

THE CAIRN COMPASS

Inspiring students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world.

Fall 2021

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Better Together

by Kevin Huinink, Executive Director

If there is one thing our entire school community can agree on this year, it is that we are so happy to have our students back and to learn together in person! We are better together, and while we were able to successfully connect via electronic means over the past two years, we have noticed that learning is so much more effective together.

Better Together is the theme of this issue of the Cairn Compass, and as a topic, it infuses so much of what we do as schools: we are better together working cooperatively as two campuses, we are better together learning in person, we are better together in leadership, we are better together as a community, and ultimately, we are better together working as Christ's body! Ephesians 4:15-16 *"Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."*

Read on to find out how we, and YOU are better together!



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Know and Go

by Stacy Kok, SK teacher, Stoney Creek

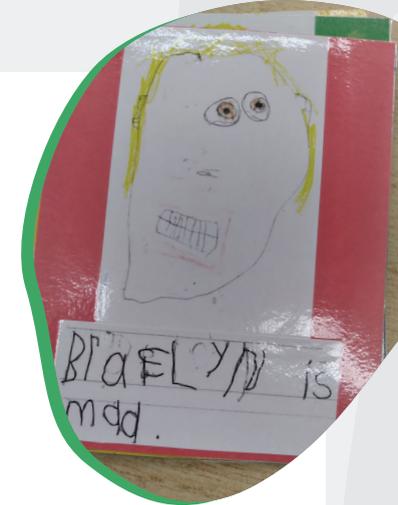
My deep hope is that my Kindergarten students will understand that they are known and loved by God, that they will share this love with others, and that they will recognize they have an important role to play in God's great big world.

At the beginning of this school year, our focus was primarily on the social and emotional health of the Kindergarten students. We discussed and learned about how we are created in God's image and how we have emotions just like God. We pondered together the different emotions that God displays throughout scripture...from anger, sadness, happiness, frustration, sick, lonely, tired, the list goes on. We learned that it is okay to have these emotions.

We then turned the focus to how we can safely handle these emotions. We discussed toolboxes, the reason for having one and many different tools that might be found in an actual toolbox. We began to think about different "tools" we could use to help us through certain emotions. In doing so, we created our own emotions toolbox. My students were beginning to grasp the idea that God really knows them. He knows what makes them angry and what makes them sad. He understands when they are frustrated or happy. He knows when they are sick or excited. The first

part of my deep hope for my Kindergarten class was becoming apparent through this study of our emotions.

In SK this year, we are anchoring our learning around the storyline "Know and Go". I am hoping to teach my students that it isn't enough to know things, but that we are to take the things we Know and share them with others, we are to Go. The logical next step of the study of our emotions was then to take the information and share it with others. I knew this was happening organically as fellow teachers would come to me and share stories of how my kindergarten students would approach someone who was hurt on the playground and teach them how to breathe deep to help calm themselves down. My students were "Going". We also created an emotions flipbook to share with our buddy class and with the JK class. The front of each page was a photograph of an SK student showing an emotion on their face. The backside of the page was a hand-drawn illustration of that same student's face showing the same emotion. We visited the JK class and our buddy class and taught them some of the tools in our emotions toolbox and gifted them with an emotions flipbook. The Kindergarten students had a chance to "KNOW" about emotions and they had an authentic audience to "GO" and share. And this is my deep hope: that they recognize that they have an important role to play in God's great big world, starting in their own school.



Braelyn is mad.



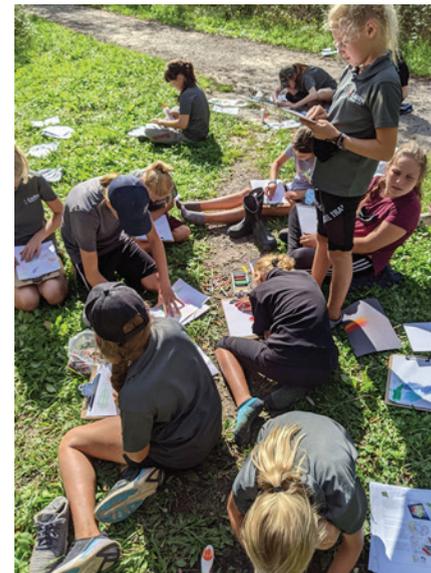
God's Intricate and Beautiful Design

by Petra VanGeest, Grade 6/7 teacher, Smithville

Our school's theme for this school year is guided by the word 'Known'. The Grade 6/7 class took that theme and applied it directly as we asked ourselves: "How can we know God and how can others get to know God through us?" We decided to explore these questions through our class theme of becoming 'Servants in Awe'.

In September, I shared my deep hope for each of my students that reaches beyond their assessments, projects and daily work. **My deep hope for them is that "they will develop a personal and deepening relationship with Christ, learn to know Him more through a wonder of His intricate and beautiful design in creation and use His gifts to actively participate in Christ's redemptive work."** We spent the week discussing and praying about our deep hopes and how it was more than just a to do list for the day. Together we wrote and shared our deep hopes for ourselves and posted them in our classroom to remind us throughout the year.

To explore the theme of Knowing God, or Being in Awe of God through our Biodiversity unit this term, our class explored how God created the whole world and has a special plan of redemption for all of His creation in Bible and Science. We learned that we can get to know and be in awe of God through his marvelous and intricate creation.



Together with the Grade 5/6 class we spent our Thursday afternoons outside exploring trails, ponds, and many different habitats in the Niagara region as we explored the symbiotic relationships in our ecosystems, gathered insects for our insect collections and discovered different native and invasive species in our area.

As we collected, classified and researched all these different insects we witnessed the vast diversity and creativity of our Lord's creation. We celebrated and shared our collections with our Buddies, the Senior Kindergarten class, as well as the rest of the school.

We look forward to digging deeper into different ways we can know and be in awe of the Lord this year. We discovered that when we are in awe of God that we want to tell others about it! Our deep hope is that as we learn more about God, we will shine His light to others as His servants.



From Vision to Reality

by Kevin Huinink, Executive Director and Josie DeGraaf, Board Chair

When a visionary board tasks a strategic planning task force to provide direction and initiatives for a leadership team to execute, wonderful things can happen! This fall, the Board of Directors gathered at its annual visioning meeting to review progress on our strategic plan, and to plan forward steps to stretch us into the next few years.

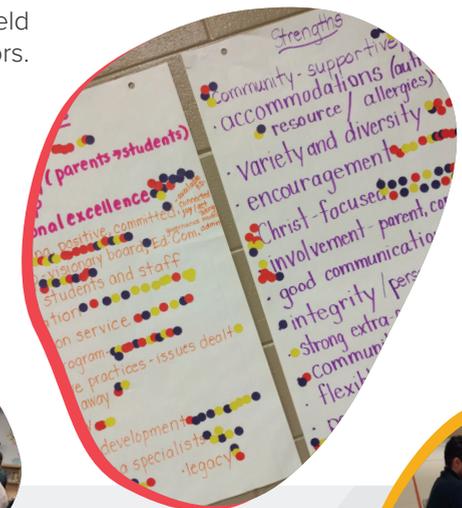
Delving deep into our core values, the Board reviewed its priorities - how we are achieving them, and how we can continue to grow. Flowing from that exercise, a major theme from that meeting was 'Celebration!'. The 2018-2023 Strategic Plan initiatives have all been initiated and/or completed! More than 30 initiatives under the headings of

- Building Clarity
- Growing Further
- Growing Deeper, and
- Equipping Staff, Schools, and Families

are complete and in motion!

Rebranding our schools, developing an admissions framework, prioritizing paying down debt, expanding and enhancing our buildings, refining our recruitment processes, connecting families internally, increasing collaboration and prep time for teachers, and increasing opportunities for professional development are all examples of intentional work that has been accomplished over the past three years!

The successes of the past three years are a result of the work done by and under the direction of a capable leadership team, equipped and held accountable by the governing Board of Directors. A closely aligned and engaged Board and Leadership, working collectively with high support and high accountability has proven that together, much can be accomplished! All thanks and glory be to God!



(\$150,000 Goal)

Lead the Way

Annual Fall Drive for Operations

Your support of our annual Fall Drive is an important source of funds for Cairn Christian School.

We count on annual donations to provide for:

- Bursary support to make Christian Education accessible
- Essential support so that students with specific learning needs will have access to Christian Education
- Annual costs to upgrade and maintain technology
- Crucial professional development to keep our educational staff and schools at the leading edge of teaching

The support of our community last year ensured that this year, our bursary provided \$300,000 to over 50 families, and provided the financial means to send approximately 120 students to our schools.



(\$3,200,000 Goal)

Building the Way Campaign

Yes, this is a big deal, and stretches us beyond our normal 'ask!' Already since the beginning of the campaign, our donors have provided over 85% of our goal! It is a short distance to 90% when we can begin construction and 100% to reach our goal!

Current and projected enrolment show the urgent need to address our space issues. Our Smithville campus project includes:

- Addition of 2 Kindergarten classrooms and 2 Primary classrooms
- Renovations to entryway, student services, and administrative spaces to enhance security and accessibility

Stoney Creek enhancements support increased enrolment and community use of the facility, and address repairs to provide for the safety of our students and staff:

- Create an outdoor learning space and replace aging play structures
- Replace the remaining portion of the original roof in need of repair
- Enhance rear entryway
- Repair fire services road

Our final goal is to relieve the burden of long-term debt to allow our schools to invest further into our students and their learning.



Your choice to financially support our ongoing work through our annual appeal for operations, as well as the exciting opportunities in the Building the Way Campaign, will help Cairn Christian School support families, enhancing our mission to inspire students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world. We know that if Christ is central, our work will be blessed.

Greetings from the BOD



On behalf of the Cairn Christian School Board of Directors, I have the privilege of connecting briefly with you, those who love and support Cairn Christian School.

As a parent who has had 4 children attend and graduate from Cairn Christian School and also having had the opportunity to serve on the board these past 4 years, it feels appropriate to look back and reflect with thanksgiving. God is at work renewing and redeeming His people! I can see and appreciate how children have been inspired to love, learn, and lead together in God's world. Our gifted teachers have been empowered to make this a reality. Their love for God and His children has consistently been

evident even (especially) in difficult times. I have been encouraged by witnessing the prayers of the community and how they continue to be answered. I am thankful for the financial support that continues to flow in a time of disruption and difficulty. And finally, I have seen our great God at work not only through the above examples, but also through His meeting our deepest hopes and needs for grace-filled relationships, perseverance, and trust as He builds His kingdom in Cairn Christian School and in our hearts.

May we all enjoy a blessed Christmas as we look forward to the day in which all things will be made new!

Dave Vellenga

Your 2021-22 Board of Directors: Brian Wierenga, Julie Redekop, James Riewald, Ed Mafa, Duane VanGeest, Melissa Vanderwier, Kei Dube, Josie DeGraaf, Dave Vellenga, and Tanya Heida (not pictured)

The Cairn Compass is a quarterly newsletter distributed to the Cairn Christian School supporting community.

Our Mission

Inspiring students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world.

Our Vision

To be the leaders in education by inspiring a diverse and unified student body to love, learn, and lead with God's grace, bringing Christ's love to the world.



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