



# THE EAGLE EYE

HOME OF THE EAGLES



**FFA students teach elementary students how to make a living necklace during Elementary Ag Day, April 1, 2016.**

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# CHRIST-LIKE LEADERSHIP

Learning Christ-like leadership skills is one way to make a positive impact on the world, and the opportunity to apply those skills through an FFA program is a unique opportunity for SC students since it's rare for a private school to have an ag education program.

With no ag education in the Albany or Corvallis school districts, the program at SC offers kids something extra, especially when combined with the Christian education.

"In terms of the Christian aspect, so much of what FFA was founded on is Christian principles, such as being diligent in our labor and living to serve others," says FFA Advisor and Ag Education teacher Amy Krahn. "Here at SC we can completely embrace that, and I love it."

The FFA motto of, "Learning to do, doing to learn, earning to live, and living to serve," reinforces the value of Christ-like leadership through activities that vary from public speaking events to service-learning. Service-learning differs from community service in that it takes place over the course of a semester or year, is more hands-on, and is intended to provide a meaningful way of applying the leadership and educational skills learned in school and through FFA to meet an identified community issue.

Krahn explains that ag education is normally funded through the

department of education in most states or via federal dollars, money that private schools are not qualified to receive.

"Ag programs require money, time, and resources, and we are blessed here at SC because we have a large number of ag resources, in terms of kids and alumni who are huge supporters of the school's ag program, which allows us to offer this to students," Krahn says.

Along the lines of learning to do, doing to learn, and serving others, Krahn points out that all the lettuce for the salad bar in the high school cafeteria is grown and harvested by the FFA students.

Talking with several FFA students, they all agree that good leadership involves listening to others, being committed to the needs of the other people in the group, and setting a good example.

"Even if you don't agree with someone, you can each have your own opinion," says L.R. Burns, a freshman. "I think it's important to be compassionate and try to understand where the other person is coming from."

- *"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."* - John Quincy Adams.



## FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

With the retirement of Wilbur Starr, and the hiring of his replacement, Santiam Christian is in the midst of an historic leadership transition. This will be the first time in decades that we will have a new high school principal.

With the planning for this transition occupying much of my thinking this year, I have found it enlightening to compare what is happening here to similar situations in the Bible. Reading in both the New and Old Testament has highlighted how some leadership transitions have gone well while others failed and gives us key elements for success.

One fascinating example of a successful leadership transition is the passing of the torch from Moses to Joshua as they led the nation of Israel. There are several aspects of this story that give us valuable insights today.

First, both men were successful, but they had different gifts and talents because the nation was in a different situation with each. Moses was called to lead them successfully out of Egypt and to position them for the conquest of Canaan. Joshua

was the leader tasked with conquering the new territory and distributing the land among the 12 tribes. Both men were gifted, both were talented, but both were different. I believe this to be true at Santiam Christian now during our period of transition. Different times call for different gifts.

Second, although the leaders changed, God's vision for the nation did not. A change in leadership does not mean a change in vision for the organization, but a renewed focus and energy on what we are accomplishing for God's kingdom.

Third, both men were explicitly called by God to the position of leadership. Moses had the well-known encounter with the burning bush, but that does not diminish that Joshua was the man chosen to succeed him. God still calls people to certain positions in order to accomplish his plan.

One final thought is that times of change can bring uncertainty and confusion, and this can be a fertile ground for our enemy to make inroads. We should be reminded to pray even more for our new principal, our school, and the families associated with it. Pray this transition brings glory to God and brings new families to our school.

# A SERVANT'S HEART

Farming requires working until the job is done, even if that means working right up to the point when it's time to start again. It requires doing a little bit of everything and a willingness to do just a bit more. Most of all, it requires faith and care. Faith that God will provide and the ability to care for what He has provided. Not unlike the job of a principal.

High school principal Wilbur Starr grew up working on his family's dairy and grass seed farm in Bellfountain, Oregon that had been homesteaded in the 1840s and passed down through the generations. Most of the time it was just the family running the dairy and working in the fields, fixing machinery, and doing whatever else needed to be done to keep the farm going. He may not have realized it at the time, but it was here Wilbur learned the lessons of having faith that God would provide, how to be a good caretaker of what he and his family had been given, and hard work.

"Growing up, I didn't think about working on the farm and what I was learning, it was just a way of life," he states matter-of-factly. "You pretty much had to learn how to do whatever was needed, if something broke down you had to figure out how to fix it."

Wilbur and Luanne's oldest son, Jeff, started at Santiam Christian in 1985. At that same time, Wilbur began volunteering to help coach sports as well. Two years later, in 1987, Wilbur was hired as the junior high teacher and their younger sons, Ryan and Aaron, transferred to Santiam Christian. Wilbur became the head track coach, and the assistant football and assistant wrestling coach at that time. Wilbur will be the first to tell you Santiam Christian has been blessed with many caretakers over the years, and that one of the school's strengths is the willingness of students, faculty and parents to step in and lend a hand when things need to be done.

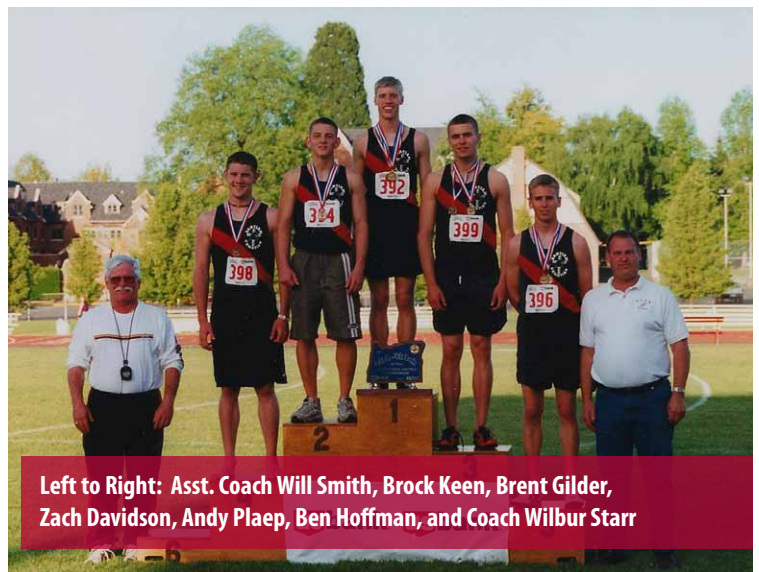
Teacher, principal, and coach, are only three of the many jobs Wilbur has had while at SC. Others include head of transportation, building and grounds, and janitor. "The Lord has blessed him, being a farm boy he learned how to do many things," Luanne says. "But that's how it is here, everyone helps out, especially in the early days, parents took on jobs because the school didn't have the money to go out and hire help, so parents did it."

Talk to some of the staff who have worked alongside Wilbur for many years and you'll hear a recurrent theme: hard working, great support, passion for kids and the belief that Santiam Christian is as much about ministry as it is about education.

Mike Hill, who drove buses in the early days and now teaches math and Bible in the junior high and high school, has been at SC for 30 years. "You need to feel called to do what you  
*continued on reverse....*



Wilbur Starr, High School Principal (1990)

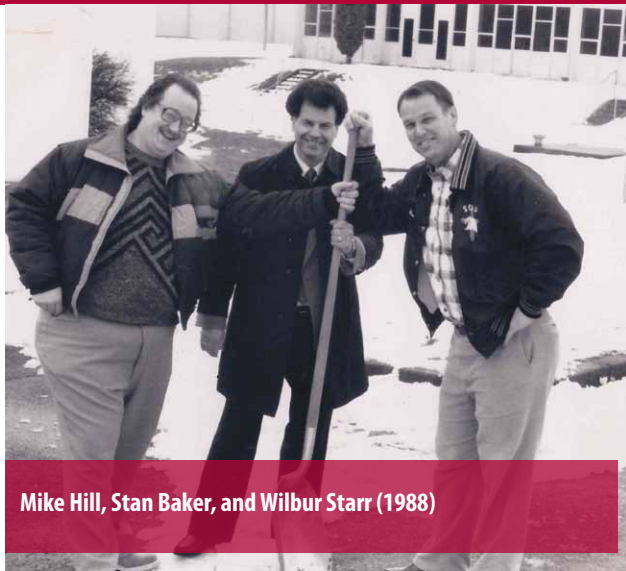


Left to Right: Asst. Coach Will Smith, Brock Keen, Brent Gilder, Zach Davidson, Andy Plaep, Ben Hoffman, and Coach Wilbur Starr

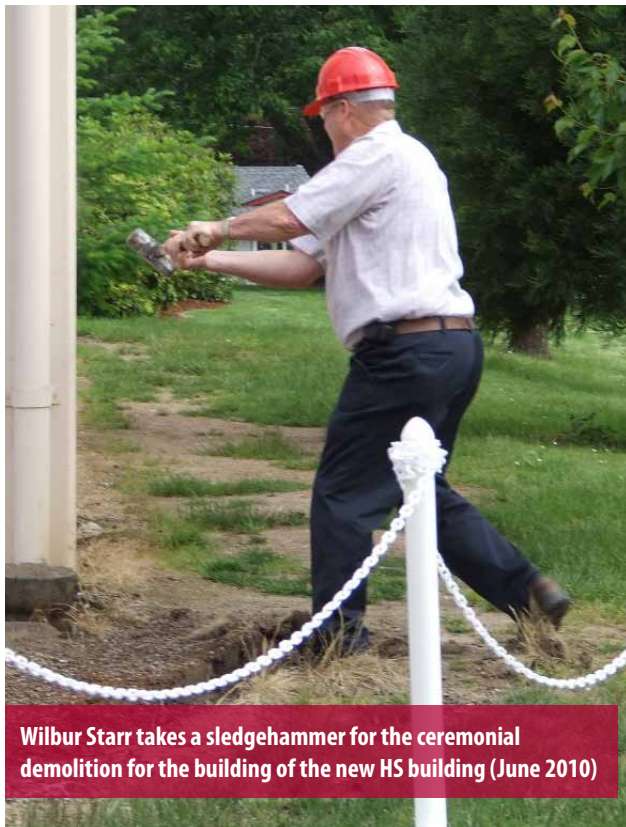


SC Faculty 1988-89

(From left to right) Back row: Bill Ford, Wilbur Starr, Stan Baker, Mike Hill, Brad Meyers, Matt Nosack; Middle row: Jacki Ford, Dot Lehr, Carol Wall, Kathy Erickson, Ellen Madarus, Esther Knaupp, Ardiss Burch; Front row: Larry Chambers, Royce Miller, Matt Strauser, Paul Carlson



Mike Hill, Stan Baker, and Wilbur Starr (1988)



Wilbur Starr takes a sledgehammer for the ceremonial demolition for the building of the new HS building (June 2010)



Wilbur Starr celebrates the new bus arrival (January 2016)

do, that's what fuels your passion, and I know that's how Wilbur has felt about his time here," Hill says.

Thirty-one years is a long time to do anything. Spend that much time in one profession and you are bound to have lots of stories to tell, and when your stories involve seeing God move in profound ways, it really isn't fair to ask if there is one story that stands out the most over that amount of time.

But when asked, Wilbur contemplates the question, and answers with a story not of glory for himself or any one person, or even the school. But of a simple account illustrating the power of prayer.

An end of the year field trip to the coast with the junior high students had been planned, and Wilbur told the kids every day since the trip had been announced to pray for a good time and nice weather so they could really enjoy the beach. When they woke up that morning, the weather was bad. Everyone came to school with all their stuff for the beach and asked if the trip was still on since the forecast for the rest of the day at the coast was for rain.

"I said, 'have faith, we have been praying about it, so we are going,'" Wilbur recalls. "We drove to the coast, and it rained all the way there. We pulled into the parking lot at the beach, and it quit raining. The sun came out. We spent the whole day and had a great time. We got on the bus and as we pulled out of the parking lot, it started raining. And I thought, this is a great lesson for the kids, the power of prayer."

In all his time at SC, Wilbur only worked for two superintendents, and he says he enjoyed working with both. "Stan Baker and I were a great team and now with Lance, I think the school is in a great position."

Wilbur and Stan would often walk the school grounds looking over and discussing what needed to be done and how to do it. Walking through the parking lot one day talking about the potholes and what could be done to repair them without any money, they noticed an asphalt truck with men standing around it. Curious, Wilbur and Stan decided to see what was going on. It turned out to be an asphalt patching class from the Laborers Training program next door to the school. The class was jack hammering holes into the asphalt, then filling them in.

"We asked them if they would like to work on some real potholes, they said sure, and that's how we started a partnership with the group," Stan recalls. "Many of the things that have happened over the years, the world would say is coincidence, but we know it was God providing."

Stan says he and Wilbur complemented each other well. "Wilbur was my right hand man through my 25 years here at Santiam Christian. Our strengths were in different areas. But we had the same heart, to see kids walk with the Lord."

When asked, "what now?" Wilbur looks to his hobbies of rebuilding tractors and old trucks, visiting their grandchildren, and Luanne's honey-do list, just maybe not in that order. "Start a new adventure," he says with a smile.

*And on the 8th day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, "I need a caretaker"-- so God made a farmer. - Paul Harvey*



## FIRST THINGS

Character development is an important part of Santiam Christian Schools' education, and Junior High Principal Steve Bittner has taken it one step further with "First Things." This is a time where he has all the junior high students gather in the hall, and he talks briefly with them about the week's character trait before they start the school day.

Bittner came up with the idea for "First Things" in an effort to build community and have more direct input with the kids. "I wanted to be more intentional with the character education program, and I thought one way to do that is by going over the weekly character trait first thing in the morning on the first day of the week," he says. "My feeling is if you're not being intentional about it than you are not going to do it."

This is the first year of the program and Bittner says he's had positive feedback. His goal is to reinforce the character education goals of the school, build community, and emphasize the value in being uncommon. "In our culture, in our society, people who display strong character are less and less common," Bittner says. "So I am trying to point out the value in being the uncommon man or woman, and I thank the students when I see them display those qualities."

*It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world and moral courage so rare. - Mark Twain.*

Bittner says if he notices something going on in the junior high that he thinks needs to be addressed he may use the time during "First Things" to focus on that while weaving in the weekly

character trait. What he sees at this age is a huge societal pull to be a certain way and follow the cultural norms. "I am trying to counteract those things," Bittner says. "What sticks with junior high kids is to fit in with their peers. I want to give them some good things to remember so they have the tools they need to make good decisions here and outside of school."

*He who walks with integrity walks securely. - Proverbs 10:9*

Bittner's passion for character development started many years ago while overseas working on curriculum for schools in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union. When he came to Santiam Christian, he decided to paint core character traits on the walls that include quotes ranging from Mark Twain to Proverbs. "I did those when I first came here almost 20 years ago, and they are still relevant today because they are truth."



### MARIA STEILING - RETIRING

Maria's heart for ministering to our students will be missed. In all of the valuable classes that she taught, it was evident that she loved the Lord and all of her students.

## NEW HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Santiam Christian was fortunate to have numerous qualified candidates apply for the position of high school principal, but saw in its selection of Erik Ritschard a blend of qualities well suited to where Santiam Christian is headed in the future.

Ritschard has been the Head of School at Darren Patterson Christian Academy in Buena Vista, Colorado since 2003. He, his wife, Jani, and their oldest son, Noah, who will be a senior at Santiam Christian in the fall, will move to Oregon this summer. They have four other children in different parts of the country including a daughter and son-in-law in Tigard.

“Erik brings a great combination of academic success and relationship skills to SC,” says superintendent Lance Villers. “While each of the candidates who interviewed had strengths, his strong skills were in areas where he can help our school.”

“I am very interested in high school principal work, so Santiam Christian and that desire came together in that way,” he says. “As I read the school’s website I became excited about the mission and the vision for Santiam Christian School and thought I would love to be apart of that.”

Ways he can see expanding what SC has to offer may include online learning courses.

“I think online learning in all forms is an inevitable part of the future, not that traditional learning will be replaced by it, but it is a good skill to have.” He says what he sees is an increase in professional communities that want people who have the ability to learn online.

“We can’t completely abandon the face-to-face format, relational skills are fundamental to our Christian mission and a strength of Christian high schools, so where we navigate as educators is to have digital learning skills but emphasize that we still need to know how to interact with people,” he says. “There has to be a balance, if we devalue humans in favor of technology then we miss the point. Technology is all around us, it is happening and we need to pay attention, but we don’t need to jump on the bandwagon without thoughtful consideration of its effects.”

Ritschard says he is thrilled with the opportunity to join SC. “We walked away from our visit back in February and really felt Santiam Christian is a great school with a lot to love, and we are excited to start a new adventure and join the team.”