

One CAMPUS One CONCORDIA

ALL-SCHOOL WORD ON AUG 16TH BROUGHT THE JOY OF SEEING 670 K-12 CONCORDIA STUDENTS TOGETHER IN WORSHIP ON ONE CAMPUS. Students joined their voices in song, praise, and personal prayer - and in doing so embodied the One Concordia ideology.

The idea of One Concordia allows for Students to share spaces in gracious ways every day. Since August, those things take place in new ways as Senior High Teacher's Aides lovingly welcome Academy students each morning upon arrival at school and throughout the day in classrooms. "It has been a blessing to connect students in intentional ways as we have gathered together on one campus. We are looking forward to our first chapel hosted by the high school Praise Band on October 4th," shared Academy Principal Nathan Domsch.

Concordia is a unique place for Christ's love to shine through each student, teacher, and staff member as they interact with one another. This new integration gives our older students opportunities to display Kingdom Leadership in even more extensive ways.



THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

HAVE MADE A HUGE IMPACT ON CONCORDIA LUTHERAN SCHOOLS OF OMAHA AND WE ARE SO BLESSED!

Eligible Thrivent members can direct Thrivent Choice dollars to the nonprofit of their choice.

Concordia Jr.-Sr. High and Concordia Academy are both part of the network of nonprofits that receive Thrivent Choice Dollars.

BECAUSE OF YOUR
INCREDIBLE GENEROSITY, AS
OF SEPT. 1, 2023, DONATIONS
HAVE ALREADY SURPASSED
THE ANNUAL TOTAL FROM
2022, REACHING OVER

\$5,000 AND CONTINUING TO RISE!

Please log in to your account today and direct Thrivent Choice dollars to Concordia Academy or Concordia Jr.-Sr. High.



ROM OUR VERY INCEPTION, FAMILIES EMBRACED CONCORDIA'S VISION, SEEING BEYOND MERE BRICKS TO FUTURES BEING BUILT. ANCHORED IN THE STRENGTH OF ISAIAH 28:16, OUR MISSION REMAINS UNWAVERING.

The Thrive campaign, championed by 78 families thus far, is more than a testament to our growth. Its recent milestones include refurbished Academy classrooms, an optimized senior high space, and the westward expansion of our Worship Arts & Activities Center.

But we're not simply expanding the Fort campus. We're breathing life into the dreams of our predecessors, opening doors for 70+ more students, and looking beyond infrastructure to the aspirations of our community. Uniting all K-12 students and staff under one roof signifies deepened bonds and shared purpose.

With the commitment of a vast team of contractors and architects, and the addition of Nick Tofteland as our Director of Advancement, Concordia's future is bright and on track.

However, Concordia is defined not by walls but by daily-lived values and visions. The Thrive campaign is our call to action, capturing our faith, molding leaders, and ensuring Concordia's legacy thrives for generations.

We invite you, our fellow legacy-builders, to stand with us. Together, we will ensure that each and every Mustang steps out of this place as Faith Secure, World Ready, Kingdom Leaders.

ENGAGE WITH THRIVE:

- Meet with Nick Tofteland
- Begin a mission-focused partnership and explore how your priorities resonate with the Lord's guidance for Concordia.

VISIT OUR CAMPUS

 See firsthand the changes we're making and feel the spirit of the Mustangs. Schedule a tour and walk the grounds with our team.

SPREAD THE WORD

 If you're as excited as we are about Concordia's future, share the vision with friends and family. The more voices in our chorus, the more beautiful the song.

To initiate a conversation or for more details, please contact Nick Tofteland at **nick.tofteland@concordiaomaha.org**.









WAYS TO SUPPORT CONCORDIA

As God continues to bless this ministry, we give thanks for YOU! Thank you for supporting the growth and development of Faith Secure, World Ready, Kingdom Leaders through your time, talents and treasures. Have you considered these ways to support Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha?

IRA Charitable Rollovers or IRA RMDs can provide an opportunity for stewards over the age of 70.5 to make gifts to Concordia directly from their IRAs with no income taxes due on the rolled over or donated funds.

Employee Match Ask your employer if this option exists for you!

Gifts of Stocks Concordia can receive gifts of appreciated stocks

Estate Planning Have you considered leaving a legacy gift for Concordia as a part of your estate planning?

Endowment Fund Gift Helps us plan for the future!

Thrivent Choice Concordia partners with Thrivent Financial and is eligible to receive Thrivent Choice Dollars.



LEADERSHIP

Rob Cooksey, Head of Schools

Amy Schwarting, Jr. - Sr. High Principal

Nathan Domsch, Academy Principal

FAITH SECURE WORLD READY KINGDOM LEADERS

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct 20: Booster Club Trivia Night 6 PM - 9 PM

Nov 1: Blood Drive 7 AM - 2 PM

Nov 11: Concordia Gifts & Goodies Bazaar 9 AM - 3 PM

Nov 12: One Act Home Show 7:00 PM

Dec 3: Academy Concert 7:00 PM

Dec 14: JH Christmas Concert 7:00 PM

Dec 15: SH Christmas Concert 7:00 PM
Dec 22 - Jan 2: Christmas Break

Mar 1: Annual Gala - watch for your Save the Date

with our new theme!

Mar 8 & 9: Matilda, the Musical 7 PM Mar 10: Matilda, the Musical 2 PM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board of Directors

Ryan Hahn (GraceHill Lutheran Church)
Rob Lindau (Zion Lutheran Church)
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(Lord of Life-Elkhorn)

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Dan Swan (Pacific Hills Lutheran Church)

Dusty White (Coram Deo)

Alumni IN ACTION

M S A 2006 GRADUATE OF CONCORDIA HIGH SCHOOL, DANIELLE CORNELL IS PROUD TO BE BACK ON CAMPUS

providing a new service to our students as the full-time K-12 School Nurse. Danielle shares, "Building relationships is one of the most important parts of nursing, and I want to do my best for the students and their families." Danielle's ability to work with students understand their medical needs, be available daily to all students at every grade level, and offer professional care has blessed the entire Concordia community.

As one of the newest Concordia team members, Danielle finds it easy to return to her alma mater in this role. "I was looking for a change and had heard great things about school nursing. I had such a positive experience at Concordia as a student, so the idea of returning was very appealing." Danielle started in July after spending the last 12 years at Nebraska Medicine in the Cardiac ICU (2011-'13) and the Adult and Pediatric Oncology Department (2013-'23). The transition to Concordia came with additional benefits; Danielle is able to bring her own children to the Academy each day before making her way to her office in the Jr. – Sr. High section of the building.

The blessings of adding the School Nurse position to the Concordia staff this year have been abundant. As the community came together onto one campus, the need for an individual focused solely on the care of our students was evident. Danielle's care, compassion, and strong faith are all examples of how Concordia is growing in ways that help our students become Faith Secure, World Ready, Kingdom Leaders.



THEMES/COSTUMES are encouraged! CONCORDIA BOOSTER CLUB PRESENTS TRIVIA SIGHT 6 PM | Doors open 7 PM | Game starts BYO Food and Beverages Must be 211 Cuestions? Please Email boosterclub@concordiaomaha.org



the Gift OF HOSPITALITY



God calls me to do this work.

Ann Mosher, Hands and Feet parent group coordinator

E"EACH OF YOU SHOULD USE WHATEVER GIFT YOU HAVE RECEIVED TO SERVE OTHERS." 1 PETER 4:10

Ann Mosher has a long history of using her gifts to bless others. When Ann was in high school, she created posters for her classmates' birthdays to make them feel special.

After a significant life event, Ann was inspired to make a difference in people's lives through acts of hospitality. In 2012, her family relocated to lowa with three young children, and during that time, Ann faced a serious health issue that required major surgery. During her three month recovery, her new church family came to her aid by cooking meals, homeschooling her children, and cleaning her house. Through this experience, Ann recognized the incredible value of showing care and hospitality towards others.

Ten years ago, Ann and her family moved to Omaha where her daughters, Sophie, Annabella, and Adelaide, attended LifeGate school. Ann had a desire to show appreciation for the teachers and staff there and began hosting events for them. When Sophie enrolled at Concordia in 2015, Ann stepped up to lead the "Hands and Feet" parent group. Under her leadership, the group organizes holiday meals, international lunches, and teacher appreciation gifts. Ann is grateful for the support she receives from others who share her passion for this work. She says, "God calls me to do this work, and I am so thankful for those willing to support my ideas with their gifts of time and treasure."

Ann consistently dreams up new ideas to support the Concordia family. She feels it's important to help teachers with tasks they may not have time for. By trying to put herself in other people's shoes, she wants to figure out what would be helpful to them. Her efforts have inspired her three daughters to also seek ways to help others. They have often helped Ann set up and clean up after special meals at the school. Ann hopes to find someone else to continue the Hands and Feet program, as her youngest daughter is now a Junior. For now, she enjoys using her God-given gifts to bless others.



FROM DOMSCH'S

I just returned from a trip to take our Kindergarten class to The Heritage at Sterling Ridge, a nearby nursing facility. Our kindergarten classes have visited nursing homes for several years. It is a blessing for our students to share their learning and sing songs and a blessing to the residents to whom they bring joy through the interaction.

Each Concordia Academy class adopts a service focus for the school year. As the kindergarten class shares Jesus' love with the "grandmas and grandpas," our first-grade class works to help pregnant and parenting women in crisis through Bethlehem House. Our second graders will serve traumatized children with Project Linus, while Academy third-grade students will live out their faith in service to the members of the Omaha Fire Department. Fourth-grade students will serve the families of children fighting disease through Ronald McDonald House, and fifth graders will help elderly members of our community. Our Ignite K-1 students will let Jesus' love shine through to various community helpers. The Ignite 2-5 class will serve homeless and impoverished Omaha residents through their work with the Open Door Mission. This focus on service continues through the Jr. and Sr. High grades when our students head out into our community on Faith in Action Day.

Service is an integral part of our curriculum at Concordia because our faith in God motivates us to act on behalf of our neighbors. It is a blessing to see God at work in the lives of students who love to serve others and how our students are edified in their faith as they serve!

₽ BLESSINGS Nate



National Merit Semi-finalists David Rice & Avery Dieckman were in the top 16,000 students out of 1.3 million! They will continue in the prestigious competition for Finalist status.





Senior pitcher, Mackenzie Groninga, now holds the Concordia record for most strikeouts with over 400. She broke the record on 9/19/23 and continues to make history with every batter she faces.



Meet our new staff! L to R Front Row: Danielle Cornell - School Nurse, Hannah Nunnenkamp-Engelman - Vocal Music/Worship Arts, Tina Festner - Sewing/Academic Success Center, Kate Mueller - Academic Success Center, Rachael Means - Orchestra. L to R Back Row: Grant Stecher - Maintenance, Adolph Shepardson - PE/Football Coach, Nick Tofteland - Advancement Director, Scott Slump - Maintenance, Natasha Jensen - English.

BE BOLD!

As Concordia's Jr. - Sr. high principal, I am delighted to share the excitement and incredible journey we have begun this school year. It has been remarkable to witness the unification of our K – 12 community on the same campus. This significant change brings a wave of enthusiasm and newfound unity and energy.

One of the most compelling aspects of this unification is the opportunity to foster a stronger sense of community within our school. Having all grade levels under one roof has already begun to break down the invisible barriers that sometimes exist between our younger and older students. Each day, senior high students welcome Academy students to campus with smiles, high-fives, and hugs. The looks of joy on the faces of our younger students and the smiles of our older students are priceless. This type of experience encourages mentorship, collaboration, and a sense of responsibility among our older students, who have embraced their roles as role models for their younger peers.

At the same time, our Academy students benefit from the proximity to the Jr/Sr High, through early exposure to the values and traditions that define our school. This close interaction fosters a sense of belonging from an early age and helps them envision their educational journey through high school. It is heartwarming to see the smiles, waves, and cheers from all ages as our younger students walk through the commons on their way to recess during our Junior and Senior High lunch times.

With our students sharing the same campus, we have been able to start creating exciting opportunities for academic collaboration and enrichment. For instance, older students now have the chance to serve as reading buddies, math mentors, and prayer partners for our younger students. Additionally, our combined campus will allow for more flexibility in curriculum development through cross-grade events such as homecoming week, guest speakers, and worship.

As a Lutheran school, we are deeply committed to instilling strong values and principles in our students. Integrating grades K-5 and 6-12 on the same campus allows us to create a more cohesive, values-driven environment. Where older students serve as living examples of the values we hold dear, providing guidance and mentorship to their younger peers. This interaction reinforces the importance of compassion, empathy, and faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ, in their daily lives. Furthermore, it allows us to strengthen our collective commitment to the principles that guide our school's mission to build Faith Secure, World Ready, Kingdom Leaders.

I am humbled to be a part of this journey and bear witness its positive impact on our students and community. With this exciting start, we look forward to the incredible possibilities that lie ahead, as we continue to nurture and empower the next generation of learners at Concordia. Together, we are not only building a school; we are building a family united in faith and education.

AGONGORDIA EIRST

Three kinds of bees make up the hive QUEEN. WORKER. DRONE

With Mr. Mike Ellis

Mr. Mike Ellis' Ecology and Environmental Science class has a special opportunity never before offered at Concordia. Two bee hives thrive in the grassland north of the football field thanks to a grant through Dort University and Professor Emeritus Dwayne Bajema. These hives and their colonies allow students to don bee suits and engage in handson beekeeping experiences each wee. Students identify the larvae, pupa, types of bees, and the growing honeycombs inside the hives. Students learn about bee ecology, pollinators, bee habitats, spring pollinator planting, bee care, and additional elements of beekeeping that accompany the weekly hive trips.

As the class headed to the hives early on a Thursday morning, students selected to handle the bees put on bee jackets, long gloves, hoods, and long pants to cover their legs. They lit the smoker in the dirt lot to avoid dry grass and used it to disguise the pheromones that cause bees to sting, which would create a frenzy within the colony. By smoking his bare hands, Mr. Ellis could handle the frames with his bare hands and avoid any stings.

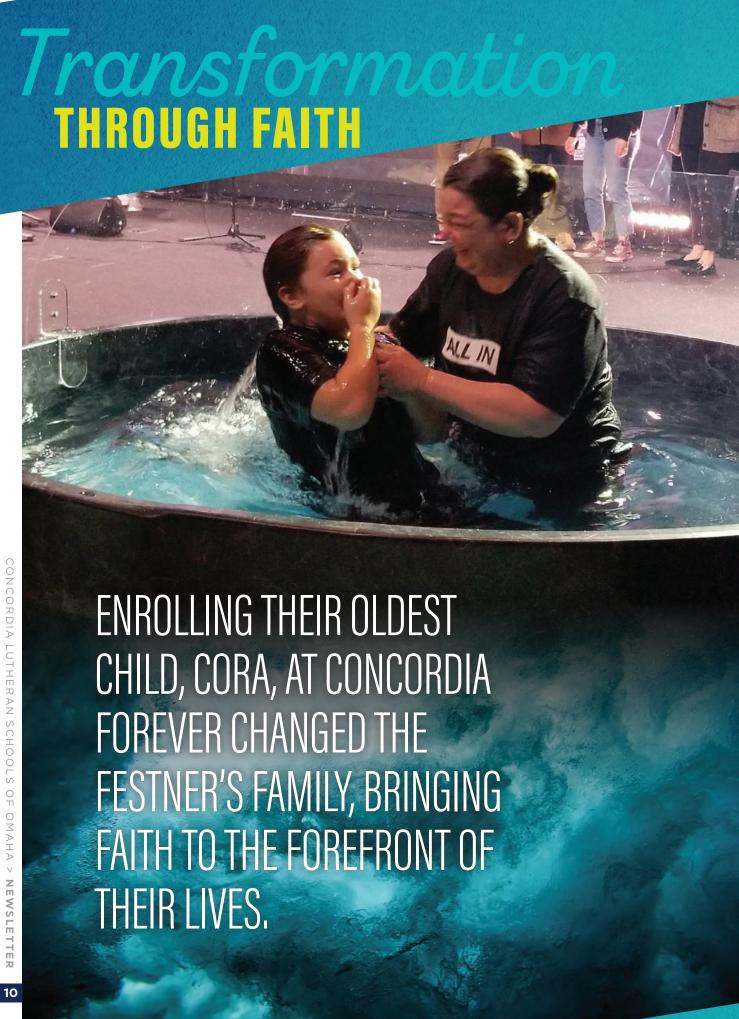
As the students pulled the frames out of the hive, they could view the honeycombs inside. Mr. Ellis said he hopes to have enough honey by spring to have several small jars at the Concordia Gala auction. Having lost the queens in both hives this year, the honey production is not what he had hoped by this time, but he plans to grow the colonies by starting a new hive at a separate

location that can be brought to campus later.

Mr. Ellis started this program at Concordia via a grant he received and training he participated in this summer through Dort University in Sioux Center, IA. The USDA-funded grant allowed him to attend training one weekend each month to learn and develop curriculum for schools while acquiring equipment to implement the program at Concordia. He sees a lot of potential for the bees and the students taking his classes, "I would like to see a collaboration with our business and marketing classes in the future as well. To see honey produced, marketed, and sold through our students in these classes would be great".

This unique educational opportunity is funded by a USDA grant through Dort University in Sioux Center, IA





Enrolling their oldest child, Cora, at Concordia forever changed the Festner's family, bringing faith to the forefront of their lives. Cora was seeking a new school, and during their research on public schools, they learned about Concordia from one of Cora's former classmates. Upon visiting Concordia, Tina was impressed by the diverse range of elective courses offered to students, particularly the Medical Detective class for junior high. As a result, Cora enrolled at Concordia as a seventh grader in 2021.

Even though the Festner family did not attend church, they instilled values of kindness and consideration in their three children. Tina was initially intimidated when attending parent conferences, but she and her family came to realize that everyone at Concordia is part of the same family. They enrolled their son Grady in the middle of his third grade year, and their daughter Elise (also known as Lulu) joined as a sixth grader in the fall of 2022.

As Grady learned about Jesus he started having "faith talks" with his mom, and Cora encouraged the family to attend church. Since that time the family has attended Good News church and love its diversity. Eventually, Grady and Tina made the choice to be baptized. Tina was baptized first, then was blessed to perform the baptism of Grady. Tina shares, "I learned that just being kind is not enough." Since coming to faith in the Lord, she feels complete and much happier with her life. Tina says, "I feel happier, stronger, and more confident." She has also seen the benefits for her children as they learn about the love of Jesus at school. During their first year at Concordia they learned that Concordia students experience discipline in a different way.

"I loved that rather than just receiving a punishment, our student met with Mr. Jipp, the religion teacher, several times and learned the impact of her actions. She learned how to forgive herself and that she gets a fresh start every day at school, and with the Lord," says Tina.

The Festners have always appreciated the sense of family at Concordia. They have enjoyed watching the entire school travel to Lincoln to cheer on sports teams at the state level, students helping one another, and respecting school boundaries. This fall Tina became part of the family in a new way when she joined the teaching staff of Concordia Jr.-Sr. High. She teaches Jr. High sewing, assists in the Academic Success Center, and helps manage students in the afterschool Concordia Club.

She learned how to forgive herself and that she gets a fresh start every day at school, and with the Lord.

Tina Festner





FIRST-HAND CULTURAL EDUCATION

Puerto Rico. The trip was an opportunity for them to practice their Spanish and learn about a new culture; in the end, it gave them much more.

Mr. Gonzalez, the Spanish teacher at Concordia Sr. High, planned and organized the trip through EF Tours. He was accompanied by two parents, Bill and Tammy Anderson, who served as chaperones. The trip's primary focus was education and cultural experience for the students. The itinerary was packed full of travel with early morning bus rides and new adventures. The team visited historic landmarks like the Old San Juan fort, hiking in the rain forest to waterfalls, exploring caves, snorkeling, swimming in the Bioluminescent Bay, cooking, and dance lessons. Tammy shares, "Spending time in a different culture, where Spanish is the local language, allowed the student to see life from a different vantage point. Through this experience they practiced problem-solving, gained confidence, and built stronger bonds with their classmates."

For some of the students, the trip has changed how they see their own lives. Abby Matthew shared, "This trip showed me that not everyone has the same opportunities that I have. It made me feel very blessed, but it also made me want to help people. I want to do more trips now and be a blessing to those people who don't have what I have." Abby's sister, Haley had similar thoughts, "I learned that not everyone goes to a great school like I do where it is safe. It was challenging to witness how poor the economy of Puerto Rico is; many of the homes are built out of cement due to the threat of hurricanes." The team made an impact by bringing over 300 batteries and donating them to a local church for when hurricanes hit the small island.

The trip also brought the students a lot of joy. Will Olson's best memory from the trip was when the group took dance lessons on the beach and passersby joined them. Will said, "Mr. Gonzalez taught us that in the Puerto Rican culture people love music and are very friendly."

Mr. Gonzalez is planning to take another group of students in 2025 and will start forming that team soon. For students considering the trip, Will Olson offers advice, "In the end, people regret what they didn't do in life, not what they did. There is a huge benefit from getting out of your comfort zone."

IMMERSIVE LEARNING



IN PUERTO RICO

TRAVEL IS
FATAL TO
PREJUDICE,
BIGOTRY AND
NARROWMINDEDNESS.

MARK TWAIN





ALL OF THE THINGS WE HAVE AND TAKE FOR GRANTED, showering, eating, going to bed, chiropractors - they have about 25% of - and are so thankful for. And all of their appreciation made me so much more grateful for my life." These were observations made by Oscar Maxon during a 10-day mission trip to St. Mary's, Alaska in June with fellow Concordia Students Charlie Marco, Isaac Goetz, and Eli Childs, along with teachers and trip sponsors Mr. & Mrs. John & Alice DeBoer. This group shared their experiences over homemade pizza and Mrs. DeBoer's zucchini cake. Listening to this group was much like their time in Alaska may have been: a lot of joy, gratitude, and so much excitement there's no way to know who said what.

Teaching VBS, in the remote "bush country" of Alaska, to children ranging in age from 3 years to Middle School presented challenges this team was ready to take on, and from which they learned many lessons. Meal planning, packing appropriately, going "tech-free," and doing age-appropriate lesson planning were all essential parts of the trip that presented unique difficulties for the entire group. VBS supplies were ordered and shipped to Sister Kathy at the local church before the team arrived in St. Mary's, with trips to the convenience store for last-minute items taking place during the week. Charlie, Isaac, Eli, and Oscar were in charge of planning each day's devotions and VBS activities, with guidance and assistance from Mr. & Mrs. DeBoer. Still, the bulk of the work was left to them to decide how to spread the good word of God's love to the community of St. Mary's.

As they engaged with the children and adults in the community, the boys discovered that the children seemed happy, consistently wanting to communicate, not on their phones or distracted, but wanting to talk all the time and learn new things. "They didn't have to need anything. They just wanted to come up and talk to us, and they liked Isaac's hair!" was the communal response to being asked how the people from St. Mary's welcomed them.

Teaching VBS brought this group of boys a deeper understanding of how they are fulfilling the final piece of the Concordia Mission Statement: Faith Secure • World Ready • Kingdom Leaders. As Faith Secure VBS teachers, they were Kingdom Leaders with an incredible message to share. In teaching, they recognized missing words and meanings. One of those words was "eternal." An incredibly important word that Oscar, Isaac, Eli, and Charlie had the joy and privilege of teaching children to carry with them eternally.

It's easy to see how deeply the group was impacted by this experience just by listening to them share their stories and talk about their time in the village of St. Mary's. You get the good news of how profound the blessings reach when you hear from Sister Kathy herself, "The impact this group had on our village and the youth here is immeasurable. To have a group come all the way from Nebraska told the people here how important they are and that others want to be with them and learn about them."

Due to the success of the 2023 trip, another mission trip is in the planning stages for 2024. Students interested in attending can contact Mr. DeBoer for more details.





THE IMPACT
THIS GROUP
HAD ON OUR
VILLAGE AND
THE YOUTH
HERE IS
IMMEASURABLE.

SISTER KATHY



15656 Fort St. Omaha, NF 68116

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE, AND FIND DIGITAL COPIES OF THE NEWSLETTER, **MUSTANG MEMO, ETC. UNDER THE "NEWS** AND UPDATES" TAB!

CONCORDIAOMAHA.ORG



Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: 'Whoever' believes will not be in haste.

CLSO Foundation **SECURING CONCORDIA'S FUTURE**



GAYE LYNNE SHAFFART FOUNDATION BOARD CHAIR

HE CLSO FOUNDATION SHARES THE CONCORDIA LUTHERAN **SCHOOLS' MISSION** of preparing young people for lives of faith, service, and leadership as Christian disciples - Faith Secure - World Ready - Kingdom Leaders. To fulfill that mission, the CLSO Foundation must build positive relationships, encourage generosity, and manage resources to create a strong financial foundation that advances the Gospel for years to come.

Exciting things are happening at Concordia with the transformation of our campus and the growth in enrollment - our future is bright. The Foundation Board is dedicated to ensuring the long-term viability of Concordia. To accomplish our goals, the Foundation Board will work together with Concordia leadership and the school Board to develop a sustainable funding model. We have a tremendous opportunity to grow our Foundation's financial resources and increase our donor numbers. We believe that God is working on the hearts of our families and friends to partner with us in growing the Foundation and securing Concordia's ability to continue to nurture students who are deeply rooted in God's love.

Gaye Lynn Schaffart Board Chair Lee Handke **Gail Hawkins** A. William "Bill" Kernen **Brandon Newhouse Lloyd Probasco** Dan Vehle **Sabrina Weiss Ex Officio Members: Rob Cooksey Aaron Sailer Nick Tofteland**

FOUNDATION BALANCE

SEPT. 2022 BALANCE

\$2,087,387

DEC. 2022 BALANCE \$2,211,441 = \$124k

MARCH 2023 BALANCE \$2,356,945 **~ \$145k**

JUNE 2023 BALANCE

\$2,468,929 **\$112k**