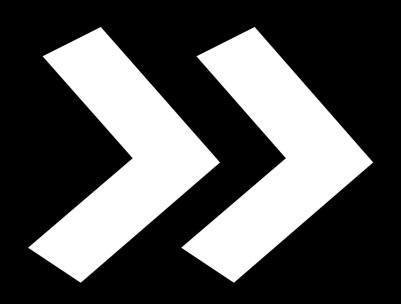


LOOKING AHEAD



JANUARY

6 School Resumes

20 Elementary
Conferences
PM ONLY
(by appt. only)

24 Homecoming

FEBRUARY

3 HS Conferences
PM ONLY
by appt. only

17-18 NO SCHOOL Mid-Winter Break

MARCH

RE-ENROLLMENT MONTH

2-6 EL Book Fair

13 End of 3rd Quarter

13 HALF-DAY (K-12)

13 All-School Praise-Gathering

16-18 Kindergarten Screening

20 Wax Museum

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We've all been there...whether by choice or directive. Take a minute and read a message from the heart of our Head Administrator.

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Board or Bored. This report is certainly the former and never the latter. Stay up to date with a special message from the Board President, Justin Knoth.

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It's been awhile since you walked the aisle! We'd love to hear where God has you now since you left TCS! Check in here and let us know!

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From the...

Principal's Office

Seasons of life are a part of God's great plan for each one of us.

The 2019-20 School year will end a tremendous season of service by two stalwarts of the Tri-unity Christian community; Ellen Birdsall and Greg Gallas. Collectively they have devoted over 50 years to this organization. For both, the job has been more than a job. It has been a ministry.

Ellen has answered thousands of tuition questions! She has met budget challenges, and been a part of big decisions. She has worked with new families and board treasurers' year after year. Ellen's steady voice has been invaluable to me and those who work with her.

I have come to know Greg Gallas as more than a school AD. I have come to know him as a friend and a man who loves the Lord above all else. Greg has swept floors, drove bus, coached, mentored new coaches, scheduled, re-scheduled, organized uniforms, striped fields and so much more.

As they close out this season of their lives, I ask you to join me in praying for their future and all God has readied for them.

Thank you for your service!





Deb Blanker - Superintendent - HS/MS/EL Principal

Board REPORT

Hello Tri-unity Family and Community!

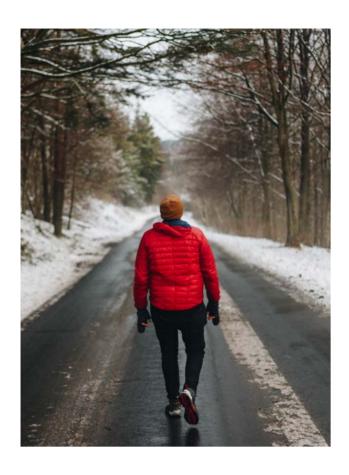
I would like to take a moment to share some very important news. As many of you have probably heard, our wonderful and faithful leader, Mrs. Deb Blanker has been considering retiring at the end of this school year. This led to much prayer and numerous conversations regarding her succession and what that would mean for TCS. Over the years, Deb's duties have grown so large that in most other districts they would be divided among several people. Yet, she handles them with grace and TCS would not be the fantastic school it is today without her. Knowing this, the Board of Trustees asked that Deb pray about reconsidering and postponing her retirement. To our delight, after much prayer and consideration, she has agreed to remain in her current position for the next school year and God willing even beyond that.

As exciting as this news is, the Board understands that we can not keep Deb forever and we are working diligently to create a succession plan for when she does decide to retire. Our goal and Deb's own desire is to make this as smooth a transition as possible when that day does come. In the meantime, we will continue to do what we believe is best for TCS and will look to implement some new structures to help support Deb and the growth and future of our great school. It is evident that God's favor rests upon Triunity Christian School and we believe that we are about to enter a period of abundant blessings over TCS. Thank you Deb, for all that you have done and continue to do for our students and our school.

Blessings!

Justin Knoth TCS Board President

the Defender







"If you come at four in the afternoon, I'll begin to be happy by three."

- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Anticipate

ANTICIPATION REVEALS THE LIMITS WE PUT ON GOD

Think of the hardest situation you are facing in life right now. Perhaps it's a health scare. It might be a family issue. Maybe it's your marriage. It could be financial.

Now ask yourself a question. Do you believe God will move in that situation?

How you answer that question may surprise you. More to the point, it may enlighten how much we do or don't trust in God's ability to move in some of our most difficult situations. So what should be a simple, even routine question of faith instead potentially betrays an underlying fracture of faith. While we readily accept that God *can* act, our concern is whether or not He *will?* And If we aren't truly sure that God will act in some way at some time, we are rarely ready when He does.

Cue the theme for the 2019-20 school year at TCS: **ANTICIPATE**.

Anticipation by definition is thinking ahead of something that hasn't happened yet. It's all about guessing what might take place so we are better prepared if/when it does. In fact, we do this all the time and probably don't even realize it. Take driving a car for example. Don't we find ourselves looking further down the road for slowdowns or stops so we are better

prepared when they eventually cause us to do the same? We do this over and over. Eventually it becomes automatic and second nature. Anticipation.

So why do we struggle to do the same with God? Don't confuse anticipation with prediction here; think expectation. The fact is, somewhere along our road with God, we may have lost the intentionality of looking down the road. We've ignored the rearview mirror of past cause and effects and we've stopped looking ahead for brake lights, green lights, or any lights for that matter. The result? Our spiritual lives become reactionary and lacking the vital proactive expectation of what God is going to do.

Anticipation means expecting that God will move and preparing yourself for readiness when He does. Notice the ingredients here. Expectation, Belief, and Preparation. None of these are reactive responses. They are proactive demonstrations of faith in a God that moves!

Too often today we are stuck in the sands of past moves of God. It's not that these moves of God are somehow less powerful and necessary today from when they initially took place but rather, it's the danger that our familiarity with these past moves has bred a template for how we now think God must move.

So here's the challenge for both this school year and 2020: Let's redefine our "possible" with God with the truth that He's the God of the Impossible so ALL IS possible. Let's anticipate that He WILL move and put ourselves in a position to be ready when He does. *BO*





FROM

he Winter athletics season has already started with only one question, where did the Fall season go? Wasn't it just the beginning of August a short time ago when the teams were reporting to their first day of practice? From Cross-Country, Cheer, Football, Soccer, and Volleyball we had over 100 high school and middle school athletes participating on our Fall sports teams. Moreover, this included a dozen athletes participating in two sports! Special congratulations to the Varsity Volleyball team for winning the Alliance Conference! What a great achievement for the Lady Defenders. Many thanks to everyone who helps make our athletic program what it is today!

That said, the Winter sports season is officially here! Boys and Girls Basketball and Boys Bowling will be on everyone's calendar for the next 4 months. Already, the Boys Middle School Basketball teams have been playing their seasons, and both teams continue to hold the standards of Tri-unity Christian School high! The Varsity Teams are right behind them and are working hard as the season has just kicked off. From here on out, it's full speed ahead as the race towards March begins! A quick reminder: All game schedules can be found on the "Big Teams" web site under Tri-unity Christian School. We do our best to communicate changes in the schedule and Tracie Kumko posts weekly schedules on Tri-unity's community Facebook.

By now, many of you are aware that this will be my last year as your Athletic Director. The completion of this year will mark 22 years of service at TCS, and 35 years in Christian Education altogether. Thank-you for making my last Fall season one of the best ever. As I reflect on my time at TCS, the wins and the championships have certainly been a highlight, but it has been the interacting with the coaches, players and families that has been the greatest experience! I will always carry these with me.

Lastly, I would like to say again what a blessing it has been to work within the TCS Community over the past 22 years. I look forward to my last Winter season here as your Athletic Director. My challenge to you is to continue holding to the standard we have here at TCS. Let's Be Different! Be the example to your kids as you want them to be on the court. Be their cheerleader not their coach. Make every effort to be Ambassadors of Christ. The excitement starts now! I hope to build memories of this last Winter season with all of you. Together, let's make this the best season ever.

Let's Go Defenders!

"Play like a Champion ... every day.""

Greg Gallas - Athletic Director



WORSITY BOSKETBOLL

December

TO THE TOTAL OF THE PARTY OF TH

3 6:00pm @ KELLOGGSVILLE

@ BELDING

LO 7:00pm HOPKINS

7:00pm

13 5:30pm WELLSPRINGS PREP

20 5:30pm CALVIN CHRISTIAN

27 5:30pm NORTHPOINTE

7:15pm @ GODWIN HEIGHTS

14 7:00pm ORCHARD VIEW

7 6:00pm @ FRUITPORT CALVARY

23 7:00pm @ ZION CHRISTIAN

28 7:00pm W

31 5:30pm

WM CHRISTIAN

@ COVENANT

E O LOUIS

3 6:30pm LANSING CHRISTIAN

7 5:30pm AVIATION ACADEMY

10 7:00pm @ WELLSPRINGS

18 5:30pm @ FENNVILLE

21 5:30pm @ BLACK RIVER

25 5:30pm @ GRAND RIVER PREP

28 5:30pm @ POTTER'S HOUSE

IVE CI

2,4,6 DISTRICTS (HOST)

10.12 REGIONALS

17 QUARTERFINALS

19-20 SEMI-FINALS

21 FINALS

December

@ BELDING 5:30pm

HOPKINS 5:30pm

CALVIN CHRISTIAN 6:30pm

NORTHPOINTE 5:30pm

5:00pm LANSING CHRISTIAN

5:30pm @ AVIATION ACADEMY

7:00pm FRUITPORT CALVARY

20 5:30pm BLACK RIVER

5:30pm POTTER'S HOUSE

@ GODWIN HEIGHTS 5:30pm

@ AVIATION ACADEMY 4:00pm

ORCHARD VIEW 5:30pm

@ FRUITPORT CALVARY 6:30pm

@ ZION CHRISTIAN 5:30pm

WM CHRISTIAN 5:30pm

March

DISTRICTS (HOST) 2,4,6

10,12 **REGIONALS**

QUARTERFINALS

SEMI-FINALS 19-20

> **FINALS** 21

WORSITY BOSKETBOLL

December

13 7:00pm WELLSPRINGS PREP

16 7:00pm @ WM CHRISTIAN

20 7:00pm CALVIN CHRISTIAN

January 1

3 7:00pm PEWAMO-WESTPHALIA

10 7:00pm BRIDGMAN

15 6:30pm @ LANSING CHRISTIAN

17 7:30pm @ FRUITPORT CALVARY

21 7:00pm @ MARTIN

24 7:30pm ZION CHRISTIAN (HC)

28 7:00pm @ KELLOGGSVILLE

31 7:00pm @ COVENANT

7:00pm AVIATION ACADEMY

11 7:00pm MORLEY-STANWOOD

14 7:00pm HOLLAND CALVARY

18 7:00pm @ FENNVILLE

21 7:00pm @ BLACK RIVER

7:00pm @ GRAND RIVER PREP

8 7:00pm @ POTTER'S HOUSE

IVI DIE CIA

3 7:00pm NORTHPOINTE

5 7:00pm HOPKINS

9,11,13 DISTRICTS

16,18 REGIONALS

24 QUARTERFINALS

26-27 SEMIFINALS

28 STATE FINALS

BOSKETBOLL

December

E O LOUIS

10 5:30pm NORTHVIEW

13 4:00pm WELLSPRINGS PREP

16 5:30pm @ WM CHRISTIAN

20 4:00pm CALVIN CHRISTIAN

6 7:00pm AVIATION ACADEMY

11 5:30pm MORLEY-STANWOOD

18 4:15pm @ FENNVILLE

20 7:00pm @ BLACK RIVER

27 7:00pm POTTER'S HOUSE

TO THE TOTAL OF THE PARTY OF TH

3 5:30pm PEWAMO-WES

5:30pm BRIDGMAN

15 5:00pm @ LANSING CHRISTIAN

17 4:30pm @ FRUITPORT CALVARY

21 5:30pm @ MARTIN

24 5:00pm ZION CHRISTIAN (HC)

28 5:30pm @ KELLOGGSVILLE

31 4:00pm @ COVENANT

March

3 5:30pm NORTHPOINTE

5 5:30pm HOPKINS

December

12 3:30pm WEST CATHOLIC (FAIRLANES) 16 3:30pm TRI-MATCH (NORTHWAY LANES) 18 3:30pm WELLSPRINGS PREP (FAIRLANES)

	3:30pm	CALVIN CHRISTIAN (FAIRLANES)
	3:30pm	WEST CATHOLIC (CLIQUE LANES)
	3:45pm	UNION (FAIRLANES)
13	3:45pm	POTTER'S HOUSE (PARK CENTER LANES)
20	3:45pm	GR PREP (FAIRLANES)
28-	-29	REGIONALS

TO THE TOTAL OF THE PARTY OF TH

4:00pm

CALVIN CHRISTIAN

		(FAIRLANES)
	3:30pm	SPARTA LANES)
16	4:00pm	WELLSPRINGS PREP (WESTGATE LANES)
	TBA	ORCHARD VIEW (NORTHWAY LANES)
	3:30pm	POTTER'S HOUSE (FAIRLANES)
	3:45pm	GR PREP

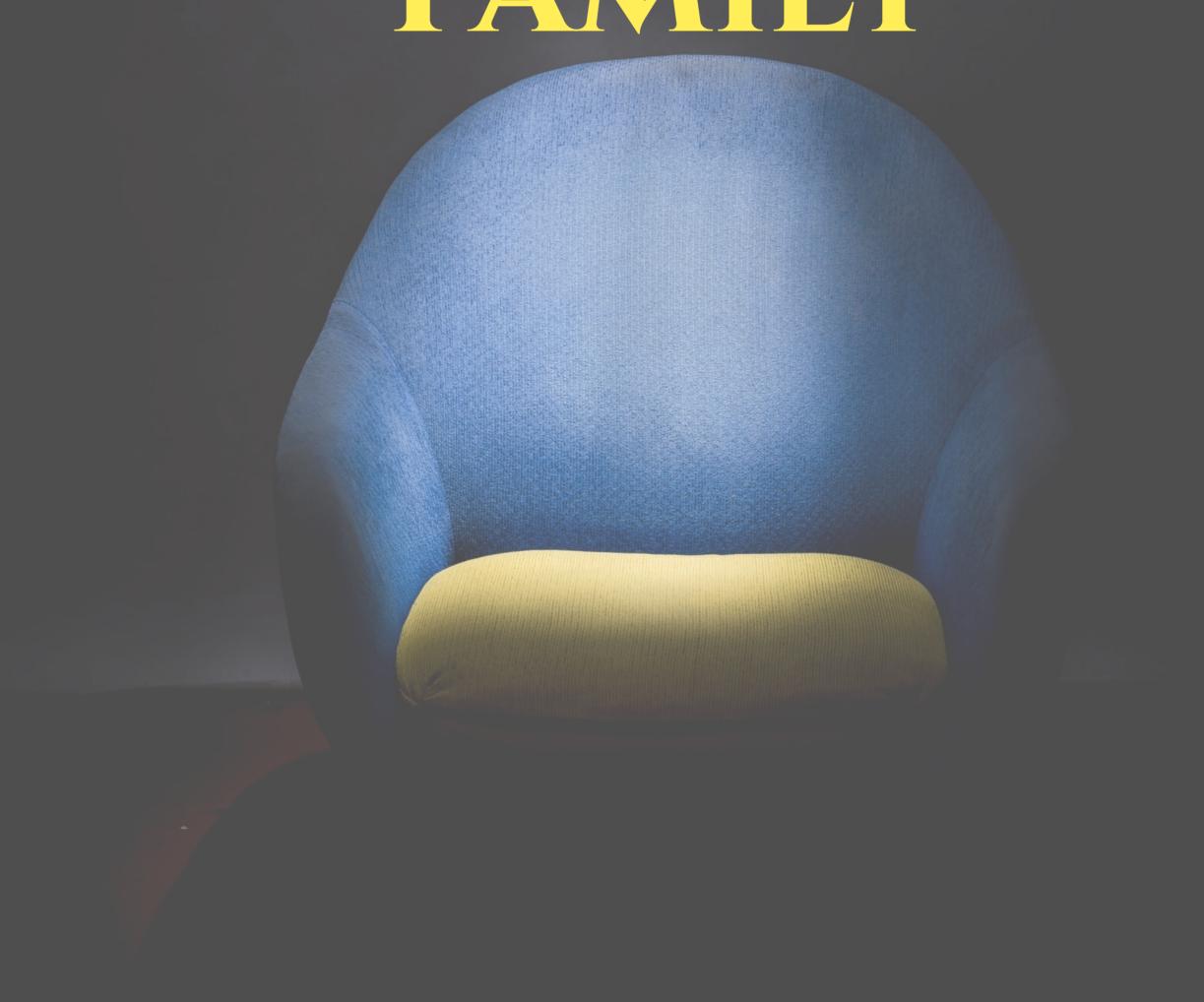
(FAIRLANES)





meet...

THE RILLEMA FAMILY







How did you hear about Tri-unity Christian School and why did you decide to send your kids here?

We had heard about Tri-unity for years because families like the DenBoer's, Smit's, Wubben's, and Smith's all go to our church and have had their children attend TCS over the years. We used to think they were crazy because of the driving distance (we live in Hopkins)! Our kids used to attend East Martin Christian School but as our family was rapidly growing (only 6 kids at that time) we ended up having to pull them out because of their high academic needs and place them in public schools. As our kids continued growing, they were growing out of their high academic needs, so we started entertaining the idea of sending our kids back to a Christian school. We looked at Moline, Byron Center Christian, and Zion, but things did not fall into place and seemed out of our reach. We had settled for the reality that sending eleven kids to a Christian school was not possible. Then, last year several of our kids approached us asking if they could be homeschooled because they were struggling significantly with many different things that were going on



in their school. Scott and I knew that if they were recognizing it was not a good fit for them then we needed to do something different. We also wanted all our kids to be together again. We loved that TCS is a Preschool-12th grade school. We prayed over this as a family. We started asking more questions and connected with Mrs. Blanker and things started falling into place. From the moment we connected with Mrs. Blanker, we felt the peace and excitement we were longing for that this dream of having our kids surrounded by a Christian school community again was no longer just a dream but could actually be a reality! Our kids were very excited about the diversity at TCS and the amount of families that are touched by adoption as well. Their life story feels more "normal" at this school. What became so obvious, overwhelming, and encouraging though was the primary concern of the TCS Staff is each student's Spiritual growth, followed by their character, their academics, and sports was last! On top of that, they wanted to partner with us in raising our kids this way!

Your family is quite large through fostering and adoption. This requires enormous intentionality and sacrifice. Tell us the story behind Scott and Becky Rillema and the "Elected Eleven."

Scott and I had always dreamed about adopting someday, both of our extended families had been touched by adoption. We were married in 2002 and started our adoption journey in 2006 being linked with a little boy in Guatemala. This felt so right and things were going very smoothly but while we were in the process the U.S and Guatemala closed down adoptions with each other due to corruption in the Guatemalan government related to adoption cases. Then we felt God was encouraging us to switch our focus to infant domestic adoption. We did so in 2007. We sat on a waiting list until January of 2009. Meanwhile, Scott and I believed



L-R: Justyn (12), Trey (14), David (13)

God was calling us into the foster care world and we started our PRIDE training to get licenses. While we were getting licensed, a lady I was working with told me about these two beautiful babies who were ages 1 and 2 at the time, Avi and Trey, who she knew were going up for adoption in her friend's home in Lansing. We started meeting with them hoping that as soon as our license was approved they would hopefully transfer these kids to our home. In September of 2008, the foster mother of Trey and Avi had a family emergency take place and called us one morning asking if we could meet up with her and move them into our home so she could care for a family member. The agency allowed them to move in as we qualified as respite care givers by this time. So with only a few hour's notice, we went from a house of just the two of us to a family of four! With a few texts and the help of our Church family, we had beds, clothes, and toys waiting for us by the time we got back home with the kids! In January of 2009, we were also chosen by a birth mom of a little boy in Saginaw and we went through that approval process. Sadly, once the agency we were working with found out

we had two foster kids in our care they rejected the adoption because "others were not willing to grow their family through foster care, and we may not have the safest home anymore doing foster care." So in 6 months we went from 0 kids to 2 kids, to possibly 3, then back down to 2, knowing we could go back down to 0 because we had not yet been chosen to adopt Trey and Avi! To say we were devastated and scared was an understatement. We were wondering how many babies God was going to allow us to get connected with and then pull them back away again? But God knew the desires of our heart! At this time, we continued trying to follow God's calling to adopt but things did not fall into place time and time again. Then in April of 2009, the opportunity arose to foster an 18-month old baby for a few months. We were now a family of three...all ages 3 and younger. Once this little one left, we gained three more. This made us a family of five, ages 6 and younger. In October of 2009, after fighting all summer to adopt Trey and Avi, we lost to a family that the agency claimed could care for them better because they were a family of color. But the story wasn't over! After several weekend visits with the kids, we began to suspect that this family was not treating the kids very well. We pleaded with the agency and begged God for grace and intervention as Trey and Avi had been in our care for over a year and we believed God had called us to be their parents for more than just the past year. But time went on with no change and October 18, 2009 arrived. This was the date that we had to pack up all Trey and Avi's belongings, along with a photo album I had made, were forced to hand them over to their new family. This was so hard as we assumed this was the last time we would ever see them again. We were scared, in despair, confused, and lonely; probably the first time Scott and I were literally on our knees in prayer because we knew deep down that Trey and Avi belonged with us forever. Then on October 31, 2009 God answered our prayers! We received a phone call saying that the agency had done a "surprise visit" as we had requested they do many times and what they found was not okay!



They were now asking us if we could head over to Lansing and pick them up and they would proceed with allowing us to adopt Trey and Avi! What a praise report! In June of 2010, the sibling group of three we had been fostering was reunited with their bio family after having them for about a year. We asked for a one-week vacation with Trey and Avi before we took on any more kids. We made it about three days before they called us on vacation asking if we would be willing to take on four boys! (Nate, Preston, David, and Justyn) We thought they were crazy! We also knew that if this is what God wanted us to do he would give us direction and that He did! We asked for them to give us a few days once we got home to get a bigger vehicle because our Minivan only could hold seven. We found a really great deal on a used Suburban that week and then the boys moved in. They were in 2 different homes and were now able to be together! We had a couple other kiddos that would come and go in short periods of time in there and we kept our foster care license open in case more bio siblings were born. We did really believe six kids was enough. But in February of 2013 we were approached about Joshua, who Lord willing, will have a significant story to tell someday regarding the obstacles he has overcome in his life! This was not a smooth transition but we broke down that tough exterior one step at a time believing again that every kid God placed in our home was there for a reason! In the spring of 2015 we were approached about a little girl who was 5 years old and who needed a home. At this time, we had 6 boys and 1 girl and we had said if there was an African-American girl who with no siblings



L-R: Preston (15), Josh (14), Trey (14), Jayla (8), Avi (12), Nate (17), Vo'Cean (2)

David (13), Albanie (4), Faith (10), Justyn (12)

that we would love to find a sister for Avi. This was Faith. The thing is, Faith was coming to us with significant needs. When we met her at the age of five, she was not speaking. She made noises, and would spin on her knees a lot. We met with both of her prior foster families and they told us that with seven other kids in our care there was no way we could handle her. We met Faith and she was beautiful, but we believed that we had our hands full already so we could not take her in. BUT GOD! We went to church that Sunday and our missionaries talked about how if you follow God's calling He will surround you with the resources you need to fulfill his calling! Scott and I both had tears streaming from our eyes. One of my boys looked up at me with his little eyes and asked "did you just hear Jesus talking to you?" We knew that God was telling us we needed to take in Faith. She had been up for adoption since she was 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ years old. We called the agency on Monday and started the paperwork. She moved in the summer of 2015. We started weaning her off all her meds she was on and out sprung this beautiful girl with such a vibrant personality. We started with the basics learning all her colors and numbers etc. We did kindergarten twice and tutoring every summer and caught her up very close to grade level. We tell everyone we adopted Faith on Faith alone! Faith ended up getting adopted before Joshua, but after Joshua was adopted in February of 2016 we decided that 8 kids was enough and we closed our foster care license. God has a funny sense of humor though; you see He doesn't like it when we try to put limits on Him. The Sunday after we closed our foster care license there was this new mom in our church with two beautiful babies that were 4 years old and 4 months old (Jayla & mop; Aubie). I introduced myself to her; she was new to the area and I asked her if she needed help with anything. She happened to need help with childcare! Well the first Friday evening we were supposed to watch these two kids quickly turned into a whole weekend. In fact, we continued to care for them every week for about 3-4 days per week. Finally, we obtained full time guardianship of them in June of 2016. Then the mother had another baby in March of 2017 and Vo'cean moved in with us at 8 weeks old! We tell God we are open to as many kids as He asks us to care for but personally we feel 11 is enough! We say we are not setting limits on God - but honestly my husband is against getting a 15passenger van because he is afraid that God will fill it!:)

What are some challenges that the Rillema Family has faced and how has God come through along the journey?

We have experienced many challenges along the way...some that we've talked about already and some that are too recent and will be part of the testimony of our kids in the future! Along the way, it has been the Word that has gotten us through every obstacle. Verses such as Exodus 14:14 (the Lord will fight for you, you need only to be still), Romans 8:26 (the Spirit helps us in our weakness), Joshua 1:9 (be strong and courageous, do not be afraid for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go), 1 John 4:19 (we love because he 1st loved us), Romans 8:28, Deuteronomy 31:6, Psalm 12:6-7, 1 Corinthians 5:17, Isaiah 41:10, Jeremiah 29:11, Isaiah 60:22 and so many more. Also, we are so thankful for our massive support system and the many prayer warriors that pray for us through this journey called life.



With such a large family, there has to be so many funny stories! What are some of the best that you can remember?

LISTEN TO ME! Recently we were all sitting around the kitchen table everyone was talking, there were several conversations going on with different people, it was getting pretty loud. Then, out of nowhere, our 2 year old just started singing at the top of his lungs, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"! It made every conversation stop at the table and everyone started laughing. Obviously we must have been leaving him out and he wanted to join in on the noise as well!

FIELD TRIP? It's not uncommon when walking through the grocery store for our kids to be asked by strangers, "What Field Trip are you on? I mean, what else would a group of kids this size be doing?

HOW MUCH FOOD? People ask us random questions like how much food do you guys eat? In general we go through 4lbs of meat in a sitting with fillers. We go trough 11 gallons of milk a week. We go through 2 boxes of cereal each morning and a loaf of bread to make school lunches. Those "large boxes" of snacks that come with 30-40 in them don't even get us through the week. We go through 90-130 snacks a week - just in lunches with each kid taking 2-3 snacks.

HERE COMES THAT VAN! We hear comments about our "white stalker van"...We can do just about anything other families can do with a family this size but when it comes to vehicle selection - the options are VERY limited!

If the Rillema Family was an animal, which would it be and why?

The first animal I thought of were ants - because just like ants, it takes our whole army to work together to move us forward each day and to get tasks done! However, my kids said ants are not animals! They said we are more like geese. There is usually always a leader in the flock. They take good care of each other and they make a lot of noise!



Josh and Nate with Grandparents after a Defender Football Game

What are you most proud of when it comes to your 11 kids?

The fact they are all so uniquely different but can operate as one strong unit. We have used the analogy of puzzle pieces being all different shapes and colors but when they come together they make a beautiful picture. It is so addicting to see the progress that these kids make and the obstacles they overcome. Our favorite times are when we are able to all sit around the table together, do devotions together, play family games together and just hang out together. We use to go out to eat periodically when they could all eat off the kids menus. At least 90% of the time people would come up and complement us at our table for how well behaved they were, that we prayed together and talked together. Many times our bill

was paid for or at least a large chunk of it. The kids at first were in awe of this happening time and time again, but then it almost became a norm. Scott and I do lots of volunteering so our kids are learning to enjoy doing this too - and we can get a lot of work done in a short period of time with all these hard workers!

Last Question. What advice or wisdom would you pass on to other parents as result of your experiences?

Kids are not cookie cutters. They are each uniquely different, made perfectly in God's image. They all interact differently, learn differently and respond differently to each situation. We need to look more at the "why" then the "what's". We need to be in God's word regularly and rest on his grace, patience, and unconditional love with us so we can pass this on to our kids as well!



AlumiCorner

Reconnect. Renew. Re-engage.

HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU GRADUATED OR ATTENDED TCS?

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR WHERE GOD HAS TAKEN YOU IN LIFE SINCE THEN!







DEEP ROOTS | STRONG WINGS