

NACE Notes

Fall Edition 2017

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Instructional Excellence

The focus of this issue of NACE Notes is **Instructional Excellence** and our pursuit of it through professional development. We are coming out of a season of the calendar year where teachers have had some time away from the classroom to rest and rejuvenate, but also to buckle down and invest in their practice. Most NACE staff members pursued some sort of professional development opportunity through the summer and into the fall that directly impacts their craft of Christian teaching.

The stories that follow are some early evidence of how that investment plays out in the classrooms at John Knox Christian School and Covenant Christian School. Our students... the kids that come to us every day... are the direct beneficiaries of these activities. As an administrator blessed to wander the halls and places of learning in both schools, I see first-hand the difference that teachers invested in their own growth make in the growth of our kids.

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At NACE, teaching isn't just a job. It's an act of worship. We don't worship with half a heart, we do so fixing our thoughts on things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

Philippians 4:8 "And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honourable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise."

BY KEVIN HUININK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Responsive Classroom

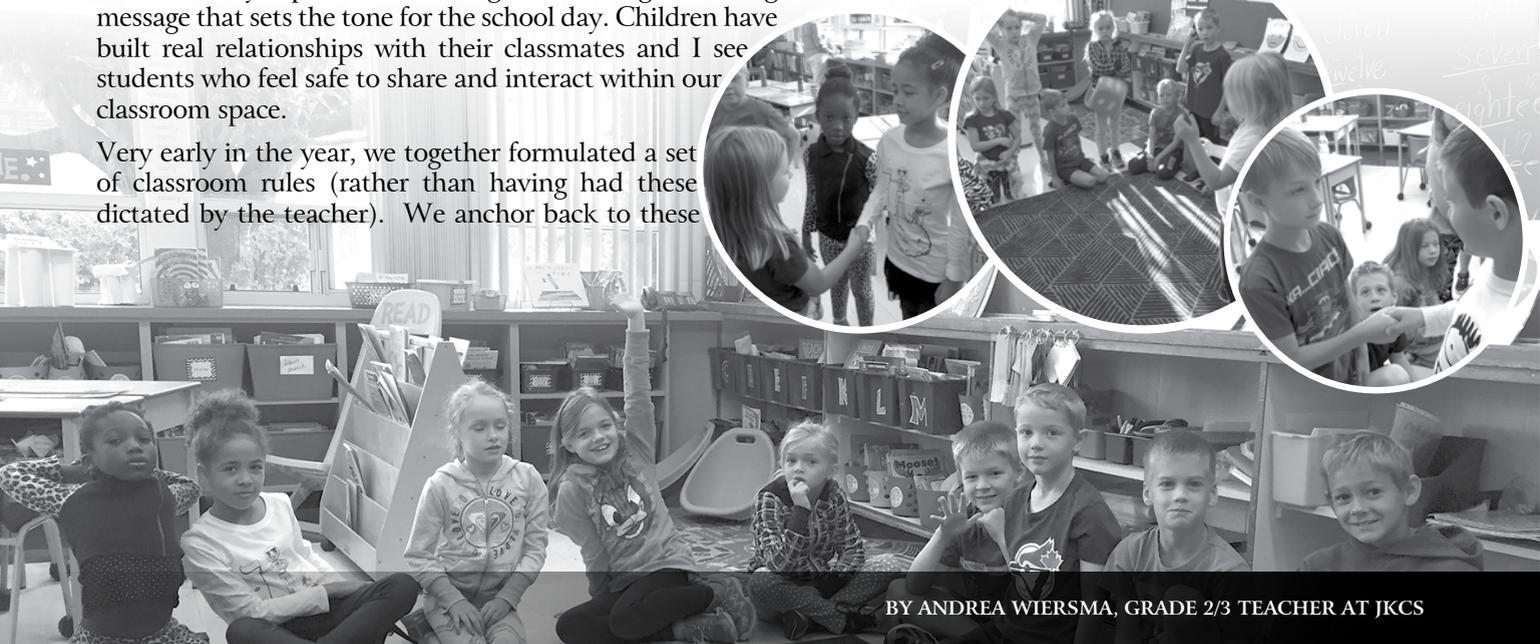
Time spent in Responsive Classroom training this summer has reshaped the culture within my Grade 2/3 classroom. In a Responsive Classroom, each student experiences high-quality education every day in a space that aims to be joyful, safe and challenging.

Each morning we begin our day in Morning Meeting around devotions. Students greet each other in an authentic way, spend time sharing, and reading a morning message that sets the tone for the school day. Children have built real relationships with their classmates and I see students who feel safe to share and interact within our classroom space.

Very early in the year, we together formulated a set of classroom rules (rather than having had these dictated by the teacher). We anchor back to these

rules multiple times each day. Students are confident in holding classmates accountable to the rules we formed collaboratively.

I am excited to see these practices unfold and grow as our school year progresses! I am thankful for the time spent this summer with a wonderful group of dedicated professionals.



BY ANDREA WIERSMA, GRADE 2/3 TEACHER AT JKCS



Extending Our Borders to Finland



From September 22-29, a group of 34 Christian educators from Ontario and beyond were provided with the opportunity to go to Finland to explore their educational system. For the past several years, Finland has been ranked as one of the top countries in terms of PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) test scores. One of the most interesting things is that Finland wasn't making an effort to rise to the top; they just did what they thought was good educational and pedagogical practice,

and discovered that their healthy approach to learning was paying off academically for their students.

So....what do they do differently, and what can we learn? It's hard to summarize a seven-day adventure, visits to a number of Finnish schools, conversations with the author of Finnish Lessons, discussions with teachers and administrators, both Finnish and Canadian, and high-level engagement with learning leaders from across Ontario. Some of us, as trip participants, are currently contributing to a document that is a work in progress that has us naming things under a number of headings, including "I like", "I wonder", and "A take-away".



Mrs. Koornneef (CCS Principal) and I liked the flexible classroom furniture that allowed for an easy redesign of the learning spaces for students. We also liked the pattern of classroom learning: 45 minutes of instruction followed by 15 minutes of some kind of a physical break. We liked how teachers were highly respected and valued and were provided with a high level of autonomy. We liked how student success is measured by more than merely academics: how a child engages with his/her peers, how a child is engaged in his/her community, how much responsibility a child takes for his/her learning are equally as important.

Our 'I wonders' include to what extent the broader Finnish culture impacts classroom learning. We wonder how receptive Canadian parents would be to a shorter school day (i.e. 4-5 hours a day for students from Grade 1-Grade 8). We also wonder about how parents would feel about extra-curricular activities being taken out of the school day and run by adults other than teachers. We wonder if it is possible for our students to become completely fluent in 2-4 languages by the time they graduate from elementary school. We wonder how to move toward having two fully qualified (i.e. master's

degrees) in every classroom, in addition to one or more student teachers).

In terms of a few 'take-aways', we would love to be able to provide more flexibility for our teachers in terms of innovative teaching practices. We want to be more intentional about the 'how' and 'why' of our schools. How do we engage students as creators rather than consumers? The centre of the system is the flourishing of students.

This once in a lifetime opportunity was made possible, in part, through the generosity of donors who have a desire to see our Christian schools thrive and flourish. Their willingness to contribute financially, as well as prayerfully, made a trip like this possible.

Independent Christian schools in Ontario are positioned in such a way that we can be creative in the way we approach student support and student learning. We are educating children to be creators within the culture in which they live, rather than simply consumers. God is blessing us in our efforts; we thank each of you for your support in this endeavour called Christian Education. God is good!

BY BONNIE DESJARDINS, JKCS PRINCIPAL

Welcome to the Hive:

Deeper learning through expedition

This past summer, a group of NACE teachers attended a three-day workshop called “Deeper Learning 2017” which was hosted by our school and led by Stephen and Joanna Levy. During those days, Stephen and Joanna challenged us to design deep learning activities that develop learning and skills in a meaningful context, to design assessment strategies that encourage the students to measure their own progress and to engage students in activities that help them to use their God-given gifts to serve. As the three days progressed, a project idea started to emerge, and this September, our Grade 8 class started a project on bee-keeping.

In Psalm 24:1, it states “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in



it.” Psalm 8: 6-9 continues on with “You made him (people) ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.” God is the Creator, the Ruler, the King of creation. People, as image bearers are invited by God to share in God’s kingly rule by being stewards of God’s creation. They are called to care for the plants and animals, not destroy or waste what God has given. By caring for creation, we glorify and serve both God and others. We glorify God by acknowledging him as the Ruler of this World and we honour other people by giving them a world that they can continue to use.

The aim of this bee project is to help students understand the need for caring about God’s earth. The honey bee is one creature used by man to provide for man. While this is not bad, over the last ten years, a noticeable increase in bee colony collapse has been observed. Helping the honey bee to survive has become a key environmental issue. Hopefully, by studying bees, we can gain a better idea of the intricacies of our world and how all of our endeavours need to be carefully assessed.

Currently, the students are working to learn as much about bees as possible so that in the spring they will be

able to start our own beehive. Already this fall they have been designing a bee garden that they hope to plant before the snow falls. In the winter, they will be working to construct beehives that will be used in the spring to house the bees.

By the end of the project, the students will have created an exhibit that other students or classes can visit. This exhibit is intended for sharing the information that the students have learned about bees and the responsibility of caring for these insects. The highlight of the exhibit will be an observation beehive.

The project started on the second day of school with a field study trip to an observation beehive located near Niagara Falls. The students were thrilled to see the bees at work in the hive. Seeing how the animals worked together to maintain their home was especially interesting. Realizing that the bees built each of those perfect hexagonal cells to form the honeycomb helped the class to understand the intricacies of God’s creation. Also, in their efforts to clean the hive, the students saw some bees carry dead bees from the bottom of the hive to the top where the hive’s opening was located. In another instance, a group of bees protected their home by attacking a wasp that had invaded their space. These small animals were able to accomplish amazing feats in the beehive.

The students have learned more about the hive itself through the fall. One of the first classroom tasks has been to understand what is typically found in a brood frame. The students’ knowledge has been outlined in the form of a display in the classroom. The students will continue to learn. They will understand more about the biotic and abiotic factors that affect a typical hive. They will examine the bee under a microscope and study God’s wonderful creation of animal cells and plant cells. They will see how these cells form the unique body of the bee. Finally, they will learn the intricacies of building structures as they learn how to build a variety of types of beehives. In all of this, the students will come away with a greater appreciation of God’s creation and a better understanding of how they can be stewards of his creation.

BY MARIE RAMSEY, GRADE 8 TEACHER AT CCS



New Families!

*This fall, NACE welcomed 40 new families to our learning community!
21 at JKCS and 19 at CCS:*

Emmanuella Asman (Ayvianna, Grade 5, Janiya, Grade 2, Neriah, JK)
Rod & Sigrid Blake (Delna, Grade 8 and Ruth, Grade 6)
Adam & Holly Bylsma (Emily, Grade 2 and Micah, SK)
Jaime & Lorena Cortez (Adrian, Grade 5)
Jovan & Tijana Djurdjevic (Luka, JK)
Jordan & Amanda Hoiting (Ari, Grade 2 and Eli, SK)
Kenn & Denise Hughes (Luke, Grade 1)
Oluseyi & Toyin Johnson (Dolu, Grade 8)
Paul & May Kang (Junsu [Ben], Grade 7)
Tom & Tina Mantopoulos (Maria, JK)
Isaac & Mine Ogunsiji (Damilola, JK)
Christopher & Augusta-Ighalo (Nathaniel, Grade 8)
James & Rebecca Park (Hannah, JK)
Aaron & Emily Rijgersberg (Kaylee, JK)
Doug & Anna Rolfe (Calvin, Grade 1 and Jenna, JK)
Roman Sverdlov & Diana Sverdlov-Varengaup (Samuel, Grade 2, Emilia, SK)
Jack & Johanna Vanderhorst (Thomas, JK)
Greg & Alaina Vanderleeuw (Owen, SK)
Rob & Kerri Van Luik (Cody, JK)
Greg & Jackie Voorberg (Georgia, Grade 1, Haley, JK, Hannah, JK)
Ernest & Ruthine Baron (Lael, Gr. 1, Abeil, SK)
William & Alisha Brouwer (Jasper, JK)
John & Evelyn Deelstra (Miriam, SK)
Christopher & Dianna Dueck (Noah, JK)
Nicholai & Michelle Dykstra (Weston, SK)
Paul & Jennifer Hamill (Kallie, gr 5, Joseph, gr 3, Jonah, JK)
Calvin & Sarah Hessels (Cole, JK)
JJ and Colleen Keizer (Jake, SK)
Jeremy & Melanie Kiers (Rosa, gr 1 and Ryker, JK)

Brad & Elissa Koornneef (Kayla, JK)
Andrew & Rosalie Lang (Aiden, JK)
Jennifer Marchison (Riley-Ann Daigneault, gr 8)
Lee & Erica Melarangeli (Hope, JK)
Winnie Muchuba (Alex, gr 8, Regina, gr 7)
James & Katie Riewald (Brighton, JK)
Pete & Courtney Riewald (Jacob, JK)
Scott and Sonya Van Driel (Marika, Gr 3)
Liz VanLeeuwen (Meghan, Gr. 7)
Steve & Melinda Vooys (Gavin, JK)

New Staff Members

This fall, NACE welcomed 10 new staff members to our learning community!

Amber Vanderhout - Educational Assistant JKCS
Helena VanEs Hastlet - Educational Assistant at JKCS
Adrianna So - Senior Kindergarten at JKCS
Esther Vandersluis - Educational Assistant at JKCS
Stacey Kok - Educational Assistant at JKCS
Laura DeHaan - Grade $\frac{3}{4}$ teacher for September/October at JKCS
Kathleen VanHoffen - Educational Assistant at CCS
Anne Haas - Educational Assistant at CCS
Lauren Zandstra - Grade 7 teacher at CCS
Cheyenne Tessier - Bus Driver at CCS
Lisa Schilstra - Administrative Assistant at CCS

Peaches, Pies, Putting, and Purpose

One of the more rewarding parts of being a part of the NACE supporting community is the opportunity to sit or stand shoulder to shoulder and to literally get our hands dirty in support of Christian Education. If you need some inspiration (and we all do!!!), you need to come and take part in our peach peeling or apple pie making work days! Not only are there many 'willing workers', the rooms are buzzing with stories - stories of the early days of our schools, teachers present and past, boards and committees and their work over the years, as well as excitement of a continued and sustained vision for the gospel infused into all of learning. We are thankful for so many who have come out to support these worthy events for decades, and those who are just discovering this beautiful and sweet side of our learning community.

The same can be said of our annual golf tournament in collaboration with Smithville Christian High. The sponsors and participants are made up of an eclectic mix of long time supporters as well as new friends and family taking their clubs out on the links for a leisure day in support of Christian Education.

Funds for NACE schools come in a variety of ways, and we count on each of our revenue streams to enable us to continue to vigorously pursue our vision and mission. Tuition dollars, of course, make up a major part of our revenues, but events such as these (our Family Fun Fest is right around the corner - November 11!!) along with our annual Fall Drive account for almost 15% of our total operating budget. That's about \$400,000 in total.

Part of our work in fundraising is to make sure our supporters always, always know what the purpose of their support is. Although it's a peach, an apple pie, a day on the golf course, a cheque written for the annual campaign... it is SO MUCH MORE. Each of these enables a family to send their children to a school where God is central, where character matters, where life's purpose is found. Thank you to all who support our purpose. It makes a real difference, every single day!



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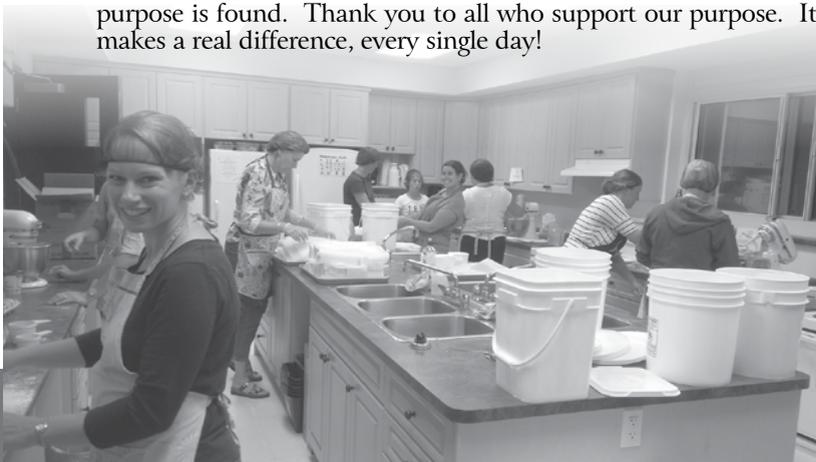
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Do you think an innovative character is a gift from God?



Are you - or do you know - someone who took a talent (think of the parable of the talents) for innovation and turned it into a successful business or a great new approach in some ministry?

We think our Christian schools will be strengthened by innovation. Do you?

Our Christian schools are increasingly committed to providing an excellent educational experience for their students. That means being familiar with the latest developments in brain research. It means being familiar with the latest understandings garnered through psychology. It means mining scripture to uncover an ever-better picture of what it means to be created very good, in the image of God; and also to be plagued by the effects of sin in every area of our physical and emotional beings.

How can the Christian School Foundation Canada play a role in this area of innovation in Christian education? Quite simply, we believe there are

supporters who want to encourage intelligent, innovative and impactful professional development.

Our member schools want to have their staff members - support staff, teachers and administrators - exposed to the very best professional development available. This will equip them to be the best they can be, and to provide the best possible educational experience for their students.

The Christian School Foundation Canada draws donors and Christian schools together to expand their influence in the world for Christ. That is why we exist. Our Innovative Professional Development Fund is going to help schools committed to this kind of growth meet the costs associated with this.

Does that sound like the kind of initiative you would be excited to support? Contact Tony Kamphuis at the Foundation - tkamphuis@christianschoolfoundation.ca or 905 929 1445.





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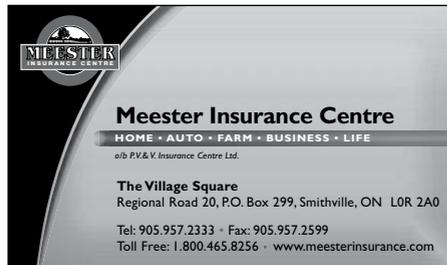
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