

SPRING 2021

chimes

WESTMINSTER CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

IN THIS ISSUE:

Count It
All Joy

Disruption Causes
Innovation

Led to a Life
of Service





Abiding in the Light

DR. BARRETT MOSBACKER

“Whoever loves his brother abides in the light...”
—1 John 2:10

Light is one of God’s greatest gifts. In fact, light is the first thing God created because physical life is not possible without it. The same is true spiritually and intellectually. We are told in John 1:4 that “in him [Jesus] **was life, and the life was the light of men.**”

Light is life-giving! And we know that we are walking in the light of the Gospel when we love each other. This is why this year’s school theme is **Reaching Higher: Love Your Neighbor as Yourself**. Our love for one another demonstrates that we are God’s children — the children of light and the light of the world.

Biblical love is not merely an emotion — it is a sacrificial commitment to another’s welfare. One of the most beautiful passages in the Bible is John 15:12–14:

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.

This year our teachers, coaches, and staff have demonstrated sacrificial love for their students through their creativity and flexibility in learning new technology and in teaching both on-campus and online. They have put herculean effort into keeping our campus open in the middle of a global pandemic. They have sacrificially *given* of themselves for their students. This is Christian love in action. Our teachers walk in the light of the Gospel and they share the life-giving light of God’s Word daily with their students!

This Easter season, may we reflect on God’s love for us and show that we are walking in the light of the Gospel by how we love one another.

chimes

Editor

Anne Harmon

Graphic Designer

Amy Roff

Photography

Mike Rohlfing
Volunteer photographers

Head of School

Dr. Barrett Mosbacher

Head of Academic Development

Micah Gall

Head of Enrollment

Jennifer Sengpiel

Head of Finance and Operations

Todd Fuller

Head of Student Development

Dr. Dani Butler

Athletic Director

Cory Snyder

Westminster Christian Academy

800 Maryville Centre Drive
Town & Country, MO 63017
314.997.2900 • wcastl.org

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.

© 2021 Westminster Christian Academy

CONTENTS

SPRING 2021

NEWS

4 Academics



6 Arts



8 Athletics



14 Admissions Disruption Causes Innovation

15 Community News

18 Advancement Wildcat We CARE

FEATURES

10 Count It All Joy

Through creativity, hard work, and sacrificial love, Westminster faculty and staff members have willingly reimagined what goes on inside and outside the classroom this year.



13 Reflections from the Class of 2021

Nicki Mabry, senior class president, and Caleb Moellenhoff, secretary for the class of 2021, reflect on their time at Westminster and their unusual senior year.



ON THE COVER

The cover art is by seventh graders Edde Sue Doehring, Lucy Kim, Laila Anderson, and Norah Yost. The mosaic is inspired by the work of African American artist Alma Woodsey Thomas, with the cut pieces of paper reflecting her signature style.

EVENTS

16 Virtual & Distanced Events



ALUMNI NEWS

19 Class Notes

23 Alumni Spotlight Laurie (Burch) Strohmeier '96



Academics

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT



JUNIOR WORKS AS RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Last summer, junior Ellen Rose contributed as a research assistant with world-renowned Washington University botany professor Tom Croat. Over an adventurous career, Dr. Croat has discovered and categorized over 3,000 new plant species. Ellen assisted Dr. Croat by measuring, categorizing, describing, and documenting previously undiscovered species of *Spathiphyllum* plants from South America. In addition, Ellen helped translate and expand upon an earlier *Spathiphyllum* study from the 1940s. Their research, supported by the Missouri Botanical Garden, will be published in the coming year.

MIDDLE SCHOOL STEM: QUEST FOR SPACE

Middle school STEM students had the opportunity to experience God's grandeur as they designed, built, and performed heat experiments in the classroom and prepared their experiments to be run onboard the International Space Station. Through our unique STEM curriculum, developed in conjunction with Quest for Space, students were introduced to the disciplines of software programming, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, project management, and teamwork. STEM 7 students completed the semester by running a radiation heat experiment, creating a program using drag-and-drop graphical tools in the LEGO Mindstorms development environment, and testing their program on the Quest for Space Ground Units in their classrooms. STEM 8 students created both natural convection and forced convection experiments, preparing their natural convection experiments to be run onboard the International Space Station. The STEM 7 and STEM 8 student programs are currently being prepared to be run on Quest Institute's automated multipurpose platform on the International Space Station. Once the student experiments are run, results will be returned to Westminster for the students to observe whether the data from their experiments in a microgravity environment differ from the results they observed on Earth.



CULTURAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

A group of six middle school teachers are in the process of creating a cultural education curriculum that includes video lessons. The curriculum includes topics like equality, allyship, advocacy, equity, and conscious and unconscious bias. Every lesson is grounded in Scripture, focusing on the parable of the Good Samaritan. We look forward to sharing this positive, biblical, and eternal perspective on racial unrest in the upcoming school year.



ROBUST LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Westminster has transitioned to Canvas, a learning management system that allows the delivery of curriculum to extend beyond our walls. Students learning at home have everything they need — daily plans, assignments, Zoom access, class calendars — which allows them to stay connected to both teachers and peers. Teachers continue to grow in their understanding and utilization of all Canvas has to offer. We are excited about using this resource both now and into the future.

PRIZED TEACHERS

Westminster teachers Karen Thompson and Jeff Gall received the Arlen R. Dykstra Teaching Prize last year. Mrs. Thompson teaches middle school science and Dr. Gall teaches upper school history. The award, named in honor of former head of school Arlen R. Dykstra, is a \$1,000 prize presented annually at commencement. It recognizes the recipient's outstanding expression of the Christian worldview in his or her teaching and lifestyle. It also honors the recipient for his or her mastery of teaching matter, involvement in the life of the school, and creative and innovative presentation of curricula.



AN UPDATE FROM COLLEGE COUNSELING

College decisions are rolling in for the Class of 2021! The following are just some of the schools that have extended offers of admission to our outstanding Westminster students: Cornell University, Purdue University, Texas Christian University, Washington University-St. Louis, Vanderbilt University, and more!



YEARBOOK, NEWSPAPER, & BROADCAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Westminster's yearbook was awarded the National Scholastic Press Association 1st Class distinction for the 15th year in a row. 800News-The Wildcat Roar, Westminster's student newspaper, was recognized nationally as one of only 15 school newspapers during the fall semester to achieve the Distinguished Site Distinction by School Newspapers Online, the largest provider of online and mobile publishing solutions for scholastic and collegiate journalism programs. 800News was one of only two school newspapers in the Midwest to earn this award. The broadcast team, 800Live-WCA Today, won the "3 Best of SNO" award for their video stories in November of 2020.



ARE YOU ON INSTAGRAM?

Are you following Westminster? If not, you should be! Follow your Wildcats [@wcastl](#) for snapshots of daily life at Westminster, a look inside the classroom, announcements about upcoming community events, and more.



Arts

CREATIVE EXCELLENCE



Choirs and Orchestras Perform Livestreamed Fall Concerts

Despite not being able to perform for a live audience, the Westminster choirs and orchestras held livestreamed fall concerts. The performers took the challenges in stride — including wearing specially-designed masks for singing — and put on beautiful shows. Watch them at livestream.com/westminster.

Students Selected for All-State Orchestra

Congratulations to Jonathan Lee (sophomore, cello), Elinor Dana (junior, cello), and Miriam Smith (junior, violin) on their selection to the Missouri All-State Orchestra!

Honors Orchestra Students Announced

Amie Do (eighth grade), Raquel Herrera (eighth grade), Denny Muehleisen (seventh grade), Elizabeth Myers (seventh grade), Jacob Pederson (seventh grade), Adam Schelker (seventh grade), Savannah Smith (eighth grade), Sam Wenger-Stickel (seventh grade), and Miriam Smith (junior) were selected to participate in the St. Louis Metro District 8 Honors Orchestra. These musicians played alongside some of the best student performers in the area as part of the audition process.

Senior Qualifies for District Honor Band

Matthew Burgess (senior, trombone) is in District Honor Band and will get a state audition.

Nine Students Inducted Into International Thespian Society

Nine students were inducted into the International Thespian Society this year: Caroline Porterfield (junior), Abbie Cannon (junior), Zach Leeker (sophomore), Marisa Penner (junior), Jonah Zell (sophomore), Stewart Geisz (junior), Ian Henderson (junior), Xavier May (junior), and Elizabeth Bauer (sophomore). Students were selected based on hours spent working in the arts, academic performance, and more.



Senior Receives Prestigious Scholarship

Elizabeth Nolting (senior) won a prestigious scholarship for her Individual Event Solo Musical Theatre Performance at this year's Missouri State Thespian Conference. The \$1,000 scholarship, which Elizabeth will receive annually during all four years of college, was awarded to only four applicants out of hundreds of thespians from around the state. After graduation, Elizabeth will study musical theatre at the top performing arts college in the country — The American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City.

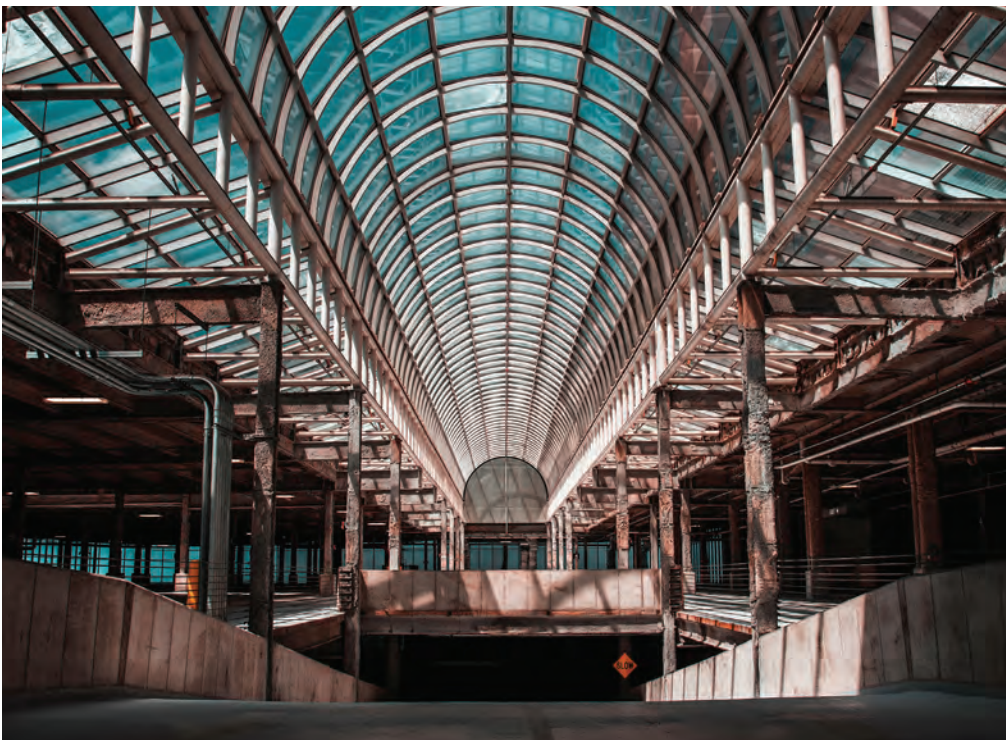


Sophomore Awarded Performance Award

On August 16, **Lizzy Crowe (sophomore)** competed along with 15 other finalists in the 10th Annual St. Louis Teen Talent Competition's televised broadcast on Nine PBS. Lizzy was awarded The Berges Classical Performance Award for her ballet routine.

Photographers' Work Featured in Gallery

Luke Coco (senior) and **Lily Wendel (junior)** had photographs selected for an exhibition through Webster University's May Gallery called "Beginnings 2020." [Photo by Luke Coco.]



Seventh Grader Performs as Orchestra Soloist

Elizabeth Myers (seventh grade) recently performed as a soloist with the St. Charles County Youth Orchestra after winning the Junior Division of the Mike Russo Concerto Competition. Her piece was Vivaldi's concerto in A minor, Op3, No 6, 3rd movement.

Freshman Is Westminster's First on Teen Arts Council

Florence Sarra (freshman) was accepted to the Saint Louis Art Museum's Teen Art Council, which gives teens a voice in the design and implementation of teen programs at the Museum. In addition to planning the annual Young Artists Exhibition, members receive behind-the-scenes Museum experiences, participate in arts workshops, and take field trips to local arts organizations.

Music Department Records Virtual Christmas Concert

Christmasfest, which included classics like "Silent Night" as well as more modern pieces like "The 12 Days of Regifted Christmas" and a cover of Pentatonix's "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen," was pre-recorded and premiered digitally for students and families to enjoy. Find the concert at wcastl.org/christmas.



Athletics

GENERAL NEWS AND TEAM HIGHLIGHTS



BROOKE HIGHMARK SCORES 1,000 CAREER POINTS

Junior guard Brooke Highmark eclipsed 1,000 career points and has committed to Belmont University on a full scholarship.



WILDCAT SPORTS CHAT

We have started Wildcat Sports Chat, a video podcast that highlights current and former Westminster athletes and coaches across a variety of topics. Watch the show at wcastl.org/sports-chat.

LIVESTREAMING EVENTS

Though many sporting events have been limited to very few spectators, Westminster has broadcast live competitions for many sports. Catch recent and future livestreams at mshsaa.tv/?S=wcastl.

MARGO O'MEARA WINS FOURTH STATE DIVING CHAMPIONSHIP

Senior Margo O'Meara captured her fourth state diving championship at the MSHSAA Class 1 Dive Meet. Last year, Margo set a new state record in all classes with 636.5 points. This year, Margo's total of 621.45 means that she owns four of the top seven scores in state history. She is the first female diver to win a state championship four times in the meet's 46-year history. Margo will attend Duke University on a diving scholarship. In June, she will compete in the United States Olympic Diving trials in Indianapolis with her sights set on qualifying for the Olympic Games this summer.



NINE CATS SIGN LETTERS OF INTENT

To date, nine Wildcats have signed letters of intent to pursue their athletic passions at the collegiate level. We're incredibly proud of these students and look forward to watching them progress at the next level. Next fall, you'll find these student-athletes at the following schools: Nick Moten — Baseball, University of Missouri; Landen Johnson — Baseball, Indiana State University; Margo O'Meara — Diving, Duke University; Annessa Shively — Soccer, University of Arkansas; Grace Clement — Soccer, McKendree University; Adam Ebling — Baseball, Tulane University; Zach Dantuono — Baseball, University of Missouri; Luc Fuller — Baseball, Drury University; Jack Powers — Football, Cornell University

COVID-19 IMPACTS SPORTS

Due to COVID restrictions, the following sports were not able to compete in 2020. We look forward to seeing them play again very soon!

Boys

Golf
Baseball
Lacrosse
Tennis
Track

Girls

Lacrosse
Soccer
Track

BASKETBALL

The boys team's regular season concluded with an 18–5 record. The Wildcats then won the district championship for the second year in a row! Juniors Casen Lawrence and Caleb Thompson and sophomore Kobi Williams are all averaging double-figure points for the Wildcats.

Girls basketball ended the regular season 20–4 and ranked #2 in small school polls. The Wildcats went on to win the district championship 54–52! Juniors Carlie Vick and Reilly Brophy are being heavily recruited.

CHEER

This cheer season has been challenging, considering the limited games, practices, and ability to perform all the wonderful aspects of cheerleading. The squad has fought through this by focusing on the positives. They have strengthened their team unity, school spirit techniques, and game day performances.

CROSS-COUNTRY

The boys team moved from Class 3 to Class 5 because of the past five years of success at districts and state and because of the new championship factor put in place by MSHSAA that determines what class private schools are in.

The girls team stayed in Class 3 and had four girls qualify and run at the state meet.

DANCE

The dance team has not only been able to perform for football and basketball games but they have found other ways to be active in the Westminster community. The team was featured twice in *Showtime at the Academy* and participated in this year's We Are One event in February.

FIELD HOCKEY

The girls varsity team ended up making it to the “sweet sixteen” of their state tournament for the second consecutive year. Six players earned All-Conference and one made the All-Metro second team.

FOOTBALL

During a very difficult and challenging year, our players learned a lot about adversity and hope. We hoped and prayed we would have a season, and we did. It really showed us there is always hope through prayer.

GOLF

The varsity girls team finished their regular season with an 8–3 mark in dual meets. Ellie Johnson (junior) won the district tournament with a score of 74 while the team finished 3rd. Ellie Johnson and Morgan McKee (senior) went on to the state tournament, where Ellie finished 5th and Morgan finished 26th overall.

HOCKEY

In this reduced season the team got off to a shaky start, but the club rebounded and finished strong by winning their last six games of the regular season. They are advancing into the quarterfinals of the Wickenheiser Cup and look to extend their season a few weeks by reaching the finals.

SOCCER

The boys team finished the year 7–6, ranked 3rd in state for Class 2. Senior Luke Laughlin was voted 1st Team All-State, senior Andrew Smith was voted 2nd Team All-State, and junior Caleb Legters was voted Honorable Mention Team All-State.

SOFTBALL

The softball team had a lot of heart and displayed it by showing up to work hard every day, even while only being cleared to practice for the first eight weeks of the season. The team played nearly every day for the remainder of the season and made a great deal of improvement.

SWIMMING

The boys swim team capped off a marvelous season with an impressive state meet. Two relay teams earned All-State honors and medaled by placing 7th. All three relays (200 medley, 200 free, and 400 free) broke the school record, and senior Hugh Muschany did the same in the 50 free.

To date, the girls swim and dive team has an impressive 11–2 record. All three relays have made consideration times for the chance to go to state. Sophomores Samantha Lee, Sara Schloss, and Eleanor Disper as well as freshmen Ellie Berkland and Kennedy McGowan have made consideration times as well in the individual events. Margo O'Meara (senior) broke her own school record in diving in both the 11 and 6 dive format.

TENNIS

The girls team had a very successful season, concluding with Avery Surber (junior) and Hailey Colley (senior) placing 6th in doubles in the state tournament. This was the first state appearance by a Westminster girls doubles team in 10 years.

VOLLEYBALL

The girls team finished the season with a 9–3 record and a second-place finish in the district tournament. Six players were voted to the All-District Teams and the All Metro League Teams.

WRESTLING

Wrestling and practicing with masks on has been a challenge, but the team has met this with stoic resolve. The team has won many dual meets and looks forward to the district tournament where they will find out who qualifies for the next round of the postseason.



COUNT IT ALL **joy**

Thriving During a Challenging Year

In the Westminster Portrait of Graduates, the young men and women of our school are challenged to “value learning,” “find joy,” and “cultivate their experience” even in the face of obstacles and difficulties. This school year has challenged our community to rise to the occasion in ways we never could have foreseen.

We are grateful and excited to have been able to maintain a safe and healthy campus while offering a full academic program in-person every day this year. Through creativity, hard work, and sacrificial love, Westminster faculty and staff members have willingly reimaged what goes on inside and outside the classroom.

IN THE CLASSROOM

From a teacher’s perspective, managing a classroom of in-person and remote students as well as other restrictions and safety protocol requires innovation and imagination. Through creative engagement strategies, Westminster faculty have continued to provide an academically excellent and relational learning environment for all students.

Many Westminster teachers say that this year’s greatest success is simply being able to be in the classroom with students every day. Chris Knerr, upper school history teacher, says that he is grateful to be able to maintain “relationships you develop with your students. It’s just good to be with them, and despite going home a bit more tired than normal, it’s been a good year to teach.”

Karen Thompson, eighth grade physical science teacher, says that she's learned just how crucial social interaction is to the learning experience. She says, "Hats off to the kids — the year started so weird and awkward with only seeing each other's eyes. As we got used to the protective systems we have in place [like wearing masks and using dividers], a beautiful thing started to happen: I saw the joy in the students again." She has enjoyed seeing students love science just as much as before. When students learned about physical and chemical change by making mini s'mores in a lab experiment, Mrs. Thompson took the class outside to enjoy a socially-distanced snack.

Mrs. Thompson and her students have quickly adapted to the COVID-adjusted school schedule, which involves condensed classes and school ending at 1:15 every day. She is still able to "engage hearts, souls, and minds while teaching content" and has found that students deeply appreciate when their teacher takes the time to "engage in conversations and build beyond the curriculum." Her students' grades have not suffered and her classes are on track.

Overall, Mrs. Thompson praises the hard work of the administrators, faculty, and staff who have enabled education to take place in the classroom every day this year. She is so grateful to be able to teach science fully, including experiments in the lab.

AT-HOME LEARNERS

Approximately 5–10% of Westminster's student body are classified as "at-home learners" on any given day. This includes students who felt more comfortable learning from home full-time this year as well as those who are in temporary quarantine situations. Many at-home learners participate in live on-campus classes, which gives them the opportunity to interact with their in-person peers.

At-home students recognize the opportunities and challenges of their situation. Junior Amber Allen says that she balances enjoying the flexibility and being able to sleep in a little more with the struggle of "not being able to see my friends and classmates as often as I would like." Junior Joshua K. Anderson appreciates "still being able to participate in my leadership groups and clubs." He describes feeling included and supported in his online classes: "If I ever have questions about anything we're learning I can speak out in class and ask it, and if we're ever having class discussions I can add to the conversation and for a moment feel like I am actually there in the classroom."

Drama class poses a unique challenge due to its highly interactive nature. Gina Rosenberg, middle school drama teacher, engages remote students by "having them critique performances and participate in some dramatic games when possible." Additionally, at-home students are able to film their own performances via their iPads.





Mrs. Rosenberg encapsulates the feelings of many when she says, “I do pray to return to an all in-class experience as the pandemic draws to an end. Humans are designed to be in community. For now, I will do what I can to make [at-home students] feel connected to this amazing school.”

SENIOR SERVICE

Cocurricular and extracurricular activities look different this year as well, and senior service is no exception. Most locations where students have volunteered in the past are not accepting volunteers for safety reasons, so Director of Student Life Susie Brown encouraged students to choose their own, self-directed, service projects. Instead of focusing on one project for the whole school year, the majority of seniors have participated in a number of shorter projects to meet the requirement of 40 hours (adjusted from the normal 50). Seniors have served in their families and communities wherever possible, including grocery shopping for elderly relatives, helping friends move, volunteering at church, and painting designs on the windows at Delmar Gardens, a nearby assisted living facility. For the first time, many service projects have included projects within Westminster: students are working at Pawprint Coffee, serving

on Student Council, setting up lab equipment in the science department, and working alongside the maintenance department.

Senior Caroline Strauss has spent time volunteering with the groundskeeping crew, including “picking up trash, trimming trees, mowing the lawn, and putting the growth beds down on the athletic fields.” Caroline concludes that she didn’t expect to enjoy the work as much as she does: “It is really cool to see the physical fruits of our labor around school. My biggest takeaway has been learning about the hard work and dedication it takes to make our campus look so good. It makes me respect the work of the maintenance department so much more.”

SPIRITUAL & MENTAL HEALTH

Although we are very blessed to have been able to keep our campus open every day of this school year, the mental and emotional toll of growing up in a pandemic has still, unfortunately, affected our students. School counselors Mollie Pfuetze and Jonnell Patton have been working tirelessly to support students through such an unprecedented time.

They invited to campus the CHADS Coalition, an organization that speaks to students about mental health. These presentations include information about how to assess your own mental health, ask for help, and find trusted adults, ultimately equipping our students to better care for themselves and others. Mrs. Patton says that the CHADS presentations have “opened up conversations with students about where they are emotionally” and allowed the counselors to know who might be needing a little extra support.

Mrs. Pfuetze and Mrs. Patton notice that even small moments of joy make a huge difference in helping students feel supported and happy. They cite homework-free weekends, weekly dress down days, extra days off of school, exciting virtual events like *Showtime at the Academy* and *Rock Paper Scissors*, and the increase in school clubs with helping students cope with current circumstances. Weekly chapel videos from Director of Spiritual Life David Ottolini '04 have focused on addressing how students are feeling and pointing to Jesus as the source of our ultimate hope and joy. Mr. Ottolini says, “Joy is not just a feeling or emotion but is an aspect of the fruit of our life in Christ. Jesus gives us the ability to rejoice in hope because he is alive. Even in tough times, we can be encouraged that the joy of the Lord is our strength.”

Above all, we are remembering to “count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness” (James 1:2–3). •

REFLECTIONS FROM THE CLASS OF 2021

Nicki Mabry, senior class president, and Caleb Moellenhoff, secretary for the class of 2021, reflect on their time at Westminster and their unusual senior year.

What has been the most positive part of your Westminster experience overall?



NICKI: The most positive part of my experience overall is definitely all the different relationships I have been able to build with people who are genuinely kind, caring, and supportive. Westminster has so many opportunities to build those relationships, and I am so thankful I took advantage of that. Westminster has given me people who will be with me for the rest of my life.



CALEB: In every subject, there is a focus on academic rigor, but what has been more impactful for me is the application of that rigor to rationally defend the life-changing truth of the Gospel. As a student, it has been clear to me that incorporating the analysis of tough questions and current issues from a biblical worldview is not just a required aspect of the curriculum here. The teachers truly care about sharing the wisdom they have acquired from their own struggles, doubts, and life experiences.

What has been the most positive part of this year at Westminster?

CALEB: I'm very glad that we had in-person school this year and that Westminster did what they could to make life as normal as possible while being safe. It was great to see my friends and to be back competing in sports.

What has been a challenge this year? What are ways that it's been overcome or progress has been made?

NICKI: Any kind of change is a challenge, but I believe that the Westminster community has overcome many challenges this year through maintaining an eternal perspective. Many teachers and coaches remind us that while no one could have foreseen a school year like this, none of it surprises God because He is still in control. I think that perspective makes all the difference.

What do you think you'll miss most when you graduate?

NICKI: The faculty and staff, from teachers to administrators to maintenance, genuinely care about us not only as students but as people. I am grateful for the way Westminster encourages and provides opportunities for growth in academics, extracurriculars, and faith. I have learned so much about God and His heart and character through conversations with people here. I will most definitely miss seeing the people of Westminster every day.

CALEB: I'm grateful for all the good friends that I have met through Westminster. I've certainly been blessed by Christian fellowship as well as lots of laughter. I will definitely miss my classmates when I graduate.

What has been your biggest accomplishment during your time at Westminster?

NICKI: I hope that my greatest accomplishment is leaving Westminster better than I found it by starting a ripple effect of leadership, service, and faithfulness. Now, whether that happens or not is not yet evident, but God will have His way if that's His will.

CALEB: My biggest accomplishment has been learning to channel my desire to work hard in a positive way in order to promote spiritual, emotional, and physical health rather than letting academics and athletics rule my life. However, this accomplishment is truly not my own but the Lord's.



Disruption Causes Innovation

BY JENNIFER SENGPIEL, HEAD OF ENROLLMENT

We've all heard the sayings "make the best of a bad situation," "find the silver lining" and my personal favorite, "make lemonade out of lemons." Well, we've all been given a bountiful crop of lemons to make lemonade for years to come. Last year brought a pandemic the likes of which mankind hasn't dealt with in over a century. Certainly, most of us alive today have never grappled with this type of disruptor. At Westminster, we've been asking this question: how can we take this pandemic, this disruptor, and create our own silver lining or lemonade? As Christians, we know that God never gives us more than we can handle, and the events of the past year were not a surprise to Him.

"Disruptive Innovation" is a term coined in the early 1990s by Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen. Fundamentally, the term asks a very important question: how can you turn disruptions into opportunities? As it relates to organizations, disruptive innovation has been widely misunderstood. It is not about breakthrough technologies that make processes or products better; it's about innovations that make them more accessible and relatable, therefore serving more people.

Westminster is embracing disruptive innovation. We must continue to evolve and adapt to serve our community and God's kingdom. As our vision states so eloquently, we are here to prepare and equip more young men and women to engage the world and change it for Jesus Christ. *Change* it, not remain idle.

Our admissions practices were seriously disrupted by the pandemic. We couldn't do large-scale events, group tours, or student shadow visits. We had to innovate the way we connect and share the Westminster experience. This innovation needed to build relationships in a time where social distancing was no longer an abstract concept. Our heart and desire is to connect with families, hear their stories and goals, and share our mission — tell our story and why we exist. It is never a forced fit; we want the Lord to connect our hearts and move people to Westminster.

With these paramount tenets in mind, we developed a more personal and individualized approach with our prospective families. We now hold one-on-one family tours connecting with students and parents on a much deeper level. Each family is matched with an admissions partner who remains connected with them through the entire application process, answering questions and helping them connect with our community. Our admissions team uses video emails to develop stronger connections digitally. We overhauled our open house into two sessions focused more on what we believe and bringing to life what learning within a biblical worldview looks and feels like. As God's children, we all come with different gifts. We want to truly see each of our applicants and partner with the whole family to create a learning experience that not only glorifies Christ but challenges them appropriately.

Ultimately, the disruption of the pandemic has provided us an opportunity to innovate not only with how we connect with our community but also in how we educate and much more. It's a time that has caused unrest, but I'm very excited that the Lord has us firmly in His grasp, and the future looks bright and innovative! •

Community News

UPDATES FROM AROUND CAMPUS



PARTNER SCHOOL IN SOUTH KOREA PROVIDES MASKS FOR TEACHERS

Our partner school in South Korea, Saemmul Christian Academy, recently donated 2,000 unique masks to Westminster. Saemmul tried many different kinds of masks for their teachers and found that a particular disposal medical mask works better than most, especially for lecturers, speakers, and teachers. These masks provide full coverage and protection yet are lighter weight, which allows teachers to speak for a long time without too many breathing difficulties. We are so grateful for this generous gift from our partners in Christ on the other side of the world! In a letter to Saemmul Christian Academy, Dr. Mosbacker wrote, “Your kindness is a reflection of Christ’s love that transcends national boundaries.”

MARK JENNINGS RETIRES

Mark Jennings retired in February after 20 years of service to Westminster. Mark was the lead groundskeeper from 2001–2010, when he became the Director of Facilities. In 2019, he returned to being the lead groundskeeper. He also served as assistant coach of the boys volleyball program and drove buses for after-school athletics for many years. Mark’s quiet service to the Lord was instrumental in the lives of those who worked alongside him. He not only did his job well, but he also taught those around him to do their jobs well as a service to the Lord.

IN THE SPIRIT OF GIVING 2020

Students collected approximately 32,000 items including school supplies, toiletries, clothing, and canned goods to benefit nonprofits in St. Louis and around the world this year. Partner agencies included Sunshine Ministries, African Vision of Hope, Operation Christmas Child, One Heart Ministries, and the Little Bit Foundation.



WE ARE ONE

Westminster hosted its annual celebration of Black History Month, We Are One, with a virtual program on February 22. This year’s event celebrated the significance of African American music in American culture. Guests enjoyed spirituals, gospel, blues, R&B, jazz, and hip hop performances by the Westminster choirs, varsity dance team, and others. Watch the program at wcastl.org/bhm.

CAMP WESTMINSTER

Sports, art, music, and lots of adventure! At Camp Westminster, boys and girls in grades K–9 can choose from more than 40 different half-day and full-day camps. Options include Violin Blast Off, Disney Showstoppers, STEM camps, and so much more — there’s something for everyone! Camp Westminster takes place from June 7–July 2. Visit wcastl.org/campwestminster and sign up for a summer of fun today!



DOCUMENTARY FEATURING WCA STUDENT WINS EMMY

A huge congratulations to seventh grader Laila Anderson! St. Louis Children’s Hospital’s film “Laila: The Next Season,” a documentary that recounts her diagnosis, treatment, and recovery from a rare disease called HLH, won a Mid-America Regional Emmy Award on November 21, 2020!

“I was just excited for Children’s Hospital and everyone who made the film,” says Laila, “because once I was healthy, it was our goal to give back to the organizations that helped me be where I am today.” She’s thrilled that this film can bring awareness and support to the people and places that saved her life.

VIRTUAL & DISTANCED EVENTS

Bringing Joy While Staying Safe



WINTER MIDDLE SCHOOL PLAY ↓

Middle school drama teacher Gina Rosenberg came up with a creative solution to the challenge of how to safely have live theatre with the middle school winter play, *10 Ways to Survive Life in a Quarantine*. This play, which consists of a series of monologues, was rehearsed in small groups and recorded in a large room to safely distance. The play received rave reviews among middle school students, who watched the pre-recorded performance from their classrooms, as well as in the community, where it amassed over 500 views on YouTube during the limited viewing window. Mrs. Rosenberg says, “I am proud of our performing arts department for creatively making performance art safely.”

FIRST-EVER SCHOOL FILM ↑

Because the fall play, *The Spoon River Project*, could not be a live performance due to restrictions on gathering, a team of students and staff created our first-ever school film. Producer Ian Gilbert (senior), director Matteo Zavaglia (senior), cinematographers Logan Mann (senior) and Abby Johler (junior), and audio techs Adam Zell (senior) and Jackson Loehr (junior) were involved in all aspects of the production, from pre-production to editing. Drama teacher Jim Butz worked with the actors, while other teachers and staff helped coordinate and manage the production. Abby says, “I learned so much more every day from hands-on experience than in any class I could have taken. It was such a great opportunity to go through the whole process of making a feature film.”



BRINGING LIVE TV TO WCA

Though the same restrictions on live theatre applied to community events, Director of Marketing & Communications Mike Rohlfiing '05 rose to the occasion. Inspired by “event television” like the Oscars and the Super Bowl, he created two cinematic, COVID-safe, livestreamed shows that brought joy and connected our community: *Showtime at the Academy* and *Rock Paper Scissors 2021*. Both shows provided the opportunity for a number of students interested in media to practice cinematography, photography, sound, and more in a “live TV” setting.



SHOWTIME AT THE ACADEMY ↑

wcastl.org/showtime

Mr. Rohlfiing says he’s “always had a soft spot for Westminster’s annual talent show,” but this year it looked quite a bit different than usual. *Showtime at the Academy* was a mostly-virtual affair: Mr. Rohlfiing individually filmed 17 different student performances as well as skits, interviews, and an opening musical number, “Another Day of Masks.” After two months of filming and editing, the school community watched the show as it was broadcast live to individual classrooms and homes on November 6. *Showtime*, which was sponsored by local company Moneta, featured live interactive games, voting, and announcement of the \$300 grand prize winner and required a crew of 15 students and staff.

“Another Day of Masks” turned out to be especially popular in the community — Mr. Rohlfiing and star Sam Parker Stillman (senior) were interviewed on St. Louis Public Radio, and the video, which was featured by KSDK, has over 15,000 views online.

ROCK PAPER SCISSORS 2021 ↓

wcastl.org/rps

When Spirit Week was moved to April, Mr. Rohlfiing started thinking about ways to break up the winter doldrums. The solution: a rock paper scissors tournament. After seven preliminary rounds, 16 contestants advanced to the finals and competed live in the Theatre on January 28. Between rounds, viewers enjoyed contestant interviews, bracket analysis, a hype speech from the coaches, an Indiana Jones cinematic re-enactment, and an appearance from an unexpected villain. The show was hosted by Tyler Collison (sophomore), Sam Parker Stillman (senior), and Luke Laughlin (senior).

Mr. Rohlfiing describes the behind-the-scenes process this way: “Whereas most of *Showtime* was pre-recorded, the majority of *RPS* was truly live as it was broadcast to classrooms and homes. This, again, took a large crew of students and staff to pull off. We had to coordinate cameras, sound, lighting, video playback, bracket updating, projector and tv control, scoreboard graphics, hosts, a referee, and contestants to make sure everyone was in sync to produce the best show possible ... and all of this had to be done live! This took a lot of practice and a lot of troubleshooting to iron everything out.”

“The best part about producing huge projects like this,” Mr. Rohlfiing says, “is when it finally all comes together. Rehearsals and practices might be messy, I may be working until the very last second on some final video edits, contestants may get quarantined at the last minute, but when we finally go live and the pressure is on, everyone always does an incredible job. There’s no turning back, you just have to go, and I love that feeling.”



WILDCAT WE CARE

**Our Loving Community Supports
Students in Need**

BY CAROLYN HOLT, ADVANCEMENT TEAM LEADER, MAJOR GIFTS

A year ago, when the pandemic struck, Westminster families faced hardships of various kinds, including loss of employment. As a result, some grappled with difficult decisions regarding how to move forward with their children's education.

Compelled by love for one another, the Westminster community immediately and generously stepped in to fill the gap with the goal of keeping all Westminster families at the school.

In an outpouring of generosity, 261 supporters contributed \$260,000 in tuition assistance. Every gift, large and small, made a difference, enabling 32 students to return to campus this year despite economic hardship.

The passion and participation of our faculty and staff were a special inspiration. Our heartfelt thanks go to our 70 faculty and staff who made a tremendous impact with more than \$25,000 raised. Westminster alumni, too, gave back in a big way by doubling their participation — read their Wildcat We CARE stories at wcastl.org/alumnigiving.

To all who so generously contributed to the Wildcat We CARE Program, we share this message from one of the families blessed by your support:

"The Westminster staff, teachers, and community have so deeply impacted our family by pouring God's truth, love, and life into our kids. We were very concerned with all of the



COVID losses that we would not be able to afford Westminster this year. ... We are so grateful that [our daughter] could stay with her friends and continue to be educated in such a nurturing and God-honoring school ... where she is valued, known, loved, and supported. I'm very sure that the seeds planted here at Westminster will impact her entire life in positive ways. Although we don't know who you are, we pray God's richest and deepest blessings on you and hope that someday we are able to give in a way that supports others in similar ways."

This is just one example of how the Westminster community demonstrates God's lovingkindness to one another every day. In times of crisis, the love, strength, and generosity of the Westminster community shine even more brightly! •

As the Lord leads, would you prayerfully consider a gift to the Wildcat We CARE Campaign to continue to support families in need? wcastl.org/give



REFLECTIONS

A Note from Your Alumni Relations Coordinator

As we move forward into 2021, we remain steadfast in the belief that alumni events will return to campus as soon as it is safe to do so. Meanwhile, we continue our commitment to keep you engaged through the monthly e-newsletter “Wildcat Tracks” and our alumni Facebook and Instagram pages. Be sure to follow them for event information, class updates, and fun contests!

Many of you have reached out, sending in news to share. So much has happened in your lives as you move forward fulfilling the plan God had waiting for you. After all, life does go on! I look forward to sharing these updates — they provide a connection that touches your fellow alumni. Check for your graduation year in the next few pages to see what your classmates have been up to.

Fortunately, we were blessed to be able to virtually share some really fun events this year with our alumni community, including the student talent show *Showtime at the Academy*, plus both the orchestra and choir fall and Christmas concerts. While we may not be able to see you in-person yet, the Westminster spirit stays strong, and we will persevere. Once a Wildcat, always a Wildcat!

Blessings,
Hannah Wallace Murray '93

CLASS NOTES

ALUMNI NEWS

'93

Amy (Skid) Woelfel lives in Jerseyville, Ill. with her four boys ranging in age from 20 to 3 years old. Amy is the principal at a juvenile transition center in Centreville, Ill.

'97

David Holtzman, president of Search Solution Group in Charlotte, N.C., coincidentally connected with Alex 'AJ' Fletcher '04 and placed him in his new position as the director of business development for Latin America at Time-Master.



'00

Amanda (Drissell) Baca and her husband, David, joyfully welcomed their fifth child and first daughter, Bliss Elizabeth, on August 7, 2020. Bliss joins adoring brothers Blaise, Dietrich, Lewis, and Carson. “We are praising God for our sweet surprise and His bountiful gifts!”



'03

Heather (Hass) Spanogle and her husband, Jeff, welcomed their fourth child, Caleb August, in November 2020. The Spanogle family lives in Jakarta, Indonesia, where Jeff is a professor at a Christian university.



'05

Lauren (Waeckerle) Hunter and her husband, Matt, have been happily married for twelve years. They live in Arlington, Texas with their five children: Raylee (8), Suhre (6), Emmie (5), and twins Truett and Davis (3). Lauren graduated from the University of Missouri with a degree in education in 2009. Matt is a full-time student pastor, while Lauren homeschools their children and helps Matt with their DJ business in her spare time.



'06

Adam and Kat (Bear) Brown welcomed their second child, Georgia May, on December 27, 2020. Their son, Walter, is 2, and they live in Chatham, N.J.

Daniel Minnella has been a missionary in the Philippines for six years. He is learning his fifth language and is able to preach in two of the local languages.



'09

Jordan Duke married Tracy Turnbull in May 2020. After spending the last three years traveling to 34 countries around the world for work, Jordan and his wife Tracy plan to settle in Libertyville, Ill. Jordan currently works in cybersecurity risk management at Abbott Laboratories.



Jimmy Myers and his wife, Mary Lynn, lived in Houston for three years, where he served as the director of young adults at First Presbyterian Church and they had their daughter, Lila. Now the Myers family is in Durham, N.C., where Jimmy is pursuing his doctorate in the New Testament at Duke Divinity School. They are expecting their second child. Jimmy recently received the top award from the Goodwin Writing Prizes for Excellence in Theological Writing for a paper entitled "Give Gifts to the Evil-doer: A Rereading of Matthew 5:38-42."



Thomas Porter was the 2020 recipient of the Denver Association of Petroleum Landmen President's Award. Thomas contributed countless hours to the DAPL with his involvement on the education committee and the board. He is currently a senior land negotiator at Occidental Petroleum in Denver, Colo.

Bryan Willey and his wife, Kelsey, welcomed Brayden Douglas Willey on September 5, 2019.



Andrea (Waeckerle) Herron and her husband, Dustin, have been happily married for seven years. They live in Keller, Texas with their 6-month-old daughter Evelyn. Andrea graduated from Murray State University in 2013 and is currently pursuing her master's degree in counseling. Dustin is a men's pastor at Gateway Church.



Max Piazza married **Olivia (Pierson) Piazza '09** on December 29, 2020. While they met at Westminster, they did not start dating until Olivia was teaching at Westminster and Max was in medical school. Olivia graduated from Gordon College in 2013 and Max graduated from the Air Force Academy in 2014. Max is currently an ER resident at Good Samaritan Hospital on Long Island and Olivia teaches art at Long Island Lutheran Middle and High School. When Max finishes his residency, they will begin a nine-year stint with the Air Force. Their wedding party included Karlton Smith '10, Dick Ross '10, Will Pierson '11, Emma Bailey '14, Eleanor Pierson '20, and former Westminster teacher Maddie Prentis.



'11

Drew Waeckerle and his wife, Lea, have been happily married for six years. They live in McKinney, Texas, where they are area directors for Young Life. Drew graduated from Moody Bible Institute with a degree in biblical studies and is pursuing his master's degree in Christian education from Dallas Theological Seminary. Drew and Lea have two daughters, Sutton (3) and Mills (3 months).



'10

Shelby (Massot) Archer and her husband Joel welcomed Chloe Ann Archer to the family on January 24, 2021! She was born at 35 weeks, weighing 5 pounds, 4.5 ounces. Big sister Ellie Ruth is adjusting well to the change.



'12

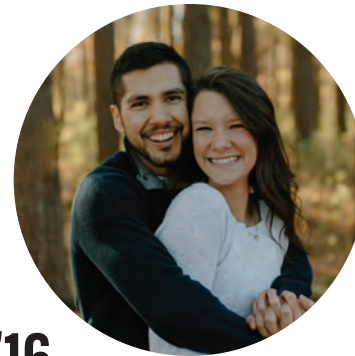
Jacob Buffa married Shanna Sparkman on December 15, 2019. They live in West Palm Beach, Fla., where Jacob is a sports science analyst for the Houston Astros and Shanna is a fitness professional at Eastpointe Country Club. They are enjoying the warm winters and working on their golf game together.

Maggie Mauze studied at Covenant College in Chattanooga, Tenn., where she received a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies, focusing on sports management, youth ministries, and coaching. After graduating, Maggie served with A Christian Ministry in the National Parks for three seasons before working for Vail Resorts in Breckenridge, Colo. Now, Maggie works for Bellhop Moving Company in Chattanooga.



Haley (Woolbright) Horina married Matthew Horina on June 14, 2020. Their original wedding plans were canceled due to COVID-19, so they had a small backyard wedding with family.

Jenni Jurgenson is in her second year of audiology school at Washington University. After completing her undergraduate degree at The University of Tulsa in 2018, Jenni worked with Fellows in Birmingham, Ala. Those challenging nine months solidified her faith foundation that began at Westminster. "I grew more than I ever thought imaginable!"



'16

Caleb Buffa and **Lauren Alldredge '15** recently became engaged and look forward to their fall wedding. Caleb graduated summa cum laude from St. Louis University and is currently working towards his master's in geographic information science. Lauren graduated summa cum laude from Union University and will graduate from the University of Missouri with a master's in occupational therapy. Lauren and Caleb enjoy hiking together.

Nick Cacciarelli graduated from Mizzou Business School with a degree in economics in May 2020. He was offered an academic merit scholarship and will be attending SMU Dedman School of Law in Dallas, Tex. this fall.



'14

Catherine Bakewell's debut middle grade novel, *We Are the Song*, will be published by Holiday House in spring 2022. *We Are the Song* is a fantasy novel about a world where music is magic and a 12-year-old singer, Elissa, has the power to tear down walls, heal wounds, and cure hunger with her voice. Now a goddess has given Elissa her biggest assignment yet: end a war.



'15

Saenea Williams is currently a coordinator of football strategy and business development at the NFL. She handles pipeline programming as well as departmental strategy for football operations.



Isabel Guariglia is in her first year of law school at Washington University. She graduated from the University of Missouri in 2020 with a bachelor's degree in journalism. Law school has been the goal ever since she participated in the We the People competition at Westminster.



'16

Zach Hughes and Rachel Donaldson became engaged on March 9, 2020 on the Causeway Coast of Northern Ireland. As they chart their next steps, they are grateful for connection to God and the support of their families. Zach has recently received the Furman University Willard A. Metcalf Personal Character Award.

Audrey O'Neill is working toward her PhD at the University of Washington after graduating from Loyola University of Chicago last summer with a degree in biochemistry and a minor in computer science.

Matthew Rush is a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Army and will be serving with the 10th Mountain Division this spring.



Hannah Grace Smith recently graduated from Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. with a degree in interior architecture and a minor in fine art. She just finished her first illustration job for a children's book entitled *A Day To Stay Home*, which is available for purchase on Amazon. Hannah Grace currently works on commissioned artwork from all across the country and teaches art at Covenant Christian School. Her work was featured in a gallery show done by Art St. Louis.

'17

Kirsten Davis was drafted by Louisville Racing FC in professional soccer as the third pick in the second round. She will finish the 2021 season at Texas Tech and then will move on to the pros.



'19

Alex Cross started a new job as senior organist at Christ Memorial Church in Holland, Mich. He is a sophomore at Hope College studying vocal music education.

IN MEMORIAM



Marilyn Goggan, mother of Laura (Goggan) Greene '81 and Kent Goggan '84, passed away on February 11, 2020. She was the founding coach of the drill team that became the "Catettes" in the late 1970s and into the 1980s.

Alumni: *If you would like to be included in the next issue of Chimes, please send your update, graduation year, and a recent photo to alumninews@wcastl.org.*



JOIN US FOR COMMUNITY NIGHT!

**April 29, 7 p.m.
Family Arena**

We can't wait for Spirit Week, coming up on April 23–29! We are so excited to be able to continue this beloved tradition and look forward to safely celebrating soon! Make sure to join us for Community Night on April 29 at the Family Arena in St. Charles.

Led to a Life of Service

AN ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT ON LAURIE (BURCH) STROHMEYER '96

Laurie (Burch) Strohmeyer graduated from Maryville University's Occupational Therapy program in 2000. She has now been an occupational therapist (OT) for over 20 years, all because of one service opportunity during her senior year at Westminster.

What led you to want to go into Occupational Therapy?

For my senior service at Westminster, I was placed at Litzsinger School, which serves students with a wide range of abilities. I remember my first day there like it was yesterday. I saw children who used wheelchairs, splints, braces, and walkers, as well as children who couldn't communicate with spoken words. I was 17 years old and had never been exposed to this population, and it made me sad. After my first day, I went to the Director of Student Service and Leadership, Sara Drexler, to ask for a new placement. She prayed with me and asked me to try working there one more time.

The next time I went to Litzsinger, I saw a distressed little boy leave his classroom with a woman. When he returned to the classroom, he had been transformed. He was calm, focused, and happy. I asked who the woman was and what she did to help the young boy. The teacher told me that she was an occupational therapist — someone who helps people do the things they want and need to do in order to succeed in their daily activities following an injury, illness, or disability. I observed the OT for a while, and I was in awe of her ability to connect with the students and their response to her treatment. It truly changed the way I viewed those children. They showed me that they had capabilities and desires that all children have. That day, at 17 years old, I knew I wanted to become an OT.



What is the most rewarding part of your career? What is the hardest part?

The most rewarding part of my career is being able to work with a huge variety of populations. For the past 20 years, I've worked with infants through hospice care as an OT. Though the most difficult part of my job is dealing with patients dying, I cannot imagine doing anything else.

How would you describe your role during COVID?

I work at a skilled nursing facility where I help residents become more independent and able to complete activities of daily life such as brushing their teeth, showering, getting dressed, and eating. We have had COVID-positive residents since April of 2020. Although it has been heartbreaking to lose patients to this virus, I have been extremely grateful for technology. A lot of my patients are able to FaceTime their loved ones who cannot visit them.

What life lessons did you learn from Westminster?

I am forever grateful to the people like Mr. Tim Hall and Mrs. Sara Drexler who believed that I could grow up and become a helper to others. I've been an OT for over 20 years now because of people like them. •



Westminster Christian Academy
800 Maryville Centre Drive
Town & Country, MO 63017
wcastl.org 314.997.2900

June 7–July 2
Grades K–9



CAMP
WESTMINSTER

Camp
is Back!

Choose from over 40
weekly camps offered
for boys and girls

REGISTER
BY MARCH 31
FOR AN
EARLY BIRD
DISCOUNT!

LEARN MORE AT
[wcastl.org/
campwestminster](http://wcastl.org/campwestminster)

