

# THE DEFENDER

## FALL 2023



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OUR THEME FOR THE YEAR IS "WAKE UP"

**EPHESIANS 5:14 SAYS, "WAKE UP, SLEEPER, RISE FROM THE DEAD, AND CHRIST WILL SHINE ON YOU."**

Paul, in his letter to the Ephesian church, addressed the sin in which they were living. The church had begun to look more like the culture around them, contrary to the way Jesus called them to live. Things had gotten so bad that the church seemingly could no longer differentiate between those who did and those who did not follow Jesus.

Our culture today has fallen into this same trap. It is our prayer that our students would "Wake Up" as Paul instructed the Ephesian church by turning away from their sin and living for Jesus by standing apart from the culture. At TCS, we are striving to create a culture that reflects the actions and character of Jesus Christ so let's WAKE UP and become who He's called us to be!

# A LETTER FROM *the Superintendent*

## A NEW CHAPTER + + +

Greetings TCS Community!

The 2023-24 school year is off to a great start and in full swing as God continues to bless and grow the TCS Community! The evidence is all around us in the crowded halls, portable classrooms, and a packed auditorium.

As we celebrate this growth and continue to move forward in our City on a Hill Vision, I want to reiterate something I spoke about at our Fall Banquet this year. You may remember I referenced the great patriot Patrick Henry's famous quote during America's battle for Independence long ago..."United We Stand or Divided We Fall."

I believe this truth is timely for TCS today as well. Our recent growth has brought with it many changes including leadership team expansion, organizational infrastructure, security upgrades, and many more. With change comes a greater opportunity for differences, disagreements, and discord. But consider Paul's plea to the church in Corinth "...let there be no divisions...rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose." To preserve this unity requires allegiance to something or someone GREATER than ourselves and praise God we have a Savior who sits at the apex of greatness for who He is and what He's done.

Our mission at TCS is to Graduate Academically Excellent Disciples of Christ. So, when change becomes uncomfortable, let's elevate our commitment to our mission and more importantly, He who gave us the mission!

Here's my challenge if you are willing to join me:

Let's Remain United. Let's Remain Committed to the Mission. Let's Remain Focused on the Vision ahead of us. Let's be quick to forgive and overlook offense. Let's prioritize Godliness over gossip. Let's be known for our willingness to lay down preferences for mission/vision progress. Said another way...let's be Different!

God is moving mightily in the world today as He draws mankind to Himself and what a privilege we have at TCS to be a part of that work! Let's rejoice together, work together, and continue to be faithful to becoming the CITY ON A HILL that He has called us to be.

One Savior. One Family. One Mission. Unity in all Things. #MissionForward



Superintendent



# BOARD REPORT

Hello Tri-unity Christian School Community,

It's wonderful to witness the positive developments and growth happening at Tri-unity Christian School. I feel blessed to be a part of a Christian school that's committed to advancing the Kingdom, being obedient to the Holy Spirit and nurturing the next generation of disciples. The concept of being a "City on a Hill" is powerful and signifies the impact our institution aims to have in the world at a time when it is so obviously and desperately needed. It's evident that TCS is making a positive impact and attracting more families who share our same value for Biblical Christian education.

The Board of Trustees is working hard to ensure that the vision of TCS does not experience "mission drift" as the world around us seems to be falling further and further away from the Truth. We are committed to standing on God's Word and refuse to make compromises that do not align with Biblical commandments, teachings, and values. I would like to personally thank the dedication of our TCS staff and school community, including your time, resources, energy, and prayers, as it plays a crucial role in making TCS the great institution that it is. May your unwavering dedication to these principles continue to guide TCS in all its actions and decisions, fostering a community where faith in God and His Ways are paramount.

Blessings,

TCS Board President

# CITY ON A HILL

## V I S I O N

It's been nearly two years since the launch of our City on a Hill Vision, and we are continuing to move forward! To date, we have added 5 additional elementary classrooms and 4 portable classrooms to accommodate the catastrophic growth that has taken place.

The need to finish both phases of the vision and to build our new 9-12 HS Building on our new land across the street is more urgent and necessary than ever! Currently, we are focusing on raising the funds to pay off all debt related to expansion costs we have accumulated in our current building, which is just over \$3.7 million.

While this is certainly a big chunk of money, it pales in comparison to the power of our God and what He has called Tri-unity Christian School to be in the communities of Wyoming and Grandville for just such a time as this.

**A CITY ON A HILL** does not hide its light by looking to blend in with the darkness around it but shines brightly in the midst of that darkness.

**A CITY ON A HILL** is firmly planted on the high ground of Biblical authority, enabling it to stand firm against the shifting winds of cultural compromise.

**A CITY ON A HILL** that is a place where a culture of honor, respect, and excellence is the expectation, not the exception.

**A CITY ON A HILL** that challenges students to actually KNOW God better rather than being content to simply know OF God better. A City on a Hill is never satisfied with head knowledge but seeks true heart transformation.

**A CITY ON A HILL** prioritizes authentic Discipleship that is more than just a list of right or wrong choices; but instead about seeking the WHO and the WHY that make those choices right or wrong.

**A CITY ON A HILL** prioritizes Discipleship that comes from a lifestyle MINDSET rather than a circumstantial STATE OF MIND.

**A CITY ON A HILL** views student discipline, correction, and love as synonymous rather than mutually exclusive.

**A CITY ON A HILL** is marked by a community who, at their core, desire to look, act, and sound more and more like the Master until people can't tell the difference between what they read and hear about Jesus and what they see in their lives.

I welcome you to partner and continue partnering with us in this COAH Vision, both prayerfully and financially, until the great day when God makes this Vision a reality!



TCS Superintendent and Development Director

# PHASE ONE

Update as of November 30, 2023

## New Classroom Construction

Cost: \$1.9m

Remaining:

**\$201,771**

## New Land Cost (30 Acres)

Cost: \$1.92m

Remaining:

**\$1,720,000**

## Middle/High School Construction Loan

Cost: \$2.03m

Remaining:

**\$1,318,460**

## Original EL Campus Loan

Cost: \$1.025m

Remaining:

**\$483,247**

## Total Debt Retirement on Current Campus:

**\$3,723,478**

(before breaking ground for new campus)

# + A LETTER FROM *the Athletic Director*

Greetings TCS Families!

Going into the fall of 2023, longtime assistant Tracie Kumko has moved on from the role, leaving an opportunity for a new person to step in and impact students and families through sports. We thank Tracie for her unwavering support, guidance, and love for Defender Athletics. Courtney Zudweg has transitioned very well into the new role and has picked up right where Tracie laid the foundation. We are very grateful to have Courtney, along with her knowledge and experience, in this role moving forward. She is a great addition to the staff family.

When August rolled around, our athletic teams were beginning practice. The seasons looked to be full of optimism as we have some very good athletes returning to our halls this year. Our boys' soccer team returned to the pitch after taking a year off last year, and they improved drastically throughout the season. A young team, sometimes starting with as many as 8 or 9 freshmen, battled tough and gained valuable experience that they will look to build on as they grow and move from year to year. Our cross country team had a couple of exceptional standouts to highlight. On the boys' side, brother duo Tyler Laansma (11th grade) and Lincoln Laansma (8th grade) finished 1st and 2nd in the conference standings. On the girls' side, Brielle Voorhees (11th grade) finished 6th in the conference as well. All 3 runners also qualified individually for the state finals meet. A phenomenal accomplishment for the whole program! In Defender football and volleyball, we saw

a couple of teams who brought home the hardware, both winning the conference. In football, it was the first time since 2018, whereas volleyball has now started a streak of conference championships, bringing home a trophy in both 2022 and 2023.

As we highlighted a staff transition to begin the season, we also ended the fall sports year with a couple of "retirements." First, we want to thank our cheer team duo of Amy Langelier and Christie Eerdmans, who have poured into our cheer program for the last 8 years. Second, coach Tim Heath, who has been involved in the football program for 10 years, with 8 being the varsity head coach. Thank you all for your dedication and sacrifice to being an extension of our school and helping to mold excellent disciples of Christ.

As the weather changes, and temperatures drop, we are starting to prepare for the upcoming winter season. We hope to see you pack the stands for our basketball teams as we look to continue the excellence our fall sports teams have laid out. This community is special, and we truly do believe that God is working something great here, not only in the school setting, but in all of our extra curriculars and athletics as well. We are excited to be along for the ride. Thank you all for your support of Defender athletics.

Go Defenders!



Athletic Director





# OUR STAFF

NEW FACES FOR 2023



**SELA CLIFFORD**  
Middle School English,  
Bible, and Keyboarding



**TINA DEWITT**  
2nd Grade



**COURTNEY IPPEL**  
Middle School and High  
School Science



**AMANDA MARZEAN**  
Paraprofessional Aide



**CAITLIN SCHIERBEEK**  
Recess



**JOSH SEPANIK**  
6th Grade



**KAYLEEN SCHMID**  
High School English and  
Media Studies



# FALL BANQUET

GOAL: \$100,000 - TOTAL RAISED: \$130,896





# HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT



The HS retreat was great! We started off by bringing the Salt Team down a day early and focused on leading their peers. At night we sat around a bonfire and challenged them to listen to the leading of the Holy Spirit. After we gave them time to get alone with God and listen to what the Holy Spirit was challenging them with for this year, we had them share with the group. It was awesome to hear how God was speaking to them.

On Tuesday the rest of the HS joined us. We had great sessions where the students were challenged in different areas, such as creating a culture of value and the impact your attitude has on everything you do. They also had opportunities to enjoy different activities that Grace Adventure offers. Things like archery, laser tag, bike riding, kayaking, and more. We ended the night with our service where Stan Pelak, who is the Youth Director at City Church Greenville, talked about David and Goliath. We had a powerful altar time where the teachers and staff came forward and the students were challenged to come up for prayer and confess any giants in their lives that are hindering their walk with the Lord. I truly believe there were breakthroughs in many students' lives.





# + LAPS OF LOVE

On September 29, 2023, the elementary students grades Young 5s through 6th grade participated in a fundraising event called Laps Of Love. LOL is held every 2 years to raise funds to support the elementary students service program Kids Feeding Kids. Through KFK, students are involved in service projects that feed other kids in our community. Currently through KFK students make lunches for the high school students who minister at Gods Club in the Black Hills District of GR and package snack packs for Hand2Hand ministries. KFK has been an important part of Tri-unity Christian Schools for over 15 years. This year the Laps of Love event raised over \$11,000 to fund KFK. We praise God for the generous support from our TCS parents and community which will help us continue to serve others in the coming year.





**WE MAKE A LIVING  
BY WHAT WE GET,  
BUT WE MAKE A  
LIFE BY WHAT  
WE GIVE.**

-Winston  
Churchill



**LEGACY  
PARTNERS**

## TRI-UNITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL PROUDLY STANDS FIRM IN THE FOUNDATION OF GOD'S WORD AND HIS TRUTH.

Each day brings with it a new assault on Biblically-based education in America. God is being systematically removed from classrooms as each new curriculum seeks to eliminate even the idea that He exists. Perhaps most disturbing are the results of these attacks as many Christian schools across the country have wilted under the pressure to compromise and concede Biblical truth. At Tri-unity Christian School, we believe truth is never defined by the forces of cultural relativism but rather by the eternal authority of God's Word. If His Word says that God never changes, then neither does His Truth. Our mission then is to graduate academically excellent disciples of Christ who stand firm on God's Truth...but we need your help to do it!



### WHAT

#### What Is a Legacy Partner?

A Legacy Partner is anyone who makes an annual donation of \$1000 or more towards the gift of a Christian education at TCS for students who demonstrate qualifying financial need. Legacy gifts are applied toward the current school year unless specified otherwise.

### WHY

#### Why Become a Legacy Partner?

Over 50% of families at TCS apply for tuition assistance each year for well over \$600,000 and many more families seek qualified assistance beyond what is available. Consequently, our fundraising goals increase annually to accommodate this growing need and the families qualified to receive it.

### HOW

#### How Can I Become a Legacy Partner?

##### DONATE ONLINE

Go to [triunitychristian.org](http://triunitychristian.org) > Support TCS > Become a Legacy Partner. Follow the prompts to submit the donation information safely and securely.

##### DONATE BY MAIL

Simply mail your check or e-check made payable to Tri-unity Christian School with the Legacy Partner designation on the memo line.

*"We felt the Lord's calling to give our kids a Christian Education that would equip them with deep-rooted faith and Bible-based teaching, but we knew financially it wasn't possible. The Legacy Fund has blessed us with the ability to follow the Lord's calling on our family."* -TCS Parent

#### QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about becoming a Legacy Partner, please contact Ben Ophoff at 616-532-8827.

Your Legacy Partnership gift is 100% tax deductible.

Graduating Academically Excellent Disciples of Christ  
[triunitychristian.org](http://triunitychristian.org)

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# TRI-UNITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



Crafted by David & Brook