



THE EAGLE EYE

HOME OF THE EAGLES



AN INSIDE LOOK:

- » MUSIC PROGRAM RECEIVES DONATION
- » FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT
- » NEW PRINCIPAL SETTLES INTO FAMILIAR ROLE
- » WILLAMETTE VALLEY DRONE CHALLENGE
- » TACKLING THE TOUGH STUFF
- » DEDICATION TO CRAFT PAVES WAY

MUSIC PROGRAM RECEIVES DONATION

Santiam Christian's elementary, junior high, and high school music programs received a generous donation this year through Subaru of Corvallis and their "Love of Music" fundraising drive to help local schools.

The \$5,000 donation to SC music allowed elementary music teacher, Robyn Penner, and elementary, junior high and high school band teacher, Annette Miller, to purchase some much needed equipment for students to enhance their music education. Once the school was notified of the donation, each teacher turned in a wish list with possible purchases and the administration chose how to spend the funds.

Some items on Miller's wish list included a concert tambourine, music folders for high school band, and sheet music for the different grade levels. She was able to purchase a xylophone for junior high and high school band and a set of temple blocks to share between the elementary, junior high, and high school bands.

"Having a complete set of concert percussion in good condition is a big goal of mine and this helped a lot. Percussion is expensive, especially mallet percussion," says Miller. "We have some good mallet percussion players coming up and I want them to have the right equipment to play on when they get to junior high and high school. This will benefit our program for many years."

Miller says the students found out about the donation when some of them went to help accept the check. They didn't have any input as to spending but were pretty impressed with the amount and the new items.

"It's great to be thought of, noticed, and appreciated. We have so many wants/needs and this was significant enough amount to buy something big without saving for a long time. Hopefully others will be motivated to give when they hear about this," Miller added.

Penner purchased an electric piano, a class set of ukuleles, along with music stands and ukulele cases. "We wanted something that the greatest number of students could enjoy, and we wanted something tangible so we could tell them, "This is what was donated to us," says Penner.

"Donations such as this are important to music programs because quality equipment can be costly," says Penner. "The keyboard will be a huge boost to the program. It produces a high-quality sound and can be transported to the gym for performances. The ukuleles give us an option to teach another beginning instrument to students, one with a high success rate and a definite "coolness" factor."



4th grader Max David practices the ukulele



8th graders Anna Eby and Seliah Greene, along with 7th grader Kellan Evans play the xylophone



6th grader Joseph Castillo playing the temple blocks



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

At the beginning of this school year, Santiam Christian High School had to do something that had not been done in over twenty years, and that was to welcome a new principal to the school. You can read about that transition through the eyes of Erik Ritschard elsewhere in this issue.

In many ways, this was a daunting task. It can be more difficult to assume leadership over a school or business that is doing well compared to one that is struggling, especially an organization that has seen stability in leadership positions for so long. Even in the midst of moving his family half-way across the country he has demonstrated grace and patience as he learns his new position.

Getting to know Erik and his family has been a joy, while also learning more about his love for education. He brings us a new perspective based on his experiences at other Christian schools and colleges. It can be enlightening and useful to have a fresh set of eyes looking at what we do and why we do it. His college experience will help us get a better grasp of what higher education expects from our students.

He has continued the tradition of those before him; he has a great heart for students and teachers and I appreciate his relational way of working through issues with them. I love his passion for discipling young men and women in their walks with the Lord and the ways that is manifested in his daily interactions with them. I know our high school is in good hands for years to come.

NEW PRINCIPAL SETTLES INTO FAMILIAR ROLE

While this may be his first year as high school principal at Santiam Christian School, Erik Ritschard has returned to a role he was in at one time and is familiar with.

Before coming to SC, Ritschard served as principal and head of schools while in Colorado. He also spent some time as an academic dean at a small college, which he says was similar to being a principal.

“I came off of 13 years as head of schools, so part of my hope in coming here was that I would be a good support person for Mr. Villers because I would have a sense of what it was like to walk in his shoes after serving as head of school for 13 years,” says Ritschard.

The place is new, but the mission is the same and he says he sees many commonalities between his previous schools and SC; working with people, teamwork, being intentional, and making changes when there is a need.

“The concerns of Christian schools are similar, such as balancing our academic mission and being faithful to our role as a discipling institution,” says Ritschard. “Christian schooling can be one of the most powerful discipling tools we have as the body of Christ.”

One difference the new principal noticed between his schools in Colorado and SC, was the stability of the SC community. Meaning, he’s met families who have lived here for generations, parents and kids who are born and raised here. “There’s a lot of strength in that,” he says. Whereas in Colorado, the community was much more transient.



This was a year of observing for Ritschard, learning how things are done at SC and why they are done that way. A few changes have been made but they were things that the pieces were already in place for and momentum had been started, such as small groups. But not a lot of large scale change; he believes change should be thoughtful and incremental.

“Disruptive change can be negative, so my intent has been largely to walk through this year with the community and let them show me what we do and who we are, and I asked a lot of questions,” says Ritschard.

While professionally much of what Ritschard is doing is familiar, he says on the personal side, the biggest change was letting go of what was familiar. But he adds it’s also part of the adventure. “As a family we love the uniqueness of Oregon and the school community has been very kind, supportive, and affirming.”

While he’s been a principal before, Ritschard says everything felt fresh and new this year. He enjoyed making the rounds of classes, seeing teachers working with students, and working with Mr. Bittner on a chapel planning team.

Ritschard says the best part of his first year here at SC has been getting to know the students, teachers, and staff. “It’s a great community. I’ve just thoroughly enjoyed that part of it, getting to know the people.”



WE'RE UPDATING OUR RECORDS!

Please take a minute and use the attached envelope to update your information.

- » Would you like to continue to receive this newsletter?
- » Add contact information for other SC Alumni (your children)?
- » Make an end of school year gift?

You also can do this online at www.santiamchristian.org/update.cfm

WILLAMETTE VALLEY DRONE CHALLENGE



Seliah Greene practices her drone flying skills

Students in the STEM program at Santiam Christian had the opportunity this year to take part in the Willamette Valley Drone Challenge, a pilot program that aligns civic groups, industry and students with the aim of supporting the next generation of innovators.

“The overall goal is to train students on the tools used by top companies today to do fast paced product development,” according to STEM program coordinator Kim Conolly. “In the past product development could take months or years, now it takes place in a matter of weeks before a company will decide to move forward or scrap a project. For this program, the drone is just a platform.”

Conolly is always looking for new STEM opportunities, and she says this one provided a great challenge. Neither she nor any of the students had experience with drones, so learning to fly was just one step in the process. But flying drones isn’t the point of this pilot program; the students have to decide what they want their drone to be used for and what they want to accomplish with it.

Seven teams total took part in the program this year, with the SC team being the only one not in Yamhill county.

Applied Learning:

During the year, the teams learned about innovation culture and were introduced to the Agile methodologies and other best practices used by high-growth companies to manage the innovation process. The process of the challenge includes each team choosing a customer in their area and deciding how to use the drone to help the customer.

“I learned it takes a team to do something and that everyone contributes to make it work,” says eighth-grader, Keilana Oxenrider. “In the challenges, everyone had lots of great ideas on how to work it out, but you need to choose the one that best fits the situation.”

The SC team decided to focus on search and rescue with the Benton County Search and Rescue team as their customer. The program hopes to teach young innovators to think about their customer and whether or not their project is valuable to the customer. In this case, Benton County Search and Rescue has a drone with a camera, so the team decided to have their project focus on adding thermal infrared sensing to the drone.

The team put their plan to use at the fun fly where they created a route to see how quickly they could find something using the drone and the thermal sensing.

“This is a great way for them to think through the whole process and ask important questions, such as, can we show we can do this reliably, what’s our range for thermal, and how quickly can we find what we are looking for,” says Conolly.

Next year, the team can keep going with this project, or they can pick a different customer and start a new project.

Conolly says one of the great parts about the STEM program is that it is about collaboration and pushing boundaries. “It’s taking the things students learn and applying them in the real world, developing their critical thinking skills, because innovation is happening so fast this is stuff they will be able to use.”



Joshua Montoya and Caroline Conolly work on their drone



A ONE-DAY SEMINAR FROM CPYU

WALT MUELLER + MARV PENNER

Tackling the TOUGH STUFF

CPYU
CENTER FOR PARENT/YOUTH UNDERSTANDING

TACKLING THE TOUGH STUFF

Today's youth face a world much different than the one their parents grew up in and encounter challenges that many parents may not know how to deal with. Fulfilling the mission of Santiam Christian and knowing parents are facing these new challenges has fueled the reason Santiam Christian Schools is hosting the seminar, "Tackling the Tough Stuff" this coming October.

SC Superintendent Lance Villers says he feels it's important to bring this seminar to the community because of the large increase in the number of kids dealing with issues such as anxiety, depression, and self injury, and the need for parents to have tools to help their kids.

"We felt this one is really good because it talks about the issues and then gives you practical ways of helping kids from a Christian perspective, which is great," says Villers. "It doesn't try to teach you how to be a professional counselor, but if you see something going on, here's what you can do."

The seminar is put on by the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding, a non-profit organization whose mission is to work with churches, schools, and community organizations to build stronger relationships between young people and those who are helping them grow into a healthy adulthood.

Villers attended a seminar earlier this year in Longview, Washington, where the speakers, Dr. Marv Penner and Dr. Walt Mueller, discussed the various realities that make life tough: developmental, cultural, contextual, and theological.

Villers says teachers at SC are very interested in the seminar and that they will be encouraged to attend. While the seminar was very sobering, he says at least he feels he has some answers for how to handle these situations now.

"It's important that we provide this to our school community because it's a message everyone needs to hear," says Villers. "Youth pastors are dealing with this stuff as well as parents. It needs to be something we respond to as the body of Christ, not just as a Christian school."

DEDICATION TO CRAFT PAVES WAY



Junior James Johnson plays his solo from the state competition at the Junior High and High School Spring Concert in May

Blowing into a musical instrument and making noise isn't necessarily difficult, but turning that noise into something people actually want to hear and enjoy listening to, now that's another story. It's something that takes hours of practice and years of dedication as Santiam Christian junior James Johnson can tell you.

Johnson's hard work has paid off over the last several years, and this year he took first place for his alto saxophone solo at the district level and placed third at the state level during the OSAA Solo Music

Championships competition this past spring.

Johnson says his goal is always to do his best and do better than he did last year. "I may not get first, but for me it's the journey that matters not the destination."

His journey must be right on course since he has ended up at the

same destination two years in a row; first place at the Oregon Music Educator's Association District Competition. SC competes in District 11 which includes schools of all sizes from Lincoln, Linn and Benton counties.

Johnson auditioned for and was selected to be in the Oregon All-State Symphonic Band and the All-Northwest Wind Symphony, and this summer he will spend two weeks touring Europe with the Oregon Ambassadors of Music.

He also auditioned for and participated in the Western International Band Clinic (WIBC) the last three years.

Johnson's mom, Flora Yao, says her son does have natural ability, but that he also puts in a lot of hard work and has a passion for playing the instrument. She's seen a difference in his playing since winning district last year, which was a total surprise.

"His playing has really changed from technical to more musical," she says. "It seems like it really comes from his heart."

According to SC Band director Annette Miller, to her knowledge this is the first time that an SC student has placed in state and she is excited for the example this sets for the younger band students.

"Seeing this shows them the variety of opportunities that are out there for them to take part in and learn from," says Miller. "Taking part in the different competitions enhances their understanding of music and gives them the opportunity to meet people from other bands."