



# MODUS VIVENDI

*A Way of Life*

COMMENCEMENT 2022

FACULTY PROFILE:  
JENN SINCLAIR

THE ROLE OF THE ARTS  
IN SOCIETY

THE BENEFITS OF MUSIC  
ON YOUR CHILD'S  
DEVELOPMENT

THE BEAR  
CREEK  
SCHOOL  
MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2022



# MODUS VIVENDI

*Summer 2022*

*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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Patrick Carruth

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### THE BEAR FACTS

Each Friday during the school year, *The Bear Facts*, Bear Creek's weekly newsletter, is emailed to current parents, faculty, and staff. *The Bear Facts* contains news and announcements from each of the school's divisions and from the athletics department.

### ON THE COVER

"Morning Calm" by Lucy McDonough '25 (acrylic paint on canvas). The objective of this Studio Art 2 assignment was to capture a sense of place, time of day, or season in an impressionistic way. Lucy's answer to the prompt was to capture the feeling of morning calm. Read more about the arts at Bear Creek throughout this issue.



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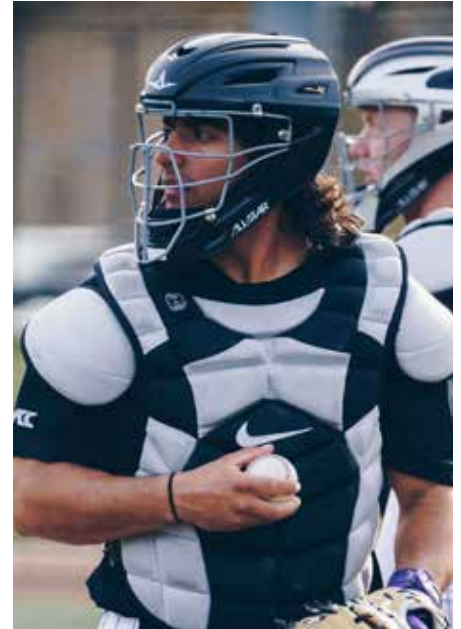


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# COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS FROM THE HEADMASTER

By Patrick Carruth

Okay. I admit it. I did it. I went to see the movie *Top Gun: Maverick*, and I really liked it! And, yes, I'm going back. There, I said it. (And, by the way, how is it he can be nearly 60 years old and do that stuff?) In 1986, Tom Cruise probably never thought he'd be filming a *Top Gun* sequel nearly forty years later, but here we are, and he still has a full head of hair, still rides a motorcycle, and does a lot of his own stunts. Where did I go wrong?

The original *Top Gun* was released in 1986, one year before I graduated high school.

I was a typical 80s kid. In 1986, I drove a 1975 manual Toyota Celica (except to Prom when Mom let me borrow her all white, T-top, IROC Z28 Camaro), played football, was a captain of the high school baseball team, wore collar-up preppy pastel shirts, too much Polo cologne, and wanted to be Tom Cruise. So why am I telling you all this?

It's about identity and influence.



As you no doubt can tell from this story, I worked hard to shape an identity, an identity built on externals: people, accomplishments, clothes, sports, cars, and movies. Perhaps I am alone in this exercise, but I suspect some of my story may resonate with some of you. And so, as you graduate today, I'd like to first talk about **identity**.

The world in 2022 is very much engaged with the question of identity, and it presents seemingly limitless options for you

to engage in the same exercise I did. In that way, I suppose it's not much different than 36 years ago. Nevertheless, as you commence and engage those conversations away from The Bear Creek School, may I remind you that, in your time here, we have been working to help you become the individual God intends and that your identity is first to be found in Him.

The Scriptures frequently speak of **who we are**:

In Chapter 1 of Genesis, we read that each of us is a

special creation that reflects the image of almighty God:

*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*  
(Genesis 1:26-27)

The Lord similarly prompts the prophet Jeremiah and by extension each of us to recall that you are known by that same God before you are even formed:

*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.*  
(Jeremiah 1:5)

Paul's admonition to the church at Ephesus echoes our identity in Christ:

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* (Ephesians 2:7-10)

And consider the depth and dignity of the Psalmist's refrain:

*O Lord, you have searched me and known me!*

*You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.*

*You search out my path and my lying down and are*

*acquainted with all my ways.*

*Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether....*

*For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.*

*I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made  
Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.*

*My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.*

*Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book*

*were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.*  
(Psalm 139:1-4, 13-16)

It would not be too much of an overstatement to declare that all the disciplines of the humanities have been trying to answer Jean Valjean's simple query, "Who am I?" the question of identity, and have found their answers, though often beautiful, to be fully incomplete. Graduates, your identity is not temporal. It is transcendent. It is not

determined by creation. It is created. Each of you is a unique and amazing individual, made by a holy and loving God. Never forget that truth.

Okay. Let's move from my silly *Top Gun* example and remove the terrible image of me in a Camaro from your mind to something more in keeping with The Bear Creek School. The second thing I'd like to encourage you with is **influence**.

Contrary to the words on the walls, the mission of



CINDY MCCAILL



The Bear Creek School does not end with helping you “become the individual God intends.” There is more. Our desire is that your individual journey will prepare you to be compelled by your faith to engage the world with wisdom, compassion, and courage. In other words, our hope is that you will live your life and be a positive influence on others by loving your neighbor as yourself.

Many years ago, when I taught high school English, we took a class to Scotland and England. We toured many places, including the Globe Theater (have you ever seen *Hamlet* performed as a comedy?), Stratford-upon-Avon (where we saw the best version of *Henry the Fifth* I have seen to date), and Oxford. While in Oxford, Paige and I walked Addison’s Walk, a small trail that C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien used to walk together.

As you may know, in many of his collected letters, Lewis identifies Tolkien and their friendship as a significant reason for his Christian conversion. In 1929, they began to meet to discuss Middle Earth and their writings, and eventually formed a larger group called the Inklings. Lewis writes of a particular evening on Addison’s Walk that had a profound impact on his coming to faith in Christ. In 1931, Lewis wrote to his friend Arthur Greeves, “How deep I am just now beginning to see: for I have just passed on from believing in God to definitely believing in Christ—in Christianity... My long night talk with Dyson and Tolkien had a good deal to do with it.” Apparently, that evening, the three men walked and talked into the early morning hours. The conversation with Tolkien and fellow Inklings Hugo Dyson changed him.



Lewis would later explain more to Greeves, indicating one of his difficulties centered around the notion of Christ’s redemption. He again writes, “Now what Dyson and Tolkien showed me was this, that if I met the idea of sacrifice in a Pagan story I didn’t mind it at all: again, that if I met the idea of a god sacrificing himself to himself I liked it very much and was mysteriously moved by it: again that the idea of the dying and reviving god similarly moved me provided I met it anywhere except the Gospels. The reason was that in Pagan stories I was prepared to feel the myth as profound and suggestive of meanings beyond my grasp even tho’ I could not say in cold prose what it meant.” Lewis became convinced that “Myth Became

Fact” in the person of Christ.

Addison’s Walk and the influence of friends living authentically before him changed C.S. Lewis, and he became one of the most significant apologists for the truth of Christianity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That is by design. The Lord works in

miraculous ways, but He frequently works through the **influence** of others, authentically reflecting their **identity**, the *imago Dei*, to the world.

So, graduates, my challenge to you: may your individual **identity** be firmly rooted in the One in whom all things hold together and in whom all things have their meaning. And, from that root, may you **influence** others through authentic lives of wisdom, compassion, and courage.

Right now counts forever and you are ready. Class of 2022, we are proud of you, we love you, and congratulations on taking the next step in your journey.



# Congratulations to the Class of 2022

Omoruwa Oluwatoyin  
Agbonile\*\*\*  
Cornell University

Beatrice Emma Archer‡\*  
Whitman College

Katherine Xiang Bendes\*\*  
University of Southern California

Gabriel David Bennett‡  
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical  
University

Madeleine Karen Susanna  
Bordenet\*\*\*  
Western Washington University

Dila Naz Bostanci\*\*  
Boston University

Tess Alden Bumiller\*\*  
Utah State University

Zachary Charles Carlson\*  
Santa Clara University

Luke James Chang‡  
Santa Clara University

Tianze Chen\*\*  
University of California, Irvine

Jasmine Lalise Chin\*  
University of Washington, Seattle

Joshua Park Christie  
Whitworth University

Rachel Geddes Cook‡\*\*\*  
Purdue University

Nicholas Jacob Coy\*\*  
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical  
University

Domenic Paskelino Dedomenico  
Seattle University

Alexander Blackwell Diller‡  
American University

David Kendall DuBois‡\*\*  
University of Washington, Seattle

Sophia Katherine Dunn\*\*\*  
Cal Poly State University, San  
Luis Obispo

Benjamin Charles Fettig‡\*  
Pepperdine University

Ryan Anton Foster\*\*\*  
University of Michigan, Ann  
Arbor

Kacey Sloan Fritz‡  
Western Washington University

Stanley Koy-Tin Fung‡\*  
University of Illinois at Urbana-  
Champaign

Andrew George Haddad\*\*\*  
Baylor University

Chandler Timothy Oscar Hollis‡  
Lake Washington Institute of  
Technology

Joseph Donald Horey‡\*\*  
University of California, Santa  
Barbara

Philip Huang\*\*\*  
University of California, Los  
Angeles

Thomas Reese Huberty‡\*\*\*  
University of Notre Dame

Henry Bradford Humphries\*\*\*  
Wake Forest University

Whitney Hutchings\*\*\*  
Brigham Young University, Provo

Angelina McKenzie Jenson\*\*\*  
Boise State University

Yilin Jeffrey Jiang\*\*\*  
Rice University

Steven Wesley Jing\*  
Pennsylvania State University

Alexander Kim\*  
University of Puget Sound

Mi En Kim\*\*  
Boston University

Joshua Ames Linnenkohl‡  
Grand Canyon University

Heng Kuan Tiger Liu\*\*  
Purdue University

Xiaotong Lu  
Santa Clara University

James Ji Chiu Masse\*\*\*  
University of Washington, Seattle

Sarah Jane McArthur\*\*\*  
The University of Alabama

Charles Michael McDonough‡  
Blackburn College

Aaron Thomas Moore  
California Lutheran University

McKenna Jenelle Mullet\*\*\*  
University of Colorado Boulder

Thaddeus Chase Norris‡\*\*\*  
Northwest University

Nathan Lawrence Pinto\*  
University of Toronto

Allen JianHao Qiu  
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical  
University

ZiLi Qu\*\*\*  
University of Washington, Seattle

Clara Michelle  
Santodomingo‡\*\*\*  
Northeastern University

Sarah Ruth Sherrer‡  
Rollins College

Nathan Crispin Shields\*\*\*  
Colorado College

Zoe Monique Smith\*\*\*  
Central Christian College of  
Kansas

Aidan James Stutz‡\*  
Cal Poly State University, San  
Luis Obispo

Alanna Christine Town\*\*\*  
Smith College

Aaron Eelis Aleksu Uotila\*\*\*  
Boston University

Chloe Abigail Wengerd\*\*\*  
Gap Year

You Wu\*\*  
University of Washington, Seattle

Sherri Xu\*\*\*  
University of California, Los  
Angeles

Shekina Joy Yeo\*  
University of Washington, Seattle

Michelle Zhu\*\*  
Emory University

\*\*\*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 KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 12)

# Reflections from the Class of 2022

## Excerpts from Commencement Speeches

Photos by Janeen Sorensen



### Nicholas Coy

When I came to Bear Creek as a freshman, I knew absolutely no one, but I quickly made friends with teachers and students, beginning with the immense fun of Icebreaker. Then the academic year started which sparked one of my largest interests, even to this day, photography.

During sophomore year, Zach Carlson and I entered the Conrad Challenge. Though we didn't place well and had many late nights updating essays and business plans for the challenge, we learned a ton and re-entered the next year when we landed in the top 30%! Another big start in tenth grade was ASB. I can honestly say my time in ASB has been the most fun, the most challenging, and the best time for me to grow.

That leads me into junior year. The first surprise was yet another ASB position, where I ended up as the Vice President. It was here that I learned some amazing life advice: if you can make just one person's day better then you've done your job right. AP Language and Composition gave me appreciation for another profession, writers. Until recent years, "creative writer" was not a term I would use to describe myself. AP Lang opened a door previously closed to me: writing to have fun and doing it quickly.

Senior year became the perfect catalyst for steady improvement: balancing work and ever-important sleep, relearning how priorities and lists work, and knowing that what I do actually has an impact on others have all propelled me through this year, and through all the sun and burning sand. I hope that I have paved a true and good and beautiful path for those after me, and for myself into the future.

In four short years, we have been challenged in ways we never would have expected. We have been in the spring of hope; we have pressed through the winter of despair. We have felt as kings of the world; we have had our very existence questioned. My teachers and mentors have played an irreplaceable part in my development while at Bear Creek. I can say with full confidence that they are what made this school special to me. If I could put my time into a single sentence, it would be this: you won't know how amazing it will be until you try, and no matter what, there will always be friends to help you along the way.



## Zoe Smith

**M**iddle School is rough for everyone. I will be the first to admit, I was not too excited when my parents told me I was going to yet another new school, called Bear Creek, for eighth grade. But it wasn't long before I realized they had made the right choice. Bear Creek is the most welcoming, supportive, and invested school I have ever attended.

As I am sure you can imagine, the first day of eighth grade was a little terrifying. Some of my classmates had been friends since preschool, and there were a lot of new routines I had to get used to. Soon I found I had amazing teachers and was quickly welcomed by my peers. I was included in foursquare games at recess and had a lot of fun in Advisory. But, as you know, school isn't just about fun.

Bear Creek has challenged and supported me academically. Our teachers found a way to push us to the next level without making it feel rushed. And if we ever felt like we were getting left behind, they were always there to help us out. This year during our Capstone class, we were often in charge of the lessons ourselves.

While my teachers have helped me grow academically, they did something even more valuable, they helped me grow spiritually. Daily, teachers drew connections between the curriculum and the Bible and God's love for us. Honestly, I was a little surprised to hear about Jesus in my Geometry class but hearing how God's wonder can be seen in every aspect of our lives was possibly more important than some of the lessons themselves.

Beyond the classroom, Bear Creek provided many more opportunities for us to grow. We could become leaders in ASB or the House system or even create clubs. We were encouraged to volunteer, not just so we could walk across this stage, but also to teach us lessons that can't be learned in the classroom, like the value of community and giving our time to help others.

While my time here at Bear Creek has felt short, I have learned innumerable lessons and made priceless memories. The Class of 2022 is resilient, hardworking, and caring. I have no doubt that you will all do incredible things in college and have no trouble handling whatever else life throws at you next.





## Philip Huang

As an incoming freshman, House Induction marked a huge transition in my life. I remember seeing a multitude of colors, upperclassmen raising flags and yelling at the top of their lungs, and lively chatter all around me. House members were dancing, twirling, and celebrating with pure happiness. Initially, I saw myself as an outsider who had stumbled into the wrong place. Being someone inclined to stay quiet, I worried about being isolated from this school's passionate spirit. When everyone welcomed me with warm smiles, my voice stuttered and trembled. Little did I know that my time at Bear Creek would become something I would always reflect on and treasure in my heart.

At Bear Creek, I encountered people willing to openly discuss thought-provoking questions and find methods for overcoming obstacles, whether that be in a classroom, on the court, or in an online Teams call at twelve o'clock a.m. During sophomore year, AP European History weekly discussions were extremely stressful for me. I despised talking and equated class discussions with being chased by a bear. However, I soon found these collaborative settings to be extremely helpful and rewarding. I was guided toward different branches of thought that allowed me to gain a more complete understanding. Most importantly, I learned how I could form my own worldview from these ideas. Both my peers and my teachers not only allowed me to provide my thoughts but encouraged me to do so even if it went against their own opinions.

In sports, I faced the pressure of performing well. I worried that I was going to fail, or not meet others' expectations. Instead, I found people who offered me their outstretched hands. I will always remember the moments when we prayed together and cheered for each other during both the victories and the hard-fought losses. These experiences lifted us up and developed us into better individuals.

While each person had a different way of contributing to the Bear Creek community, everyone was united by strong bonds and a willingness to form relationships. Our unity was enforced by our diversity, our collaboration by a desire to grow as individuals, and our victories by the struggles we endured. What happened during high school is not just an unforgettable memory; it is a foundation to build on as we go on to become individuals who contribute to the world in our own ways through God's love.



## Angelina Jenson

There are numerous unique personalities at Bear Creek, from the little preschoolers to our *100% spicy senior class*...at least, according to our class hoodie. I would specifically like to emphasize the word “personality.” With so many intricate personalities, there are remarkable ways each of our brains works. I see Bear Creek as a school that values each individual in the community from the very beginning. It is one of my favorite things about Bear Creek.

Bear Creek first and foremost values our thoughts as students. In my first few months in preschool, my classmates and I built inventions out of toilet paper rolls and blue tape. I shoved my materials together in a wild mess and blurted out the first thing that came to my mind during the show and tell. Despite my messy and confusing jumble of words, Mrs. Anderson patiently listened. She appreciated every invention the class designed. From the beginning of my experience to my senior year, the Bear Creek community focused on treating students not like immature children who needed lecturing, but as goal-getter, curious, and unique people. In my thirteen years here, I encountered exceptional teachers who helped me flourish and remain confident in my identity. I am forever grateful.

But Bear Creek is not just a school where we grow in our knowledge. It is also a school to grow in our faith, our relationships. It is a school that values individual passions and ambitions and dreams. I’m sure many seniors remember the trendy Rainbow Loom in fourth grade. We made bracelets during recess. Mrs. Peeler noticed us making bracelets one day, and she asked if we could all do bracelet making together. She was so happy to learn a little part about us. Relationships blossomed through these small acts. Teachers valued our interests and wanted to listen to them, from Ms. Wilson and Mrs. Burns learning how to play Nertz with my lunch group to Ms. Gardiner praying for our House group every time we met. In the end, the Bear Creek community wanted to help us succeed in these interests. I believe it has been a success. Look at us now. Bear Creek wanted us to become the individuals God intends, and I have no doubt that we are becoming just that. I cannot wait to see where life takes each one of us. Enjoy the adventure!



## Henry Humphries



**M**y first day at Bear Creek's Upper School was halfway through my sophomore year, on January 6, 2020. I knew some students and teachers since I had gone to Lower School and Middle School here, but I expected to be lost at sea. I thought that I was starting high school all over again. I approached my start date with angst, anxiety, nervousness, and above all, fear.

The first moment I walked through those doors into the Upper School I realized I was home. Over the next two and a half years I would have moments of laughter, joy, tears, ailments, and isolation, but through thick and thin, I always knew that this place—this community—is home.

There are two parts of this community I want to recognize. First are the teachers.

The faculty at Bear Creek have developed my character in more ways than one. I learned from Coach Mendo that your greatest losses are fuel for your future successes—and to never dwell too much on the past. I learned from Ms. Wilder that the true intention of the classroom is not to teach material but to build a community that can laugh and learn together. From Profesora Gardiner, I learned what passion for one's job truly looks like. And from Mr. Norris, I learned that the point isn't the grade you get, but the growth you achieve. Every student has learned his or her own set of values; and interacted with the teachers in their own special ways. We will hold onto all these lessons during the next chapters of our lives.

Next, I want to talk about us—the Class of 2022.

Long ago, when we ran in the school's annual Walk-a-thon, I would look at the "Class of 2022" printed on our shirts and laugh. "Geez," I thought, "that's a million years away." But we're here. During our tenure over these past four years, we've been subjected to a lifetime of changes. We had every excuse to throw our hands up in the air, complain about the cards we'd been dealt, and give up. But we didn't. Going forward, I ask the Class of 2022 to remember these times. To remember it all. And how we persevered. Whatever obstacle you may encounter going forward, know that it is not impossible to navigate because you've done it before—we all have.





# FACULTY COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

BY LAURA WILSON

PHOTO BY JANEEN SORENSEN

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*It is a great honor to be here speaking in front of you all today.*

Graduates, I know this is your first (and hopefully only) high school graduation, but as you attend other ceremonies in your lives, you will find that they generally follow the same pattern. There's lots of acknowledging, thanking, and sitting. There's a ponderous speech—like the one I'm about to give—that is meant to inspire you onto new and greater things. It usually sounds like, “Let me tell you what I wish I'd known when I was young and dreamed of glory—you

have no control who lives, who dies, who tells your story.” (*Hamilton: An American Musical*)

But here’s the reality: you will forget this speech. Maybe almost instantly. Maybe you won’t even hear as I’m speaking. But even if you hear it, you will forget it. And that’s okay. It’s actually good, because I gave a very similar speech at Convocation at the beginning of this year, and I’m hoping no one notices how much I’ve copied it here.

But really, I want to point you to a reality I think is important. You will forget this speech, but that is not what today is about. Today is about the people who surround you, who are sitting next to you, the ones in the chairs who have taught you, raised you, supported you.

Memory is an essential part of what it means to be a human. Right now, your parents are thinking back on when you were babies, probably drooling on things, learning to walk, playing on the elementary playground, doing President reports. They are remembering the struggles over eating vegetables and the fights over staying out late. But at this moment, their memory is shaped by a realization of where those struggles and successes have led—to graduation.

Memory is essential to living out the rest of our lives. We connect with the past, and it shapes how we view our present and our future. Memory can also transform.

Most of you will have at least one moment today when you get caught up remembering. Graduation is a time to remember, and remember deeply, the steps that you have taken to arrive on this stage. I think it was Vitamin C who summarized it so well: “As we go on, we

remember/All the times we had together.”

Memory has a way of highlighting the things that truly impacted us. And I would venture a guess that the things you will most remember about high school are people. There might be some bad memories and some good ones. I’m not asking you to cast some sort of rosy glow over difficult things and gaslight yourself into believing it was all perfect. It’s important to see the bad as bad and not rewrite it.

But the true gift of memory is when we can see the ways in which everything, the good and the bad, fits into a life where God is in control and is directing us toward Him.

T.S. Eliot in *Four Quartets* writes:



*This is the use of memory:*

*For liberation—not less of love but expanding*

*Of love beyond desire, and so liberation*

*From the future as well as the past.*

There is a kind of liberation beyond our own pettiness with memory, the ability

to see past what we wanted at the time to what was actually shaping us.

Think back for a moment to the height of remote learning. Cameras turned off or oddly angled toward the ceiling. Stanley with a background of everything on fire. We were all trying to figure out how to take notes, unmute, answer messages, and still feel like a human while being isolated from literally all of humanity. Perhaps these were not our best moments. But I still remember last year on picture day, when nearly all of us came back on campus and we saw other people in a classroom for the first time in a year. It was an almost giddy experience. This memory is what sticks with me—



the moment we rediscovered the joy of being incarnate beings. We remembered that God created us to be in fellowship. And yes, it came with a rediscovery of how much certain people annoyed you. But even now, I hope that you can see the value of the ability to be annoyed.

This year has had a lot of memories. There have been raucous lunch groups, watching everything from the *Pirates of the Caribbean* to *Pinocchio*; Beatrice carrying a heavy barbell twice down the length of the parking lot, Mi En stopping by the teacher room to chat; Josh sometimes (at least once) wearing his uniform; Thad and Zoe trying their best not to assassinate every senior while taking Senior Assassin too seriously; trips to State for baseball and golf; Zach's ever-expanding collection of Robinson-themed outfits; Nick appearing at a moment's notice to solve tech problems; Joshua probably cleaning up everything; Aaron wearing a bucket hat; Rachel in a hippo onesie—these memories remind us of our flaws, our talents, and how much our lives have been shaped by others.



Remember the people who you've spent time with. Your teachers have spent years with you. In many ways, you have not taken Biology or AP Lang—you've taken Dunn and Norris. You've been shaped by how they see you. They see you as fellow eternal souls. They have decided to be patient, to be gracious. They have asked you to do hard things. They have valued your humanity.

Hopefully, the sum of all of our journeys through high school has been to arrive at deep gratitude. It might be gratitude for having reached the end, finally. But there is also a realization that we are not in control, and that everything, easy and difficult, has been an act of grace from God.

To quote T.S. Eliot again:

*The only wisdom we can hope to acquire  
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.*

There is freedom in realizing that we are not in control, that we don't have all the answers. There is also freedom in realizing that there is a kind and loving God who is in control and does have the answers. And I know that sounds like a pat, Sunday school answer, but it should only take a brief survey of our life experiences—some active remembering, if you will—to sense the truth in that. We are being shaped, refined, by a God who loved us so much that He sent His son Jesus to live a human life and die on behalf of all humanity. We are reminded over and over again that God is a God who remembers

His people. When they sin against Him, tell Him to shove off, or simply ignore Him, instead He remembers His promises to them. To return, to save. There is a long, recorded memory of His character. The Israelites were notoriously forgetful. Within moments of being rescued from

Egypt through a supernatural chasm in the Red Sea, they decided that God must not really be around anymore. And they built a golden calf as a replacement. Despite His repeated protection of them as they journeyed in the promised land, they would frequently jump ship and worship other gods. In the first book of Samuel, we see the prophet find a tangible way to remind the Israelites of the faithfulness of God:

*And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the Lord and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." So the*



*people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth,  
and they served the Lord only. And Samuel cried out to the  
Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him.*

*Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah  
and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, "Till  
now the Lord has helped us." (I Samuel 7:3-4, 12)*

This Stone of Ebenezer would have become a landmark, a physical change to the landscape that would have provoked thought and reflection to anyone who passed by. It was not meant to make Israel feel guilty but to remember the great power and love of God.

Remember then, that you are seen and loved by the God of the universe. He calls you to remember those around you and to remember how He used them to speak into your life. There was not a moment here at Bear Creek when God did not see you. You go off today to experience new things and new people, new colleges, new learning, and probably some new forgetting; but remember this place and this time. Remember the ways you experienced love and connection, joy, and triumph. Remember how it revealed to you your limitations and your failures and the failures of others. There is joy in the humility that memory brings. None of you have been perfect. But none of you have been alone. None of you have been forgotten by God. He remembers, He sees. And when He remembers your failings, your inconsistencies, your unkindness, He remembers the sacrifice of His son Jesus for those things. God is interested in who you are and who you are becoming.

To read from T.S. Eliot again:

*What we call the beginning is often the end  
And to make an end is to make a beginning.  
The end is where we start from.*

*With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling  
We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.*

And he quotes Julian of Norwich:

*And all shall be well and  
All manner of thing shall be well*

Class of 2022, the high school years have been a battle, and there will be challenges in the future.

Make an Ebenezer stone today that recognizes the God of the universe who cares about you, as limited, forgetful as you are. He has used the people around you to care for you. You each have a hopeful future that is also wildly unpredictable. It will feel joyful to cross this stage. But in the moments that feel less joyful, remember how God has loved you.

Psalm 27 says:

*I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would  
see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living.*

*Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall  
strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD! (Psalm  
27:13-14)*

Maybe try to forget remote learning. That one you can let go of. And you can forget this speech. But take your memories of your time at this school, look for joy, and you will find it.

It has been a great joy to be your teacher. It has been a greater joy to speak to you one final time and tell you, from the faculty, that we love you. May God bless you and keep you, may the Lord cause His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you. Thank you.

Laura Wilson teaches history at The Bear Creek School. She began teaching at Bear Creek in 2017, having previously taught at a classical Christian school in Hawaii. She loves the "so what" questions that come up in history classes and the chance to connect with students about their own histories and the ways in which their stories inform their present. Laura holds a B.A. Liberal Arts from New Saint Andrews College and an M.A. Public History from University of York.



# FACULTY PROFILE: JENN SINCLAIR

BY KATIE GOMULKIEWICZ '13

*Kiri-e* is a beautiful and ancient form of Japanese art that involves using paper to cut (*kiri*) a picture (*e*). Jenn Sinclair discovered this art

form in Japan and loved the way it forced her to view the world in a different way. These days, *kiri-e* is one of Jenn's treasured mediums of art and one that Bear Creek students may learn in her classroom. Although Jenn learned about *kiri-e* while living in Japan with her husband, Brent, she explained that "art has always been a part of my life." As a child growing up in Edmonton, Alberta, Jenn's aunt taught her oil painting, and she began taking private art lessons at age five. In college, Jenn earned a certificate in fine art and graduated with a degree in art education from

the University of Alberta. Jenn shared that her final art show in college explored "seeing the beauty of nature and trusting your eye to see this beauty."

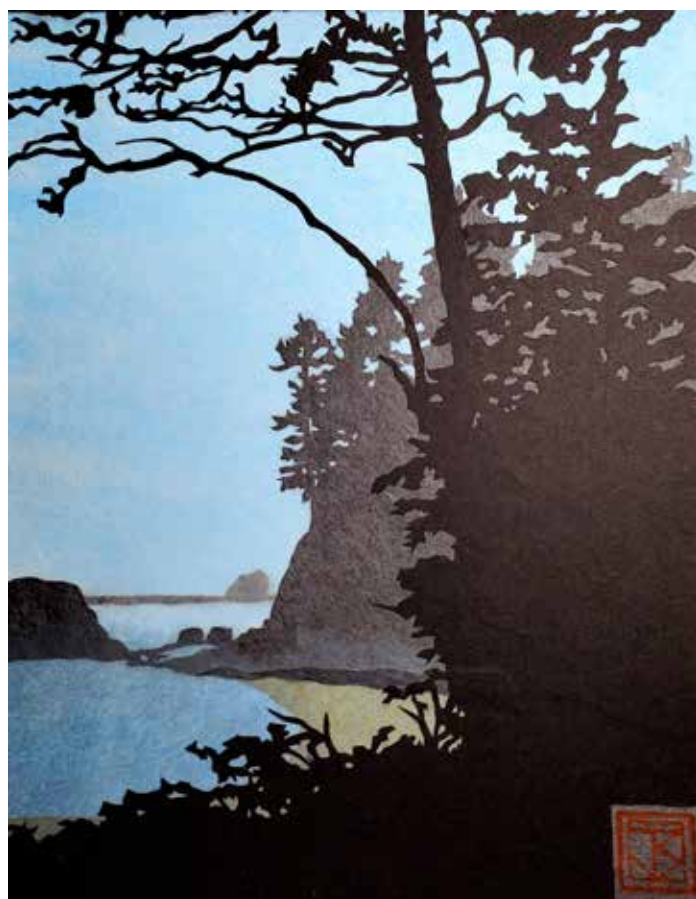
Jenn's life has been rooted on the foundation of trusting that God "has set a path for her." God's path led Jenn and Brent to Japan shortly after graduating from college. While there, Jenn taught English and art to her students. Years later, a flight layover in Seattle on an uncharacteristically sunny day changed Jenn and Brent's lives again when they decided to relocate



to the area. Jenn then spent fourteen years as a dedicated mom to her children, Makenna and Connor. Jenn also brought her love of art and teaching to their school's art docent program. However, as

**“IT’S IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS TO SEE BEAUTY WITHIN THEMSELVES, AS WE ARE ALL GOD’S CANVASES.”**

Connor and Makenna grew, so too did Jenn’s desire to return to teaching, and once again, God laid the



A *kiri-e* image by Jenn inspired by one of her favorite family trips to Cape Perpetua in Yachats, OR.

path before her. “I prayed, and the next day the Bear Creek job popped up on my LinkedIn,” Jenn explained.

Having taught at Bear Creek for four years now, Jenn embraces the impact art has upon her students.

During our interview, Jenn pointed out a still life project her students had recently completed. “Look,” she said, “that student wanted to add a turtle to his painting, and so I told him ‘You can!’” When I asked her why, Jenn explained, “I want to give students permission to be happy with their choices and ideas.” As we studied each still life together, her students’ unique imaginations jump off the paper. Giving students permission to express themselves is one of the many things Jenn cherishes about teaching art.

“Another one of the projects that my students complete is a self-portrait,” she shared with me. “Many students resist this project, but it’s important for them to see beauty within themselves, as we are all God’s canvases,” Jenn explained. In another project this past year, Jenn taught students about *sumi-e*, a form of Japanese ink art, and the class discussed the similarities and differences found in art around the world. During the interview, Jenn also shared with me a stack of the students’ *sumi-e* artwork. Each piece was a different, creative rendition of the traditional Japanese style.

Not only does art teach students about God and His creation, but it also gives students the permission to explore, experiment, and let go. “I can’t do art” is not something that students say in Jenn’s classroom. She believes that “everyone can do art” and shared that her mother began watercolor painting at age seventy. For her students, Jenn’s classroom is a space to let go of the pressure to succeed and learn to express themselves in a beautiful way. She asks each student, “Is it okay to make mistakes?” and prays that they learn it’s not about getting the right answer but rather about exploring and creating and trying new things through art. Yes, she covers the fundamentals such as how to properly use their tools and the elements of art, but Jenn shared with me that her desire is for





Above is a sampling of the artwork from Jenn's classroom.

students to go deeper. "I want all of my students to learn practice and patience," she explained, "and to see God's beauty in a new way."

In Japanese culture, there are rooms in which art is hung for people to come and reflect and find peace. Jenn finds that same calm in the mornings as she witnesses the hundreds of shades of green bursting through a Washington spring. Her art remains, as it was in college, a reflection of God's beauty surrounding us. "I hope that my students' artwork is taken home and hung on a wall," Jenn shared with me. "I know my students put their hearts and souls into everything they create."

In *kiri-e*, pieces of paper are cut with precision

and layered one upon the other until an image is formed. In many ways, Jenn's classroom is a *kiri-e* masterpiece. Every project layering one upon the next emphasizing the Creator and empowering students to make their own artistic choices—projects that are hanging up right now in homes throughout the Eastside.

Jenn Sinclair holds a B.Ed. Secondary Art from University of Alberta, Canada, and a Fine Art Diploma from MacEwan University, Canada. Jenn has been teaching children since 2008 and believes that through art and creativity, we have the power to inspire others to make the world a better place. In 2018, Jenn joined the Bear Creek community as Lower School Art Specialist. Beginning in fall 2022, she will teach visual art for kindergarten – grade 6 classes.

# ON THE STAGE IN 2021 – 2022

Every year, Lower School students participate in a stage production and/or a significant oral presentation in front of peers and parents. Why do we spend time having students engage in this art form? Art has the power to move us, change us, and inspire us. We point students to truth, goodness, and beauty, and a theatrical production is just one way we have students immerse themselves in a story that reveals the condition of the human heart, taking on the role of a character and creating with their classmates. Drama and oral presentations also teach students many things about using language well, building vocabulary, and becoming more confident in rhetorical skills.



Kindergarten students performed *The Real Princess*, adapted from Hans Christian Anderson's beloved fairy tale on April 6 – 8 for their families.



All three second-grade classes presented a puppet show entitled *The Rabbit Who Wanted Red Wings* on February 10.



On March 23 – 25, grade 1 classes performed short adaptations of three beloved children's stories for their families: *A New Coat for Anna* by Harriet Ziefert, *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams, and *The Empty Pot* by Demi.



Grade 4 classes presented Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* for their families on March 9 and 10.





Grade 6 students performed Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on January 19 and 20.

Students in grades 7 and 8 taking the Drama elective present an evening production for family, friends, and the school community. Students engage in the history and technique of theater and are given a chance to showcase their own performance techniques.



J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan and Wendy*, adapted by Doug Rand, was performed on November 9 and 10.



Middle School students performed an adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* on May 20.

Upper School produces two theatrical productions each year. The fall semester class performs in November, and the spring semester production is in April or May. Typically, a play by William Shakespeare is produced once each year. Our Shakespeare Immersion Program aims to cultivate in students an understanding of human virtue and frailty by examining the great works of William Shakespeare through stage performance and curricular parallels.



Upper School theater students presented a modern adaptation of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* on November 19 and 20.



Upper School theater students presented *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov on April 29 and 30.



# Lower School Students

## Find Truth, Goodness, and Beauty Through the Arts

BY TRESSA PARKER

One important component of a liberal arts education is providing a broad knowledge base in the fine arts. By studying both visual and performing arts, students learn to think creatively, analytically, and artistically, and grow in their ability to create and innovate. They develop in wisdom, compassion, and courage as they interact with one another, try new things, gain confidence, and learn to think critically.

Lower School students in kindergarten through grade 4 participate in a well-rounded fine arts program, visiting studio art classes at least twice a month, attending music classes twice a week, and

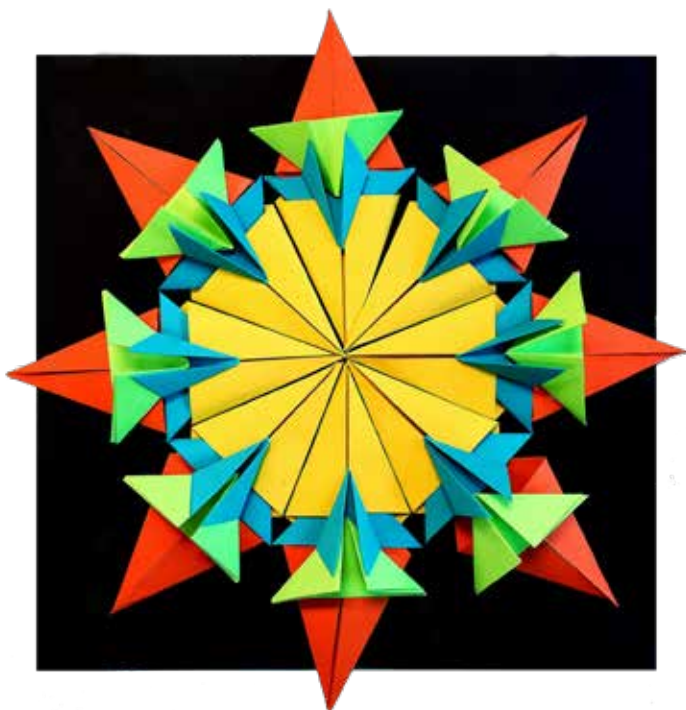
participating in class dramas. These dramas include a fairy tale in kindergarten, short story vignettes in grade 1, a puppet show in grade 2, and a Shakespeare adaptation in grade 4.

If we look at the fine arts curriculum through the lens of the *trivium*, the lower portion of the seven liberal arts, we see how students move through each stage of the learning process. The word *trivium* is Latin for crossroads, or the place where three roads meet. In education, these three paths include stages or methods of teaching and learning: grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric. In the classical model, these stages align with the developmental level of the students, and since Lower School students are good at absorbing information, there is an appropriate emphasis on the grammar stage in the early years. We can also look at the *trivium* more broadly, as the three paths one travels to reach deep learning, and we find that Lower School builds a solid foundation in the arts using all three phases of the *trivium*.

In the grammar stage, Lower School students learn to **recognize** truth, **honor** goodness, and **admire** beauty.

In our studio art curriculum, students learn concepts such as line, texture, tone, and shape. Through music classes, they learn to read notes, keep a steady beat, match pitch, play instruments, and practice dance steps. Through dramas, students practice memorization, develop literacy skills, and learn new words.

Students are building vocabulary in all these subjects as they acquire foundational knowledge that provides



Grade 4 radial symmetry and relief sculpture to create unique patterns with paper



CINDY MCCAHL

Kindergarten production of *The Real Princess*, adapted from Hans Christian Anderson's beloved fairy tale

a framework for future learning. These are the roots of the tree, strong and solid, running deep and wide.

In the dialectic part of the *trivium*, students learn to **stand** for truth, **examine** goodness, and **appraise** beauty.

In studio art classes, students practice observation skills as they analyze and evaluate works of art and participate in discussion. They try new techniques including drawing, painting, clay, collage, mixed media, and three-dimensional art. They explore the principles of art and learn how to combine elements and use proportion to create beauty. Music classes provide students with the opportunity to learn distinct types of music and recognize the look and sound of various instruments. They practice making music starting in smaller chunks and building until they have mastered the full piece. Through the drama

program, students analyze the characters from a Christian worldview. They bring their interpretation to the lines, practice diction, and learn to project their voices. They also examine the humanity of the characters as part of the redemptive story—people who are made in God's image, yet fallen. Students learn to recognize virtue and human frailty.

Students are growing in their ability to reason and ask questions. They develop a process for understanding and make connections between the arts and other aspects of life and culture. These are the trunk, branches, and limbs of the tree, creating a sturdy structure and healthy support system.

On the rhetoric portion of the path, students grow in their ability to **communicate** truth, **display** goodness, and **create** beauty.



Grade 3 observational mixed media leaf collage with line work to show movement and unity





Grade 4 students perform with ukuleles for Mothers Tea.

Students are made in the image of our Creator God, and we know that they have truly learned when they are able to communicate that knowledge and understanding in meaningful and creative ways. In studio art class, students produce beautiful pieces of art, using all the skills they have developed deeply through their grammar and dialectic experiences. Our music program has a performance focus, and student learning culminates in events such as the Christmas programs and Mothers Tea. Students showcase their progress through vocal pieces and use of instruments such as recorders, ukuleles, drums, and xylophones. They display their ability to blend voices and sounds and work as a team, as members of a community. During drama performances, students use their rhetorical skills to project their lines with expression, using persuasive and articulate communication. They become comfortable on stage and gain confidence and composure through performing for an audience.

Students express truth, goodness, and beauty as they communicate their knowledge. These are the leaves, flowers, and fruit of the tree, glorifying God and delighting others.

Lower School teachers intentionally design experiences to meet the learning objectives described above. They nurture students to develop into the individuals God intends, inspiring them to cultivate intellectual curiosity, innovative thinking, and imaginative communication as they create beauty for all to enjoy.

Tressa Parker joined The Bear Creek School in 1994 as a second-grade teacher. In the years since, she has served as Lower School Division Head, Preschool Division Head, and Lower School Dean of Students. She currently serves as Dean of Literacy and Learning. She holds a B.A. Elementary Education from Covenant College and a M.Ed. Curriculum and Instruction from Lesley University.



# THE BENEFITS OF MUSIC ON YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

*How instrumental instruction and performance boost learning and social-emotional strengths in kids*

BY GEMMA ALEXANDER

*This article was originally published by ParentMap on September 29, 2021, and is reprinted with permission.*

When people talk about high stakes testing in schools, they are usually referring to the emphasis placed on kids' scores. But another aspect of standardized testing may have even bigger impacts on our kids' success. Subjects that get tested get funded, so when budgets are tight, the arts—especially expensive instrumental music programs—can be the first to go. It's a short-sighted decision that can have long-term effects on the quality of our kids' education. It turns out, you really want to see your kid's brain on music.

Research shows that children who receive arts education score higher in math and reading and develop stronger critical and creative thinking skills. Arts education can even improve media literacy, because we are exposed daily to advertising and political messages that are crafted by artists to affect us in specific ways. For all these academic reasons, the arts—defined as theater, dance, visual arts, and music—are recognized as core subjects in Washington state. But the most significant benefits of arts education extend beyond academic performance to the way the arts help us develop as people.



Grade 4 students try out instruments in preparation for beginning band in grade 5

"Art is what makes humans unique from other creatures," says Kelsey Thompson, band director at The Bear Creek School, an independent preschool – grade 12 school in Redmond. "We create from a very young age, and unfortunately, I think we lose some of that as we grow up. Cultivating that creative side in kids all the way through school is what we hope will help them

continue to be creators as adults. I think you'll find that teachers push music for music's sake, not for the math test score."

As social-emotional learning (SEL) has become more common in schools, educators have found that the arts are already fully integrated with SEL principles. In the wake of a year of remote learning that put many music programs on hold and challenged kids' social development and emotional well-being, the natural points of connection

between music instruction and SEL are especially valuable.

"Art elicits an emotional response at a very basic level," says Thompson. Quality arts instruction encourages kids to examine that response and to develop self-awareness as they improve their own performance.

"If we're rehearsing a song, we might play just a couple measures of the song and then stop and ask, 'How



Upper School Concert Band Spring Concert

did that go for you? What do you need to fix?’ Music teachers are constantly asking those kinds of self-reflective questions in class, and it’s forcing students to think in a different way than in their other classes,” says Thompson.

Learning an instrument also encourages self-regulation. While practicing, students learn to manage emotions such as frustration with a challenging piece of music. They also learn to manage the anxiety that precedes performance, first in class and eventually in public. When students go beyond solo instrument practice to join an ensemble, the SEL benefits are even greater, because it is an inherently social activity.

“Performing arts classes like drama and music involve a team. Like team sports, one person’s performance

affects everyone else’s performance. Learning how to navigate that is super, super important because it translates to the workplace directly,” says Thompson.

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*Celebrating the  
journey may be the  
most important thing  
parents can do to  
encourage their kid  
in music.*

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In ensemble music classes like orchestra and band, students learn to hold themselves responsible to the bigger group. There’s no hiding in the back of the classroom, either, and the experience of participating fully in music class makes speaking up in other classes easier, too.

Since everyone hits a wrong note sometimes, students learn to fail publicly and move on. Self-reflection, teamwork, and shared failures and successes are also the recipe for empathy. Participating in

ensemble music is basically practice for living in society, with the added benefit of content learning.

“A strong music program starts in kindergarten,” says



Thompson. While instrumental music is rarely offered before middle school, students who learn general music in elementary school have an advantage in understanding the nature of ensemble music, learning to read music, and careful listening. But as important as musical progress is, the sound of an ensemble performance is not the surest sign of a quality music program. Thompson says the most important indicator is the kids themselves.

"If the students are enjoying the experience, the teacher is probably doing a good job of making relationships through music, rather than simply teaching music," says Thompson. "Encourage the squawking and encourage the squeaks because that's how they get better." The point is not perfection, it's growth—another important SEL lesson. The listening experience at a middle school Christmas concert may be a far cry from Handel's "Messiah" at Seattle Symphony, but at this stage, the sound is not the most important part of the performance. Remember, three months ago many of them didn't even know how to hold their instruments.

"Yes, the performance piece is really important, but it should be about sharing their learning. Kids are excited to show their parents what they've learned," says Thompson. So, if you want to support your child's musical education, hold off on the musical criticism and express interest instead.

"Celebrating the journey may be the most important thing parents can do to encourage their kid in music,"

says Thompson. Ask questions about what they are learning in class. Even singing along to the radio and sharing your own imperfect voice is encouraging.

Of course, parents can only celebrate the journey if kids continue on it, and kids can be reluctant to practice.

"At the beginning, I think external motivators are important. Twelve-year-olds don't always have intrinsic motivation," says Thompson. The old guideline of 30

minutes daily will result in rapid progress. But Thompson cautions that it isn't realistic for most families. It's better to establish and reward a sustainable practice schedule than to fight over a too ambitious one. It may take a while to establish a strong practice routine, but once kids start to see improvement, they are less likely to resist practice.

And Thompson promises that there will be improvement if your child sticks with it. "Only about five percent of the population has true tone deafness. Kids are born musicians, and it's our job as teachers to encourage that in them. And even if your family has no musical

talent, it doesn't have any bearing on the ability to enjoy and make music."

Regardless of academic impacts and inborn talent, as long as you are human, learning to make music is valuable for its own sake.



Middle School Band Spring Concert

Seattle-based freelance writer Gemma Alexander focuses on the intersection of parenting and the arts. When she's not writing for *ParentMap*, she blogs at [gemmadeealexander.com](http://gemmadeealexander.com) and tweets at [@gemmadeetweet](https://twitter.com/gemmadeetweet).

# THE ROLE OF THE ARTS IN SOCIETY

BY MARLA BLUE

Before I took my first art history class in college, I was told to expect slides of boring images. I had been told wrong. Instead of memorizing titles and dates of famous works of art, I ended up learning about the history of societies, their culture, their values, their image of God, and how they saw their world. It was fascinating, and my understanding of earlier societies became broader and deeper than the knowledge I had gained from other history classes. I began to understand that art was, and always had been, more than self-expression.

Another misconception I had was that there were two different purposes for art. One was to create beauty or pleasure such as an oil painting or symphony, and the other was to convey a

message or sell a product, such as advertising and graphic design. I was told there was no great purpose to fine art, other than to create and experience beauty and that there was no great creativity or beauty in commercial art. As I continued my arts education, I came to believe that all art tells a story, communicates, and has purpose—and that all art is creative and beautiful.

Some of the earliest preserved artwork tells the story of a hunt on the wall of a cave or family history on a totem outside of a dwelling place. In ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, art represented the gods of the society and told their stories. The early Christian church produced art that told the stories of Creation, the fall, and the birth of Jesus. To those

who could not read, Christian art told the story of salvation through friezes, frescos, paintings, and statues. This early art was communication, whether it was the story of a hunt in a cave drawing or the story of creation on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

In the Renaissance period, wealthy patrons hired artists to create art to bring glory to God and to shine the light of God's beauty in their homes, chapels, and churches. Art was commissioned both to glorify and display devotion to God. Michelangelo produced the work he was hired to create; he was a commercial artist. Nearly all Renaissance art was "commercial" in that it was commissioned for a purpose, and those commercial enterprises created some of the



Prehistoric human cliff painting c. 2000 BC in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand



Ancient Inuit Totem Lodge in Alaska



*The Last Judgement* fresco in the Sistine Chapel, Vatican Museum by Michelangelo



most beautiful art ever seen.

Like visual art, performance art, such as music and theater, has been communicating and telling stories since our earliest known societies. Western theater has roots in ancient Greece beginning around 550 BC, and Eastern theater traditions trace back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. These early theater productions told stories of the relationships between men and gods or featured spiritual dramas and mystic rituals. Music goes back even further, developed in the earliest of civilizations, as seen in discoveries of early flutes made from bird bone and ivory.

Art history instructors tell us that we can learn about a society and what it valued through studying its art, but I also learned that art can be used to impact culture and change what people value and how they behave. Does culture create art or does art create culture? In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, graphic design and packaging reached new levels of sophistication and with the development of mass production printing and communication

through radio and television, began to change what people ate, wore, and how they spent their free time. Coca-Cola's first advertisement in 1886 launched a campaign that would create what is arguably the world's most popular beverage. Music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century played a significant role in inspiring and giving voice to the civil rights movement. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "The freedom songs are playing a strong and vital role in our struggle."

Beyond communicating ideas and values, there is also something inherently spiritual about art. We use the words creative and creation when we discuss a work of art. To create something out of nothing, to paint, write, or make music, brings something into existence that did not exist before. Art is created, and the artist is a creator. We realize that as God created us in His image, we were made to be creators.

Dana Gioia, who served as the chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) from 2003 – 2009, said, "The Christian has a unique role for

speaking in a fresh way to our culture. We know our Creator. We know of His love, and we see our creativity as a gift from Him. Therefore, we have the most compelling reason for creating, commissioning, and buying great art. It is a celebration of being made in His image."

As Christians, we bring glory to God by creating beauty and exercising our gift of creativity. Our music, drama, poetry, and painting are expressions of our values, our struggles, our culture, and our desire to know God and to know ourselves. Art is an integral part of who we are as people and who God has created us to be. What story are we telling as Christians today? Are we creating and producing beauty? Are we bringing glory to God by using and refining our gift of creativity? What are we communicating to others through the art that we produce, and how will future students who study our society view us?



The ruins of the ancient Roman theatre at Aphrodisias in Turkey



Old billboard sign advertising ice cold Coca-Cola soda drink in its city of birth, Atlanta, GA

Marla Blue, Marketing Director at The Bear Creek School, holds a B.F.A Graphic Design from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA. She grew up involved in the arts, playing the organ, flute, and saxophone. Today, she enjoys attending plays at Village Theater in Issaquah and visiting the Seattle Art Museum, as well as any live music she can find, especially jazz.

# Serving the Community One Uniform at a Time

BY DEBBIE MARCHIONE

For Melissa Harbin and Kelly Mickelson, PTF Board members and the Co-Chairs of the PTF Used Uniform Sale, the joy is in the details. “For each sale, we process over 1,500 items, and there are thousands of potential points at which a mistake can be made,” laughs Kelly. Melissa chimes in, “But we love doing it!”

Melissa and Kelly became friends when their sons were in the same Bear Creek Preschool P4 class during the 2019 – 2020 school year. They worked together on classroom activities and gradually got more involved in the school, serving as Room Parents and Parent Reps as well as on PTF committees. Melissa also volunteers as a Parent Mentor, helping families new to Bear Creek integrate into the school community. Both women reflected on the importance of finding a school where they could be directly involved and make a difference in the lives of both the students and the school community. “Parents are welcome here, and volunteering is a great example for your own children that you care about their education and want to be in their world,” Kelly commented.

Kelly became involved in the Used Uniform Sale in fall of 2021 amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenge of adapting this valued community service drew her to the project. She and Ellena Johnson, the former chair, spent many hours building out and refining a web platform, allowing the sale to move completely online. The work involved figuring out an inventory management system and an entirely new process to conform to the COVID-19 protocols. Kelly notes, “It was important not to cancel the sale but to evolve it in light of COVID-19 in order to give parents a sense of safety and confidence in their purchases.”

Kelly invited Melissa to join her as a co-chair this



Kelly Mickelson and Melissa Harbin

year. With a background in inventory management, Melissa shares Kelly’s love for details and was excited to be part of a service that helps the community. The two have further refined the “behind the scenes” systems and processes as well as the drive-through delivery offered to parents. They estimate that it takes about 8 weeks of work to collect, sort, inventory, and package all the donated uniforms.

Both women agree that while it is a lot of work, it is rewarding. Kelly states, “I love being able to volunteer at Bear Creek because it is an example to my boys of a servant heart.” Melissa agrees and adds, “I love to volunteer because it helps connect me with other parents.”

In addition to their volunteer time, both families invest philanthropically in Bear Creek. “For us, it is so important to support Bear Creek financially as well, because we believe in the mission. Bear Creek is helping shape our children, and we want to do what we can to support all the students here,” says Kelly. Melissa concurs, “This is a place for our family to grow, and we want to contribute however we can.”

Bear Creek is indeed grateful to Melissa and Kelly for their willingness to dedicate their time, talent, and treasure to serve the school community.



# Diamond Performing Arts Center Dedication

BY DEBBIE MARCHIONE

On April 22, 2022, the Diamond Performing Arts Center in the Upper School was officially dedicated and named in honor of the Diamond family. Sue Diamond is a long-time trustee of The Bear Creek School, and her late husband Kent was a beloved golf coach and volunteer. The family has a long tradition of involvement and philanthropy at Bear Creek. Sue's gift to name the space reflects her commitment to the arts, especially music, but, more importantly, it reflects her commitment to students, encouraging them to explore their God-given gifts so they might bring honor and glory to Him.

Sue and her children Karin '13 and Colin '15, and Karin's fiancé (now husband) Ethan Frederic, along with family, friends, fellow Trustees, and members of Bear Creek's President's Circle celebrated the naming with a special dedication ceremony followed by a concert by renowned Hawaiian slack-key guitarist Jeff Peterson.

In keeping with Sue's care for students, Bear Creek's Upper School band students had the opportunity earlier in the week to learn from and perform with Mr. Peterson as well. The musician graciously performed a song with the Upper School Jazz Band at their Spring Concert and



Ethan Frederic, Karin Diamond, Sue Diamond, and Colin Diamond



Jeff Peterson with Upper School students in the Nagel Commons

participated in a lunchtime mini-concert and Q&A session for all interested students.

Bear Creek is deeply grateful to Sue Diamond for her

dedication and her very generous philanthropic investments to benefit students and advance the school's arts program and mission.

# THE BEAR CREEK SCHOOL COMMUNITY'S GENEROSITY REACHES NEW HEIGHTS

**W**e are incredibly grateful to everyone who invested in Bear Creek during the 2021 – 2022 school year. Your generosity through the Annual Fund and Gratitude Gala made a huge impact on our students, faculty, and staff and allowed us to take advantage of innovations developed during the pandemic, improve our outdoor areas, and continue to deliver on our mission.

The Annual Fund topped more than \$870,000, the most ever raised.

The Gratitude Gala and online auction raised in excess of \$448,000, with \$190,000 of that designated to improving our outdoor spaces. Starting next fall, Lower School students will enjoy a new playground surface and equipment, Upper School students will have more areas to gather outdoors by the pond, and students of all ages will be able to gather for learning or community in a terraced amphitheater in the grassy area between the Main and Upper School buildings.

The school also received more than \$2.65 million in commitments for scholarship funds, significantly increasing the amount of money available to help students who otherwise would not be able to benefit from a Bear Creek education.



**139** households gave for the first time



**\$2.1** million in scholarship endowments



**392** bidders in the online auction



**162** guests at the Gala



**110** items in the online auction



**\$3.5** million in total philanthropy





## INVEST IN THE FUTURE

Legacy giving is a powerful way to make an impact on tomorrow's world through the education of future Christian leaders—individuals prepared to engage the world with wisdom, compassion, and courage. Your thoughtful planning to advance the mission of The Bear Creek School will make a difference in the world your children, grandchildren, or even great-grandchildren will inherit.

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 by welcoming you into our *Legacy Circle* of like-minded donors.

For more information about making a legacy gift in your will or through life insurance, property, or other assets, contact Mariana Keller, Senior Director of Philanthropy and Community Engagement, at [mkeller@tbcs.org](mailto:mkeller@tbcs.org) or 425-898-1720 ext. 340.



## BEST OF 425 MAGAZINE

In May, Bear Creek was honored once again by readers of *425 Magazine* as the **Best of 425** in the Best Private High School category, and kindergarten teacher Jenny Shimada was again voted Best Teacher. These honors reflect on all our faculty and staff and their talent and commitment to delivering on our mission. This is the fifth year in a row that Bear Creek's families have voted us "Best Of" in one or more of the education categories.



# GABE VILAFLO, CLASS OF 2021

THE CHALLENGES AND REWARDS OF BEING A COLLEGE STUDENT-ATHLETE

BY WHITNEY ISBELL '15



From the time he played Little League baseball, Gabe knew he wanted to play baseball at a high level, including in college. He reflects, “Even though it was just for fun, and half the time kids are making sandcastles at shortstop, or picking flowers in the outfield, or just looking forward to the snacks after the game, I loved it. I loved baseball even more than I loved those goldfish or orange slices. Since then, I’ve been working towards my goal of playing in college, and now that I’m here, my next goal is to be drafted.”

After a complicated, turbulent recruiting process due to the pandemic, Gabe is proud to be playing for the University of Portland Pilots. “I had been talking with several NCAA Division I schools about playing baseball, but nobody was able to make an official offer because of the effects COVID-19 had



on the 2020 – 2021 recruiting class. When the restrictions were finally lifted and I tried contacting some coaches, the answer was the same every time, ‘Sorry we have an extra big roster because of COVID now and we don’t have any spot on the team we can offer you.’ I can’t begin to describe how discouraging it was to think that the goal I dreamed of for so long and had been working my whole life toward seemed out of reach. God always has a plan though.”

Given the circumstances, in the spring of his senior year, Gabe decided to attend Yakima Valley Community College as an infielder. However, a month before school started, the University of Portland reached out and offered him a walk-on spot as a catcher. “I had never played catcher before, so I had to be super flexible! It took way longer than I thought and wasn’t exactly how I imagined it, but I finally got the opportunity to play D1 baseball.”

The life of a college athlete can be difficult, particularly for freshmen. Gabe redshirted his freshman year, so did not see any playing time, despite having to spend long, difficult hours practicing and training along with the rest of the team. “Going through my freshman year not playing at all allowed doubts to creep into my mind. I noticed my anxieties and stress and depression were amplified. I would question if I really belonged there, but I was able to pick myself up and bet on myself. I started seeing a therapist and made a conscious effort to do things that were out of my comfort zone and to just have fun! How many people get to





be on a D1 sports team? I get to be one of them! My goals for the season were to enjoy the moment, to learn and grow physically and mentally, and to keep going the extra mile so I can be the best contributor to my team.” Gabe’s parents and friends played an important role as well in encouraging him to continue working hard. “They constantly reminded me how far I’ve come as an athlete and to remember how good it feels when you overcome something challenging. I’ve done it a bunch of times before, so why can’t I do it again?”

Gabe’s first year brought many challenges, but also rewards. Besides building his strength and skills, he has developed close friendships with his teammates. “Unfortunately, we were eliminated from the playoffs when we lost to Gonzaga in the West Coast Conference tournament, but we were so close with one another that even though it was the last time that group was going to share the field together, I know that the relationships we made are going to last forever.”

In addition to his physical growth, Gabe reflects on his personal growth. “What has surprised me the most, beyond how much better I’ve gotten, is how independent I’ve become. Playing on the team has showed me how much you have to learn on your own. It’s not easy at first, but once you master the routines and get to know the guys on the team and the coaches, you start feeling more at home.”

He continues, “Another rewarding thing for me was seeing improvements in how I think about the game

of baseball. I’ve learned that everyone on a team has a role. It doesn’t matter if you’re injured, not playing at all, or the star player—everyone has a specific role on the team. Those who choose to accept their role, no matter what it is, help bring the team together. We were at our best this year when all 35 of us on the team were bought in to build a playoff and championship caliber team.”

As Gabe worked to juggle academics with athletics, he credits Bear Creek for teaching him the importance of good communication with teachers. “In college, especially on a sports team, it’s vital that you communicate with your professors if you’re missing a day of class because of a game. Reaching out to them means the world to them and establishing a relationship with them benefits you and your professor a ton.”

He concludes, “I knew I wanted to play baseball in college at the highest level I could. I knew it was going to be hard, but I didn’t realize exactly how hard. Everyone says it’s a big commitment, and you really have to love your sport and everything that comes with it, the good and the bad. They are correct!”

“I’ve also learned that there are so many positive things that come out of what seem to be negative situations. By watching my teammates and having my own experiences, I’ve been able to learn that valuable lesson of finding the good things that come out of everything. I’ve learned so many tools this year to help me become mentally stronger.”



# MEGAN STOJANOVA, CLASS OF 2010

## DISCOVERING A CAREER IN ART

Megan (Cheever) Stojanova has worked in the video game industry for nearly a decade. She agreed to share about her experience in the field with *Modus Vivendi* via an email interview.

### **MV: WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING SINCE YOU LEFT BEAR CREEK?**

I graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Illustration from Academy of Art University in San Francisco, then I moved with my family down to Austin, TX. Since then, I have been working in the video game industry as a concept artist, and now I manage a team of outsource artists. I also run a small clothing reselling business on the side. I got married in September 2021 to my wonderful husband Lubo.

### **MV: TELL ME ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE WORKING AS AN ARTIST IN THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY.**

The first thing I say is that it's a lot of fun! For the majority of my career, I worked as a concept artist/2-D art generalist. My strength is in character costume design; I would help figure out clothing and outfits for characters and player-characters. I worked at Daybreak Games (the Austin studio is now called Dimensional Ink) for about five years. I designed player costumes, as well as illustrated icons, UI, and even key art (big promotional illustrations) for DC Universe Online. I also started working with and managing external partners ("outsource") which led me to my current job.

Right now, I am at Aspyr working on the *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic Remake*. My title is



Megan with her husband, Lubo

Lead Outsource Artist, so while I don't personally work on much artwork myself anymore, I art direct our external partners. I manage a team of other outsource artists, which so far has been a blast. I really enjoy my studio as we have so many accomplished and talented industry veterans, and we still get to work in a laid back, goofy, but still hardworking environment.

### **MV: WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO GO INTO THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY?**

I have always wanted to do something with art, and I have been playing games since *Pokémon Red*. I didn't realize that a concept artist for video games was even a job until my sophomore year in high school, and at that time (like many other aspiring professional artists), *World of Warcraft*/Blizzard Entertainment was the dream job. I think I discovered this as a potential career path just from browsing their career section. The decision wasn't difficult at all; it's a combination of two things I enjoy so the fact that I get paid to indulge is amazing!

### **MV: WHAT HAS SURPRISED YOU MOST ABOUT THIS CAREER?**

I'm still blown away by the amount of knowledge and research required by any discipline. For example, character and environment artists and material



Megan's work

artists (people who create the 3-D assets and those who create the textures) need to not only know how the programs work (which are usually highly technical), but they work in multiple programs. On top of that, they must research how time, weather, lifestyle, etc., affects the appearance of materials. For example, knowing how clothing wears, how certain fabrics look in light, how to sculpt those difficult materials effectively—it's all a huge rabbit hole of knowledge that goes beyond just "making art." This extends to programmers and tech artists—there is a lot of wrangling technology for certain functions to be achieved. I know there is so much more to those disciplines but overall, it's pretty wild just how much there is to learn.

### **MV: WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING PART? THE MOST CHALLENGING PART?**

When I worked on DC Universe Online, the most rewarding part was when players got really excited about an outfit I designed. It is an MMORPG, which means it's a live game, or game-as-a-service. We were developing and shipping content at the same time. There were a couple of occasions when I had the opportunity to create some original designs (instead of costumes based off an existing comic book character), and players reacting positively to that always felt great. Being able to work with

community, as well as to help create an experience that they were looking for was incredible, and it's something I miss!

Now at Aspyr, the most rewarding experiences are seeing the results from developing strong, personal relationships with our outsource partners. Being able to cultivate a sense of camaraderie between two different studios, two different teams, two different countries is so cool. I am excited to see how our work is received by the public whenever our game gets released. Seeing fan reactions during our Sony announcement was amazing!

I think the most challenging part for me is getting caught up on technology. My background is in 2-D art—I use one, maybe two programs that are not very technical. I'm currently working on a high fidelity, AAA title that is aiming to use the latest and greatest tech, so there is a bit of a knowledge gap there. I oversee a couple different disciplines, each of which have their own workflows and programs, so learning more about everything is a bit of a task, but it is an ongoing learning process.

### **MV: HOW DID BEAR CREEK HELP PREPARE YOU FOR THIS CAREER?**

Honestly, my time on the girls basketball team was the most impactful. Learning to think critically and solve problems from the traditional Bear Creek education is great but navigating what kind of a teammate and leader I wanted to be has been absolutely critical.

# ALUMNI NEWS AND CLASS NOTES

*Class Notes are submitted by alumni and lightly edited for grammar or clarity. They represent a range of alumni experiences. Share your news with the Bear Creek community using the form at [alumni.tbcs.org](https://alumni.tbcs.org).*

2006

## Inness Pryor

Inness lives in Portland and works as a private practice mental health counselor specializing in anxiety and OCD.

2009

## Beth Patterson



Beth (Graham) Patterson graduated in June from her medical residency at Jacobi Montefiore Emergency Department in the Bronx, NY. At graduation, Beth received The Social Emergency Medical Advocacy Award, given for championing diversity, equity, inclusiveness, and belonging for all. Beth will be working at Evergreen Hospital in Kirkland.

2012

## Adriaan Dippenaar



After graduating with a B.A. in nonprofit leadership and starting a career in the social sector, I'm back in school for a Master of Science in Human Centered Design & Engineering at UW. Last year, I served as Pastoral Fellow at Valley and Mountain Fellowship in the Columbia City neighborhood of Seattle, where I have lived since college. I am newly engaged to Schiff, my partner of five years; we are planning a wedding for next September. On the average weekend, you will find me backpacking, gardening, cycling around the city, playing with my cat, and dreaming about product designs for a more user-friendly future.

## Erik Domas

Erik graduated from the University



of Washington School of Medicine in June 2022 and started his general surgery residency at St. Joseph Medical Center in Tacoma. Before graduation, he and his wife McKensey travelled on their honeymoon to Norway where they hiked along fjords and within Jotunheimen National Park.

## Danielle Isbell



Danielle married Mason Pashia on May 29, 2022, at Trinity Tree Farms in Issaquah in an outdoor ceremony. Danielle and Mason were able



to share their love for poetry by reciting poems they had written for each other along with their vows. Family and friends from near and far, including Bear Creek alumni and alumni families, were present to share in the celebration. Each wedding attendee was gifted a pinecone as a symbol of the trees that were planted in their honor.

2014

### Alexa Calcagno



Alexa graduated in May 2022 from medical school at Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine in Fort Worth, TX. She has started a three-year Emergency Medicine residency at UT Health San Antonio.

### Bridget Daugherty

After graduating from Tulane University in 2018, Bridget moved to Galway, Ireland and then to



Birmingham, AL. Last summer, Bridget and her fiancé, Daniel, moved back to Seattle, purchased a townhouse, and planned their August 2022 wedding. Bridget works as an engineer in research and development for medical devices.

### Jon Kok

I currently direct worship at a church in SeaTac and teach 15 piano students as well as Zumba at 425 Fitness.

2015

### Mike Lau

Mike Lau completed his B.S. in electrical engineering from Santa Clara University in December 2019. While visiting friends in the UK after Christmas, he became stuck there due to the pandemic. Making the best of the situation, Mike pursued



a master's degree from Darwin College at Cambridge University. After graduating in 2021 from Cambridge, he began a Ph.D. at Princeton University in mechanical and aerospace engineering, with a focus on large-scale energy modeling. Mike suffers from a rare autoimmune disease and is currently seeking a kidney donor as a transplant will help him resume his studies, which are currently on hold.

### Matt Miller

Matt Miller works for Learfield Amplify, which is responsible for ticket revenue generation at many NCAA Division I schools, at Virginia Tech (VT). His main job is to drive new sales and new people to Virginia Tech in the form of season tickets for football, basketball, and baseball. Matt recently closed a sale of eight new Club seats which generated over \$20,000 in new revenue for VT.

# CLASS NOTES CONTINUED

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

We would love to have you join us this fall at one of our upcoming events. Watch your email and social media or check out [alumni.tbcs.org](http://alumni.tbcs.org) for more details. If you are interested in helping plan or organize an event, or have any questions, please contact Alumni Relations Manager Whitney Isbell '15 at [alumni@tbcs.org](mailto:alumni@tbcs.org).

### Wine Tasting and Gathering for Alumni (age 21+) and Parents of Alumni

Woodhouse Winery,  
Woodinville  
October 7, 2022

### Dig Pink Volleyball Matches

October 7, 2022

### Green & White Night

November 22, 2022

### Alumni Homecoming Basketball Games

December 16, 2022

Follow us on Instagram @BCAAlumni or request to join the Alumni or Parents of Alumni Facebook groups.

2016

### Sam Humphries



I graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with an M.S. in Operations Research on May 26, 2022. I began my service with the U.S. Army on June 2, 2022, at Fort Benning, GA, where I will participate in Basic Officer Leadership Course (BOLC) and Ranger School.

2019

### Cody Clayhold

Cody is currently a pre-M.D./Ph.D. student at Rice University in Houston, TX, studying cell biology and genetics. He is also actively involved with cancer immunotherapy research at MD Anderson Cancer Center, which he will continue during his gap year following graduation in December 2022. Since he began at Rice, Cody has stayed involved with Intervarsity Christian Fellowship and his local church, West University Baptist.

2020

### Brielle Baker



Brielle Baker graduated from Seattle Pacific University with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology in June 2022. Brielle is now pursuing her doctorate in industrial organizational psychology at Seattle Pacific University. In addition to her studies, Brielle will continue to perform with the SPU varsity cheer team for the third year and was recently named a semi-finalist in tryouts for the Sea Gals, the Seattle Seahawks cheer squad.

# FAREWELL

In June 2022, we wished a fond farewell to two long-time Bear Creek faculty members.

**Kellie Anderson** is moving to eastern Washington after 15 years teaching at Bear Creek. She was our first preschool teacher in 2007 and went on to develop the preschool curriculum and grow our preschool program. Kellie served as a beloved teacher for her students and much-admired mentor for new teachers as well. Nearly 300 Bear Creek students benefited from her love, her creativity, her energy, and her modeling of Christian faith. Kellie and husband George are parents of six Bear Creek alumni.



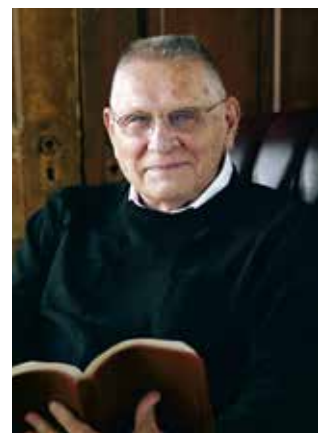
**Carl Benson** retired after 17 years of teaching math at The Bear Creek School and many additional years as a teacher elsewhere. A stalwart of the Middle School and Upper School faculty, during his career he helped thousands of students come to see the beauty of God's creation in mathematical formulas and helped lay a strong foundation for students to progress in their math skills in high school and college and beyond. Carl and his wife Shelley have two children, including one alumnus. He is looking forward to spending time with his adult children, fishing, and relaxing.



Both of these individuals played key roles in delivering the mission of The Bear Creek School, and we are deeply grateful for their commitment and dedication. They will be missed!

# IN MEMORIAM

On March 5, 2022, Bear Creek's original Dean of Students and valued former board member **Rev. Dr. Curtis Brannan** went home to the Lord. Affectionately known as "Dr. B," he played a key role in helping shape the early culture of The Bear Creek School and he provided spiritual leadership to students and faculty. His love for God and his family left an important legacy at Bear Creek as well as with various other ministries and countless individuals. He will be greatly missed by many.







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# WE CAN DO SO MUCH BECAUSE OF YOU!

The Bear Creek School's Christian liberal arts curriculum and nurturing environment enable each student to become the individual God intends, ready to engage the world with wisdom, compassion, and courage.

Your philanthropic support of the Bear Creek ALL-IN Annual Fund ensures that we offer our students the programs that enrich and amplify their education.

Please join us in supporting unique learning opportunities every day!

# ALL-IN!

