

MODUS VIVENDI

A Way of Life

FACULTY PROFILE:
PHIL HIGLEY

OUTSIDE THE BOX:
JANTERM AT BEAR CREEK

CHANGING THE WORLD—
BY DESIGN

THE BEAR
CREEK
SCHOOL
MAGAZINE

WINTER 2020



MODUS VIVENDI

Winter 2020

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.

CREATORS

Editor-in-Chief, Debbie Marchione

Managing Editor, Alicia Williams

Copy Editor, Sini Fernandez

Copyreader, Alicia Williams

Proofer, Elisa Watkins

Art Director, Marla Zylstra

EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS

Articles, photographs, and ideas are welcome and may be sent to modusvivendi@tbcs.org. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length, clarity, and style.

CONTRIBUTORS

Karen Blankenbeckler, Craig Chapman, Sini Fernandez, Katie Gomulkiewicz, Lori Lee, Debbie Marchione, and James Woollard.

Modus Vivendi is published twice a year by The Bear Creek School. If you are interested in writing for *Modus Vivendi* or have comments or questions regarding the publication, please contact us at modusvivendi@tbcs.org.

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.

PRESIDENT AND HEADMASTER

Patrick Carruth

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Andrea Lairson, Chair

Fileno Alleva, Vice Chair

Curtis Kraft, Treasurer

Colleen Broaddus, Secretary

Ted Robinson

Susan Diamond

Patrick Carruth

Shawn Firminger

William Bieber

Kevin Keith

Jodi Hallum

Kristine Shields

Only online can you find the latest news, photos, and information about upcoming events. We're here, 24/7.

tbcs.org

***facebook.com/
TheBearCreekSchool***

The Bear Creek School Facebook page contains current photos and posts about what is happening at Bear Creek. Bear Creek Preschool also has a Facebook page, and The Bear Creek School Alumni and Parents of Alumni have groups. Like us and join the conversation!

***Visit our Instagram
@thebearcreekschool***
to see student life at Bear Creek.

LET US COME TO YOU

ALERTS

To get text or email reminders for upcoming events, athletics team events, and special programs, sign up for alerts at tbcs.org. Click on the "bell" icon next to any upcoming event on the school's website calendar to sign up for an alert for that event.

THE BEAR FACTS

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

MYBC

Students, parents, faculty and staff, and trustees can find the latest announcements, upcoming events, and a complete list of role-specific resources. See MyBC at the top of any page at tbcs.org, and log in.

SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS

Stay up-to-date on the latest news, events, and social media posts by visiting our Community page at tbcs.org/community.

ON THE COVER

Quinn Hagen, grade 2, proudly shares her structure created in the Lower School Innovation Lab. Each Lower School class spends a full week visiting the lab where they collaborate in teams to create sturdy structures using design elements and basic engineering principles. Read about how Bear Creek embraces innovation as a classical school on pages 8 – 9.

PHOTO BY JANEEN SORENSEN



WHAT'S INSIDE



PHIL HIGLEY

Learn about Middle School teacher Phil Higley.

Pages 10 – 12



CHANGING THE WORLD—BY DESIGN

Read former Trustee Craig Chapman's reflection on innovation through a Christian lens.

Pages 22 – 23



ANNUAL FUND IMPACT

See how donations to the Annual Fund make a difference.

Pages 28 – 29

IN THE CLASSROOM



- 6** Message from the Headmaster
- 8** Innovation in a Classical School
- 10** Faculty Profile: Phil Higley
- 13** Writer's Workshop
- 16** Outside the Box: JanTerm at Bear Creek

BEYOND THE CURRICULUM



- 20** The SAMR Model: Helping Teachers Learn to Innovate
- 22** Changing the World—by Design
- 24** Building Community Through Athletics

PHILANTHROPY



26 The Gift of Hospitality

27 A Gift for the Ages

28 The Annual Fund Impacts Students Every Day

ALUMNI



30 Alumni News and Class Notes

30 Colin Eckhoff, Class of 2015

32 Chris Pattillo, Class of 2009

33 Kaley French, Class of 2013

34 A Summer in Palestine
Ian Levasseur, Class of 2018

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADMASTER

By Patrick Carruth

A FEW YEARS AGO I saw the movie *Imitation Game* which is a story of Alan Turing and the cryptanalysis team from Hut 8 and their contribution to the successful British deciphering of the German Enigma machine in WWII. I was struck by a couple of things. Obviously, the first was my ignorance of the history and development of the discipline of computer sciences; but, the second was perhaps more profound and relevant. For those of you who have not seen the movie—spoiler alert. At one point in the movie, after years of effort, the Hut 8 team discovers a key piece of data that enables them to finally break the Enigma encryption code and understand German military communication. Elated, they decide to quickly notify the British Army and Intelligence agencies in hopes of preventing an imminent German attack on a civilian vessel. At the moment, however, they are seized by the paradoxical power of their discovery, recognizing that if they disclose the attack and miraculously save the civilian ship, they will unwittingly reveal to the Germans that they have broken the code, and, the following day, the Germans will modify the code and encrypt it differently. Years of work will be wasted, the team will have to begin trying to break the code again and war will continue.



It is in that moment the characters understand technical skill is not enough. They must decide whether to allow the preventable destruction of human life to occur, in order to keep their discovery a secret and ultimately save millions of lives and win the war. Decisions such as these require both technique and wisdom.

The paradox is profoundly relevant to students at The Bear Creek School and to us as a community, because it reveals the often unseen purpose of

true education – *wisdom, compassion, and courage*. We tend to be fragmented in our thinking. And our modern pace of life and our institutions reinforce this prevalent way of thinking. So, we “specialize” everything and construct dichotomies which are not actually true. We categorize schools as a “humanities” school or a “STEM” school or a “liberal arts” school, when, in reality, those pieces are distinct parts of a unified whole.

What the climactic moment of the movie reveals is this truth—technique paired with wisdom changes the world. While the code-breakers were highly technically trained mathematicians and linguists who specialized in precise areas of expertise, once

they accomplished their technical task with their technical skills, they were presented with a much larger challenge that was not technical. They had

**THE FULLNESS OF AN
INTEGRATED EDUCATION
IS TRUE EDUCATION
AND THE PROMISE
OF A HIGH-QUALITY
CHRISTIAN LIBERAL ARTS
EDUCATION. DONE RIGHT,
IT TEACHES STUDENTS
BOTH TECHNIQUE AND
WISDOM BY WHICH
TO SOLVE TECHNICAL
PROBLEMS, TO SEE THEM
IN THE LARGER CONTEXT,
AND TO WISELY AND
BIBLICALLY DISCERN, "SO
WHAT AND NOW WHAT?"**

to decide when to reveal information and when to suppress it, knowing that the consequences would likely be the destruction of people, cities, countries,

and civilizations, as well as the salvation of those very same things. Their technical skills allowed them to solve a vastly complicated problem, but once accomplished, they had to make much bigger decisions—who lives and who dies. These are not technical questions. These are ethical, moral, and human questions which require wisdom and discernment. These are questions that may only be answered from an integrated worldview.

The fullness of an integrated education is true education and the promise of a high-quality Christian liberal arts education. Done right, it teaches students both technique and wisdom by which to solve technical problems, to see them in the larger context, and to wisely and biblically discern, “so what and now what?” You see, in the end, Christian liberal arts education is about integration and not fragmentation. Such integration serves the mission of The Bear Creek School well because technical knowledge is yet another branch (or STEM, if you will) on the source and end of all knowledge, *enabling students to become the individuals God intends*, prepared to make wise and creative decisions as they engage tomorrow. *Soli Deo gloria.*

Innovation in a Classical School

BY KAREN BLANKENBECKLER

Many people hear “classical school” and assume this means doing things in a traditional or old way, the way things were done hundreds of years ago. With that assumption, classical education and innovation seem in conflict. But being old does not make it good nor does it make it bad, it just makes it old. The Bear Creek School is intentional in how we educate our students as we apply the classical approach in a creative and innovative way.

We believe we must be innovative in our approaches while staying true to things we know to be of value from classical education. We are classical in the Why and the What. We are innovative in the How.

THE WHY

As a classical school, we have a philosophy on why education matters and what exactly we are trying to accomplish. In contrast, modern education is focused on a utilitarian view of usefulness. In this philosophy, education is only important as it contributes to our future success. Our future success is often defined by good grades, which lead to a good college, which leads to a good job. C.S. Lewis says, “Education without

values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil.” This training in values is a significant focus of a classical education. We are focused on helping our students grow in virtue. Rather than education just being an accumulation of facts which we might use later, it is encouraging a fulfilling life in which a student knows and reveres the good, loves and

reproduces the beautiful, and pursues the excellent.

We are not just a classical school but a Christian classical school where we recognize that God is the good, the true, and the beautiful. Our studies in school help us fulfill Matthew 22:37–39, which is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind and love our neighbors as ourselves. As we

HERE ARE A FEW OF THE MANY WAYS BEAR CREEK USES TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM:

- Students drill and practice mastery of information with programs like Quizlet.
- Teachers post their own videos or recommend videos so students can watch and absorb the content at their own pace.
- Students can use programs such as Flip Grid to record their own presentations.
- Student notes and teacher notes can be accessed electronically by the whole class so learning is more interactive.
- Teachers use programs like Plickers or Peardeck for a quick in-class way to assess student understanding and give feedback.
- Teachers and students use OneNote to share information, discuss important concepts, and pose questions to be answered in classroom seminar discussions.

grow in knowledge of subjects like literature, mathematics, science, and languages we better know and can love God, His creation, and His creatures.

THE WHAT

Our curriculum is intentionally planned to help students grow in knowledge and understanding of the great events and great minds of the past. We believe that things of quality that have endured over time deserve to be studied, including literature, poetry, mythology, history, and music. Studies in mathematics and science help us develop critical thinking and problem solving skills as well as a better understanding of our world. Other components of the curriculum have been carefully chosen to prepare our students to be people of wisdom, compassion, and courage and make a difference in the world.

THE HOW: BOTH CLASSICAL AND INNOVATIVE

In order to learn any subject, we must first have the basic knowledge and understanding (grammar), we must then analyze and apply that knowledge (dialectic), and then be able to articulate clearly what we have concluded (rhetoric). This classical understanding and approach guides the learning process of our students. This is where innovative approaches come in. We continually ask our teachers, “What is the best way to help

your students go through the learning process?” This question is important to keep asking because schools are dynamic places with changing students, changing culture, and changing technology.

We ask our teachers to be innovative in the way they tackle the learning process. This means to think through everything they know about students and the way they learn from our classical methodology and then apply creative, cutting-edge ways to help them learn all they can. Dorothy Sayers, an early proponent of classical education said, “The whole of the Trivium was in fact intended to teach the pupil the proper use of the tools of learning, before he began to apply them to ‘subjects’ at all.” Included in our “tools” for the twenty-first century is advancing technology which can help students learn. There are many ways computers and other electronic devices can help the learning process.

Innovation is not limited to the use of computers or electronics. Innovation at Bear Creek means being intentional in methods, constantly learning and adapting, and using creative approaches to help students learn. This philosophy is consistent with our mission statement as we consider each student a unique individual and seek the best ways to help him or her become the individual God intends.



Karen is one of the founding members of Bear Creek's teaching faculty and as the V.P. for Academic Affairs oversees the academic program from preschool through grade 12. She has served more than 25 years in steadfast leadership and has made major contributions to the development and success of the curricular and co-curricular programs at Bear Creek. She has a B.S. in elementary education, with a concentration in early childhood development from Oregon State University, and a M.A. in curriculum and instruction from Lesley University.




FACULTY PROFILE:

PHIL HIGLEY

STORY BY KATIE GOMULKIEWICZ

PHOTOS BY SINI FERNANDEZ AND JANEEN SORENSEN



“THESE KIDS I AM TEACHING ARE LITERALLY THE FUTURE,” PHIL REMINDED ME, “THAT IS BOTH IMPORTANT AND EXCITING.”

WHEN PATRICK CARRUTH, Bear Creek’s President and Headmaster, said that “teaching is one of the

most important professions,” Phil remembered thinking, “this is a big deal.” However, Phil Higley did not always feel that way about education. “Honestly,” he told me, “I thought high school was a joke. I felt like a lemming among lemmings just jumping through hoops.” This feeling was so strong that Phil almost didn’t go to college. However, at the age of nineteen, Phil became a Christian and with this new faith came a renewed desire to learn. He enrolled at Northwest University to learn more about philosophy.

Now described as a mentor, Phil shared with me the story of his first philosophy paper for Dr. Darrell Hobson, a professor at Northwest, who wrote “Come see me, I’m not going to bother reading the rest of this.” Although at first that statement seemed harsh, Dr. Hobson shared with Phil that he wanted to help teach all his students to think, to read, to write, and to speak. This experience instilled in Phil the conviction that good education is about both knowledge and relationships, an idea that he applies to teaching Middle School at Bear Creek.

After college Phil enrolled at Fuller

Theological Seminary for a master’s in philosophy and after that he planned to pursue a doctorate in Trinitarian theology, however, in his last quarter of the master’s program Phil had a change of heart. He told me, “I read something Karl Barth wrote, ‘True theology serves the church, and where it ceases to serve the church it is no longer authentic and true.’” This struck Phil and once again, he changed the trajectory of his future. Instead of pursuing the “self-serve” of a doctorate, Phil decided to serve others through ministry. And although Phil enjoyed his time in ministry, he kept thinking about teaching. “I wanted to be the teacher I needed when I was younger,” he told me.

Soon, an opportunity fell into Phil’s lap. His wife, Kim, had been teaching at The Bear Creek School and when a position opened for a Middle School Christian Studies teacher, Phil “threw his hat in the ring” and the rest is history. I asked Phil what he loves about teaching Middle School, and he told me that this is “an awkward and vulnerable time of life” for the students which allows teachers to play a critical role of mentorship and support. Phil said his



first year as a teacher taught him two key things: one, that Bear Creek students are incredibly intelligent and two, that all students go through the ups and downs of life. That's when Patrick's message truly hit home for Phil. "These kids I am teaching are literally the future," Phil reminded me, "That is both important and exciting."

Phil values the Christian liberal arts philosophy at Bear Creek because as he told me (paraphrasing N.T. Wright), "the Gospel does not change, but we change, and we want it to change us." So, although the classics don't change, the liberal arts free people to be relevant "agents of change and culture."

Phil and I spoke at length about the value of community, and he described teaching at Bear Creek as "life together." Community came up repeatedly during my conversation with Phil. This togetherness also explains Phil's deep passion for fitness. Phil became a Christian in a gym after another man gave him a Bible and began talking to him about the Gospel. Phil met his wife Kim

at a gym so in a roundabout way, fitness also brought Phil to Bear Creek. "Good things happen when we live in healthy community," Phil explained. God made us to be in community, he made us mentally tough, and he made us with bodies. Phil described faith as "earthy" and spoke about the value of physical activity not just for maintaining a healthy body but also for growing in confidence and courage. He furthers that belief by teaching the Middle School Strength Training class.

Outside of history, philosophy, and fitness, Phil revealed to me he is also a huge *Lord of the Rings*

nerd. "I seriously watched the movies in theaters at least seven times and don't worry, I've also read the books ten times," he told me. At this point in the conversation I wasn't surprised by Phil's love of *Lord of the Rings*. In fact, it seems like exactly the type of story that would resonate with him. "Of course, I know Tolkien hates allegory, but *Lord of the Rings* does tap into the ultimate story," Phil said. "There is good and evil, and we are caught in between. We have to make choices." Although he is talking about hobbits and wizards, the same could be said for mentoring Middle School students. "I want to engage relationally with students," Phil emphasizes, "I want the students to know I care." Phil isn't teaching lemmings, that's for sure. He is teaching his students to think, to speak, to read, (maybe even to lift), and most importantly to live authentic lives rooted in Christ. Phil's words rattled around in my mind the rest of the day, "I want to be the kind of teacher I needed." Ask any of his students, they'll tell you that he is exactly the kind of teacher they need.



WRITER'S WORKSHOP

BY DEBBIE MARCHIONE

PHOTOS BY JANEEN SORENSEN

Frequently, innovation is equated with technology, yet this false equivalency limits innovation. Our Lower School Writer's Workshop is a good example of an innovative approach within a classical context.

Students engage in the entire writing cycle—plan, write, revise and edit, and publish—multiple times throughout the school year. They choose topics from their own hearts and minds, not ideas provided by the teacher, providing a richer, more meaningful

experience. Beginning in kindergarten, and spiraling each year, students learn the structures and rules for narrative, non-fiction, opinion, and realistic fiction. What makes Writer's Workshop innovative is the methodology, centering around a mini-lesson



**THE APPROACH PLACES
THE EMPHASIS ON THE
STUDENT AS A WRITER,
RATHER THAN ON THE
WRITTEN PRODUCT.**

and then immediate implementation, with students practicing the concepts of the lesson while the teacher guides them one-on-one.



The approach places the emphasis on the student as a writer, rather than on the written product. This helps each student develop his or her own voice, with individualized instruction that allows him/her to meet the learning objectives in a self-paced way. The content doesn't change, but this innovative approach to teaching gives the students a more differentiated learning experience.

Says first-grade teacher Renee Matson, "The kids get to write about what they know, and they absolutely love Writer's Workshop. They are thrilled to share their published pieces with one another. It's very powerful for kids to realize that they have a voice and have the courage to share it with others."





OUTSIDE THE BOX: JANTERM AT BEAR CREEK

BY JAMES WOOLLARD
PHOTOS BY JANEEN
SORENSEN

JanTerm: Intentionally Different

January 2020 marks the tenth anniversary of JanTerm at Bear Creek. For those unfamiliar with the concept, JanTerm is like a mini semester during which students take a break from their regular studies and pursue alternate courses for a short period of time. In our case, students in grades 7 through 12 select four topical seminars that they study for seven or eight days. Although we didn't invent the idea—it's quite common at the collegiate level—we are one of the few secondary schools in the nation, and certainly Washington State, that offers JanTerm to its students.

Why JanTerm?

Part of the reason we introduced JanTerm was our desire to create some breathing room for our students. In a busy school year, having a break mid-way through the year can feel like a respite. Before JanTerm was launched, students had faced final exams upon their return from Christmas Break. Now, with



Design and Produce Your Own Textiles: Eco-friendly Artisan Design with a South American Flare!



Board and Video Game Design



Advanced Dissection



Ultimately the Best

final exams occurring before Christmas, students can enjoy their Christmas vacations and genuinely look forward to easing back into school in January. But JanTerm is much more than just a mid-year interlude; it's a special opportunity to provide a different, innovative curriculum for our students. That uniqueness can be summarized in two words: breadth and depth.

Breadth

First, JanTerm allows us to broaden our curriculum. If you examine this year's JanTerm course catalog, you'll see a range of classes that you wouldn't typically associate with a core middle school or high school curriculum. That's because we offer teachers a fairly *carte blanche* opportunity to get "outside the box" by teaching mission-appropriate classes that match their passions, hobbies, and interests. Consequently, the selection of classes is very broad, ranging from "Stand-Up Comedy" to "Stop Motion Animation" to "School of Rock." With the goal of offering innovative seminars, we have deliberately recruited parents and grandparents (and occasionally alumni) to teach classes as well, knowing that they bring a unique skillset and a wealth of experiences that we cannot normally provide. In 2020, we offered 104 different JanTerm seminars, 13 of which were taught by parents or grandparents. These included a badminton class taught

by a former Chinese national champion, a psychology course taught by a university professor, and “Sports Broadcasting 101” taught by a current ESPN and Fox Sports broadcaster.

Depth

We are also deepening our curriculum. With built-in time constraints in the school year, teachers don't always have the extended time needed to delve deeply into topics that they would like. JanTerm is a great opportunity to do that. For example, Advanced Placement (AP) classes continue to meet throughout JanTerm, but for AP teachers, the JanTerm schedule provides an opportunity to drill down and get into the nitty gritty of their subjects by focusing in-depth on one or two topics that lend themselves to intensive investigation. One example is AP Physics 1 taught by Linda Graham. Last year during JanTerm, she taught a special unit focused on crash scene investigation. In this unit, students took on the role of police officers investigating a car accident, determining the facts of the case using the laws of physics, and even going to court to present evidence and conclusions based on their physics knowledge. It proved to be a truly innovative, applied physics class.

A Lasting Impact on Students

One of the neat things about the program is the opportunities it has created for students beyond JanTerm. In that sense, JanTerm is just a taste of what lies ahead. An example is alumnus Matthew Mistele '17. Matthew was already a budding computer programmer back in Middle School, when he developed a game for the Xbox 360 Marketplace. Later, during Jan White's “Blog It” JanTerm class, he wrote about his experiences and his plans to develop mobile apps. The post was read by someone in Australia who reached out to Matthew and commissioned him to develop a company app. And the rest is history, as they say.

On a personal note, I know of at least two families who subsequently adopted dogs because of the gentle pleading (relentless pressure?) of the students



Cars & Culture



Me Like Fire! The Art and Science of Grilling



What Goes Up Must Come Down: Yoga and Balances



Painting for His Purpose



Urban Sketching



DIY: Creating One-of-a-Kind Works of Art

in my JanTerm class entitled "It's a Dog's Life." So, I like to think that JanTerm has made a positive impact on our four-legged friends as well as our two-legged students (if not their parents!).

Impacting the Community

Some JanTerm classes have made a difference in the lives of people beyond Bear Creek. Upper School art teacher Trinity Osborn teaches a class called "Painting for His Purpose." During this class, students paint portraits of disadvantaged or orphaned youth in Malaysia, using photographs sent to Mrs. Osborn by The Memory Project. The portraits are then sent to Malaysia and hand-delivered to the orphans. In many instances, these children do not have personal belongings. However, by participating in this project, the Malaysian children will have a personal object to treasure, a memory from their childhood, and a visual reminder that they are beautiful artworks themselves.

Closer to home, Ryan Summers' "Visitation with the Elderly" class works with Country Estate at Union Hill, an assisted living facility across the road from Bear Creek. As part of this course, students provide company, conversation, and connection to a group of senior adults. While students do not provide any direct care to the elderly, leaving that in the hands of trained professionals, they do bring an important social benefit to the residents. The course also involves several readings and conversations on issues of human dignity, the elderly, and compassion.

It's no surprise that many students look back at their JanTerm experience as one of the highlights of their Bear Creek education. The opportunity to engage in new material or dive deeper into topics is what makes JanTerm a truly exciting and innovative program for all. The impact that it makes in our students' lives and the lives of those beyond Bear Creek makes this a valuable program at Bear Creek. If you are a parent, grandparent, or alumna/alumnus and would be interested in teaching a future JanTerm class, please reach out to James Woollard, JanTerm program director, at jwoollard@tbcs.org.

The SAMR Model: Helping Teachers Learn to Innovate

BY DEBBIE MARCHIONE

What do we mean when we talk about innovation in the classroom? At The Bear Creek School, Linda Graham, our Upper School Innovation Coach, defines innovation as, “Helping students learn more effectively by doing things in a different way.”

As Innovation Coach, Linda’s role is to train our teachers to adopt and integrate technology in new ways, while still being true to Bear Creek’s classical approach to education. “One of our challenges is to live classically in a modern world, which means applying new tools and technology in a thoughtful way to achieve our desired outcomes.”

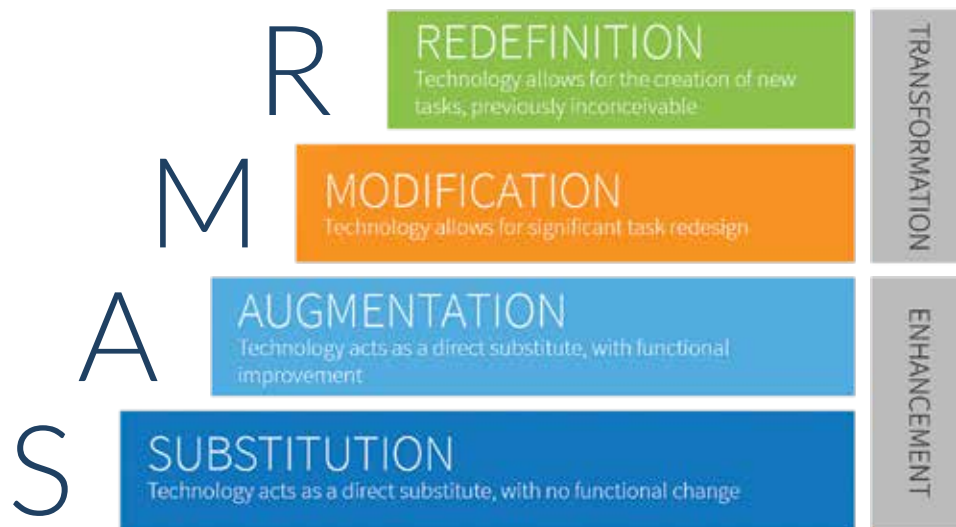
For example, how we access information has changed dramatically in recent years, so part of the *grammar* stage includes giving students more options and tools for gathering knowledge that take advantage of a wider variety of sources. At the same time, we have to teach them how to evaluate those sources, which gives us the opportunity to teach them to think and read critically and discuss the ethical use of information and the importance of digital citizenship. These types of conversations fit well into the *dialectic* stage, when students are questioning and beginning to synthesize what they have learned. New technologies can also play a role in the *rhetoric* stage, as students consider ways to share or present their knowledge to others, determining the best medium from among many options: a video, a podcast, a slide show, or a written paper.

Students engage with the world in a variety of ways, and the latest brain research has shown that

providing multiple modalities for learning, beyond the traditional lecture and note-taking, can make a positive impact on students’ ability to learn. For example, our juniors and seniors each have Microsoft Surface tablets, on which they can type notes, handwrite, collaborate in online spaces with classmates and teachers, create slideshows or videos, and delve into vast quantities of data, exponentially expanding their options for active learning.

In order for classroom innovation to happen effectively, teachers need support and training. Linda uses the SAMR model, developed by Dr. Ruben Puentedura, to help Bear Creek faculty integrate technology in the classroom and teach in innovative ways. The letters “SAMR” stand for Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition.

The model is progressive in nature and builds on itself. A teacher might begin with Substitution, replacing a paper worksheet with a digital one, then move on to Augmentation, such as using a digital quiz in class that allows him or her to see in real time which questions are not well-understood or which students are struggling with particular concepts. Building from these steps, a teacher can tackle Modification by changing the way a class approaches learning objectives. For example, they



might use the Microsoft Teams app for a group project. This app allows students to study and work together virtually, collaborating on tasks and research, without the need for physical proximity. The teacher can watch the project, and the group cooperation, unfold in the online space, guiding and supporting students as needed. Another option might be to videotape a lecture, allowing students to watch the lecture online as their homework, then use class time for lab or a Socratic discussion. This integration also enables students who are absent to stay on track, or in the case of a snow day or other interruption, for a class to continue learning. Finally, Redefinition gives faculty and

students a chance to explore opportunities that are only possible through technology such as practical applications for 3D printing. These opportunities may include partnerships with other students, organizations, or companies beyond Bear Creek, and open up a wealth of options which the school is just beginning to explore.

While the SAMR model focuses initially on technology, training faculty to think in new ways about how they teach—the tools, methods, and approaches—will naturally lead to greater innovation beyond technological tools and introduce students to even more creative ways to learn and share knowledge.

With a solid foundation of wisdom, compassion, and courage built on critical thinking skills, Christian values, and curiosity, Bear Creek students will no doubt be well positioned to become the next generation of innovators in our world.

Changing the World—by Design

BY CRAIG CHAPMAN

“Design is the fundamental soul of a man-made creation.” That poetic expression from Steve Jobs, made during an interview in 2000, fully captures the spirit of the man who created and then re-invented Apple Computers. The quote has really stuck with me as I have thought about the words “design” and “creation” and their relation to our human soul. Over the last few months, I have been working with my colleagues at Northwest University to put together a set of new degree programs within the Creatio Center for Technology, Media, and Design. Given the mission of our university to “carry the call of God by continually building a learning community dedicated to spiritual vitality, academic excellence, and empowered engagement with human need,” we must consider the question: Why should a Christian care about and engage with innovation, design, creativity, and technology?

It’s certainly no mystery that we have an incredibly creative God because the entire Biblical story is a masterpiece of design. In fact, the very first verse of the Bible, Genesis 1:1—before we learn anything else about God—highlights creation. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” At the end of the Bible, Revelation 21:5 says, “I am making everything new!” And in between are countless stories that highlight God’s creativity as the great Designer of the universe, the world, and His plan for our life. Our creation in the image of



Craig Chapman is a parent of Bear Creek juniors Haley and Jack and a former Trustee. He is the Director of the Creatio Center for Technology, Media, and Design at Northwest University. A version of this article is being published concurrently in *Northwest Passages*, the magazine of Northwest University.

God means, among other things, that we are born to design and innovate. That fact makes it important to consider our own role as designers and innovators.

Let’s consider some other examples from the Bible. For instance, it’s pretty clear that Adam and Eve had to design their own wardrobe! We might chuckle at that, but there are many more important examples. God gave Noah some detailed instructions about the size and purpose of the ark, but God left millions of design details up to him, allowing him to cooperate with God as a designer and innovator. We can assume that Jesus was also a designer. Tradition tells us that Jesus was a carpenter, but the Bible actually says he was a “tekton” or builder, working with stone, metal, and wood. I must imagine that God’s son created some really cool stuff! But the Bible presents other designers we should not seek to copy. We can give some high marks for creativity to the folks who designed and tried to build the Tower of Babel, but since they were outside the will of God, they were ultimately unsuccessful in their attempt.

So, if we are born to be creative, how can we ensure that we’re more like Jesus and less like those miscreants that thought it was a good idea to build a tower to heaven? 1 Corinthians 10:30 gives us some clear marching orders: “Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

In his book *Called to Create*, Jordan Raynor shares a great example of someone who used his creativity for Godly purpose. Johann Sebastian Bach was one

of the greatest and most prolific musical composers in the history of the world. He ended every one of his works with the inscription, *solī Deo gloria* (to God alone be the glory). Raynor says it this way: “As we look to displace the world’s motivations for creating, looking to motives of the One who has called us to create seems like the most logical place to start. As we adopt [God’s] motivations as our own, our work takes on an entirely different and richer meaning, bringing deep satisfaction as we create to reveal our Creator’s character and love others.” Clearly the key word here is motivation. The focus of our creativity must be fixed firmly upon God and His purposes. We need to ask ourselves this question: are we willing to inscribe *solī Deo gloria* on all our creations? If the answer to that question is yes, then I would assert that, as designers and innovators with a heart for serving our Lord, we have the opportunity to change the world.

My own background in creativity and innovation centered on a career in software engineering, in which I spent more than 35 years in a field completely focused on design and innovation. I must admit that, even as a Christian, my purpose in this career was to make a good living. Frankly, I fell into the trap of wrapping up my personal identity to some extent with my job at Microsoft and other technology companies. However, in 2003 I felt a tangible call from God to leave that world behind. I didn’t have any idea what was in store for me, but I knew that I was being called to a new purpose of serving Him. Not long after this, when a friend gave me the opportunity to join him in starting a technology company, I initially balked. I thought that God had called me to focus on more “spiritual” endeavors (which I thought meant being a ministry volunteer). Yet in April 2004, during my quiet time, God opened my eyes to Romans 12:2: “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you

into a new person by changing the way you think.” The message was clear to me: God had given me the skills of innovation and design; instead of using them to make money and feed my personal identity as I had done in my “old life,” it was time for me to use these gifts for the glory of God. As I helped to start “a new creation” in the form of a technology company with some revolutionary new products, there were tangible ways in which He allowed me to use my background in design and innovation to glorify Him. And today He’s still allowing me to create and

innovate as I use those same skills to build a new set of Creatio programs that emphasize design, creativity, and innovation.

As Christians, I think that we can all agree that every one of the resources under our control belongs to God—our money, our time, and our talents. As the Director of the Creatio Center at Northwest University I believe that my role is to help teach our students to take advantage of the creative talent that God has baked into us, and instead of using it for our own glory or gain, to use it for God’s glory and the Kingdom’s gain! More specifically, I feel that God’s calling here within Creatio is to find students

with a natural talent for creativity and teach them why God gave us that gift and how to use it. Those graduates from Northwest University will be the world-changers for the next generation.

So, was Steve Jobs correct? Is it true that “Design is the fundamental soul of a man-made creation?” While the sentiment expressed by Jobs sounds compelling to someone who loves to create, I believe that Steve put too much emphasis on the human role in the design process. Our ability to design, innovate, and create is imbued by our Creator, so let’s make sure that He gets the credit: “Our soul was made for design because we were created in the image of God.”

*I feel that God’s
calling here within
Creatio is to find
students with a
natural talent for
creativity and teach
them why God gave
us that gift and how
to use it.*

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH ATHLETICS



BY SINI FERNANDEZ

Sunny fall weather brought out the fans to cheer for the Lady Grizzlies soccer team at the 2019 Fall Tailgate. *Photo by Sini Fernandez*

IT STARTED WHEN MY KIDS WERE QUITE YOUNG, still kindergarteners at The Bear Creek School's short-lived Branch Campus housed in Redmond's First Baptist Church. My friend Holly Alleva asked if my son was interested in playing soccer with her son Zach '12 and some other rising first graders the following fall. "Sure," I said. And soon enough, Lucas '12 was signed up through Lake Washington Youth Soccer to play on the Ravens with two other boys from his class and three boys from classes at the brand-new Redmond Campus. So began our family's foray into organized sports and a wonderful community we discovered at Bear Creek. Throughout their Lower School years, my children all played on local teams with their classmates. As parents we enjoyed the fellowship of our children's teammates' parents, and many of these families became dear friends as the years progressed.

The Ravens stayed together for six years as did my daughters' Polar Bears and Iron Girls youth soccer teams, forging bonds of friendship through years together on the field and in the classroom.

After a fall season that always ended on rain-soaked muddy fields, we were happy to transition to Boys & Girls Club basketball teams and the comfort of a warm, dry gym. My daughters Elizabeth '12 and Catherine '14 played on teams with their classmates Kendall '12 and Kristina '14 Engelstone and coached by their mom Shelley. As the kids grew, they shifted from community sports to school sports, and soon they were all sporting Grizzlies uniforms in the Middle School athletics program. During this period, I, too, transitioned from team mom to Grizzlies Booster Club member and joined the Booster Board. The Booster Club promotes school spirit through athletics by hosting several events each year and supporting

the Athletics Department in its mission.

Helping to organize the annual events like the Fall Sports Kick-off (now Fall Tailgate), Green & Gold Night, and Athletics Banquet was fulfilling and fun because these events brought our family together with other families who continued to be our close friends. Although my kids were two- and three-season athletes all the way through Upper School, they did specialize as they got older, participating in club or Amateur Athletics Union (AAU) sports, while continuing to play additional high school sports. Lucas played AAU basketball while Elizabeth played club volleyball and Catherine played both club sports, and although the joy of cheering for my children during their club seasons was undiminished, I missed the close-knit Bear Creek community of friends at those events. My kids, however, benefitted from the intense activity and myriad additional



Dig Pink supports the Side-Out Foundation and breast cancer treatment and awareness and always draws a crowd! This year fans cheered from new green bleachers purchased with funds raised at the Annual Auction in March 2019. *Photo by Cindy McCahill*



Green & Gold Night kicked off the 2019 – 2020 basketball season in November. Beginning in fall 2018, the extended Bear Creek community can stay connected with our teams from afar with a subscription to NFHS Network which streams home games live. The Pixellot S series camera, a donation from a few ardent Grizzlies sports families, is mounted in the gym (just above the balloons). *Photo by Janeen Sorensen*

touches on the ball, returning to their school teams each season more skilled and ready to make a difference for the Grizzlies.

One of the joys of belonging to

a preschool – grade 12 school community is the longevity of the relationships developed. Shelley coached her daughters (and mine) all the way through high school. My son played basketball

with Josh Firminger '11 and Kyle Blankenbeckler '10, and now I get to watch Emma Firminger '21 lead the Green Guard at basketball games while Jace Blankenbeckler '20 is shooting 3-pointers on the court. Although my relationship with Bear Creek Athletics is now more professional than personal, the school community continues to benefit from the spirit of comradery fostered by Grizzlies sports teams. Elizabeth played in the first Dig Pink volleyball matches in October 2008, and this year Bear Creek celebrated the eleventh annual event. Lucas' team played in the first Green & Gold Night in November 2005, and this year Bear Creek celebrated the fifteenth annual event. Even though I don't miss attending every single varsity boys and girls basketball games in a season while shooting thousands of photos each week, I do miss the many hours spent with good friends as we cheered for our kids. And although I no longer volunteer to organize Booster-sponsored events, I'm proud of the new leadership in the Grizzlies Booster Club which continues to support our sports programs through these old favorites as well as new initiatives such as the expanded 2019 – 2020 basketball program, athlete yard signs, and T-shirts for Pep Band. Go Grizzlies!

The Fernandez family has been a part of The Bear Creek School community since 1999 when their twins started kindergarten. Sini started serving in the brand new Valley Campus library in 2006 and joined the Communications group later that year.

The Gift of Hospitality

BY DEBBIE MARCHIONE

FOR MICHAEL AND KARI TONI, hospitality comes naturally. Michael graduated from the California Culinary Academy and worked as a professional chef in a number of prominent restaurants with a dream of opening his own restaurant one day. After he married Kari in 2002, the couple decided to move from San Diego to Mercer Island, where Michael's parents live, and start a catering and events company. "We saw better opportunities here, and we didn't want to compete with our friends in California. I also realized that there would be more flexibility with catering than with having a restaurant, and I knew that would be important when we had a family," remembers Michael.

Michael handles the culinary side of the business, while Kari designs and manages the aesthetics and details. Her mother was an interior designer and passed along to Kari the importance of setting a tone for any occasion through the look and feel of the surroundings. Kari somewhat ruefully remembers, "My mom would let us decorate the Christmas tree, then after we went to bed, she would redo it. She had a strong vision for what the house should look like at Christmas." Then she laughs, "I do that to my kids now! When they grow up, they can do it their way."

After several years of building their business, A Platinum Event, they settled into a commercial kitchen in Redmond and began looking for a



Kari, second from right, with PTF volunteers

kindergarten that was close to their workplace for their daughter Francesca.

Kari states, "From the minute we toured Bear Creek, I knew this was the place for us. I had researched several other schools, but we canceled the other visits. We felt at home here immediately." Michael adds, "I have lived in many places and experienced a lot of schools, both good and bad, so I know what I want for our kids. It's such a good feeling to know that Bear Creek provides students such a strong foundation for their lives."

Francesca, now in grade 5, has thrived at Bear Creek, and they are hoping to enroll her little brother Jonathon in kindergarten here next fall.

Kari chimes in, "I love that the school has a vision for our kids as humans and focuses on who they are, not what they will do. The intentionality of the curriculum, the community, the focus on strong character, the way students are prepared for each project—it all comes together into a great package. I don't know what our kids will grow up to do, but I am confident that Bear Creek will help give them the values and skills they need to make good decisions, regardless of their career choices."



The Toni family

As their company has continued to grow, the Tonis have been very busy, forging partnerships with many of the wineries in Woodinville and other local venues. Despite a demanding schedule, with multiple weekly events, they still find time to be involved at Bear Creek. With their parents as models of volunteering in school and church, both Kari and Michael try to stay connected with the school and the community. In addition to helping out with classroom activities, they have partnered with the PTF to help with decorations for the Lower School and Early Middle School Fall Carnival, and have generously catered the annual PTF All-School Fellowship Breakfast, Teacher and Staff Appreciation Lunch, and Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast.

Kari reflects that, “We have chosen to share our gifts where it means the most to us. Volunteering for Bear Creek, I have learned to let go of control a little bit and have fun with the events.” Michael adds, “It’s rewarding to be a part of the school in this way. I love that we can give what we do best.”

What Michael and Kari do best is creating an event full of warmth, fellowship, beauty, and fabulous food. We are very grateful to them for blessing Bear Creek with their gift of hospitality.

A GIFT FOR THE AGES

Gifts such as bequests or trusts are a meaningful way to leave a legacy while helping to educate future generations of Bear Creek students, preparing them to engage the world with wisdom, compassion, and courage. If you have already made a provision for The Bear Creek School in your will or estate plan, please let us know so we may say thank you and recognize your generosity.

For more information contact Debbie Marchione, V.P. for Philanthropy and Community Engagement, at dmarchione@tbcs.org or by calling 425-898-1720 ext. 339.

THE ANNUAL FUND IMPACTS STUDENTS EVERY DAY



Inspiring students through field trips and experiences beyond the classroom walls



Nurturing students' creativity and confidence through beautiful drama and music performances



Developing athletes' physical skills and personal character, regardless of experience

Annual Fund contributions play a vital role in allowing Bear Creek to fulfill our mission and graduate students prepared to engage the world with wisdom, compassion, and courage. Here are just a few examples of the impact Annual Fund gifts make.

Thank you to everyone who made a gift!



Helping students find their artistic voices through various art mediums and professional gallery show experiences



Innovating classroom instruction with new technology, educational tools, and equipment



Sustaining beloved school traditions like Grandparents Day

ALUMNI NEWS AND CLASS NOTES

Class of 2015

Rebecca Carlson

Rebecca graduated from Hillsdale College with a B.S. in philosophy in the spring of 2019 and is now a Ph.D. student in the University of Southern California's School of Philosophy. She will be in southern California for a while since it is a 5 – 6 year program.

Class of 2010

Georgina Wadhwani-Napp Frantz and Henry Frantz

High school sweethearts Georgina and Henry Frantz were married in July 2019. Close friends and family from around the world were flown in by helicopter to a remote location in the mountains in Whistler, British Columbia, where Henry had proposed on an annual ski trip the previous winter. Bear Creek alumni Jake Matthews '10 and Adelaide Tillinghast '11 served as witnesses. Georgina and Henry live in Bellevue with two Cavalier King Charles Spaniel pups.



Colin Eckhoff, Class of 2015

INTERDISCIPLINARY. CONFIDENT. COURAGEOUS.

IMPACTFUL. Colin Eckhoff uses these words to describe the characteristics of a biomedical engineer. Currently in an accelerated bioengineering master's degree program at the University of Washington, Colin is using his skills and education to make a difference for others by advancing medical technology.

When asked how Bear Creek helped prepare him for his future, Colin states, "I always knew I wanted to work with science, but I learned at Bear Creek that I could be good at a variety of things, and to not reject any one subject as not 'my thing' or unrelated. My teachers did a good job of integrating different fields of study in a way that gradually became more rewarding as I kept finding myself in positions that required interdisciplinary work. Kenny Norris showed me how to embrace my own expository expressive style, and Earl Nelson was instrumental in helping me understand language from the rigorous grammatical principles to its potential emotional impact. In addition, knowing Latin helps me decipher unfamiliar medical terms almost immediately. And having good writing skills has also been really important because I can effectively share my ideas."

Colin chose the biomedical engineering field because it brings together many different disciplines to address medical problems in new and creative ways. He is currently leading a research project to develop a portable blood coagulation analyzer, which would enable immediate treatment for trauma patients with clotting disorders en route to the hospital. Colin says, "About twenty-five percent of trauma patients have clotting disorders that make hemorrhage control significantly more challenging. However, paramedics do not have the tools they need to screen for this, and therefore patient-individualized clotting therapy cannot occur until they make it to the operating room. This device would allow the appropriate clotting therapy to start during patient transport, buying trauma patients more time to survive the ride to the hospital. Our device is a game changer." Development of this device, which would be the first of its kind, requires knowledge of medicine, chemistry, and mechanical and electrical engineering, integrated in innovative ways.

This interdisciplinary approach requires drive and risk-taking, since like any new invention, there are many false starts and setbacks. “I want to pursue a career in an academic environment,” notes Colin, “because I think it will continue to grant me the opportunity to take on leadership roles in exploring new ideas and to commit to trying things where the outcome is unknown. That takes both personal and institutional courage. In addition, the University of Washington is one of the best places on earth to collaborate with and learn from people from a variety of disciplines who exude the innovative spirit the future of medicine needs.”



Colin is not waiting for someone else to grant him the mantle of leadership and exploration, however. In addition to his primary graduate project, Colin leads the student group Bioengineers Without Borders, which works as a team to identify clinical needs in the developing world and create devices that can meet those needs. He reflects, “It’s more than just an engineering challenge. We need to understand the environment where it will be used, who will be using it, what other resources are needed, what their particular approach to medical care is, plus how it will be distributed and serviced in-country from a business and logistics standpoint. It’s a big responsibility to do all of this effectively.

That’s why the interdisciplinary nature of the field is so important.”

He adds, “Besides giving me a strong academic foundation, Bear Creek taught me to have the courage to speak up about my ideas and how to bring people together in productive ways.”

Colin incorporates his inquisitive nature and a drive to take risks in his personal life as well. To relax outside of school, Colin loves to explore the mines, caves, and ghost towns of the Pacific Northwest, as well as climb some of its highest mountains. His maternal grandfather, Robert Grant, was a mountaineer who was struck by lightning at the summit of Mt. Stuart in 1952, and despite being partially paralyzed, crawled back down the mountain to safety. “His courage and ambition inspire me,” Colin says, “even though he died before I was born.” After summiting six mountains in the Cascades this year, Colin has set his sights on reaching the top of Mt. Rainier next summer. “Exploring the outdoors helps me keep things in perspective,” he says.



Whether trying to reach the top of a mountain or create a life-saving medical device, Colin believes that Bear Creek has served him well. “Bear Creek equipped me with a mindset that I use every day to pursue my enthusiasm for medicine.”

Chris Pattillo, Class of 2009



IF YOU SAW CHRIS PATTILLO AS HAROLD HILL, the lead role in the musical, *The Music Man*, which Bear Creek produced in 2009, you might not have realized that his future lay in science rather than theater. Yet Chris credits his success as a scientist in part

thanks to Bear Creek's approach to encouraging him in a variety of interests, beyond just his passion for science.

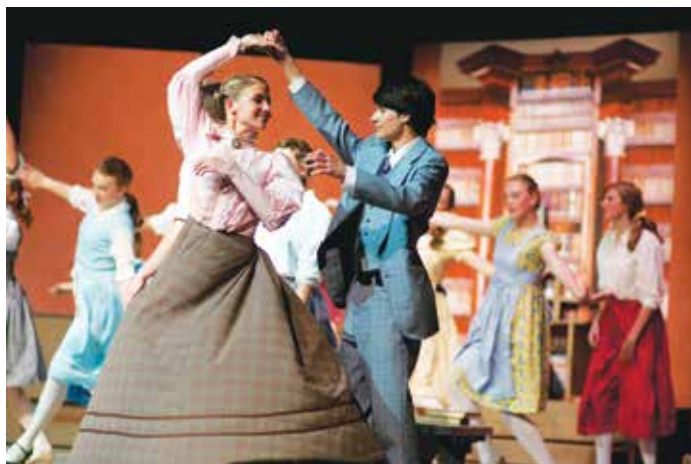
During his undergraduate years at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Chris was fortunate to be involved in a number of research projects that resulted in presentations at national conferences. He comments, "Being in the drama program at Bear Creek really helped me develop my confidence and speaking skills, which were very valuable in presenting our research."

With a Ph.D. in Chemistry earned from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in May 2019, Chris has found a challenging position as a research scientist for 3M in Minneapolis. He is excited about his role in helping develop new adhesives and applying his knowledge to a variety of products and production methods.

Chris states that, "Bear Creek was a first-rate education and prepared me well for college and graduate school. The strong science program as well as the opportunity to pursue my interests in drama and other topics helped me become who I am today." In addition to the strong academic foundation he received, he recalls fondly the relationships he built with his classmates and the teachers who truly cared about him as a person. He still stays in touch with

some of his friends from Bear Creek.

While admitting that the weather in the Midwest can be challenging, Chris is happy to be settled in Minnesota for the foreseeable future, although "Seattle still feels like home." He has adopted a puppy and is looking forward to seeing where his path will lead.



Kaley French, Class of 2013



AFTER GRADUATING FROM BEAR CREEK IN 2013,

I attended Tulane University in New Orleans, LA. At Tulane, I was accepted into a seven-year combined B.S./M.D. program in which I would complete my undergraduate studies

in cell and molecular biology in two years, perform one year of public service, and study medicine for four years at Tulane University School of Medicine. During my year of service, I worked with As & Aces, a tennis-based youth development organization, teaching life skills and the sport of tennis to children in New Orleans' Ninth Ward, the area most severely affected by Hurricane Katrina.

During my first year of medical school at Tulane, I began volunteering with the Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine to teach free community cooking classes in New Orleans with the purpose of reducing risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke while also empowering patients to prepare their own meals in a healthful manner. As someone who

has always loved to cook, this experience has been incredibly valuable for me over the past four years. Serving on the executive leadership team for the Culinary Medicine Student Organization has allowed me to use my love of cooking to help develop a culinary medicine curriculum that can be applied to other medical schools as part of preventative medicine education.

I also had the opportunity as a medical student to travel with the Bicol Clinic Foundation to provide primary care and minor surgical services to patients in rural villages throughout Nepal. Learning about the practice of medicine in resource-poor facilities instilled in me a passion for global health as well as conscientiousness regarding the cost of medical care we provide in the United States.

Currently a fourth-year medical student, I will be graduating medical school in the spring of 2020 to start residency training in pediatrics. I have many interests but plan to pursue a career in pediatric transplant medicine and hope to bring the joy of Christ to every patient I meet.

I would like to add that I would not be who I am today without the inspiration and encouragement I received from my teachers at Bear Creek. They taught me not only to love learning but also to use my knowledge to effect positive change in the world. I cannot thank them enough for the invaluable gift that is education.

STAY CONNECTED TO BEAR CREEK WHEREVER YOU ARE. #BCALUMNI



ALUMNI: [FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/BEARCREEKALUMNIGROUP/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/BearCreekAlumniGroup/)
PARENTS: [FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/BCPARENTSOFALUMNI/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/BCParentsOfAlumni/)



@BEARCREEKALUMNI



ALUMNI: [ALUMNI.TBCS.ORG](https://alumni.tbc.edu)
PARENTS: [TBCS.ORG/ALUMNI/PARENTS](https://tbc.edu/alumni/parents)

A SUMMER IN PALESTINE

IAN LEVASSEUR, CLASS OF 2018

BY LORI LEE



The Temple Mount in Jerusalem

IAN LEVASSEUR is currently a sophomore at the University of Washington studying biochemistry and chemistry. This past summer, he had the opportunity to spend eight weeks in Jericho, Palestine with The Edge, an internship program that is part of the Pioneers mission organization. We were able to connect with Ian via email to learn more about his experiences.

TELL US ABOUT THE TRIP.

Jericho is a town of about 30,000 individuals including roughly 400 Christians. I joined a team of six people working through an organization called Seeds of Hope. It is a Christian Palestinian organization that focuses on relational evangelism, because in Palestine proselytization is illegal. Their main efforts include improving and providing education and resources to local families. Seeds of Hope provides programs like daycare, preschool

and kindergarten, elementary school, after school programs, and summer camps.

The majority of my time was spent preparing for and leading a summer camp for about 60 local kids. Despite the cultural, religious, and language differences, it was an awesome experience to befriend the leaders and kids through the camp. The various activities included movie time, story time, gymnastics, games, skits, dance, computer time, and crafts. At the end of the four weeks, the kids got to demonstrate what they learned at a final show. All the parents, volunteers, and kids had fun dancing, performing skits, and viewing pictures from the camp.

I was paired with a local volunteer named Feras, a 19-year-old who studies computer science at a university in Palestine. Feras and I led the games rotation during the camp. Since we were the same age, we became very close friends.

A lot of the boys in the camp were on a soccer team that met twice a week. I got to help coach the team during my tenure. This allowed me to get closer to the kids and foster a relationship with the head coach.

WHAT ARE SOME OTHER THINGS YOU DID WHILE YOU WERE THERE?

About halfway through my stay, I started taking walks through the city of Jericho. Walking gave me an opportunity to witness the extraordinary hospitality in Palestinian culture. I got invited into many homes, fed, given cold water, and got to converse with strangers, sometimes for hours. By the end of the trip, my walks provided my fondest memories because they gave me a chance to explore the people and their culture.

On about half the weekends, we got to take trips to different areas in Palestine and Israel to see sites such as the Church of the Nativity, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee, and more. I did not feel very connected to many of the sites because they were overrun with people, merchants, and activities. However, one of the most impactful sites that we visited was the well of Jacob in Nablus, Palestine. The event is detailed in John 4:1-42 and depicts Jesus' commitment to a salvation that crossed cultural and religious boundaries (Jewish vs. Samaritan). The church was quiet when we visited and contains the actual physical well where Jesus had the conversation with the woman. That amazed me.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO GO ON THIS TRIP?

Since I was young, God placed a burden on my heart to serve the nations. My ultimate calling in life is to do missions, but typically missionaries have a medium or vessel of serving. I think I would like to become a doctor and then serve some population that is underprivileged and impoverished. When I started attending the University of Washington, a goal of mine was to participate in summer experiences that enabled me to continue to hear,



Abdullah and Ian with some photobombing sheep.

listen, and ultimately follow God's call and plan for my life. Therefore, Pioneers offered (and God provided) an amazing opportunity for me to take steps to reach this goal.

WHAT WERE A FEW OF YOUR FAVORITE EXPERIENCES?

On my second to last day there, I went on my regular walk. While I was out, a teenager and his younger brother were sitting on the side of the road tending their flock of sheep, and they invited me over to talk and drink some water. We spoke for a couple of minutes, but I continued on fairly quickly because I was on my way to a restaurant. After eating, I made my way to the date stand to pick up my daily dose of fresh dates. When I arrived, I saw the same teenager and his brother; their sheep and goats were in the nearby field. We began talking again, and the next three hours were spent tending to the sheep and goats and forming a friendship. Abdullah is a 16-year-old who helped take care of the family sheep. Despite the difference in language and difficulty of communication, he asked if I was a Christ follower and I said yes. I asked him if he was Muslim and he said yes. When we returned to the stables, I met their father, and we talked for a while. When I returned home, I texted Abdullah that the following day was my last day in Palestine, and that I would like to shepherd with them again and



The morning routine for the Summer Camp.



One of the rotations in the Summer Camp.

continue forming my friendship with him.

The next day, I tried to find him and failed. I ended up following fresh sheep tracks but the flock's shepherders looked different, and so I was nervous about saying hello. As I approached, the shepherd turned towards me and exclaimed, "Ah, you are Abdullah's friend!" I ended up spending another two and a half hours with Abdullah's 18-year-old brother Rami and became friends with him as well. At one point along the herding path, Rami stopped all the sheep and told me to watch over them because one of them had gone missing. He went sprinting off into the distance, trying to find the lost sheep. Luke 15:3-7 tells this exact story. It was amazing to experience a parable directly from Jesus' words. He returned without the sheep, and we went to the stables where we met the rest of his family. I met his mom, sister, and brother and got to see Abdullah one last time before I left. I still talk with Abdullah, and recently I asked him if they ended up finding the lost sheep. They did. Just like Jesus is chasing after them, they chased after their sheep. I am trusting and praying that Jesus will germinate, grow, and lead the seeds in that family to bear the fruit of salvation.

As I mentioned, the camp provided a means of forming relationships with the local kids. In the last week of camp, during any of the free time, one camper would be hanging out with me and would constantly say, "Teacher Ian, I want to fly." Flying was his word for being spun around. I ended up

requesting to visit his home to meet his parents and brother. A bunch of the volunteers joined me, and we visited their house, spending hours talking, laughing, and eating. At the end of the night, the mother approached me and said, "Ian, you have to come back. We love you so much and view you as one of our children."

The last week I was in Palestine, I set aside a night to visit their family again, this time by myself. Again, we ate, laughed, smiled, and talked for three more hours. On the car ride home, I apologized to the father because I had overstayed my welcome (it was midnight). He told me that my visit was such a blessing, and that he loved that I spent time with his children and would welcome me anytime in the future.

I still video call their family every week and talk for approximately an hour. It's been such a blessing to me to be able to have this relationship. I am trusting that the Lord is moving and using me to plant seeds to bring salvation to their household. They gave me a cross necklace, have asked for prayer, and have commended my character. I pray daily for the Spirit to move in their lives and for Christ's love to shine through me.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT YOURSELF BY GOING ON THIS TRIP?

I learned that I can get really stressed about things that I feel like I do not fully control. For example,

something that really makes me anxious is leading, because I never know how the person I am responsible for is going to respond, especially in different contexts (cultural, religious, linguistic, etc.). A lesson I learned from this trip was not just to **let go** of my anxiety (because rationally I already knew that), but **how to trust** God with my stress and that He truly is my sustainer and provider.

Before the trip, I knew that God's purpose for my life was to serve the poor and unreached in some capacity, but I had no idea what ethnic or religious background God was preparing my heart for. But through the interactions and relationships that God provided me in the trip, He sparked a deep burden and compassion for the Arab people. I hope to continue pursuing this passion with Arabs on campus and through trips in the coming years. Throughout the trip, the idea of God's faithfulness and total recklessness of love for the locals was abundantly clear to me.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT OTHERS?

It is easy to think of my surroundings at University of Washington in Seattle, Washington, USA, as the whole world, and my situation as the only thing that matters or exists. The effect of this way of thinking is that my heart can forget about the billions of people I do not physically see every day. This trip helped remind me that the world is a big place with different cultures and peoples. It helped take the displaced love of self I have and point it in a more positive, multicultural, and inclusive direction. The Spirit is teaching me about how the Trinity is not just for Ian Levasseur or his tribe, but He truly is a God who transcends culture and loves and seeks salvation for all peoples.

I also learned how difficult working with a team can be. All it takes is one individual's negative impact to change the dynamic of a team. I had never formally lived with and served alongside a team, so it was all new to me. The experience taught me how to have grace in tough situations and persevere and fight for peace around others with whom I might disagree.



Dance Party after the final show!

HOW DID BEAR CREEK PREPARE YOU FOR AN EXPERIENCE LIKE THIS?

I think one of the most valuable skills that Bear Creek equipped me with was how to think critically. This applies to not just academic topics in the scholarly setting, but in palpable cultural differences in everyday life. The Worldview Capstone class and the section on different world religions was also very helpful.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU?

Next summer I hope to take another trip to the Middle East to continue serving and listening to God's purpose for my life. My tentative plan is to go to medical school and then serve impoverished or rural populations in the Middle East medically and be a light spiritually.



8905 208th Avenue NE
Redmond, WA 98053

www.tbcs.org



Together

The Bear Creek School Annual Dinner and Auction

Westin Bellevue
Saturday, March 28
5:00 p.m.

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