

THE CAIRN COMPASS

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



Summer
2026

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Focused on Christ

By Kevin Huinink, Executive Director

You've followed along with our theme this year, 'Woven Together,' based on Colossians 2:2: *"I want you woven into a tapestry of love, in touch with everything there is to know of God. Then you will have minds confident and at rest, focused on Christ, God's great mystery. All the richest treasures of wisdom and knowledge are embedded in that mystery..."*

In this final issue of the year, we land on the phrase "Focused on Christ". The writer's deep hope for the church is that they are woven together in love, confident, at rest, and all for what end? So that they would be focused on the Saviour. The letter continues:

"My counsel for you is simple and straightforward: Just go ahead with what you've been given. You received Christ Jesus, the Master; now live him. You're deeply rooted in him. You're well constructed upon him. You know your way around the faith. Now do what you've been taught. School's out; quit studying the subject and start living it! And let your living spill over into thanksgiving."

The gift of our learning expresses itself outwardly in our lives - spilling over in thanksgiving. We have so much to be thankful for as we celebrate what has happened at Cairn Christian School this year. We hope you enjoy this issue of the Compass as a celebration of God's faithfulness; how we've been inspired to love, learn, and lead together in God's world, focused on Christ, woven together in love!



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Cairn Christian School

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McNally House Hospice

Community

McNally Hike for Hospice

On May 1st, students and staff in Stoney Creek partnered with Grimsby's McNally House in their annual Hike for Hospice. McNally House Hospice is a residential setting in Grimsby that provides compassionate, specialized palliative care free of charge to individuals and their families. This year was our eighth walk and we surpassed our goal of \$27,000 and raised a record-breaking \$32,846.40. Also this year, our grade eight students were able to participate in and kick off the Smile Cookies campaign at Tim Hortons, decorating and serving up cookies and smiles, with proceeds going to support McNally House.



"The McNally Hike for Hospice and Peach Bud Run are instrumental in building two things:

1. Student awareness of and engagement in a community cause outside of our own needs as a school. Investing time and energy in a cause outside of the school teaches our students about the beautiful, needed, and important work in our community. It invites them to see the needs of others and to 'be the hands and feet of Christ' in our community.

Partnerships



Peach Bud Run

On May 12th, students and staff in Smithville partnered with the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital Foundation (WLMHF) in their annual Peach Bud Run. The WLMHF works to help raise funds for the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital located in Grimsby, and is currently working to raise funds for new equipment for the new hospital. We have been participating in the Peach Bud annually since 2013. This year, we surpassed our goal of \$20,000 and raised \$22,348!



2. Community partnerships ensure that we are not just functioning in a community, but are a part of it. Cairn Christian School has raised more than a quarter of a million dollars for the needs of others over the past decades. That's elementary school kids leading the Way!" - Kevin Huinink, Executive Director



Celebrations of Learning

A Celebration of Learning is a special school event where students share their learning with a wider audience, reflecting on what they have learned and where their learning may go next. They are guided by a Deep Hope and are learning focused, student owned, and community centred.

At Cairn, our Celebration of Learning events invite students to share their cross-curricular FLEx projects, highlighting the real work they have been empowered to do as they meet the real needs of real people. These projects also show our community how we teach and learn through fostering curiosity, collaboration, perseverance, integrity, compassion, and joy.

Cairn students take an active role in designing and presenting their learning, developing leadership skills along the way. As they prepare, students revisit their learning and consider the best ways to share it with their visitors. This process deepens understanding and builds confidence.

A Celebration of Learning is more than an afternoon of presentations. It is a shared community experience of celebration and connection that empowers Cairn students to see and articulate their learning as a purposeful part of God's big story.



"The Celebration of Learning brought together the school and the surrounding community to celebrate the many ways our students were 'woven together in love' by engaging in meaningful work. This special event provided students with an opportunity to share and reflect on their learning journey, guided by their Deep Hope and centred around the question, 'How are the students learning and playing their part within God's story?'" - Joyce Koornneef, Smithville Campus Principal

"Throughout our Celebration of Learning, our students demonstrated remarkable leadership in their learning. They showed themselves to be Creation Enjoyers as marsh, plant, and provincial experts; Servant Workers through the creation of pollinator gardens, completing a hats and mittens drive, and creating a children's book; God Worshippers in their Hall of Faith and Animal Carnival performance; Community Builders through their mascot creation and Indigenous study; and Earth Keepers in their soil studies, water conservation work, and as turtle heroes." - Carolyn Bentum, Stoney Creek Campus Principal

Congratulations,

Graduates!

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” - Colossians 3:12-14

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” - Ephesians 2:10

SMITHVILLE

STONEY CREEK





Thank You, Kevin

Kevin Huinink joined the Cairn Christian School community first as principal of Covenant Christian in 2014, and then as Executive Director of Niagara Association for Christian Education (NACE) in 2016. We want to give thanks to Kevin for his many years of service to our school, as his role as Executive Director concludes on July 31st, and he transitions to full-time employment with Chisel Consulting.

Kevin's important work has included (but is not limited to) facilitating two strategic plans, walking our community through a significant name change, figuring out how to pivot during COVID, introducing Restorative Practices to our staff, bringing Teaching for Transformation to the forefront in our schools, leading a significant capital campaign to eliminate our long term debt and enhancing the facilities at both campuses, encouraging ongoing professional development, creating the resources necessary for the implementation of both instructional coaches and curriculum coordinators at both campuses, discovering the joys of being the landlord of a church, and being part of the search team that brought the blessing of Carolyn Bentum to the senior leadership team as the principal in Stoney Creek.

Last February, an article by Kevin was published by CACE (the Center for the Advancement of Christian Education) titled "Working in (Good) Community Tension: Lessons from a Bridge, a Tent, and the Trials of Leadership". In it, he shares how healthy tension, though present even in Christian community, can be navigated with curiosity, humility, and mutual love. Kevin's steadfast 'one faithful step at a time' has been invaluable during his leadership journey at Cairn. He has walked with humility through occasional times of tension, always keeping the school's mission and vision statements in mind. He has been part of creating a diverse group of learners and educators, welcoming families to our school from varied backgrounds, but who share a desire for a Christ-centred education.

Kevin, our prayer is that you will remember your time at Cairn as a part of God's plan for you. As you took one faithful step at a time, as you began each day with a time of prayer and reflection, as you met with the leadership team and interacted with students, staff, and parents, your work within our community was important. We are grateful for your service, and wish you God's abundant blessings as you continue to serve him.

Introducing Jon Berends

It is with gratitude and thanks to God that, following a thorough search process, we are excited to announce that He has provided Jon Berends as our next Executive Director (ED) for Cairn Christian School.

Jon brings to Cairn nearly 20 years of experience in Christian education. He currently serves as Executive Director of Act Five in Hamilton, ON, a creative educational organization he helped build from the ground up, where he has led everything from curriculum development and strategic planning to board engagement, fundraising, and staff team development. Jon holds a Master's degree in Theological Studies from Regent College and brings a rich background in teaching and leadership from his years at Woodland Christian High School in Kitchener, ON.

The ED Search Committee saw in Jon a visionary leader with a deep commitment to Christian education, strong spiritual leadership, and a heart that resonates deeply with the mission and values of Cairn. In Jon's own words: "I'm looking forward to joining this work, feel deep peace in God's leading here, and look forward to steadily walking in relationship with Cairn over this next year as we move toward my full-time energy coming to this work."

Jon will officially join Cairn as ED towards the end of the 2026-2027 school year, allowing time to transition his current responsibilities at Act Five. Please join us in welcoming Jon to Cairn Christian School. We give thanks and glory to God for His faithfulness in leading us through this season and for the exciting chapter that lies ahead.



Why should you swing for students?

You may not be a golfer, but the annual Swing for Students golf tournament, which supports students at Smithville Christian High School and Cairn Christian School, deserves your support.

Why?

For more than 30 years, people who love golf and who love Christian education have been planning and hosting a September tournament, that allows people to have a festive day on the links while benefiting Christian schools. The partnership between sponsors and golfers, and between the two schools, has blessed many students over the years. It's a tangible expression of community, and a chance to tell the story of the blessing of Christian education.

For many years, the tournament was organized by volunteers who were mostly both parents and golfers, and lately, the tournament has been organized by school staff. But we still need help!

This year, we have set out a goal to fill the course - normally we have ~100 golfers, and we'd LOVE to have 144 Christian School supporters come together that day.



How can you help?

If you're a golfer, you could join the tournament. But there are other ways to participate, even if you are busy that day, or you don't golf at all.

- Be a golfer
- Be a sponsor – sponsorship levels to suit every budget
- Donate a prize
- Do all three



Scan or click here to register as a golfer, or register your foursome, or to sponsor the tournament!

bit.ly/SwingforStudents2026



To donate a prize, contact
Lisa Doyle at
lisa.doyle@smithvillechristian.ca



Thank You!

Thank you for your generous support of our recent *Woven Together* Board Dinner and plant sale! Throughout the evening, we shared a glimpse of what it looks like to live out our Vision for Learning. At the heart of that vision are the character traits we seek to nurture: Curiosity, Perseverance, Integrity, Compassion, Collaboration, and Joy.

Through the voices of our storytellers—parents, grandparents, staff, and students—we saw these traits come to life in real and personal ways. Each story offered a unique thread, and together they formed a picture of a community rooted in belonging, purpose, and faith.

As was shared that evening, this kind of community does not happen by accident. It is nurtured, supported, and sustained by people who believe in what is happening here. Your support is a tangible expression of that belief! Because of your support, we were able to raise \$35,000! Because of your generosity, we are able to continue strengthening and growing a place where students are known, loved, and equipped to live out their faith in God's world.

Thank you again to the entire Cairn community for being part of this story and for helping shape our schools!

On behalf of the Board,
Jamie Hamilton

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.

Advice from someone you trust.

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