

Winter 2024

MUSTANG NEWS



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

THRIVE/CONSTRUCTION . 1
IN THE LOOP . 3
ALUMNI IN ACTION . 4
GIFTS OF LOVE . 5

FROM THE PRINCIPALS . 6
COLLABORATION IN
EDUCATION . 8
A PLACE TO BELONG . 10

MISSIONARY MISSIONS . 12
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT . 14
COMBINED CAMPUS . 16
STUDENT IMPACT . 20

GOD'S *Perfect* TIMING

THE CONCORDIA OMAHA FOUNDATION IS THE INVESTING ARM OF CONCORDIA LUTHERAN SCHOOLS OF OMAHA. Established in 2002, the Foundation is Governed by a Board of Directors. Assets invested by the Concordia Omaha Foundation are utilized for the sole purpose of supporting the needs of Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha. Funds not designated are utilized according to Foundation policy. Designated funds are utilized as gifts. The Concordia Omaha Foundation is an essential part of Concordia's Thrive campaign, which aims to raise at least \$10,000,000 in donations for the project.

We believe the biblical truth, that we become like that in which we put our trust. **If we trust in God, we are filled with life and joy as we become like Him.** 'God stands up for his people, God holds the hands of his people.' (Psalm 135:14, MSG)

God's timing is not always for us to understand. **Even when the timing isn't what we planned, we are called to praise the Lord, and execute.** (Psalm 135)



GOAL
\$10M

THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

Your participation in directing Thrivent Choice Dollars to Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha makes a difference!

THE TOTAL DIRECTED IN 2022 WAS
\$4,876

IN 2023, YOU DIRECTED
\$5,702

If you are a Thrivent member with Choice Dollars to direct, please go online and select either Concordia Academy or Concordia Jr. - Sr. High as your non-profit organization of choice for 2024!

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



thrivent

FOUNDATION BOARD

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

FOUNDATION BALANCE

DECEMBER 2023 BALANCE

\$2,701,611 ≈ \$232k

JUNE 2023 BALANCE

\$2,468,929 ≈ \$112k

MARCH 2023 BALANCE

\$2,356,945 ≈ \$145k

DEC. 2022 BALANCE

\$2,211,441 ≈ \$124k

All of this positions Concordia to further explore sustainable growth of programming and find exciting ways to deepen our commitment to personalized learning focused on the whole child. These efforts to deepen our commitment to faith-based learning are made possible by completing Thrive.

IF YOU ARE STILL ASKING, "WHY NOW?"

- The Concordia Academy lease drew to a close in May 2023. A new school home was needed. 100 individuals representing Concordia discerned opportunities God placed before us.
- There has never been a better time to reach Northwest Omaha and the greater Omaha community for Jesus Christ through Christian education. We are living in a culture crisis in the secular world. K-12 enrollment may exceed 700 when we begin the 24-25 school year.
- Concordia has spent a decade equipping for growth. As Kingdom-seeking leaders, we are faithful and prepared to be stretched.
- The blessings of facility will serve our students and prepare Concordia for the future
 - » Concordia blossoms as a K-12 unified campus
 - » More students and families join our community
 - » Students and families grow deeply rooted in God's love
 - » We expand opportunities in student programming and personalization of learning.
 - » The Concordia & Omaha communities are enhanced by a Worship & Performing Arts Center.
 - » 14 additional classrooms serve the needs of students and faculty.
 - » King of Kings Northwest church partnership on campus serves Concordia families and the community.
 - » A new entrance, offices, and improved road system prepare Concordia for future growth.

PROJECT TOTAL . \$15,000,000 >> CAMPAIGN GOAL . \$10,000,000 >> LCEF FUNDING . \$5,000,000

COULD WE TALK WITH YOU ABOUT A GIFT TO THE THRIVE CAMPAIGN? Your prayers, time, and resources are invaluable assets. Your gift to Thrive immediately benefits the cost of completing the project. A gift invested with our Foundation could endow operating costs for the worship and performing arts center or fund an additional staff position. Naming rights are still available. Please reach out to Rob Cooksey (Head of School and Foundation President), Nick Tofteland (Director of Advancement), or Kristin Herrera (Director of Operations) to set up a time to talk (402) 445-4000 or by email:

Rob Cooksey cookseyr@concordiaomaha.org
Nick Tofteland toftelandn@concordiaomaha.org
Kristin Herrera herrerak@concordiaomaha.org

THRIVE
Deeper Roots • Wider Reach

'With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day' (2 Peter 3:8). God is never in a hurry. He is always on time. The Lord is sovereign over the future (Daniel 4:32). **Trusting in the Lord may seem old-fashioned. The psalmist says, 'God, your name is eternal, God, you'll never be out-of-date.'** (Psalm 135:13, MSG)

In March 2023, Concordia broke ground on a major project for the future of Christian education in Northwest Omaha. Thrive launched even before Forward With Faith wrapped up. The timing was necessitated by the need to relocate Concordia Academy. But this is much more than a project of cement and drywall. This endeavor is an extension of God's work. God's perfect timing asks only that we commit our time, prayer, and resources to a faithful expression of the Kingdom of God at work.

Thrive is about Deeper Roots: We know that God's love impacts his people. His love is the heart of Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha. **Thrive is about a Wider Reach:** We have the opportunity to partner more broadly with families, friends, ministries, and the community in order to carry out Concordia's mission and vision. Thrive exemplifies God's **Perfect Timing:** 14 additional classrooms, a 700+ seat worship and performing arts center, a unified K-12 campus, a dedicated Academy entrance, and a campus prepared for future facility needs. These are part of God's plan for this time at Concordia.

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 stock.

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.

CONCORDIA Children's Business FAIR

Vendor Signup

Registration

Be a Sponsor

Sponsorships

Saturday March 16
10 am - 1 pm
15656 Fort St.
Vendors Ages 5-18

Register by March 2

Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

IN THE loop

LEADERSHIP

Rob Cooksey, Head of Schools

Amy Schwarting, Jr. - Sr. High Principal

Nathan Domsch, Academy Principal

FAITH SECURE WORLD READY KINGDOM LEADERS



UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan 22-26: National Lutheran Schools Week

Jan 30: Jr.-Sr. Open House

Feb 1: Ignite 2-5 Learning Fair

Feb 6: Academy Open House and Information Night

Feb 27 & 29: Parent/Teacher Conferences

Mar 1: Annual Kingdom Leaders Gala

Mar 8 & 9: Matilda, the Musical 7 PM

Mar 10: Matilda, the Musical 2 PM

Mar 16: Children's Business Fair

Mar 21: Spring Pep Rally

May 19: Graduation

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board of Directors

Ryan Hahn (*Grace Hill Lutheran Church*)

Rob Lindau (*Zion Lutheran Church*)

Kim Sucha (*St. Timothy's Lutheran Church*)

Pastor Caleb Kruse; Pastoral Representative (*Lord of Life-Elkhorn*)

Charista Baye (*King of Kings Lutheran Church*)

Alison Betten (*Grace Hill Lutheran Church*)

Joe Risko (*Pacific Hills Lutheran Church*)

Nanette Rasmussen (*Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church*)

Dan Swan (*Pacific Hills Lutheran Church*)

Dusty White (*Coram Deo*)

Alumni IN ACTION

SHE MAY TELL YOU ABOUT HER FAVORITE SCHOOL IF YOU ARE BLESSED ENOUGH TO MEET **MEAGAN RASMUSSEN.** A K-12 attendee of Concordia, Meagan says, "I love Concordia! The Lord really knew what He had in mind with this place. I saw so many people mentored and disciplined to. The Lord saved my life multiple times by being at Concordia."

Feeling known, and not just her name, but known as a person, is what made the difference for Meagan. "I feel like the staff just knew me, and they knew my friends too. The staff was like family, which helped me excel and be my best self," explains Meagan. "Mr. Staub, Mr. Kulus, Mrs. Lee - any of them could look at me and know that it wasn't my day and give me grace while still making me get work done." Knowing that she could go to teachers and that their doors were always open was comforting and helpful to Meagan during her high school years. Having that relationship with the staff made Meagan recognize her desire to attend a smaller Christian college, "I wanted to keep that. It was really special."

After graduating from Concordia in 2017, Meagan turned to a small Christian college to earn the nursing degree she always knew she wanted. "It was a little disappointing. It didn't feel that Christian to me. I got so used to something incredibly special at Concordia, and it just wasn't the same," says Meagan.

Her college experience may not have been like high school at Concordia, but she was ready. Meagan was prepared for her time in college through AP courses she took in high school, volleyball, One Act, and musicals. "We could do really well or really poorly; not only did that prepare me emotionally for life, but the purpose of whatever we did always came back to us glorifying God. I knew how to study and how to learn. I do really feel like Concordia makes students Kingdom Ready, but also educationally ready."

Meagan has put her education into practice as a pediatric oncology and hematology nurse at Sanford Children's Hospital in Sioux Falls, SD. She acknowledges that it is incredibly difficult to deal with children in horrible situations, but it is an easy role to fill, knowing that it is where the Lord has placed her. "I don't always get to talk about religion, but I know the Lord uses me in how I greet them or how I sing off-key for them, and those actions show His love, joy, and goodness," Meagan explains.

Being able to show God's love was taught to Meagan at home through her parents. "I feel extra blessed to have parents who know the Lord the way they do, to instill those beliefs at home, and then to go to school to grow deeper in those beliefs five days a week; I think there's credit due to my homelife there as well." Meagan's father, Rev. Jim Rasmussen, is the Associate Pastor and Director of Discipleship at Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church in Millard, and her Mother, Nanette, serves on the Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha School Board.

It is clear that Meagan trusts the Lord's will for her, "Time and time again, the Lord is so good. I'm thankful for all He has carried me through and led me to do. And I'll continue to trust that "he who promised is faithful." -Hebrews 10:23" she says, with joy in her heart.

The Lord really knew what He had in mind with this place.



Gifts OF LOVE



BILL KERNEN LIKES TO START AT THE END. "We wouldn't be here today for this interview if it weren't for a high school classmate of mine who married me, introduced me to Jesus, and connected me to Concordia," he says with a smile. Deep in his eyes, you can still see the love Bill has for his late wife, Leona. High school sweethearts from Villisca, Iowa, Bill remembers how he noticed her in Sophomore English class. "Johnson comes before Kernen; she was seated right in front of me."

Leona's impact is far-reaching, and it started with Bill. "I was baptized, became a member of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and was married all in the same year. Without Leona, I would not have this connection to Concordia." Leona was born, baptized, and raised in a Christian family. She never attended a Christian school, but Bill and Leona were members of St. Mark Lutheran Church, and Christian education was especially important to Leona. It was such a high priority for her that she ensured five of their grandchildren attended Concordia and saw that their tuition was paid. "Occasionally, she would pick them up from school and mentor them," recalls Bill.

We wouldn't be here today for this interview if it weren't for a high school classmate of mine who married me, introduced me to Jesus, and connected me to Concordia.

Bill Kernen

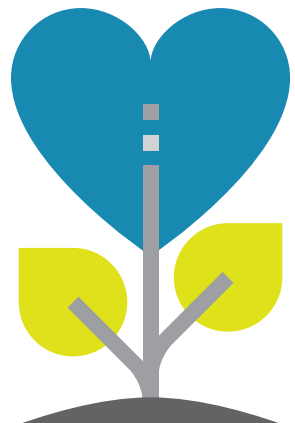
When Bill retired from the Omaha World-Herald in 2004, it was a practice that a gift from fellow executives would be made to the retiree. Former gifts to retirees were typically golf-related, such as equipment, rounds of golf at a prestigious golf course, etc. Since Bill did not play golf, counsel was sought from Leona for an appropriate gift. Her suggestion was that Bill would appreciate a gift to the Wider Omaha Lutheran Schools Association, now Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha. It was soon announced in the April 2004 School's newsletter that six executives and their spouses from the Omaha World-Herald had made a significant gift to Concordia. A retirement gift in Kernen's honor began Bill and Leona's lifetime of service to others.

Philanthropy in the Kernen family started with Leona. "She was the executive director of our checkbook," says Bill, "the job was to identify who, then for what, and then how much. From that process, we developed a Philanthropy Policy." Out of that policy came a list of the top priorities for Kernen's giving, which is prioritized into five categories. The first is the mission of the charity, which embraces the Great Commission from Matthew 28:16-20 NIV. Second is Education, third is Social Welfare, next the Arts, and then Community Efforts. Of special note is that education or social welfare institutions embracing the Great Commission move to the number one priority, which includes Schools like Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha and Concordia University-NE.

Bill and Leona's personal philanthropy and their impact on Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha has been far-reaching. Leona had a vision, and Bill has carried that through in her memory beautifully with the establishment of a private foundation with the Board of Directors, including their children, Kerry, Jonathan, Marcia, and Philip, along with advisor George Wachtler and Executive Director Michele Pohlman by his side.

In 2000, during the campaign to convert the horse barn into a high school building, some donors indicated they would like to make a gift to a WOLSA endowment fund. The Chair, Pastor Block, of the school Board of Directors at the time, asked Bill, along with some others, to make a recommendation as to whether a Foundation should be created or whether the school should own the fund. The team recommended a Foundation. Bill chaired the foundation's Board of Directors from its creation until 2022 when Gaye Lynn Shaffart was elected chair.

Listening to Bill brings an understanding that his philanthropy is truly a gift from his heart. Every gift Bill and his family gives is done so out of love, and all because of a classmate who became his partner for 54 years.



FROM DOMSCH'S *desk*

Parents are the first educators of their children. Honoring and supporting parents in that role leads to better educational outcomes and personal growth for children. We are blessed to see and support this collaboration at Concordia, with students growing in an environment where everyone is invested in their success. We honor parents as the primary educators of their children and partner with them in various ways from grades K through 12.

The support of parents, especially when visible to students, helps to encourage and support the school's mission. Sometimes this is as simple as being in a community. Concordia Academy hosted a Cozy Christmas pancake breakfast on our last day before Christmas vacation, and hundreds of our parents came out with their children to enjoy breakfast with Concordia staff members and other Academy families - such a simple act is powerful in a child's life. This visibility of parents in the life of the school sends a powerful message to their children that education is valuable and worthy of attention.

Concordia parents are invited to take an active role as leaders in their children's education at Concordia. Concordia Academy parents are frequently in classrooms. Recently, that has included parents sharing their personal experience and expertise through discussion of what they do in the community or activities relating to their passions or skills, parents inviting students to learn about the world by traveling with them virtually, and parents leading other classroom activities such as taste-tests or parties.

Parents don't only lead in person at Concordia; they are also invited to lead toward change in the school in connection with school initiatives. Curriculum reviews at Concordia Academy always involve feedback from parents on how Concordia's practice aligns with their goals for their children and the outcomes they see at home. Concordia is also actively involved in an accreditation self-study, and parents are serving in leadership roles on teams to help lead Concordia toward improvement. When parents actively participate in school decision-making processes, offer insights, and contribute their perspectives, it enriches the educational environment and promotes a sense of shared responsibility toward the success of all students.

Concordia parents have several opportunities to be involved as collaborators, leaders, and supporters of their children. Parental involvement at Concordia creates a robust support system for learning, boosting student confidence and motivation, and helping lead toward school improvement. We are richly blessed by parents who contribute to their child(ren)'s success and enrich the entire Concordia community's educational experience. Thank you, Concordia parents!



BLESSINGS *Nate*



TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Mrs. Rachael Means, this year's 2023 American String Teachers Association Nebraska Chapter Outstanding Teacher of the Year!

FACULTY PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION!

Concordia is blessed by a faculty with strong academic backgrounds and many gifts and talents. Several are pursuing advanced degrees:

This includes:

- **Mr. Peter Klemp** Doctor of Music Education at Liberty University
- **Mrs. Faith Doerr** Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction of Trauma and Resilience at Concordia University, Nebraska.
- **Mr. Jacob Fink** Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership from the Townsend Institute at Concordia University, Irvine.
- **Mr. Keaton Sturm** Master of Education in School Counseling at Doane University.
- **Mrs. Laura Troutman** recently graduated from UNO with her Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction.

BE BOLD!

Happy New Year! I hope this message finds you rested, rejuvenated, and ready for the exciting possibilities that the coming months have in store. As we say goodbye to the old and welcome the new, I am filled with gratitude for the amazing Concordia community that makes our school such a special place.

As we head into the new year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the grace and goodness God has showered on us this past year. Our students, teachers, and families have worked hard to move and integrate the Academy family into our Junior and Senior High family creating a vibrant, supportive community of students from Kindergarten to 12th Grade. This move has been filled with joy, spiritual growth and shared accomplishments, all of which are a testament of God's unfailing love.

Our Concordia community is a beautiful reflection of the body of Christ, and I am grateful for the sense of fellowship that binds us together. Let us continue to support one another in prayer, encouragement, and acts of kindness, creating a community where God's love is evident in all that we do. Thank you for your continued support of Concordia. The success of our school is a testament to the collaborative efforts of our dedicated students, families, and staff.

Wishing you a year filled with joy, growth, and blessings from above. Here's to a fantastic 2024 at Concordia!

— Mrs. Schwarting



CARTER S. BREAKS SCHOOL RECORD

Carter (left) broke a school record this fall against Boys Town on September 29. At home, Carter caught 10 passes for 226 yards and a touchdown as the Mustangs played a tight game against the Cowboys. His 226 yards receiving was a single-game school record with sophomore Drew K. (right) in just his second game at QB.

Carter is a Senior, a three-sport athlete (football-basketball-baseball) and a humble, hard working young man. He comes to practice every day ready to work and leaves it all on the field. He is a quiet young man who leads by example. His dedication and commitment to Mustang Football is greatly appreciated as he was one of only four seniors helping the Mustangs build a firm foundation and rebuild the football program with a great culture that will cultivate future success! Thank you Carter, and congrats!

COLLABORATION. EXPERIMENTATION. PERSISTENCE.

HOUR OF CODE

Early interests are leading to promising career opportunities in developing fields

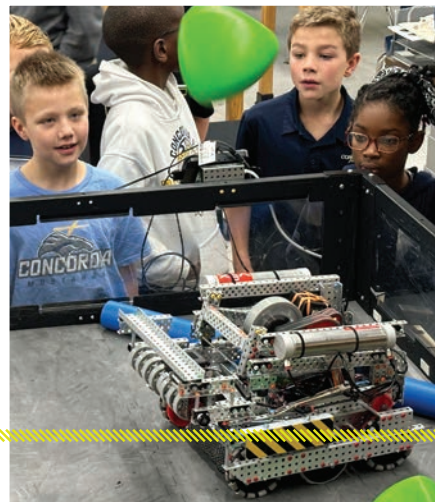
Collaboration between Concordia's Sr. High and Academy is an exciting new learning opportunity available now that all grade levels are on the same campus. Since 2016, Mrs. Senechal's 4th-grade class has participated in The Hour of Code, a worldwide initiative that began in 2013 to promote computer science. Students begin by learning about careers involving coding, then work through a coding tutorial, followed by activities on the code.org website. "I love that our students learn coding in Academy because of the many ways it develops logical thinking problem-solving skills, and fosters creativity," says Mr. Cooksey.

To add depth and more advanced experience to the coding lessons, Mrs. Senechal collaborated with Mr. Mueller, the High School Robotics coach. Mr. Mueller and his students showed examples of text-based code they created, then demonstrated how those codes give directions for the robots they built for competitions. "Seeing the text code on the screen was really cool!" said Josh M and Charles E, both fourth-graders.

Three of Mrs. Senechal's students shared what they learned about two different types of coding: block coding from Hour of Code and text coding from Mr. Mueller's class. Charles E. discussed the understanding that there are different types of coding and the fact that it takes a long time to enter text coding. "To be a good text coder, you must be good at typing," Charles noted. Ruth S learned she would enjoy a coding job someday, while Charles believes he would like to become a game developer. "Watching them collaborate" was what Josh M enjoyed the most from the experience.

Collaboration is, indeed, an instrumental part of success in Mr. Mueller's class. Working in teams, sharing, and implementing ideas can be the key to making the robots work. During the fourth-graders visit to the Senior High Robotics classroom, Adam S, Thomas P, Eli D, and Noah L showcased autonomous code by highlighting a section they were most proud of and explaining the purpose of the code to their Academy visitors.

In Concordia Robotics Club, a new game is released each year, and club members build and program custom robots for the game. Teams put in hundreds of hours building and perfecting their robots with the goal of state and world competitions in mind. Academy students learned from the demonstration that each match played is divided into two periods; autonomous and driver-controlled. In the autonomous period, the robots drive themselves based on a program created by the students.



"During one demonstration, the robot failed two times, but the third time, it worked flawlessly," shares Mr. Mueller, "This demonstrated the need for persistence in computer programming because things don't usually work the first time. It takes constant testing and adapting to make a final product work correctly."

Collaboration between classmates and classrooms is common at Concordia. Academy students are seeing how the lessons they learn in their classrooms now will be used in the coming years in more complex ways for classroom projects and extracurricular activities. Students who find topics of study exceptionally appealing are now seeing how they can lead to career options and are encouraged to explore those opportunities as they grow and develop as learners.

A PLACE *to* *Belong*

BEING BROUGHT INTO THE KINGDOM JUST FELT BETTER.

EVAN C.



Shawn and Liz Cook knew Concordia existed. They live only a stone's throw away, but attending the school wasn't part of the plan for their three boys. They attended public school until COVID hit in 2020, and then Concordia became something they looked into. Both Liz and Shawn were working from home and needed consistent, in-person education for the boys. "We are nearby, and my parents had heard good things about Concordia and told us we needed to make a decision," says Liz. Because Concordia was still holding in-person classes when many public schools were doing online courses, the Cook family, like many others, found themselves considering Concordia.

Not only had they heard good things and lived close to the school, but Shawn and Liz are friends with Lee and Jennifer Handke. Lee is a former school board member and Jennifer is the current Jr.-Sr. High Art Teacher. "We very much trust them; they are one of the reasons we were very comfortable with moving schools and joining the Concordia community."

The biggest reason the Cook family has stayed is community. "The boys are part of something bigger than themselves," share the Cooks. "We've had a really good connection to other parents and families through the sports events and activities." Taking advantage of the opportunities to do all the activities that Concordia has to offer is something Liz and Shawn both love about their boys being at the school. "It is important to have life experiences, whether it's cross-country when you never thought you could run that far, or trying out for a musical when you didn't believe you could get up in front of everyone and sing and dance," shares Liz.

Life experiences also included baptism for the boys during their first year at Concordia. Evan, Nathan, and Ryan were in 7th, 5th, and 3rd grades that year. "We really like the connection Pr. Staub has with all the kids. Concordia felt like the perfect place to have them baptized,"

said Liz. After much discussion and making the boys one another's accountability partners in the process, the three boys were baptized during an all-school chapel. It was an incredible experience for the entire school to witness the three boys being baptized together. All of the boys' grandparents attended, Evan's friends were excited for him, and students cheered for them. Now a 9th grader, Evan recognizes this as an incredibly important moment in his life: "Being brought into the kingdom just felt better."

As Evan transitioned from middle to high school last fall, Shawn and Liz offered him options regarding what school he wished to attend. He toured Central, Skutt, and Westview, all with the purpose of determining where Evan felt he could excel. "Evan said he didn't feel he had a "place" in other locations - that says to me that he feels he has a place at Concordia, both with his teachers and his friends. He is part of a community." When Evan tells you why he chose to stay at Concordia, he's clear and concise. "I like Concordia because friends feel more like family. I can relate to most of my teachers, and getting the classes I want is easy. Colleges come in, the military comes in, and it's nice to see a lot of options offered regularly. And Pr. Staub is very inspirational. He doesn't care who you are, he just wants you to be closer to Jesus."

Shawn notes that the class sizes are important to him and Liz when making the decision to keep the boys at Concordia. "Students are not being pigeonholed, and everyone rallies around you, whatever you do." Evan, Nathan, and Ryan participate in many activities, including One Act, Cross Country, Musicals, Choir, Baseball, and Basketball. Shawn and Liz share, "Evan picked Concordia because he can be a part of things: friend groups, failures, successes, learning, and it ultimately leads you to be more prepared for life."



The mission of Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha is to equip students who are Faith Secure, World Ready, Kingdom Leaders. Shawn and Liz believe that mission is being fulfilled in their boys and are happy to see them staying at Concordia with their friends who are like family, and the community in which they feel they belong.



MISSIOLOGY



AS A MISSIOLOGY CLASS, the objective is to put into practice our most important mission: to share the love of God with our neighbor. When Mrs. Audry Sado took her Missiology students on a first-time trip to St. Louis in the fall of 2023, she was very impressed with them. "When students are in a classroom, they keep a bit more to themselves. When you get them out, they love to interact, and they work really hard," says Sado.

Sharing the love of God with others was something they learned about from other missionaries. The group met with Dr. Rich Rudowski, executive director of Lutheran Bible Translators. He shared the organization's mission to translate the Bible into approximately 4,000 languages for people who do not have the Bible in their mother tongue. Louisa Lehenbauer, Director of Concordia Mission Institute and former missionary, emphasized the importance of communication and relationships through fun activities and a Bible message about Paul and his missionary journeys in Rome.

In St. Louis, they put what they learned into practice at Holy Cross Lutheran Church by buddying up with students in their after-school program. The church had converted an old seminary building into an art institute in order to serve their neighborhood needs. "Holy Cross is in an area of town that is very much transitional, and the students

cleaned an adjacent parking lot and filled three huge dumpsters full of trash, broken glass, weeds, and trash. The church appreciated the help making the parking lot so much more enjoyable and appealing to the attendees for the festival they were holding the next weekend," shared Sado.

They also served the Concordia Historical Institute by sweeping, vacuuming, and organizing rooms that needed attention. Sado commented on how hard the students worked and how much they enjoyed their time in service to others. "They were only asked to sweep and vacuum, but they reorganized the entire room!"

Sado believes it is important for students to understand what missions mean and what the trips involve. "There are many ways to serve God's kingdom, and everyone has different talents to share," says Sado. She has annual trips planned so the relationships made with those visited are built upon each year by the new Juniors and Seniors taking the trip.

Junior Ellie W. offers this advice to future attendees, "Really do your best to interact with people on the trip. Settle down, relax, and let yourself be yourself." Mrs. Sado prays each student will take home the lesson to stay involved in church, stay Christ-centered, and share the gospel with other nations.

ON A MISSION



THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO SERVE GOD'S KINGDOM, AND EVERYONE HAS DIFFERENT TALENTS TO SHARE. - MRS. SADO



FAITH INTO PRACTICE

Pastors David Linkugel, Caleb Kruse, and Kevin Foley faithfully serve lunch every Friday.

FOR PASTORS, OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE AND CONNECT IN THE COMMUNITY ARE PROVIDED IN MULTITUDES. A trio of pastors connected to Concordia saw the chance to serve lunch to students, which was too good to pass up. Prs. David Linkugel, Caleb Kruse, and Kevin Foley answered the call for lunch volunteers in the fall of 2022. Since then, the group has religiously distributed lunch to the Academy and Jr. – Sr. High students every Friday.

Pr. Linkugel from Lord of Life shares, "We encourage people to volunteer in the community as stewardship of their time and talents. This gives me an opportunity to interact with students in a role different from that of a pastor and for our member students to see me putting my faith into practice."

These gentlemen enjoy getting to know Concordia's students, staff, and fellow volunteers while serving others. "I enjoy being a pastor of an association church and being connected to the school in that way, but I've always looked at my time at lunch as just being a dad. I enjoy hearing the kids call me Clara's, Auggie's, and Freddie's Dad," shares Pr. Kruse from Lord of Life.

Pr. Foley, River of Life, says getting to know the kids better, deepening relationships, and working alongside other parents and pastors are huge benefits to volunteering in this position. To anyone considering giving their time and talents to Concordia, he says, "Just say yes, you won't regret it!"

Working alongside these three each Friday are many volunteers who devote themselves to the students of Concordia. Because of these volunteers, our weekly routines run smoothly. Each and every volunteer is a blessing to the school community.

INTERNATIONAL CLUB

The Concordia International Club allows students and staff to learn about other cultures by engaging our international and domestic students in new activities. Students build relationships and learn about foods, traditions, activities, and one another.



Every six weeks, the International club meets for a presentation from students and staff about other countries or for a field trip. The 2023-2024 school year has included education on Puerto Rico, Myanmar/Burma, and a Christmas potluck full of fantastic foods from around the world! The club members took curling lessons on January 7th, followed by a buffet of Canadian foods, including pierogies, cabbage rolls, and chocolate puffwheat squares!

Saturday, February 3, from 4:00 – 6:00 PM, the community is invited to attend a Lunar New Year party at the school hosted by the Concordia International Club.






BENEFITS of a combined campus

Each morning, a pair of siblings is in the hallways of Concordia as a Senior High girl walks her Academy-age sister to school drop-off. They hold hands as they chat and laugh their way past groups of students. It is one of the sweetest sights to see.

Academy, Junior, and Senior High students have come together in amazing ways this school year to make the Concordia Lutheran Schools campus an incredibly special place. Senior high girls greet Academy students at the entrance every morning with smiles, high fives, waves, and well-wishes to "have a great day!" Later in the day, we see more high school students in Academy classrooms engaging with students in new ways that were impossible until this year. The Teacher's Aide (TA) program has been reinvented at Concordia this year, "hopefully creating a foundation for more students to choose education as a career path," notes Jr.-Sr. High Principal Amy Schwarting.

Crossing over to the Academy for time to serve as a Teacher's Aide is a great way for some students to see their futures as potential classroom leaders, while others share their servant leadership talents when their Life Groups team up with Academy classrooms. Mr. Preston Doerr's Life Group students have built relationships with Mrs. Faith Doerr's First Grade class. Each quarter, they gather together on a Friday morning for a special project. This quarter, they tied fleece blankets and collected personal care items to donate to Bethlehem House. According to Mrs. Doerr, "Older kids are able to be role models for my students. They have a 'cool big kid' talking about Jesus with them. It's been a fun experience!"

Having all of these students on the same campus provides benefits to more than just students and teachers. Families are finding great joy in having all of their students on one campus this year. Melissa Lorang has four students at Concordia ranging from 1st to 9th grade and speaks to the advantages of one campus, "It streamlines my morning. I drive to one school and drop off my children. It is literally amazing." Beyond just

dropoff and pickup, Melissa shares the experiences her students bring home to her and how meaningful it is to them to be together. "I love that my little kids get to be a part of the larger Concordia community and activities. Specifically, football game days when the drumline comes through the halls. My kids get to feel the excitement and energy and be part of all the big things." Academically, Melissa is excited about new experiences, "My younger children are exposed to extracurriculars and activities they would not have been in another school. My fourth grader just had robotics team members showing him how fun and exciting robotics is. He wouldn't have had that if they were on different campuses. I think that's super amazing."

Collaborations are becoming more and more commonplace between the Academy and Senior High as the year progresses. What has always existed but is enjoying a smoother implementation this year is the fine arts program. Mr. Peter Klemp has traveled between campuses teaching instrumental music for all grades until this year. Mrs. Rachael Means, the new Orchestra teacher, has heard about the trials and tribulations of teaching orchestra between campuses and is very happy to have space at Concordia where instruction takes place in a classroom rather than a hallway. Mr. Klemp is very excited and has great ideas for engaging younger students in fine arts. He plans to include older band members in demonstrating instruments to incoming 5th-grade band students as they begin to look at their options. "We have only begun to explore all the ways we can utilize our older students in the fine arts to encourage our younger students," explains Mr. Klemp.

Encouraging younger students. Encouraging older students. By combining the campuses and putting all of the Concordia Community together, all of our students are encouraging one another. Attend an all-school worship or a pep rally, and you'll see encouragement so loud and proud you may just get blown off your feet. You may also see encouragement so sweet and tender you'll shed a tear.



CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

- ♥ Growth from 86,000 to 114,000 sq ft after construction
- ♥ FEMA storm shelter, Performing Arts, Worship & Activities Center
- ♥ Unified k-12 campus for all of CLSO



IT IS A HUGE COMFORT TO KNOW THAT ALL OF MY KIDS ARE TOGETHER IN ONE SPOT. I CAN GET TO THEM ALL IN ONE STOP.

MELISSA LORANG

“OLDER KIDS ARE ABLE TO BE ROLE MODELS FOR MY STUDENTS.”

MRS. DOERR



RIGHT WAY TO STATE WITH CHASE WINTER



What does a One Act director do when he knows his next cast will have one male and umpteen females? He gives himself creative license by writing the next script. In 2022, when Mr. Chase Winter knew the One Act cast would include only one male and many females, he knew it was time to put his writing skills to work and create a script customized for his unique cast. After a wildly successful 2022 season with *As You Bid's* cast and a reminder that working with a self-written script provides freedom not found otherwise, Winter again embarked on the script-writing journey for the 2023 season.

Winter finds himself most productive at One Act script writing during the summer break. The process begins with brainstorming in May and June, and once July hits, the actual writing process begins, with edits continuing until days before auditions. Total writing time takes at least 20 hours, and changes occur weeks into rehearsals. "That's the great thing about writing your own script; you can change it as needed," claims Winter.

Change it they did. Two weeks into rehearsals, the name of the 2023 One Act play changed from *Trouble in Tecoma* to *Wrong Way from Santa Fe*. This cast and crew didn't go the wrong way to state, though. They collected first-place finishes at the Conference, Midland One

Act Clash, and District competitions and placed second at the State competition. Praise from a Midland One Act Clash judge declared it the "least high school looking show" she'd seen, noting that the cast did not carry themselves like high school students. It is a compliment Winter takes to heart for his cast and crew, "I know the hard work the kids put in and the frustrations that come with a script that can change and letting them make decisions when they want me to make decisions for them. The students know what is expected, and they know how to do theatre well."

Setting high standards was instilled in the program early on with former One Act director Mrs. Lori Dillon (then, Lori Plummer). "We owe a lot of our success to her. She set a really great groundwork and created the culture that this is a serious, professional group while still in high school and having fun." Winter says of Dillon, founder of Concordia's One Act team. Winter knows he has a high standard to uphold, saying, "Our goal is to glorify God in competition."

The cast and crew of *Wrong Way from Santa Fe* proudly honored the Concordia Theatre program traditions and utilized their talent fully each time they performed. Of these things, Mr. Winter is especially grateful and proud.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

- The eSports team of Jim T., Sawyer M., and Andrew S. earned sixth place at State in Smash Brothers.
- Several HS seniors signed to compete at the collegiate level this fall: Abby D.- Central Christian College - Volleyball, Zach Z. - William Jewell - Lacrosse, Brooklynn S. - Midland University - Volleyball, Quientan M. - Truman State - Basketball
- Centennial Conference Fall All-Conference awardees:
 - » Football All-Conference: WR Carter S., RB Drew K., LB Peder E., DB Ryan S.
 - » Football Honorable Mention All-Conference: OL Oscar M., TE Asher H., DL Zander R.
 - » Volleyball All-Conference: Brooklynn S., Eliza S.
 - » Volleyball Honorable Mention All-Conference: Natalie P.
- Cross Country Individual State Qualifiers: Payton D., Avery D., Faith J., Meredith S.
- Mock Trial - Regional Championship qualifier team: Camden K., Morgan P., Adelaide M., Scarlett H., Reese L., Elisah W., Max J., Alexander S.
- OWH All-Area Football honorable mention: Carter S., Asher H., Drew K., Ryan S.
- OWH All-Area Volleyball honorable mention: Brooklyn S., Eliza S., Natalie P., Breckynn S.
- NCPA Academic All-State fall recognition:
 - » Boys Cross-Country: Avery D., David R.
 - » Girls Cross-Country: Faith J., Meredith S.
 - » Football: Peder E., Asher H.
 - » Girls Golf: Adleigh B., Elly D.
 - » Play Production: Piper B., Raegan E.;
 - » Volleyball: Eliza S., Brooklynn S.

NE All-State Children's Choir members, Ruth S. (grade 4) and Ryan C. (grade 5)



Brooklynn S., Zach Z., and Quientan M. signed letters of intent to play college sports next fall.

CONCORDIA SCHOOLS
OMAHA

» One Act: 1st Place: Conference 1st Place – Midland One Act Clash (3rd year in a row) 1st Place – Districts (8th year in a row) 2nd Place – State

- NE All-State Middle Level Orchestra: Adelynn S. (grade 8 - cello) and Christian T. (grade 8 - violin) were selected as members after auditioning with 100+ musicians to rehearse and perform in Lincoln on November 17
- NE All-State Children's Choir: Ryan C. (grade 5) and Ruth S. (grade 4) were selected as members of the 300+ student group which rehearsed and performed in Lied Center in Lincoln on November 16)

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A PUBLICATION OF CONCORDIA LUTHERAN SCHOOLS OF OMAHA FOUNDATION WINTER 2024

2023-2024
SCHOOL THEME

FIRM
FOUNDATION
ISAIAH 28:16

*Therefore thus says the Lord God, Behold, I am
laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly
cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He
who believes in it will not be disturbed.*

Students MAKING A DIFFERENCE

THE TRAINING TO BECOME FAITH SECURE, WORLD READY, KINGDOM LEADERS STARTS NOW! Students in Mr. Jipp's Leadership class worked together with the Student Council to make a difference in their community this last semester by collecting 944 items for the Open Door Mission. Once they delivered their donations the group volunteered at the Timberlake Outreach Center. At the same time, several other Life Groups combined forces to collect donations for a special event at the Lydia House. The entire student body was encouraged to bring in items that were included in the Lydia House Christmas Store where children could shop for their mothers' Christmas gifts.

