Jeff Gephart

# “Say Yes to No”

An essay based on Greg Cootsona’s *Say Yes to No*

**Okay, true confession.** I’m directionally challenged. I don’t mean to say I have no purpose in life. I’m talking about actually turning down the wrong street and getting lost! My wife and I share this challenge. Many things we do well... finding a destination is not one of them. A searchlight would help. I would love it if I had my own light in the sky to follow to my destination. Or maybe a sign in neon lights. Something to guide me when I come to that intersection or that fork in the road, and need to make a decision. Which way should I turn?

It’s a gross overstatement I know, but my iPhone saved my marriage. Now instead of debating and deliberating and arguing over which turn to take, Kristen and I simply consult the iPhone. Plug in your destination and “Voila!”—follow the map! Then if we get lost, we just blame the iPhone!

It would be great if life were that easy...like the Staples commercial with the Easy Button. Who wouldn’t love to push the Easy Button now and then in life? The reality is, God has not designed our life to have an “easy button.” Instead, God has given us a face and a name in the person of Jesus Christ. He’s given us His Word which speaks into the circumstances of our life. And, He’s given us the ability to say *yes* and the ability to say *no*.

Two simple words—yes and no—words which have great power to determine our course of action, our direction in life. Two

words which we desperately need to use in this modern life that is so dominated by information and more information—e-mail, texts, Facebook, and the constant barrage of advertising.

Every day we are faced with decisions, with little turning points where we need to choose one direction or the other. Questions concerning how we should spend our time range from the mundane to the essential. “Should I say yes to that social invitation?” “Watch that show?” “How can I help my child?” “How many hours did you say there are in a day?”

Thankfully, God, through His Word, has not left us without guidance. Tucked into a well-worn part of the Bible is a happy excuse to exercise the word yes and the word no. It’s called the Sabbath. The fourth commandment given to us by God through Moses states: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.”

We often forget that the command to take a day off is a part of the Ten Commandments, right up there with not lying, stealing, murdering, or worshipping other gods, clearly reflecting its importance in God’s eyes.

Sabbath simply means stop. Quit. Stop trying to do things on our own effort and recognize that life is a gift. So the command first to the Israelites and now to us as the people of God, is to

rest from our labors and to enjoy the goodness of God’s creation. Sabbath gives us a valid reason to say no to certain choices so we can say yes to better ones.

The problem is we have a hard time stopping and saying no! Saying yes to endless e-mails, or one more bill to pay, load of laundry to wash, or presentation to prepare, can leave us feeling drained, depleted, exhausted, physically ill, bitter, and sometimes even confused!

We were not meant to live this way.

God’s design for us, according to Sabbath, is that we would live in a rhythm. That we would experience fruitful times of work and study working in rhythm with times of rest and play. That only happens when we pay attention to what we do NOT do with as much care as we pay attention to what we do.

A former colleague of mine, Greg Cootsona, has written an excellent book on this subject. Greg and I have spent many hours talking about Christ and the kingdom, work, rest, and Sabbath. We’ve also enjoyed playing music together. For a sweet season, we enjoyed the chance each week to pull together some young adults and lead worship for a Sunday evening service. As a musician and a theologian, Greg has reflected much on the subject of saying no and Sabbath. In his book, *Say Yes to No* (2008), he talks about what he’s learned as a drummer about the rhythm of Sabbath.

*I’m a drummer, and I’ve learned that great music is not just the notes but also the spaces between the notes. In some ways, it’s how a musician handles not the notes, but the spaces, that makes the art. Notes without spaces equals undifferentiated noise. Space without notes produces boring silence. The proper relation between the two is magic. Similarly, Sabbath provides space. It is intended for us not to luxuriate in sloth but to create a livable, sustainable rhythm. Sabbath draws us back to the truth that our days and our weeks need work and rest. (p. 90)*

Notice how Greg applies music and space to Sabbath. Sometimes it’s not about what you play, but what you do not play that matters. So it is in life. The important no of Sabbath gives us the space and therefore a way to create that necessary, life-giving rhythm.

Many of us have gone through seasons in the past year that would not be described as having rhythm and a sense of rest or renewal. In fact, usually summer is the first time during the year when we really take a break, a time to reflect. We finally realize how we have been living all year. And we crash. Sometimes literally, we crash on our couch or bed, exhausted or sick. This is not God’s intention for our lives. We were created to enjoy the rhythm of saying yes and no.

I find summer is a perfect season to reflect on my year and plan changes for the upcoming school year. Perhaps this is a good time for all of us to take stock of the fourth commandment and our obedience to it.

For the sake of giving us at least *something* to do (after all, we do get to cooperate with God’s grace), I offer the following practical tips, gleaned from Cootsona’s book.

## Take a technology Sabbath

I recently asked a couple of our graduates, “Do you ever go a day without your cell phone?” Their answers indicated a definite unwillingness to disconnect. We live lives that are constantly connected. I’m writing this on a laptop, via wireless connection, so I can be out on the grass by the water. I can hear the water lapping gently at the shore, but with my laptop and iPhone, will I *really* take in my surroundings? I have experienced the profound rest that comes from turning off technology for a day. As I write this I find myself wanting to bring this habit back. It’s easy to miss the deeper reflection time that feeds our souls when the constant buzz of being connected distracts our thoughts.

## Take a day off work and obligation

For some of us this might be the most difficult. We think we can get up on Sunday, attend worship with the family, spend the afternoon paying bills, or working on our meeting agenda for Monday, and call it good. But that’s not a biblical perspective of Sabbath. In the Hebrew reckoning, the day of Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and ends the next evening. Imagine gathering for a family movie or game night, followed by an entire day connecting with your family, attending worship services, and enjoying activities as simple as Sunday morning pancakes and afternoon baseball. We can always fine tune that meeting agenda after we’ve put the kids to bed and we turn our thoughts to the week ahead.

## Renew heart, mind, body, and soul

Find out what truly helps you feel renewed and refreshed. Think carefully about the activities, leisure, or worship that truly help you embrace the truth that God’s grace is sufficient for you, that God is your Provider, and that you can trust Him.

My wife takes delight in gardening. She would probably say that planting flowers is renewing. It’s not like that for me. I love a freshly cut lawn and the satisfaction in having completed the job, but it is not Sabbath for me. Some of us might be fooling ourselves. We each need to determine and value that which brings us personal renewal. For me it’s often sitting quietly for long periods, reading Scripture and good books. It’s also quiet and peaceful conversations in nature and time for journaling.

These are basic steps in beginning to practice Sabbath. It all starts with the realization that God has given us some clear direction in life. He has given us a positive reason in the Sabbath commandment to say no. No to the constant demand for attention from our media-saturated culture. No to every obligation that demands our time. No to having to be someone we are not—and through a strategic and courageous no to a greater yes to God, yes to His rhythm, and yes to God’s purpose for our lives.

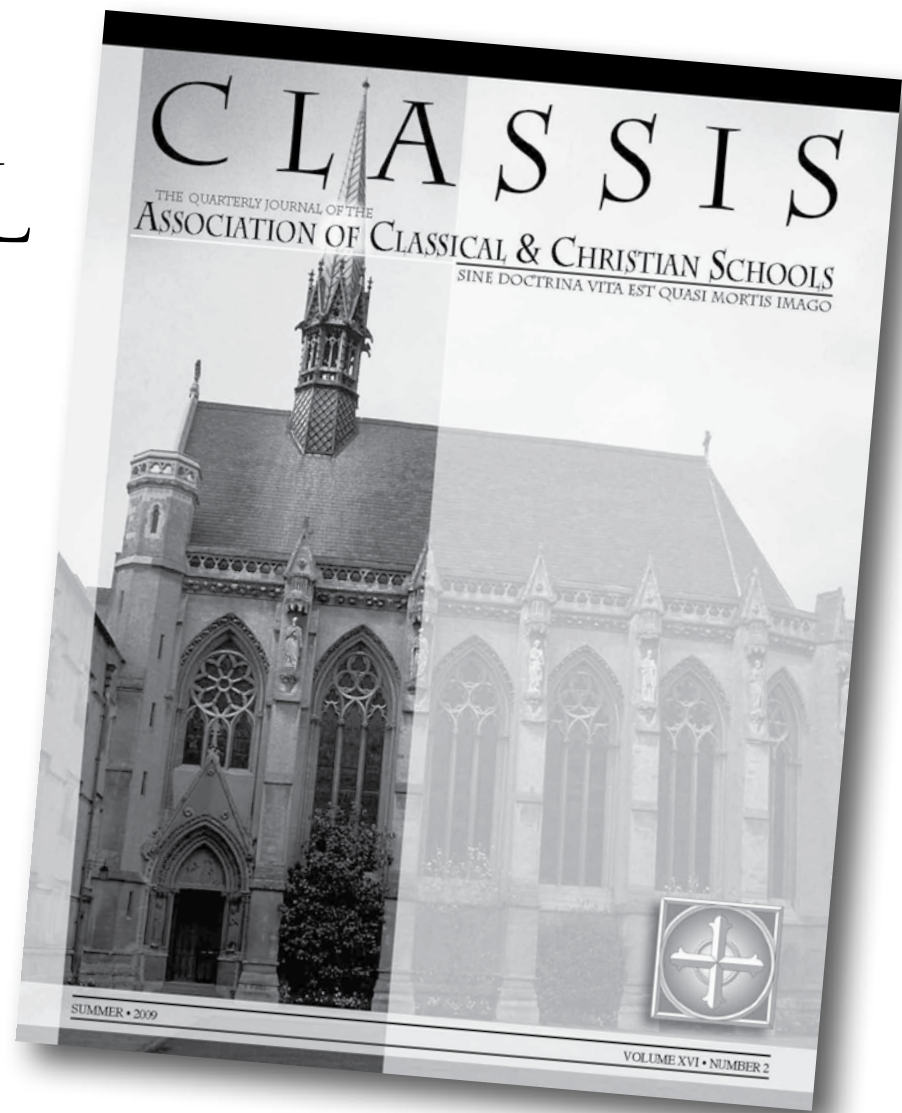
As the summer is here, perhaps it is a good time to reflect. It also might be time to figure out what direction we’re going. Which reminds me, I need to look up that address on my iPhone and figure out which way I’m going. I only hope I don’t need to find that destination on my Sabbath. Having left my iPhone resting in its charger for the day, how will I know which way to turn?



# THE CLASSICAL BRAIN

By Karen Blankenbeckler

“The Classical Brain” was published in the Summer 2009 edition of *Classis*, the quarterly journal of the Association of Classical & Christian Schools. *Classis* is a journal of articles and book reviews designed to support and encourage classical Christian education in schools around the world.



Classical education is an ancient approach. How can an educational philosophy reaching back to the 10th century be relevant to students today? Should the methods change to keep up with the ever-changing environment? Neuroscientists have done a tremendous amount of research on the brain in the last fifteen years and some people may be surprised to hear that the research supports the classical approach. While no one would claim that the findings of current brain research can or should completely prescribe teaching methods, there are many exciting discoveries that help us better understand the brain and support methods of classical education.

Perhaps the greatest opposition to the classical approach comes from modern education proponents who criticize the concentration and focus on the grammar stage and on memorization, repetition, skill rehearsal, and general knowledge acquisition. Some educators argue that in this day and age the knowledge that students must master is overwhelming in quantity and it is not necessary to commit it to memory. They claim we must instead teach our students to “access information,” think critically, and problem solve. We would all agree that problem-solving skills and critical thinking are important and

it is true that students can access information at the touch of a button; therefore, this argument may seem valid at first glance. However, brain research supports the idea that brain development in the early years is critical, and activities such as memorization, repetition, and review can structurally and chemically change the make-up of the brain. The development in the brain that occurs through knowledge acquisition, memorization, and repetition is essential in allowing the type of connections that must happen for problem solving and critical reasoning.

It is important to start with some basic brain anatomy and then examine what learning does to enrich the brain. The brain is an oblong organ weighing about three pounds. It is surrounded by the cerebral cortex, which is a wrinkled covering of cells about one-quarter inch thick. Neuroscientist and professor of neuroanatomy at University of California, Berkeley, Marian Diamond, states, “If I had to teach educators what they need to know most about the brain, I would teach about the cerebral cortex. That’s where higher cognitive processing occurs.”<sup>1</sup> The nerve cells that make up the cerebral cortex cannot increase in number, but studies have shown that the number of branches

or dendrites that act as receptors can be increased. This is important because it is these connections that create learning and memory. As students exercise their brains through grammar stage experiences such as memorization, repetition, and review they are actually growing more dendrite branches which allow the brain to build up its strength and ability to acquire more information. Ronald Kotulak, author of the book *Inside the Brain*, uses the metaphor of a banquet to show the importance of the learning environment. “The brain gobbles up the external environment through its sensory system and then reassembles the digested world in the form of trillions of connections which are constantly growing or dying, becoming stronger or weaker depending on the richness of the banquet.”<sup>2</sup> When students are learning the grammar of any subject, the banquet must be rich in order to build and strengthen connections in the brain.

*As students exercise their brains through grammar stage experiences . . . they are actually growing more dendrite branches which allow the brain to build up its strength and ability to acquire more information.*

Brain research also supports the idea that some abilities are more easily acquired during certain sensitive time periods or windows of opportunity. While we cannot increase the number of neurons within the cerebral cortex, there is an explosive growth of dendrites in the first eight to ten years of life. When the dendrites increase they add to the surface area available for synapses which act as functional connections among the cells. At peak times these connections are built at the speed of three billion per second. From birth to age ten the number of these synaptic connections rises rapidly. After that time, if the dendrite branches have not made connections, they die off. The need to increase and strengthen the dendrites highlights again the significance of specific focus on memory, repetition, and review during early learning.

Should this lead classical school educators to the conclusion that all instruction in the early years should be geared toward the grammar stage? While emphasis in grammar is critical for brain development, brain research supports the need for educators of young students to also provide learning activities that are commonly applied in the dialectic stage. As the brain accumulates knowledge, experiences, and information it stores that information in short-term memory. After a period of time if that stored information has not been used in any meaningful way through application, connection with other information, or reasoning then the learner is unable to access that memory. Information that has been used will move into long-term memory and more permanent storage. This supports the need for learning to start with the grammar of a subject area and then move into the dialectic where students are reasoning, problem solving, wrestling with ideas, challenging, considering, and resolving. The most powerful brain activity is happening when the brain has prior knowledge through memorization or experience, reviews that information to strengthen the dendrites and then makes connections through pathways in the brain that

require the learner to apply information to new situations, to reason, and to problem solve.

This leads to some recommendations for teachers as they seek to apply brain research to lesson planning and instruction. When approaching content, teachers should begin by helping students acquire new information, knowledge, or skills in an enriched classroom environment. Next, review information through repetition and practice, thereby growing new dendrites and strengthening pathways. Then provide opportunities for the students to apply that information through reasoning, problem

solving, wrestling with ideas, and application, which moves the knowledge into permanent memory storage. While this is a very simplified outline of the learning process, it can provide a framework for structuring the approach in a classroom.

Experts in the brain research field advise educators to study

brain development in order to have a better understanding of the learners in the classroom and how the teacher may alter the brain by providing an enriched environment. However, neuroscientists caution educators to avoid jumping to quick conclusions and fad approaches, but rather to combine what we know about the brain with what educators know through tested teaching methods. The classical approach is a tested method that has produced many of the world’s most influential scientists, philosophers, and leaders. It is fascinating to see how the findings in brain research support this approach.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Marcia D’Arcangelo, “The Brains Behind the Brain,” *Educational Leadership*, November 1998, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Ronald Katulak, *Inside the Brain: Revolutionary Discoveries of How the Mind Works* (Riverside, NJ: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 1997), 4.

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As Vice President for Academic Affairs, Karen Blankenbeckler oversees the academic program in grades PreK through 12. Mrs. Blankenbeckler came to The Bear Creek School nineteen years ago as a classroom teacher. She taught in grades K, 3, 4, and 5 before moving into administration. She holds a B.S. from Oregon State University in elementary education and a M.Ed. from Lesley University in curriculum and instruction.

# FOR THE CHILDREN'S SAKE

Catching up with Dr. Nancy Price and her foundation's work training African teachers

By Dr. Nancy Price

The Christian school is built of brick, filled with children eager to learn. The teacher is committed to the Lord, and her lesson includes biblical integration. The students' behavior upon the entrance of visitors to the classroom is exemplary. That sounds a lot like The Bear Creek School, doesn't it? But a little further information reveals a very different school.

The school was built from bricks that were made by hand and fired in stacks standing where they were made. The classroom is literally filled with children, 67 of them, seated three and sometimes four together on wooden benches. The walls of the classroom are simply boards scrounged from somewhere, put up to form a visual barrier between classrooms. They don't reach all the way to the ceiling, but leave a space of about five feet. The teachers' voices and students' responses from the classes on either side make it difficult to hear the teacher we've come to observe.

## FOR THE CHILDREN'S SAKE FOUNDATION

Since leaving The Bear Creek School in 2006, it has been my privilege to volunteer my time and expertise to bring Christian school teachers in sub-Saharan Africa some of the basic tools of teaching and pedagogy. The nonprofit organization is called For the Children's Sake Foundation and provides training free of charge to Christian schools. It is spread over the course of one calendar year with an intensive weeklong session during each holiday. Teachers implement what they have learned during the following term, then come together during the next holiday to evaluate and discuss their progress and

receive additional training. This lengthy cycle with several feedback opportunities is somewhat expensive but has proven to be the best method to ensure that what is presented at training is actually implemented in the classrooms.

Whether in a Nairobi slum or a relatively well-facilitated school in Uganda, the teachers I work with have a number of things in common. They are committed Christians who usually work for less than it takes to feed and house themselves. And, whether or not they hold a teaching certificate, they have little idea of how to teach effectively or from a Christian worldview.



St. Joseph's is a little school in rural Uganda operating out of this rented room with a dirt floor. For the Children's Sake Foundation is helping to purchase land on which to build a new school house. Dr. Nancy Price is pictured along with St. Joseph's director Michel Nsamba and students.



For the Children's Sake Foundation provided funding to build this classroom at Amazing Grace, a school in rural Uganda. The walls and floors are finished in concrete to help keep the dust down.

After a session on how to make a lesson plan, a Ugandan teacher raised his hand. "Thank you, Dr. Nancy, for teaching us this. I have a teaching certificate, and so do many of the others in my group. They always told us we should use a lesson plan, but we were not taught how! Now I can do it!"

## NURSERY TEACHER TRAINING

For the past three years I have resisted offering nursery teacher training. However, a visit to the Mustard Seed Nursery School this July changed my mind. Picture about 25 three and four-year-old children, who don't speak English, seated in rows on benches facing a blackboard (with their legs hanging 6-8 inches off the floor). The teacher is drawing pictures of objects (man, boy, woman, girl, orange, ball, etc.) and writing the name of each object in English under the picture. She says the word and the children repeat it but, unfortunately, they have no understanding of the meaning of the word, for instance, whether the picture is of a boy or a girl or what a real orange or ball is!

This experience led me to develop and hold nursery teacher training a few days later. Although only given a couple days notice, 26 teachers and directors from 11 schools showed up on a Friday morning for training. Several who came are not actually nursery teachers, but just wanted to get any training that was available. That is one of the best parts of working with teachers in Africa—the real desire to learn!

As much as possible, I try to use government frameworks (curriculum) as "official" confirmation for many of my "crazy" ideas which go directly against local practice and belief. A couple of my "wild" notions are that using real objects instead of drawing them on the board is a better way to go about teaching young children English, and that three-year-old children should not be sitting still on a bench trying to learn to read and copy words from the board!

## A YEAR IN KOREA

This year I took a one-year position as the interim Head of School at Seoul Foreign School (SFS) during the 2008-2009 school year. It was an excellent experience being back in a "real" school,

and good to be thrust back into the mainstream of educational research and thinking.

While at SFS I met a number of teachers who were very interested in helping with my work in Africa. One elementary teacher from SFS came with me this summer as I spent three weeks in Kenya and Uganda speaking with directors of schools who are seeking teacher training, visiting teachers who had previously attended For the Children's Sake Foundation training, and following up on the foundation's work since my last visit in May 2008.

Though I was unable to personally visit Africa during my tenure in Korea, For the Children's Sake Foundation provided funding to build classrooms for Amazing Grace, a small Christian school operating "under the trees" for the previous five years while serving a disadvantaged community in rural Uganda. It was a real pleasure to dedicate two new classrooms for the school during my visit this summer.

Next summer 20 Christian teachers from various schools in the US and around the world will spend two weeks working with African teachers trained by For the Children's Sake Foundation in each teacher's own school setting. They will provide feedback and encouragement to these African teachers as they strive to implement what they have been taught within their own classrooms.

Education is seen as the key to success in Africa. By training teachers of orphans and vulnerable children, these children can have a better education, a chance to learn to use their minds more fully, and a chance to more fully understand and live the Good News of Jesus Christ.



Children learning English at the Mustard Seed Nursery School prior to the new nursery teacher training provided by Dr. Price's foundation.

Dr. Nancy Price, founder of The Bear Creek School, served as Head of School from 1988 to 2006. In December 2005, God placed the plight of African children in her heart, leading her to establish For the Children's Sake Foundation to train Christian school teachers serving orphaned, vulnerable, and disadvantaged children in sub-Saharan Africa. [www.forthechildrenssakefoundation.org](http://www.forthechildrenssakefoundation.org)



# A TIME OF CHANGE

By Marky Olson  
Photo by Steve Pohlman

**With the constantly changing economy and much of the news being negative, we wondered about the impact this is having on those who are just beginning their careers.** After looking at the current job market for recent graduates, we contacted Bear Creek alumni to see if they are changing their career focus with the economic downturn.

A headline article in the business section of the May 12, 2009, *Seattle Times* stated, “Graduating college seniors are entering the weakest market in decades, a somber fact apparent to those attending campus career fairs, where recruiters are in short supply. Tips on interviewing and career counseling abound, no matter the age or experience of the job-seeker. However, about 25 percent fewer employers sent recruiters to the spring career fair at the University of Washington. Seattle Pacific University’s lone career fair of the year drew 30-40 percent fewer companies.” The drop in companies represented was confirmed at Seattle University. Clearly, the choices are fewer for students. In fact, the recently released National Association of Colleges and Employers’ (NACE) study states that “only 19.7 percent of this year’s graduates who have applied for a job have in fact found one.” The NACE 2009 Job Outlook Survey also finds that college majors most in demand are consistent with previous surveys; however, the long-range economic outlook from analysts is for significantly slower growth over the next several years than was experienced over the past 15 years. While new jobs are not likely to be plentiful, replacement openings caused by the aging of the work force could be. The average employee age is currently 41, which is up from 35 in 1980. Furthermore, 20 percent of the work force will be older than 55 during the next decade. To offset the impact of worker retirement, employers are developing succession strategies centered on college recruiting, and fields such as elementary and secondary education, information technology, and healthcare positions, particularly nursing, are the best prospects for new graduates. Though some of the survey results are discouraging, it appears that The Bear Creek School alumni who

are 2008 and 2009 college graduates are faring quite well. They are persistent, flexible, and confident as they pursue both advanced degrees and careers.

Connections with The Bear Creek School alumni reveal an interesting profile of students who do follow the national trend but are balanced and proactive in their attitudes concerning their careers. Dani Pohlman, a 2009 Seattle Pacific University graduate states, “I feel that I am a little unique in my experience because I have taken the route to not look for a real job right now, knowing the economy. I know that I want to go to graduate school, so I decided to take a year off. I got an opportunity to nanny this summer, which I took advantage of because I figured looking for a job right now would be an exhausting task and since I had the nanny opportunity, I thought I would take it. My degree is in psychology so it’s hard to get a real professional job with just an undergraduate degree.” Dani’s primary goal was to become a therapist, but she is now “looking into other choices, such as working for an adoption agency.” Next year she plans “to explore my options and gain experience in different internship opportunities to figure out what I want to do. That is partly due to the economy, but I think I am doing what I would have wanted to do even if the economy was booming.” Dani’s approach reflects both confidence and flexibility.

Zachary Buck, a 2009 Pepperdine graduate, decided to enter the competitive job market. He faced fewer job opportunities and more applicants, a discouraging reality for today’s college graduates. Zachary’s attitude and energy are apparent in his career search: “I really found it a challenge to brand myself in a way that would stand out. I was submitting my applications to companies that were receiving 50+ applications a day. To adapt to this challenge I had to really focus on fine tuning my resume and getting my foot in the door in as many places as possible. I worked every connection I had and took any opportunity I had to meet with people in the companies I wanted to work for. I can’t tell you how many informational interviews I had or how many people I took to coffee! In the long run, though, it was invaluable in getting me a job. After meeting all these people and going to so many informational interviews my resume stood out among the rest. These companies knew me and had a better idea if I would be a good fit with their company. Ultimately, one of my informational interviews caused the lady I met with to contact the HR head within the company and tell her how much she enjoyed me and that I would be a great fit with their company. One month later I had the job!” Zachary

graduated with a concentration in corporate crisis management, a major in high demand so he was not forced to consider changing his major, even as the economy worsened. He was more open-minded, however, in the variety of companies he pursued for informational interviews. He now works for Edelman, a large public relations firm. When asked what he felt had helped prepare him for current challenges, Zachary stated, “Where do I start? In my current job, writing skills are gold. At Bear Creek, I developed a very strong set of writing skills as well as a dynamic approach to creative writing. Even when comparing my education at Bear Creek to my college career, Bear Creek really helped to establish a solid set of skills that I have been able to rely on going into a writing intensive career. I was encouraged to develop a strong focus. My heavy course load, balanced with athletics and my social activities, forced me to prioritize my obligations and my homework. I do the same thing daily at work now. I entered college prepared and adept and I can say the same thing for my career.”

Tyler Kowal, a 2008 Gonzaga graduate, is an audit assistant for Deloitte, an accounting and consulting firm, and feels he was not impacted as much by the more recent economic downturn. However, as a newer employee, Tyler feels that it is imperative to “know what is expected and work to that level. Everyone now is concerned about job security and this is causing undue stress in the workplace. This is my major concern and as a result has caused me and many of my friends in a similar situation to work in a manner that is to go above and beyond what is expected and in some cases that means working 12 hours a day instead of the expected eight. This helps to increase productivity and sets higher expectations that could be difficult to meet.” Tyler believes that The Bear Creek School gave him “the strength to be confident in my skills and ability. It makes the above concern not as big for me as I know I am a good worker and, as a result, have the confidence that I will have a job for years to come.”

Kristina Aronson, a 2009 graduate of Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, is “headed to Georgetown University to pursue a master’s in conflict resolution at Georgetown’s School of Government. It is the top international relations master’s degree program in the country right now.” This was Kristina’s plan all along so she feels the downward shift in the economy is not relevant to

her as she pursues her advanced degree. Similarly, Jessica Harrang, a 2009 graduate of Claremont McKenna College in California, has “more seriously considered jobs that I previously might not have, but I have not made any final decisions any differently.” Jessica feels that, although it was primarily her college experience that prepared her for life after college, “it was my high school education and experiences that allowed me to be accepted into such a good school.”

The national picture conflicts with the Pacific Northwest situation in terms of college job fairs, but describes a similarity in employment challenges. Opportunities will be down 8 percent for those with college degrees this spring, according to economist Philip Gardner, research director of the College Employment Research

Institute at Michigan State University. Every spring, the Institute issues a recruiting trends report based on a survey of more than 900 businesses. The 2009 report forecasts a sharp downturn in job opportunities and urges students to begin job searches early. Despite the somewhat grim outlook, employers continue flocking to campus career fairs: “They want to retain a pipeline of new talent; otherwise, they will lose visibility,” says Stan Inman, director of University of Utah’s career services. “We are seeing less confidence. The number of employers has diminished and the opportunities are fewer than in fall. Students have to widen the range of opportunities they are looking for. There are excellent opportunities out there.”

Times, they are indeed changing...but then they have always changed. And they always will. Surveys offer a general guide, while economic forecasters base their predictions on history and the cyclical nature of the economy. But new college graduates entering the job market know that a solid and challenging education, determining and mastering personal coping skills, and plain old hard work make the difference.

**Photo: Members of the Seattle Pacific University 2009 graduating class, including Dani Pohlman '05 (front row, third from right), walk through graduation exercises.**

Marky Olson lives in Sammamish, Washington. She is a recently retired high school English and public speaking teacher. She is currently a freelance business and copywriter, a published author, and corporate writing teacher.

## Will Sanger, Class of 2007

By Vicki Kaiser

Will Sanger has always dreamed of playing in the NBA. When he made the Division I basketball team at the University of Tulsa, he got one step closer to that dream.

"I saw that they were having open tryouts, so I showed up," Will remembers. "After every practice the coach said come back tomorrow, so I did." The Bear Creek alumnus showed up to every practice during his freshman year. He worked hard, watched and learned, and served as the quasi- team manager. Then, in his sophomore year, the coach called. "What number do you want?" was all he said.

Playing Division I basketball is demanding. The practices, games, and travel consume hours that could be spent studying. This student-athlete believes school and basketball complement each other. "But," Will reflects, "I do have to stay on top of things." His first strategy, "avoid scheduling morning classes!" Second, be realistic about his schedule, "I take the minimum credit hours." And, the geo-physics major says, "It helps taking classes I am interested in." Will is also grateful for supportive professors and small class sizes.

Will is confident his specialized degree will be useful in the world job market that includes consulting in oil, construction, and engineering. With three more years of basketball eligibility he hopes to improve his ball skills to the level necessary to play professionally. "There are no guarantees," Will advises, "You can't be afraid and you say to yourself, 'be grateful.'"



Will Sanger plays defense against the Northwestern Wildcats in the NIT tournament in March.

## CLASS NOTES

This section is dedicated to our Bear Creek alumni and features stories and updates (submitted by alumni or their parents/guardians) about their lives, journeys, and accomplishments. If you are an alumna/us of The Bear Creek School, we'd love to include your story or an update in our next *Modus Vivendi*. You are welcome to send updates at any time and we will include them in our next edition. (*Modus Vivendi* has a winter and a summer edition.) You can also update your address, e-mail, share prayer requests, or enter comments via the Bear Creek Web site at [www.tbcs.org/alumni](http://www.tbcs.org/alumni).

### Jackson Brammer '08

I am a first-year pre-med student at the University of Washington (UW) majoring in psychology. This summer I will be living at home, taking 15 credits at the UW, and getting medical experience volunteering at the UW Medical Center.

### Sam Pomeroy '08

I am attending Baylor University, majoring in philosophy and great texts. This summer I am working at T Bar M Camp in New Braunfels, which is one of the largest Christian summer camps in Texas. I am a soccer coach and counselor. Then I am heading back to Seattle in July.

God has taken me on a wild and exciting journey in this past year. I have learned so much in the academic realm, as well as what it means to live as a faithful and obedient servant in Christ Jesus. God has proven His word and promises to be faithful and true in my life, and I rejoice in His providence!

## Erik Ball, Class of 2005

By Vicki Kaiser

Alumnus Erik Ball graduated from Washington and Lee University in June 2009. During his junior year the classical studies major spent a semester in Rome as a member of the prestigious Centro program, which offers selected undergraduates the opportunity to study ancient history, the topography and monuments of Rome, and Greek and Roman culture and history.

It was during this time that Erik decided to major in classical studies. "We spent the entire period intensely focused only on classics," Erik recalls. "I learned even more about myself and realized that I needed to study classics."

His study abroad included all the museums in Rome, archeological sites, and trips to Sicily and Naples. Erik appreciated the first-hand experience he gained in Rome and other parts of Italy, particularly the exposure to ancient Greek and Roman culture. "I spent a week in Sicily where there are some of the best preserved Greek temples and artifacts from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C." It might seem odd to study Greek culture in Rome, but Erik explains, "My emphasis is on Greek culture during the time period of the Roman Empire. The Romans plundered Greek artifacts and brought them back to ancient Rome."

Erik says the experience was even more enriching because of the people he met. "I had the opportunity to meet classicists from other universities and made friends with people I wouldn't otherwise have had the chance to meet." The 35 students in the Centro program lived in a convent with a huge kitchen in the basement where four Italian ladies cooked incredible meals. Erik laughs, "I think I gained 40 pounds!"

This well-traveled scholar embarks on a new adventure this fall as he

heads to London to study at Magdalen College, Oxford. Erik will be reading toward a master's in Greek and Latin languages and literature. A lover

of history, he is looking forward to studying in this inspiring environment, walking and living where the likes of C. S. Lewis once lived.



Erik Ball visited the Temple of Apollo on the slopes of Mt. Parnassus at Delphi, Greece.



Erik's studies took him to the Temple of Hera at Paestum, Italy.

**Kristin Kelley '08**

I am attending the University of Washington, and absolutely loving it, despite my initial desire during senior year at Bear Creek to go to Boston for school and get out of Washington. Going to the UW has opened up opportunities in ways I never thought possible. I am currently studying abroad in Prague and am taking the most amazing classes that are opening my eyes to a part of the world I've never learned about in school before! I was planning on also studying in Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia this summer but a change of plans has led me instead to backpacking around Western Europe for most of the summer! I've already visited Budapest, Berlin, and the beautiful countryside of the Czech Republic. This summer I'll be exploring the countryside of Italy, as well as its coast (and stopping in Rome). Then I will head back to Germany to hike through the Alps, then onto Spain, ending up in the French Mediterranean where I'll put to good use my five years of French that Madame Garceau helped me to refine. It is shaping up to be a wonderful summer.

This quarter in Prague has been amazing and is helping me to figure out where I want the rest of my college career to go. I was originally planning to major in European studies, and now I am sure of it. I was thinking about focusing on Central and Eastern Europe and this experience has cemented that decision. The culture is so amazing here, and very different, while eerily similar to that of the West. At the same time, due to years of communism, and just the general decline of the world, I have experienced how hungry the people of Central Europe are for God. I feel like He is really calling me to this place. Although I love Seattle and my church home at Mars Hill, I could see this being my future home. The people here really need Jesus and are beautiful, smart people who just need to grasp the redeeming work He did on the cross!

**Asya Simova '08**

I attend the UW, and plan to double major in French and business. I work at PacSun in Bellevue Square. During the summer I am planning to work and go to Bulgaria for five weeks. Bear Creek English classes are much more difficult than the college English classes!

**Katie Ball '08**

I am attending the University of San Diego and double majoring in business and French with a minor in communications. I am not working right now, but when summer starts, I will hopefully find a nanny job! I am going to Virginia to attend my brother Erik's graduation. Other than that, I'm just relaxing and spending as much time as possible with family and friends before I go back to school in the fall.

Next fall, I am participating in the three-day walk for breast cancer, which benefits the organization Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Throughout the summer I will be raising money for this cause and would appreciate donations to support the search for a cure for cancer. Anything would help! Contact me at: [ballk@sandiego.edu](mailto:ballk@sandiego.edu).

**Mark Henry '07**

I am currently attending Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona. My declared major is physics and astronomy. This summer, I've decided to take a research internship in Provo, Utah, which will involve the study of variable stars, a sub-field of astronomy. It begins officially in June and will run for a little over two months. I highly anticipate the experience, because it will give me the opportunity to explore, in-depth, the passion for astronomy I have had for most of my life.

**Evan Dunn '07**

I am at the University of Washington, in the linguistics program. I am not working now, but I plan to work this summer and prepare to take Arabic, Indonesian, and Hindi classes in the fall. After I graduate, I hope to teach English overseas and then become a Bible translator.

**Alex Higinbotham '07**

I am attending the University of Southern California with a major in business administration and concentrations in marketing, finance, and advertising and promotion strategy management. This summer I am working for Medical Dynamics for the first half of summer, and I am traveling down to Costa Rica to serve for the second half of summer, though there will also be a lot of backpacking fun through the country as well! I'm also going to Ohio for a family reunion.

**Heather Hunt '07**

I just finished my second year of double majoring in English writing and media studies at Wheaton College in Illinois. I've been involved in the campus newspaper for the last two years and have enjoyed getting to interview a wide variety of individuals, ranging from the college chaplain to an editor at *Rolling Stone* magazine. My work at the paper has received several awards from the Illinois College Press Association, including awards in In-Depth Reporting and first place in Sports Features writing. Next year I will be editor-in-chief of my campus newspaper.

This summer I am heading to Oxford for a few weeks to take some classes on British literature.

**Hye Rim Lee '07**

I'm in school now, attending the University of Washington, and majoring in chemistry. I'm not working now but plan to take summer classes in Korea at a university.

## Nina Hester, Class of 2003

By Vicki Kaiser

Alumna Nina Hester is living what would be a dream for some. Working for Boeing Research and Technology, this Boston University graduate has had the opportunity to work on a series of space flight experiments for NASA through a program called MISSE (Materials International Space Station Experiment) which places experiments on the International Space Station for a couple of years. An electrical engineer, Nina has worked on four experiments and was chosen to fly to Huntsville, Alabama, to install the experiments on the Passive Experiment Carrier (PEC). The materials selected for the mission are placed into suitcase-like PECs which are used for transporting experiments to and from the International Space Station.<sup>1</sup>

Although Nina cannot reveal experiment details, she does share some of what she gained from this opportunity. "I learned to be self-sufficient, work under extreme pressure from upper level management, and be quick on my feet when things that worked in Seattle suddenly stop working when I'm about to install them in NASA."

Always a soldering 'expert', soldering her experiment while wearing a NASA-issued bunny suit in an extremely hot and humid room proved to be a challenge. "My hands were sweating under the gloves so much that I dropped the iron and burned a hole through the suit, through my pants and burned my leg," she recalls. She was escorted out of the room and allowed back in only after she convinced the NASA quality assurance representative that the experiment had not been contaminated. "As a joke, they made me put the soldering iron in my mouth to make sure I didn't drop it again!"

Dropping the soldering iron caused no permanent damage to Nina's leg or



Nina Hester prepares the connections for her experiment at a NASA work station.



In the NASA clean room, Nina solders one of her experiments to the base plate that will be attached to the space station.

career as she has been asked to be a part of the next space radiation experiment, partnering with the Japanese government. And though this seems like a dream career, Nina says she has never dreamed of a career. "As long as

I'm having fun, loving life, and knowing God's in control, I'm pretty much living my dream."

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nasa.gov/centers/langley/news/factsheets/MISSE.html>

## Danny Jacobson, Class of 2003

By Vicki Kaiser



Danny Jacobson '03



Brig Dengenis '03, Danny Jacobson '03, and David Jacobson '04

Alumnus Danny Jacobson lives in sunny, southern California just three miles from the beach. While he enjoys rooftop barbeques with his housemates, (who he's happy to say are his brother and a Bear Creek classmate) it's clear that this young businessman is focused on his career.

A graduate of Claremont McKenna College, the finance and accounting major works in investment banking at Barrington and Associates in Los Angeles. Danny says he enjoys what he's doing and likes that it is rewarding. "I get to see the work I do have an immediate effect." He explains, "This is high velocity business—constantly going back and forth with deal team and client. People appreciate the work and there's immediate feedback."

There are also long hours. After his normal ten-hour work day the former high school and college football player goes to the gym. After working out, he checks his Blackberry and many times returns to the office where he's been known to stay until midnight or 1:00 a.m. Danny says the evolving changes in the financial market add uncertainty, but because of his company's mergers and acquisitions, his responsibilities have grown and he is well-positioned for the time being.

In addition to his demanding career, Danny helps run the Bear

Creek Alumni Facebook group. "We started this to stay in contact with friends. Now, people who we don't even know are joining!" He's happy people are keeping in touch and says he and the group's co-administrators are considering adding networking and advising opportunities to the page in the future. For now though, Danny's networking assignment is to help his youngest brother find an internship in California so that "the three Jacobson brothers will be together in So Cal for the summer!"

### Bess Snider '06

I'm leaving for Cairo, Egypt on June 16 to spend six weeks this summer on a Global Urban Trek with Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. We will be teaching summer school for Sudanese refugee children during the day and teaching ESL for Sudanese refugee adults in the evenings. In addition, we will be living with the Sudanese that we will be serving. I am SUPER excited for this trip! There is no doubt in my mind that God will teach me many things about the necessity of prayer and fellowship, his heart for justice, and his love for the Sudanese while I am in Cairo.

When I return from Cairo, I will be working in a neurobiology lab on the University of Washington campus studying the development of synchronous activity in the mouse hindbrain. The research potentially has clinical consequences for pregnant mothers!

### Catherine Banton '05

Catherine Banton graduated from USC with Honors from both Annenberg School for Communication and the College of Letters, Arts & Sciences. She was awarded the USC Annenberg School for Communication, School of Journalism Special Excellence Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Public Relations Student. Catherine also won the competition in her Advanced PR Seminar for best media communications plan and presentation for a nonprofit client. Her honors included Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society and USC Renaissance Scholar – Public Relations and French. Catherine will begin working as an account coordinator at a public relations firm in West Hollywood in July.

### Easton Thomas '05

I am entering my fifth year at the University of Michigan. I am majoring in sound engineering and electrical engineering. I am conducting research this summer for the College of Engineering. I am designing a 3D headphone system as part of a project that will translate the visual world into a sonic language so that blind people will be able to "see" the environment around them.

### Andrew Discolo '05

I just graduated from Tulane University with a B.S. in neuroscience and classical studies. I am not working yet, but am trying to get a job in medical research in the Seattle area. My summer plans include getting a job, volunteering in the emergency room at Children's Hospital, and applying to medical school.

### Katie Moravec '05

I graduated from the University of Washington with a bachelor's degree in aeronautical/astronautical engineering in June. I have been accepted into the University of Washington aeronautical/astronautical engineering graduate program, where I will pursue my master's. I will also begin my full-time job at Boeing (Everett site) this July. As far as celebrating goes, almost immediately after graduation, several of my friends and I are going on a weeklong trip to Oahu, Hawaii.

### Galen Haws '04

I graduated in May 2008 with honors from Biola University with a B.S. in business administration with a marketing emphasis. I also graduated with a minor in Biblical studies. Upon graduation I moved to Jersey City, New Jersey, on the Hudson River by Manhattan. I work for the Lord Abbett Private Wealth Group in finance. I am currently a CFA (chartered financial analyst) Level I candidate sitting for the exam in June. I am planning a wedding and will be getting married on August 9 in Seattle. I will be returning to the East Coast for work.

### David Jacobson '04

David began working for Hollywood mega-producer Laura Ziskin (*Spiderman 1-3, What About Bob, Pretty Woman, The 74th and 79th Academy Awards, etc.*) based on the Sony Pictures studio lot in spring of 2008 while completing his cinema & media arts degree from Biola University. Upon graduation in May 2008, David began working full-time for Laura Ziskin Productions working as an assistant coordinator on the historic ABC, NBC, and CBS celebrity telecast *Stand Up to Cancer*, which has raised over \$100 million for accelerated cancer research. After the show, David became Laura Ziskin's executive assistant and is now at work on several feature film and TV projects, including *Spiderman 4* and *5*, a new sitcom at the BBC, and a large family/adventure film set up at Paramount Pictures expected to go into production this fall.

Working in an elite entertainment culture has brought an interesting mix of challenges and blessings to David's life—such as the daily opportunity to practice faithfulness and humility, or the challenge of understanding myriad worldviews and lifestyles. Every day he has the opportunity to engage culture makers on what values and ideals can actually be called good and true.

David currently lives in Santa Monica, California with fellow Bear Creek alumni Danny Jacobson '03 and Brig Dengenis '03.

### Jeff Rehfeld '03

I graduated in spring 2007 with a B.A. in religious studies from Westmont College. I worked part-time for a little while and have since moved to Hollywood. I am in the process of looking for a job, possibly in the entertainment industry, as well as making as many connections as I can to help me in that endeavor.

### Ashley Biere Criswell '02

I graduated college with my B.A. in business management and communications in 2006. My husband, Dean, and I were married almost three years ago. My husband is in Pararescue (medical rescue) for the Air Force and we are stationed in Las Vegas. We bought our first house this year and are having a blast! We travel some as well. I am currently working as the community director for Grace Point Church in Las Vegas. Previously I was the marketing director for a marketing company and I am currently studying to get my real estate license.



Over forty Bear Creek alumni joined faculty and staff on July 11 to celebrate twenty years of classical Christian education at The Bear Creek School.

Bill Brammer



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# Grandparent and Treasured Friend Day at The Bear Creek School October 9, 2009

Join us for a musical program, classroom visit, and lunch with your K-12 grandchild. School is not in session on Monday, October 12, providing an opportunity for out of town guests to spend a long weekend with family. For information contact Linda Sheppard, [lsheppard@tbcs.org](mailto:lsheppard@tbcs.org) or 425.898.1720 ext. 338.