

SPRING 2016



chimes

WESTMINSTER CHRISTIAN ACADEMY



Writing After Westminster

Students leave Westminster equipped to find their voice in the written word



On the Cover

Madison Stoecker '15, a freshman at Washington University in St. Louis, says Westminster's writing program helped her succeed during her first-semester English course in college. "My Westminster teachers took the time to go through each of my papers with me and challenged me to see the areas where I could improve," says Madison. "They cared about me as much as my writing. Those kinds of personal relationships made a huge difference, as my professor held us to the same high standards. Effective writing skills are beneficial in many ways, so I know the strong foundation I received at Westminster will continue to help me down the road."

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Chimes is published by Westminster Christian Academy and mailed to alumni, families of current students, and friends of the school. Westminster honors Jesus Christ by providing an excellent education, rooted in biblical truth as interpreted by the Westminster Confession of Faith, for the children of Christian parents. Faculty and staff enable students to discover and embrace a biblical view of the world and integrate that view into every area of life. To request a free subscription, email info@wcastl.org.

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FEATURE**18 Westminster Writers**

Westminster's rigorous writing program equips students to use the gift of words to find their voice, articulate their beliefs, and communicate with confidence.

Senior Klarissa Sheffield delivers a show-stopping performance in Family Reunion.



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Why Westminster?

Why Westminster? I recently asked an alumnus this question when he was inquiring about an open position at the school. His answer was simple: “My life was shaped by Westminster, and I’d like to be part of its mission to shape other students’ lives.”

Parents often ask me the same question: Why should they choose Westminster for their children? (Check out Director of Admissions Peggy Johnson’s perspective on page 15.) I have five answers, confirmed over and over in conversation with many of you:

A program with an academic advantage. Our focus is on preparing students in such a way that provides them opportunities to discover their callings and professions. Our campus is simply a beautiful and functional home for our comprehensive educational program.

The Christian-school community. Our community has an educational force of its own. It is a safe, nurturing, fun, supportive, and helpful place for students to develop healthy friendships.

Opportunities for involvement. Through a wide variety of cocurricular offerings that capture every student’s interests, students continually discover and develop new talents and passions.

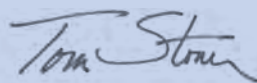
Relationships with teachers, coaches, and directors. At the heart of Westminster’s mission is the relationships that students form with Westminster’s faculty and staff who feel called to help them become the people God created them to be.

The power of Christian schooling. Education is one of the most life-shaping influences in a young person’s life. Westminster provides Christian parents with an education option that is consistent with their deeply held convictions of Christian faith, that instructs their students through the lens of a biblical worldview, and that nurtures faith and character.

In this issue of *Chimes*, you’ll see many of these themes emerge through English teacher Jill Keith’s reflections on how Westminster’s rigorous writing program equips students for life (p. 18); Jason Thompson’s story of how he was called to counsel students at Westminster (p. 13); and alumna Sarah Moore’s vocation to lead and love well in the political sphere (p. 26).

Would you add anything to my list of reasons “why Westminster?” If so, I’d love to hear from you! Please email me at tstoner@wcastl.org.

Love to you all in Christ,



Tom Stoner, EdD
Head of School



“At the heart of Westminster’s mission is the relationships that students form with Westminster’s faculty and staff who feel called to help them become the people God created them to be.”

John David Wiese

February 22, 2000 – February 3, 2016

We remember sophomore student John David Weise, who passed away suddenly in early February. A strong student and leader, loyal friend, and dedicated member of the swim/dive team, J.D. will be missed deeply by his Westminster family.

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’ And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ Also he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ And he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment.’”

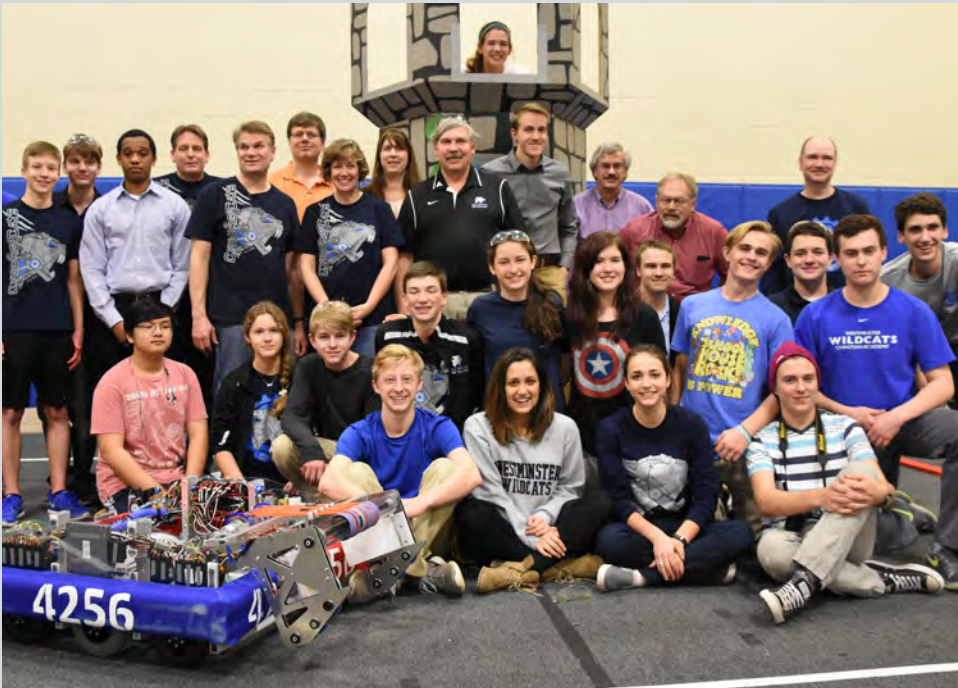
– Revelation 21:1-6

“When we first met we immediately bonded, and he became one of my best friends. I enjoyed many great conversations with him, and through his maturity and love for the Lord, he helped me strengthen my relationship with God.” – Jesse Parham, sophomore 🎵

#rememberJD

- @ToriGreiwe: The biggest smile in the hallway is now in heaven smiling down. We were all so blessed to experience the joy & faith he shared. #rememberJD
- @mike_weinberg: Praying for @wcastl community, leaders, counselors, students esp. 10th grade & JD's family. #rememberJD
- @jTfuL: JD, you are a competitor, a leader, and the most respectful gentleman I know. You are dancing in heaven with the angels. #rememberJD
- @savannahtatum: It's amazing how one boy's life can have such an impact on a community. Rest in peace JD. #rememberJD
- @landonjburke: Wiese family, I can't imagine your pain... but please know your WCA family loves you & will always be there if you need help. #rememberJD
- @trenttarantino: JD we will never forget you and the impact you made on the lives around you. #rememberJD

Mission: Mentorship



own robot in tow. They spent a day presenting Missouri University of Science and Technology's Mars Rover robot to upper and middle school STEM and engineering classes and robotics team members.

Other alumni such as **Josh DeGroot '15** have come full circle, re-entering Westminster's robotics program as official program mentors. "Josh works with students in the shop almost everyday," says Mrs. Harding. "He instructs students on how to use the CNC (computer numeric controlled) mill – a skill he learned at Ranken Tech."

Similarly, Westminster seniors are carrying this same mentorship model into their volunteer work for Faith In Action, Westminster's senior service program. In December, seniors involved in Westminster's robotics program spent a Saturday morning coaching Spoede Elementary students in the FIRST Robotics Lego League qualifying competition. Westminster seniors met with them each Thursday morning in preparation for the intense competition. "The Westminster students motivated the younger kids by helping them problem solve through the programming phase of the competition," says Kathie Dolan, gifted teacher at Spoede Elementary. "They kept the young students calm. After each event in the game, the Westminster students would pull their Spoede teams together and go back over the programs to help the kids improve for the next round of competition."

For Westminster senior **Matthew Rush**, the mentorship aspect of his senior service at Spoede Elementary is his favorite part of the program. "It's awesome to teach kids about something that you're passionate about," he says. "I can't really think of a better fit for my senior service."



At the heart of Westminster's successful FIRST Robotics program is mentorship. It begins with Westminster parents and other professionals in the community who faithfully mentor students in preparation for competition season. When students graduate from Westminster and become Cyborg Cats alumni, many return to campus to reconnect with current students, assist with competition preparation, and share what they are learning in college.

Alumni **Alex Kessel '15**, **Jon Bopp '12**, **Graham Stanfill '15**, and **Amber Terlouw '15** returned in January for the Cyborg Cats' kickoff day for the 2016 competition season. "They were very encouraging to the team as we worked to develop our game strategy," says **Lisa Harding**, director of Westminster's robotics program. Later in the month, **Brianna DeGroot Zandstra '13** and Amber visited Westminster with their

Rockin' Robotics

In early February, Westminster robotics students helped plan and host a special admissions event for 5th and 6th grade students. "They really enjoy sharing their excitement about robotics with kids and do a wonderful job of leading activities that entertain, instruct, and inspire future students!" says Mrs. Harding. This year, visitors had the opportunity to work with modeling software to create their own 3D design and build their own homopolar motor. Team members helped younger students drive the Cyborg Cats' 2014 robot and explained the design process for their 2015 robot.



Investing to Impact

The Cyborg Cats were awarded a \$5,000 grant from The Monsanto Fund in December 2015. Westminster was recognized for implementing a season timeline and work schedule that makes the FIRST Robotics experience accessible to a diverse group of students. "We are so thankful for this generous grant!" says Lisa Harding, director of Westminster's robotics program. "The Monsanto Fund's investment in FIRST will have a genuine impact on the lives of our team members."



Honored to Serve

In November, 78 National Honor Society students volunteered at Carver Elementary School in St. Louis to help beautify its campus by deep-cleaning classrooms and freshly painting the gym walls. "We saw it as an opportunity to bless our city and our neighbors by giving our time and energy to make their school an even more beautiful place to learn," says Westminster NHS advisor **Sara Schwamb**. Parent volunteer **Kelly Faust** says the students' work at Carver impressed her. "All that I witnessed truly touched my heart," says Kelly. "Great kids, awesome spirits, and amazing hearts!"

Leading the Way

Earlier this year, senior **Amanda Skeeters** was selected to attend The Congress of Future Science and Technology Leaders in Boston. She was nominated and chosen because of her excellent academic record, passion for science and technology, and high GPA. "Hearing from leaders in science and technology both inspired and motivated me," she says. "I was able to connect with other student leaders who also became friends!"

The Perfect Match

For the second year in a row, a Westminster student was chosen for a full scholarship through Questbridge. Senior Rebecca Liu will receive the equivalent of more than \$250,000 to fully fund her four years at Rice University in Houston, Tex. From a pool of more than 13,000 applicants, just fewer than 5,000 were chosen as Questbridge finalists, and 657 were chosen to receive full scholarships. "I feel honored," says Rebecca. "I'm very excited to attend Rice. It was my number-one choice."

ROTC Honors

Westminster seniors **Tom Graham** and **Matthew Rush** have earned Army ROTC scholarships, transferable to their colleges of choice. Matthew, who is interested in intelligence work and international business, received a four-year scholarship to Virginia Military Institute. Tom earned a three-year scholarship and is considering Loyola University Maryland or Wheaton College.

2015 National Merit Scholar

Jacob Waller '15, the 2015 National Merit Scholar, fell in the top 1.5% of all seniors in the U.S. who took the test.

Winter Camp: Fifth Anniversary!

January 2016 marked the fifth anniversary of Westminster's month-long Winter Camp, an enriching study abroad experience for a small group of 7th and 8th grade Korean students from Westminster's sister school Saemmul Christian Academy in Seoul, South Korea. This year, 23 Saemmul middle school students, four faculty, and two administrators visited Westminster. Various school families hosted the visitors, and weekend field trips to places like Busch Stadium, the St. Louis Science Center, the St. Louis Art Museum, and the Cathedral Basilica, as well as a weekend trip to Chicago, provided the Saemmul students with firsthand experiences of American culture.



Freedom Isn't Free

In honor of Veterans Day, students in **Ken Boesch's** American Government class collectively wrote encouraging letters and emails to servicemen and women. "First and foremost, I want the students to realize that freedom isn't free - that men and women have fought, and some have given all, for the freedoms that we enjoy each day," says Mr. Boesch. He added that this year the project has special significance for him. "My son **Calvin**, who graduated from Westminster in 2009, is now in Jalalabad, Afghanistan. So that really brings it home for me. I tell my students that this is the most important thing they're going to do all semester in my class, because they're going to be blessing a lot of people."

Nationals-Bound: We the People

Westminster's *We the People* team demonstrated exceptional understanding of U.S. constitutional government in The Missouri Bar-sponsored *We the People* state competition in Jefferson City, Mo., in January. After an intense series of mock hearing debates, Westminster's team was selected to advance to the national competition in Washington, D.C. Nearly 50 students representing high schools from

across Missouri participated in this year's competition. "I am very proud of our students and how they competed at the state competition," says **Ken Boesch**, upper school government and politics teacher. "They achieved a great accomplishment and conducted themselves well." The team will travel to Washington D.C., to compete in the national competition in late April.



In the Spotlight

Westminster's theatre arts department has produced an unforgettable 2015-16 season featuring two musicals, two plays, and a musical revue. The season opened with a colorful and enchanting production of *Into the Woods*, highlighting several senior performers. At the start of the spring semester, a small but talented cast of students performed *The Dining Room*, a thought-provoking play that explored the meaning of family. This year's musical revue, *Family Reunion*, featured well-known songs from *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Wiz*, *Bye Bye Birdie* and songs from more obscure shows such as *Songs for a New World* and *Falsettos* to portray issues of identity, home life, and parenting. The production of *Our Town* will take the Westminster stage later this spring. Considered one of the best plays ever written, it



*Junior Tom Southwell and senior Chris Lee perform together in the fall production of *Into the Woods*.*



Freshman Joshua Jones and sophomore Amie Lee made Metro 8 District Honors High School Orchestra this fall.

explores themes of daily life, love, and marriage. The season will conclude with a middle school musical, Disney's *Alice in Wonderland, Jr.*, May 13-14.

Check out some new course offerings in the arts for the 2016-17 school year. ▶

High Notes

In fall 2015, juniors **Chris Lee** (tenor) and **Sarah Nolting** (alto), and senior **Alysse Tarantino** (soprano), were selected for the Metro 8 District High School Choir. Junior **Christian McGhee** made the Metro 8 District High School Jazz Band on the drum set; freshman **Joshua Jones** and sophomore **Amie Lee** were selected as violinists for the Metro 8 District Honors High School Orchestra; and 8th grader **Hope Burkey** was selected to play the flute for the Metro 8 District Middle School Concert Band.

Drum Roll, Please

The honors rolled in this fall for accomplished percussionist and junior **Christian McGhee**, who was named a 2016 National YoungArts Foundation Honorable Mention winner in the jazz/percussion category and selected from more than 12,000 applicants to receive the honor. He was also named the drummer for the 2016 Jazz Band of America ensemble. The audition process included a submission of a recording to be reviewed by applied music faculty from some of the country's leading universities. This spring, Christian will travel to Indianapolis to participate in "Music for All" to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the National Concert Band Festival.

Parents Who Play a Part

"Thanks to the generosity of several Westminster parents, we were able to obtain a Yamaha baby grand piano for our theatre and concert use as well as implement a partial upgrade to our lighting system. Thank you, parents!" – **Kathy Eichelberger**, Director of Fine Arts



College Signings

As of February 2016, 13 Westminister senior athletes have committed to play in college: Logan McCall (baseball, Harding University), Ben Sems (baseball, University of Kansas), Aaron Cook (basketball, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale), Jake Matheny (baseball, Indiana University), Margo Koby (basketball, Covenant College), Macy Catlett (volleyball, University of Tennessee-Martin), Lauren Massot (swimming, Truman State University), McKenna Montgomery (basketball, Union University), Wyatt Malcom (football, Emporia State University), Drew Melaragno (football, University of Dayton), Keely Sweet (softball, Kenyon College), Jack Andrews (cross country, Taylor University), and Minsok Lee (football, Pittsburg State University).

Zach Hughes Wins Wendy's High School Heisman Award

In December 2015, senior Zach Hughes was one of two national winners for the Wendy's High School Heisman Award. The award recognizes high school seniors who excel in academics, athletics, and leadership. Earlier, Zach had been selected from among 102 state winners to be one of the top 10 student finalists. He then traveled to New York to participate in the collegiate Heisman weekend and was selected as the 2015 Wendy's High School Heisman male national winner.

Senior Zach Hughes poses with fellow Wendy's High School Heisman winner Taylor Campos and 2015 Heisman winner Derrick Henry.

FALL ATHLETICS

Smart Sports

This fall, 348 upper school students participated in Westminster's athletic program, excelling on the athletic field as well as in the classroom. The average student-athlete GPA for the fall semester was 3.49. Sixty upper school students had a GPA average of 4.0 or higher; 194 achieved at least a 3.5; and 296 at least a 3.0.

Cross Country

The boys cross country team proudly finished their season in November with a third-place finish at state.



Field Hockey

In the fall, senior **Lucy Kehr** and sophomore **Haley Schmer** were the first Westminster field hockey players to receive All Conference recognitions as honorable mentions. Last season, nine varsity players were also recognized for making the 2015 National Field Hockey Coaches Association - Optimal Performance Associates High School National Academic Squad. The program honors high school senior and junior varsity field hockey players who have achieved a minimum cumulative, unweighted GPA of 3.5 for the first quarter of the 2015-16 academic year. Seniors **Avery Drury**, **Maggi Eachus**, **Lindsey Falkner**, **Isabel Hauptfear**, and **Lucy Kehr** and junior **Callie MacDonald** received this recognition. Senior **Sophie Dunlap** and juniors **Hailey Rupprecht** and **Alyssa Shikles** were also honored as Scholars of Distinction for achieving a minimum cumulative, unweighted GPA of 3.9 through the first quarter of the school year.

WINTER ATHLETICS

Boys Basketball

The team scored a 60-53 victory to win the MICDS Tournament Championship for the first time in Westminster history. The Wildcats were seeded first for districts.

Girls Basketball

Senior McKenna Montgomery led the Lady Wildcats with an average 13.7 points per game and secured a 1,000-point career at Westminster this winter. The team finished their season at districts in late February.

Wrestling

Senior Alex Hopkins finished an undefeated season, 35-0, as the class 3 state champion at 170 pounds. "Alex's road to success is a great story," says Athletic Director Todd Zell. "He was cut from basketball in 8th grade and decided to start wrestling. Now he has won the state title!" Alex is Westminster's third undefeated wrestling champion. He has also received three appointments to military service academies including the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy at New London, Conn. Varsity wrestler sophomore Jesse Parham also qualified for state for the second time.



Swim/Dive

The varsity girls swim and dive team finished a strong season with a 18-1 record, a conference championship, and 22nd place at state among 82 teams. In February at the Metro League swim and dive championship, the Lady Wildcat team gave their best effort to honor the memory of their swim/dive peer **J.D. Wiese**. They celebrated a first-place finish at the championship for the first time in Westminster history. At state, senior **Lauren Massot** placed 10th in the 200 IM and received All State Honorable Mention, breaking the oldest school record from 1998. Lauren was also named All State Medalist for finishing 8th in the 100 Backstroke. After two years of diving, **Avery Iven** placed 19th in state. ▶



Dance Team

In February, the varsity dance team competed at the Missouri Dance Team State Championship in Kansas City, Mo. The team placed first in hip hop, second in pom, and third overall for the first time since the team advanced to a more challenging division three years ago. This season, the girls performed more than 10 routines - the highest number of routines in VDT history.



Hockey

The varsity boys hockey team finished a strong season at the state quarterfinals. Head Coach **Tom Canfield** was voted the Midstates Coach of the Year by 37 competing midstate teams. He received the award at the Challenge Cup game. In January, the team participated in a service project at St. Patrick's Center in St. Louis during which they prepared and served lunch to more than 100 homeless individuals. "This project was valuable because the boys needed to work as a team to get the lunch ready and served," says Patrick McWard, parent coordinator of service projects for Westminster's hockey program. "This is a great group of boys who understand how blessed they are, and giving them an opportunity to show compassion and love for others who need to see God's love was great for their personal and spiritual growth."

⊕ faculty spotlight



Ask any one of Westminster's outstanding faculty or staff how he/she came to Westminster, and each will undoubtedly share with you an incredible story of how God moved to bring him/her to the school in unexpected yet exciting ways. For Jason Thompson, middle school guidance counselor, working at Westminster is the result of a faith-filled journey of listening to God's voice every step of the way.

"Ultimately I chose to go into counseling because I love working with people and helping them with concerns and issues," says Mr. Thompson. Growing up, Mr. Thompson remembers being the neighborhood's go-to babysitter. "I was actually the first and only male babysitter in my neighborhood!" he says. "Parents trusted me to play with their kids, and I soon realized that I really enjoyed working

with children. I signed up to help with elementary and middle school summer camps, and I participated in various mentoring programs in high school and college."

Before graduating from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Ga., with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Mr. Thompson began working with a community service organization as an in-class mentor for a 3rd grade classroom. While there he met the school guidance counselor, who encouraged him to think seriously about becoming a counselor himself. "That meeting planted the first seed for me to consider counseling as a profession," says Mr. Thompson.

Not long afterward, Mr. Thompson enrolled at St. Louis University to pursue a Master of Arts in Counseling. "In my first class at SLU, my professor mentioned that she was

a Christian counselor," he says. "I had no idea that Christian counseling even existed! But I asked her about her work, and she told me I could integrate counseling and my faith for my career choice."

In 2000, he graduated from SLU and married his wife Karen, Westminster middle school science teacher. They have three boys: Zion (9th grade), Isaiah (7th grade), and Stephen (3rd grade). Mr. Thompson began his counseling career first as a substance abuse counselor working with men and women and their families to become healthy, productive citizens. "I worked as a substance abuse counselor for three years," he says. "During my second year in that job, my son Zion was born. I saw how much time Karen had at home with him in the summers and during school breaks, and I

wanted that same time to be with my family – to be involved and to be a family man – but I didn’t know how to do that.”

At the time, school regulations required guidance counselors to have several years of experience as a teacher to even qualify for a counseling position. Mr. Thompson began praying about the inclination he felt to become a guidance counselor. “The next part of this story is just one example of how awesome God is,” says Mr. Thompson. “The state of Missouri actually changed the requirements for school guidance counselors because there was a shortage of counselors in the industry, and I was one of the first cohorts to go back and complete a few education courses to become qualified to be a school guidance counselor.”

He began applying and soon landed a position at Highland Elementary School in Riverview. The position was confirmation that his career choice as a school guidance counselor was the work God intended him to do. “Any time I can plant a seed in a child and watch him or her bloom where God has placed him or her, it doesn’t feel like work to me,” says Mr. Thompson. “It feels like ministry.”

While Mr. Thompson had plans to stay at Highland for many years, he sensed that God wanted to plant him somewhere else. He followed his calling to St. Louis, where he began counseling at an elementary school in Normandy, and later a middle school in Clayton. His first year at the Clayton school was also the first for his wife and son Zion to start at Westminster. “Because we live in North County, both of our commutes were so long, and I felt like I barely saw my family during the week,” says Mr. Thompson. “I remember during last year’s spring break, I had this overwhelming concern that I was already missing a part of Zion’s life. I knew Isaiah would be starting 7th grade at Westminster this year and that soon, I would see only two of my three sons briefly in the mornings and evenings”



That same week Mrs. Thompson told him about the open middle school guidance counselor position at Westminster. “I thought, ‘Wow, this is fast!’ and immediately asked God, ‘Is this what I am supposed to do?’” says Mr. Thompson. “I had a great community and great relationships with the students in Clayton, so I was concerned about leaving. Karen and I did a lot of praying.”

He now sees God’s hand and purpose in directing him to Westminster. “God, through His wisdom, confirmed to me through a song, a sermon, and actually through one of my private therapy clients, that I was supposed to come to Westminster,” he says. “I can now make the long commute to school with my family. We usually drive my wife’s minivan to and from Westminster, so I call our times in the car together ‘mini moments.’ Just to have that bonding time together is incredible.”

Mr. Thompson says one of the best parts of working at Westminster is being able to see his family and be a part of his children’s lives that he would otherwise miss. “I get to see my family in the hallways, in the cafeteria, and in the classrooms,” he says. “I see them engaged in Spirit Week activities and get to know my boys’ teachers on a personal level.” But perhaps the greatest blessing of being at Westminster, he says, is sharing in Westminster’s community. “My most memorable experience at Westminster was my second day at school when I met with a young girl who was very upset after transitioning from another school,” says Mr. Thompson. “After we talked, I asked if I could pray with her. At that moment, I knew that I was at the right place, because it was the first time I had been able to pray with one of my students. It solidified the purpose that God has me here.” ⊕

WESTMINSTER CHRISTIAN ACADEMY: Meeting Parents' Goals

By Peggy Johnson / Director of Admissions

Research shows that most parents have the same educational goals for their children – that they would develop good study habits, self-discipline, strong critical thinking and communication skills, and proficiency in reading and math as the result of a challenging curriculum. Yet Christian school parents want more for their children. Beyond a strong academic education, these parents want a moral foundation and have a higher standard of behavior than the average parent. For the Christian school parent, it is important that his/her child walks into a place, each day, where he/she is known. Where the community is tight. Where the values taught at home and at church are consistently modeled, taught, and praised.

At Westminster the shared mission of the home, church, and school creates a strong sense of belonging for students and parents. This sense of belonging – along with a commitment to a core curriculum that motivates all students of varying academic abilities and interests to learn at their highest potential – has drawn thousands of families to explore Westminster for their children. The values we share in Christ create real community. And it is this community that gives the family an unparalleled experience from which their student will benefit for years to come.



WESTMINSTER PARENTS' RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The annual survey of Westminster graduates, conducted six years after graduation, shows that our parents' goals are being met.



82% have a
four-year college
degree



26% are
pursuing a
postgraduate
degree



76% list a
church home



42% are
involved in
ministry



The Legacy of Our Mission

By Shelley Milligan

Assistant Head of School - Advancement

In December, we received an email from an alumnus of the Class of 2007. He and his wife were going to be in town for a wedding and asked if they might stop by campus for a tour and to see some of his former teachers. I replied that two of his teachers, Andrew Shaw and Tim Hall, still teach at Westminster, and that we would love to see him and his family when they were in town.

What a privilege to meet one of our alumni and to hear his stories of Westminster in the context of a visit to a building he never knew, but a school he recognized instantly. This alumnus earned a full academic scholarship to a top university and now works for a Fortune 100 company. When I asked how Westminster prepared him for his engineering career, he replied that his Westminster science courses were more rigorous than those of his first three semesters of college. He was thrilled to meet with Dr. Shaw and Mr. Hall, both of whom not only recognized him but were also able to ask specific questions about his life and family.

Even more impressive to me, as a staff person, was the way that this man's wife reacted to Westminster. As we wandered the hallways, she was overwhelmed by our students' friendliness and hospitality.

My hope for our alumni is that they can all fly the Westminster banner so high and proudly that any objective outsider might quickly recognize our school's culture and strengths, just as this alumnus' wife could. Sometimes we forget to appreciate the blessing that this school truly is and what a privilege it is to be part of something so much bigger than we may realize.

Each of us – each of you! – plays an important role in this school community. Thank you for giving of yourself to strengthen this place, whether you teach our students, coach our athletes, lead our musicians, minister to our parents, pray for our mission, give to our Annual Fund, sort clothes at Ditto, or play any other part in the life of our school. We are grateful for you!



Thank you to our 153
Investors Circle members to date.
We're grateful for YOU!

Your generosity strengthens Westminster's financial foundation and enables us to invest in our faculty and programs to make an immediate impact on our students' experience.

We hope to welcome YOU to this special leadership giving group. If you haven't already, would you prayerfully consider joining us today by making a gift of \$1,000 or more to The Westminster Annual Fund? We'd love to host you at exclusive members-only events this year!

To give online, visit wcastl.org/give. To learn more, contact Carolyn Holt, Director of The Annual Fund, at cholt@wcastl.org or 314.997.2900.

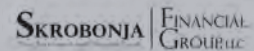
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WESTMINSTER
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Westminster Writers

Finding a Voice in the Written Word

“Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: ‘Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you.’”

– Jeremiah 30:2

By Jill Keith, M.Ed. / Advanced Expository Writing Instructor

In Advanced Expository Writing, I teach seniors how to write for life. Each Westminster student has a God-given ability to communicate. And we as Westminster teachers understand that, as our collective calling, we must help our students successfully unpack that gift and apply it to their lives. Engaging our culture for Christ requires discipline, insight, and persuasion.

Writing across the disciplines is a pedagogical strength at Westminster. I often share with families who are exploring Westminster for their children that we are not preparing students to be English majors, (my major was humanities), though such is a noble pursuit. We teach students how to master coursework in all subjects and then effectively apply those lessons in life. In 2000, the *Harvard Business Review* shared that learning agility is the primary skill that professionals must exercise in the 21st century in order to be effective in their calling. At Westminster students experience a learning process that synthesizes close reading, thinking, and composing. Seventh graders engage in a progressive curriculum that builds expressive competencies in every subject through their senior year. Learning agility, the process of mastering new concepts, and then successfully applying them to life challenges, is the happy result. Whether in robotics, concert choir, statistics, chemistry, Bible, or language, on



“I want to thank **Jill Keith** for teaching me how to write five-paragraph essays. My senior Advanced Expository Writing class wasn’t easy, but it was so incredibly helpful to me. Learning how to structure a cohesive essay was an indispensable skill in college! I’m also thankful that strong writing was emphasized even in 7th grade. In **Kim Landes’** [Miller’s] English 7 class, I was already learning how to tell linear stories and to communicate thoughts clearly. I was rarely returned an essay that wasn’t marked up, which I used to think was the end of the world. ‘Does she hate me?!’ I sometimes thought. Only now do I see how crucial editorial input is, as I became the editor of my college yearbook (shout-out to **Scott Vonder Bruegge!**) and regularly write articles for that publication. Not a day goes by that I don’t use skills I learned at Westminster. I am so grateful that my parents sacrificed and chose to send my brother and me to Westminster; it was well worth the tuition.” – **Erin Guthrie** ’11



the playing field or behind the footlights, each student consistently practices persuasive communication skills. The ability to “stand and deliver” a compelling, authentic message serves our students as they move into the world beyond Westminster.

Westminster writers land at the Academy from diverse backgrounds, both educational and cultural. As a consequence, we as faculty draw from a rich social palette when teaching our students. Reading, reflecting, and writing, Westminster students discover a powerful paradigm

through which to process the world: they must shed their comfortable identities and learn how to capitalize on their distinctive, God-given characteristics. Often, that is not an easy process, socially nor academically. Consistent composition across the disciplines helps our students to not only build writing bench strength but also learn to share what they believe in an authentic manner. Writing projects develop a student’s confidence in expressing who they are and where God has them at any particular moment. It is exciting to see a student realize that he or she



“Each essay conference capitalizes on Westminster’s belief that relationship combined with academic rigor develops our students into competent, confident communicators.”

– Jill Keith

has a story to tell and can share it in a confident, compelling voice.

Wherever a youngster has landed on the composition spectrum, our goal at Westminster is to encourage and equip him or

her to be the writer God intends. In 9th and 12th grade English, for example, that intentionality takes shape during personal writing conferences. Students complete more than a dozen original essays in multiple expository genres including research, literary analysis, narrative, and reflection, along with shorter writing pieces throughout the academic year. Their expository writing instructors read and comment on each student’s essay. In essence, an instructor conducts an ongoing gap analysis of a student’s coherent thinking and writing with a view to excellent mechanics

“The Westminster writing program may have been the most significant and impactful academic preparation I received for life and my professional career. **Barbara Heimburger**’s classes, including AP English during my senior year, taught me how to write effectively. The one-on-one conferences with her were extremely beneficial and set me up well to succeed as a history major at the Air Force Academy, as a law student at St. Louis University, and in 15 years of law teaching and practice. For the past five years, I have taught legal research and writing to sophomore college students at the Air Force Academy and, in both my teaching and professional roles, have found myself constantly returning to the fundamental principles of writing I learned from Mrs. Heimburger. The copy of Strunk and White’s *Elements of Style* that she gave me upon graduation from Westminster is still a treasured possession.” – **Jeremy Marsh** ’91

“**Dr. [Scott] Holley** was incredible! He would sit down and personally conference with each of us over our rough drafts, then give us the chance to revise and edit as needed. It meant so much that he would take the time to do that; you could tell he was passionate about writing and personally cared about us. He wanted us to succeed. He also made learning and writing so engaging through his creative approaches to teaching. I still ‘LOVE comma consciousnesses!’ And of course, who can forget *The Awful Eight?*” – **Amanda Baca** ’00

“Westminster provided an excellent foundation of writing skills that I use today in both my day job as a software quality assurance consultant and in my work as an author. I had a near-drowning experience several years ago and had to rebuild my faith because I realized I wasn’t ready to go. What started as some simple journal entries ended up as part of my first book, *Rude Awakening: What If Everything You Thought Was Right Was Wrong?* I am slowly but surely working on my second book. I am grateful for the quality of education I received at Westminster and hope to send my three kids there in the future.” – **Mark Donnelly ’88**

“Dr. [Scott] Holley took the time to sit with each one of his students after each of their essays and walk through them page by page. He wasn’t just looking for correct grammar and spelling; he challenged us to examine our clarity, ingenuity, and logic. He always made us redo our essays. I remember being vulnerable at the time, as the process was difficult, but the lingering effect was that it made me love the (often) painstaking process of refining my words. Later, as an anthropology major in college, all I did was write. I’m so thankful for Dr. Holley and others at Westminster like him who went the extra mile knowing that we were capable of more than our first, or even third, drafts.” – **Jill Ridderbos Fager ’07**



and engaging content. The student and teacher then conference together, working through the composition’s lowlights and highlights. The student then rewrites his or her original essay with a focus on improving the impact of the piece. While on the surface this may appear to be time-consuming, conferencing and rewriting is a win-win process designed to develop intellectual reasoning across the disciplines. Each essay conference capitalizes on Westminster’s belief that relationship combined with academic rigor develops our students into competent, confident communicators.

Ultimately, our Westminster graduates carry their writing capabilities into the roles God has designed specifically for their unique talents. Westminster teachers exercise a full-court press in equipping our students to engage the world for Christ. While this process is not without its challenges along the way, our graduates understand that communicating persuasively in any discipline is essential to successfully running the race that the Lord has set before them. As Job aptly declares, “For He knows the way that I take, when He has tested me, I will come forth as gold.” ⊕

▶ Read more Westminster writing reflections from our alumni at wcastl.org/ChimesSpring2016.

Celebrating Black History: Night of the Arts

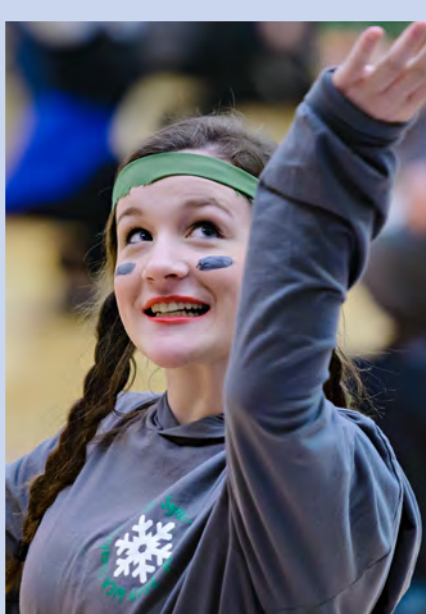
"I am truly humbled by the willingness of my colleagues, our students, and volunteers to put forth such hard work to make Night of the Arts a success. It makes me happy that people within our community are always brought together in a special way on this night! One of the highlights of the evening was hearing the audience sing along to the orchestra's rendition of *My Girl* by The Temptations. I do pray that the Lord is pleased by this work!" – Aaron Layton, Director of Diversity ▶



SPIRIT WEEK 2016

From the first Art Board sketch to the last Big Night performance (and senior victory celebration!), we cherish all our memories of Spirit Week 2016.







“Westminster always made me hungry to learn. It’s rare to be in a Christian school where you actually get sound doctrine and a strong education.”

⊕ alumni spotlight

Prospering People: Sarah Moore '07

In 2011, **Sarah Moore**, 27, a second-generation Westminster alumna, started at Americans for Prosperity (AFP) as a development assistant, eventually began fundraising for the group, and was appointed as director of development in December 2014. The conservative advocacy group operates chapters in 35 states where it advocates for free enterprise and limited government, especially in the areas of healthcare, energy, and economics.

While Sarah was an engaged member of the *We the People* team at Westminster and pursued a political science degree from Wheaton College, she never had a desire for a career in politics or even fundraising. "I hate politics," she says. "So many in D.C. view politics as an end in and of itself, instead of as a means to help others."

Her interest had always been in political *philosophy* – specifically the intersection of politics and faith, government and church, power struggles and human nature. "Thought leaders like Kuyper, Aquinas, Rousseau, and Machiavelli piqued my interest in exploring where political philosophy meets policy, but it was ultimately *civitas*, love

for one's neighbor, that led me to this work," says Sarah. "The political industry is a really dark place. So to work for an organization that seeks to positively disrupt a broken political system by advancing free market policies that help those our government has alienated *instead* of harming the poor, is an incredible gift. This is the work that God has called me to at AFP."

When she first joined the development team, Sarah supported a group of major gift officers, helped plan events, and assisted with logistics and the planning – a diverse set of experiences that would be invaluable when she was promoted to lead the team a few years later. Although she initially felt unqualified, her track record has proved otherwise. She has raised more money than anyone else on the team.

"I had to start from scratch and build my own caseload," says Sarah. "It was a numbers game – 'how many meetings can I get?' I traveled constantly because I wanted to figure out how to build as many relationships as possible. The numbers themselves are just a byproduct of relationships that are functioning well."

From a young age, Sarah has worked hard with a healthy dose of integrity – two reasons she was promoted so quickly. "Authentic production doesn't occur if you don't exhibit humility and respect for one another," says Sarah, noting how her own growth in these areas was encouraged by her family, church, and mentors at Westminster. "There were so many people focused on challenging me. My coaches' and teachers' willingness to make investments in me always humbled me," she says, noting Scott Vonder Bruegge's poignant journalism lessons and Mark Hearne's deep love



By Emily Reed

Photo: Gracie Jennings / Washington Examiner



Sarah and her parents Brookie Kramer Moore '82 and John Moore (far right) attend a conference with one of Sarah's mentors Dana Perino (center) – former White House press secretary who served under President George W. Bush – and Dana's husband Peter McMahan (far left).

of history, passed on to many of his students. "Papa Hearne's class is the only reason I remember key dates in history!" she says. "Westminster always made me hungry to learn. It's rare to be in a Christian school where you actually get sound doctrine and a strong education."

That education, like the one she received at Wheaton, she says, helped shape her worldview and, in turn, her political viewpoints. "God has called me to work for an organization that shrinks the scope of government in order to allow the church and other institutions to do their jobs, in turn allowing humanity to thrive and flourish the way God intended."

In her role at AFP, Sarah manages 34 people, including the major gifts team, events team, support team, and communications team. She spends about a quarter of her time fundraising with the group's high-level donors. How does she convince people her grandpar-

ents' age to give? "At first, I thought my age was a disadvantage," she says. "But then I realized I was the product they wanted to see. When they see a young person who shares their vision and values — who understands the threats politically and culturally to our society — they get really excited."

For Sarah, the most challenging part of the job is being the coach and the player at the same time. "It's finding a balance between building out my portfolio and leading the team well," she says. "People are the most important thing. Making time to invest in those people, to cultivate their talent and leadership, is my priority. In all organizations, it's either 'I'm here to serve you' or 'you're here to serve me.' Unfortunately in the political space, it's usually the latter. But for me, my faith informs the way I want to lead. It's about pouring into others so that they might succeed."

“ People are the most important thing. Making time to invest in those people is my priority. ”

This challenge also happens to be the reward. "I love seeing authentic, transformational growth in others — whether a donor, a peer, or someone on my team," says Sarah. "There are

two things that 'sell' in politics: crisis and hope. There is a great need, in both the private and public sectors, for Christian leaders who are able to expose others to the hope we have in Christ. I believe in exposing people to the gospel without smacking them in the face with it. This means loving people well. It is the greatest blessing to see others' lives changed when they are exposed to the benefits of living a Christ-centered life," she says. "Regardless of your industry or job title, because of this hope, we can see and encourage a better version of a person than he/she might ever have for himself/herself. The same for a team, the same for a country."

"My time in D.C. has been characterized by learning God's faithfulness as He consistently (and lovingly) nudges me outside of my comfort zone, giving me new responsibilities and opportunities for leadership, even when against my will," says Sarah. "I would have never picked this job for myself, and frankly didn't even know jobs like this existed! But the desire that God has placed on my heart is to build teams, inspire others, and cultivate leaders. It just so happens that in doing so, I get to work at a place where I can advance free market policies that allow for human flourishing. What could be more fun than that?" ⊕

⊕ class notes



'83

Jean Daehn Evans is coaching boys volleyball at Westminster. She is also running for state representative in Missouri House District 99.

'84

Karen Johnson Buchanan, along with her husband Doug and their three sons, raced in the July 2015 TriWaco sprint triathlon. Karen also completed



the Ironman Texas triathlon in May 2015. This was her second full-distance triathlon – 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike, and a marathon.

'87

Matt Bergeson moved to Chicago to assume the role of creative director at FCB Chicago.

'89

Shonda Collison Johnson and her husband Charles live in Franklin, Tenn., where Charles works as a youth pastor at Christ Community Church. Shonda was asked to play piano for the Sunday evening service there, so she is still able to be involved in music. Their boys are Trent (4) and Gavin (2).



'91

In June, **Jeremy Marsh** will conclude five years teaching in the law department at the U.S. Air Force Academy and retire as a Lieutenant Colonel following 21 years of service. He and his wife **Bekah Stortz** Marsh '02 and their four children

will be moving to Kalispell, Mont., where Jeremy will begin serving as the assistant head of school at Stillwater Christian School, a private K-12 school. For the past four years, Bekah has served as music director



at Forestgate Presbyterian Church in Colorado Springs. Jeremy and Bekah are excited about a new venue of service in Montana.

'95

Dr. Oluwaseun Heinkel attended St. Louis University School of Medicine. She completed her pediatric residency at Lebonheur Children's Medical Center in 2006, and then joined Memphis Children's Clinic. She is board-certified in General Pediatrics and practices in the Whitehaven and Kirby/Hickory Hill offices. Oluwaseun and her husband have three children who keep them busy. In her spare time she likes to play soccer and tennis.

[▶ Learn more at wcastl.org/ChimesSpring2016](http://wcastl.org/ChimesSpring2016)

In December, **Emily Nienhuis** of One Heart Family Ministries partnered with Kirk Day School, Promise Christian Academy, and Westminster to provide more than 200 Christmas gifts to the foster children served by One Heart. Kirk Day School students decorated gift bags in



art class; Promise students and volunteers shopped for the gifts; and Westminster students and volunteers wrapped the presents. Emily read the book *Kids Need to Be Safe* to the Kirk Day students participating in the service project, answered questions, and explained how they were helping give each foster child in One Heart a special Christmas by decorating these special gift bags.

'01

Ryan Tomlinson and his wife **Sara Kensinger Tomlinson '00** are expecting their second baby in June.

'04

Grace Wicks Yeung and her husband Neo welcomed their second baby girl, Kaylin, on June 29, 2015. She joined big sister Mei.



'06

Jamie Kim and her husband **Bill Cawthon** have a new St. Louis business, a food truck called Frankly Sausages. The couple has Irish twins: **Eli** (15 mos.) and **Nora** (5 mos). Jamie works as a feature film



associate producer with producer **Laura D. Smith**. She recently worked on the movie *Holbrook/Twain: An American Odyssey*, which premiered at AFI DOCS, stars **Hal Holbrook**, features **Sean Penn**, **Martin Sheen** and **Emile Hirsch**. Before moving back to St. Louis, Jamie worked for Paramount pictures on 21 Academy Award-nominated films.

Jonathan Haas and his wife **Stephanie** spent two months in Montrouis, Haiti, in the fall working with Canaan Christian Community, a local children's home and school. Stephanie worked in the medical and malnutrition clinic as well as in the school, and Jonathan helped the administration and did some media and design work for the community. ▶



'09

Paige Norman Fisher married **Christopher Fisher**, who she met at The University of Tulsa, on September 26, 2015, at Silver Oaks Chateau near



St. Louis. **Debbie Knubley** Vance '09 was Paige's maid of honor, and former Westminster student **Brittney Jackson** was a bridesmaid. Paige works as a mechanical engineer in Tulsa, and Chris is going to school for his Master's in Finance and Applied Math.

'10

Madison Burke and her fiance Kyle Loethen are the 2016 Helzberg Diamond #weproposeyoupropose couple. Their wedding is scheduled for



May 2017. Madison is a multi-media specialist for BJC at Boone County Hospital in Columbia, Mo. ▶

'11

Leah Gruneisen graduated from Taylor University and is now teaching 4th grade at International School Tegucigalpa (IST) in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. She loves her job even though it's filled with hard moments. Westminster and Taylor taught her a great deal about persevering and working hard in academics as well as



about the importance of living her life for Him. She feels equipped in so many ways to continue in this new phase of her life as a teacher.

'12

Noah Roberts is a senior at The University of Tulsa (TU). A double major in energy management and finance in the Collins College of Business and a member of the Kappa Alpha Order fraternity, Noah is one of 10 TU seniors to be recognized as a "Jess Chouteau Outstanding Senior." Named after Jess Chouteau, former Director of Westby Center and Public Functions, the award recognizes TU seniors who demonstrate exceptional achievement in both academic and service endeavors. The Jess Chouteau Outstanding Senior Award is bestowed upon no more than 10 seniors each year. Noah has served as an orientation leader and has participated in the Tulsa Energy Management Student Association, the Student Investment Fund, and Reformed University Fellowship student ministry team. He is a TU Presbyterian Leadership Scholar;

Dean's Scholar, ConocoPhillips Scholar, and Noble Energy Scholar. Noah is also a recipient of the American Association of Professional Landmen Scholarship and a student member of the association. An active TU Service Day volunteer, he has participated in many university mission trips. He is a former ConocoPhillips land intern and ONEOK commercial business analyst intern. Noah has accepted a commercial business analyst position with ONEOK following his TU graduation.

Rachel Becker was selected to the 2015 Missouri State University Homecoming Court. She is a senior majoring in child and family development. Rachel has also served as a university ambassador and is a member of Alpha Chi Omega, where she has actively served in several leadership positions.





Landon Burke is an anchor/producer at KOMU-NBC in Columbia, Mo. He recently spoke to Westminster's Broadcast Journalism class about his own anchoring experience.

'13

James Zandstra and Brianna DeGroot were married on January 1, 2016, at Trinity Christian Reformed Church. The couple met at the church in 3rd grade and started dating their freshman year at Westminster, where they both participated in the robotics program.



Alumni Football Game 2015

Top row from left: Ryan Blackwell '07, Ben Haberberger '08, Karlton Smith '10, Max Piazza '10, Sam Stufflebam '08, Zach Dorton '10, Nathan Smallwood '11, Brendan Bognar '15, John Burgess '09, Juan Mundo-Sifuentes '08.
Bottom row from left: Phillip Binkholder '09, Travis Ralls '14, Brett Bond '14, Greg Schoenberg '08, Kyle Kinner '14, Keith Degler '12, Brandon DeRousse '08, Micah Mills '10, Derrick Phillips '08.





Alumni Volleyball Game 2015

Top row from left: Landon Chard '10, Drew Menzel '11, Michael Beck '06, Cameron Hibbler '15, Ricky Breneman '15, Jay Chard '08, Adam Miller '09. Bottom row from left: Elizabeth Miller '11, Annaliese Clark '09, Leah Beck '09, Danielle Evans '12, Coach Jean Daehn Evans '83.



Alumni Basketball Game 2015

From left: Carl Thoenen '88, Tony Thompson '10, Kris Johnson '03, Coach Terry Johnson, Ryan Haxel '12, Chris Griesedieck '12, Richard Copeland '10, Andrew Miller '05, Jack Dohr '13, Timmy Miller '11, Drew Menzel '11, Ryan Blackwell '07, Andrew Beck '11, Michael Beck '06, Coach Doug Coleman '99.

Alumni Hockey Game 2015

Back row from left: Coach Dave Ganz, Manager Eve Cascella, Sam Canfield '13, Brendan Terbrock '13, Kyle Bateman '07, Bill Franz '08, Daniel Kim '08, Jimmy Munson '08, Michael Hughes '09, Seth Mundorf '12, Jordan Egertson '02, Ali Malawy, Zac Underwood '02, Coach Mike Malawy. Front row from left: Jon Wilkinson '04, Tim Appelbaum '09, Nick Cascella '04, Andrew Bateman '04, Ben Evans '13, Khris Stillman '06, Chad Kim '03, Nick Pieber '06. Not pictured: Coach Robert Bateman.



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“Why would high school boys spend multiple hours every night learning a choreographed dance? Why would students raid and plunder every Goodwill in the St. Louis area for a bunch of crazy second-hand clothes? Why would people cry, in victory or defeat, over something with no *real* impact on their lives? Why would people have breakdowns and invest three weeks of their time, energy, sleep, and lives into one week?

Because it’s SPIRIT WEEK.”

- Connor Hafenrichter, senior



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