



# CCSIGNAL

A publication of Community Christian School

"Educational Excellence through Christ"

August 2023

## Graduation Edition

### Grads honored....as Pig??? Squirrel???

It's no surprise that CCS teacher Hannah Barton chose a variety of animals to represent the personalities or character traits of her six graduating eighth-graders this spring. After all, the chapel theme for the 2022-23 school year was Bible Safari, with a focus on animals of the Bible. But some of her animal choices were a BIG surprise – evoking laughter and raising eyebrows at the May 24 CCS graduation ceremony, which was one of the most fun and emotional ceremonies in recent years.

Who won the Pig Award? Or the Squirrel Award? Or the Raccoon Award? Let's find out. Following are brief profiles of the six graduates – all of whom started at CCS in kindergarten except for Abram Ribbens, who was new this year:

**ISAAC ALVAREZ** is the son of Jacob Alvarez and Niki Gidel and plans to attend Manson-Northwest Webster High School this fall. He was given the Squirrel Award, "not because he gets really distracted or anything like that," explained Mrs. Barton after the laughter subsided, "but because he's never afraid to go out on a limb. He's always willing to try new things, and he's also the one who is willing to ask questions that other people don't feel comfortable asking, or think to themselves but don't ask." He also received the Bible Memory Award.

**MIAH HEATH** is the daughter of Drs. Brent and Bethany Heath and plans to attend Fort Dodge Senior High. She received the Tiger Award, "Because she pounced on every challenge that came her way," Mrs. Barton said. "Miah is definitely one who, if something doesn't always come super easy, like a math problem, she would work so hard to figure it out and that always very-much impressed me."

**ELIJAH LAWRENCE** is the son of Nathan and Amber Lawrence and plans to attend FDSH. He received the Raccoon Award, "for looking for new ways to solve problems," said Mrs. Barton. "If there is a problem, he tries to figure out how to fix it with his unique way of looking at things." He also received the Bible Memory Award for saying all of the year's Bible memory verses, "which is quite a feat," Mrs. Barton said.

**ELIZA McCULLOUGH** is the daughter of Reed and Emily McCullough and plans to attend FDSH. She received the Koala Award, "for always being willing to give a nice hug," Mrs. Barton said. "Even in little elementary school she was always giving hugs to everybody – even me, a 7th and 8th grade teacher who she wouldn't really see that much except at recess." Hannah laughed as she related a story that Eliza's fifth-grade teacher, Marsha Halbach, said she eventually had to limit Eliza's hugs to once a day.



The six CCS eighth-grade graduates of 2023 will be heading off to four different high schools this fall. From left are Elijah Lawrence, Kieler Smith, Miah Heath, Abram Ribbens (front), Isaac Alvarez and Eliza McCullough.

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# Coble-Day Comments

## Reflections on a wonderful year

As I close out my third school year as Principal my heart is overflowing with appreciation and gratitude. I have been so blessed to be a part of Community Christian School and I am grateful as I reflect on the final months of the school year, which we filled with so many activities and so much learning that we didn't have time to sit and ponder them until the last day was over.

## Jumping into summer projects

Many of those reflections are below, but in the meantime, we've jumped into several important school improvement projects this summer including: video camera installation, window tinting, and carpet replacement in the chapel. I have ordered new items for classrooms and a lot of new curricula. It has been a busy summer with a lot of anticipation for the new school year in August. We'll be excited to welcome several new students and teachers knowing they will add so much to CCS. It brings a smile to my face thinking about the great memories from the last school year and what the coming year will bring.

## Conferences, Book Fair

We wrapped up March with very successful Parent Teacher Conferences for Kindergarten through eighth grade. It is always wonderful for the families to be in the classrooms to hear all of the great things their kids have accomplished this year. We are blessed to have students who want to learn and grow academically and spiritually. During conferences we hosted our annual Book Fair overseen by our fabulous librarian Mary Bowser and her assistant Ruth McCullough. Kids of all ages brought their parents to see the wide selection of books and many were purchased for homes and classrooms thanks to the generosity of parents.

## Thank you, PTF!

Parent Teacher Fellowship ended the year strong with candy bars sales in the spring and the annual rummage sale in July. We are appreciative of the many fundraising efforts of PTF. The money raised is used to fund many projects and activities throughout the year including Teacher Appreciation Week, purchasing materials and supplies, and sponsoring the all-school field trip at the end of year. Special thanks to Emily McCullough, Tawny Anderson and Bethany Heath and the rest of the parent volunteers that work so hard to raise money and take care of the students and staff.

## Serving our city

We pride ourselves on service at CCS and once again we celebrated Earth Day by cleaning the school grounds and other areas in the community. It is a great opportunity to help make our environment a little cleaner and do something good for Fort Dodge. Third through eighth graders went off campus to do their cleanup at the Highland Park campus and the grounds behind Walmart and Target.

## Student talents on full display

Our multi-talented students were on full display in May during the Student Music Recital and the Spring Music Concert thanks to the vocal and instrumental music instruction of Mrs. Bodholdt. The concert included songs from Broadway Musicals such as The Lion King, Annie, Newsies, The Sounds of Music and Wicked, among others. It was a great opportunity to hear the band that returned this school year with great success, and we thank Mrs. B. for her willingness to bring the band back!

The Spring Art Show continues to impress me as the students display the wide variety of artistic styles they learn about during the year – from water colors, paint, clay, weavings and much more. We are so blessed to have Mrs. Stephan as our teacher. She really helps all students develop and grow their artistic abilities, as her knowledge and enthusiasm for art are ever present. The older students have the opportunity to be in an art club that does special activities throughout the year, and at the end of this year, they started working on a mural in the library which is very impressive.

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## Community Christian School

*"Educational Excellence through Christ"*

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## 'Comments' continued from Page 2

### Graduation celebrations

The end of the year brought many celebrations including three graduation ceremonies. The eighth-grade class of six amazing students had an awesome send-off thanks to Mrs. Barton. There was laughter, tears, and a lot of smiles as they reflected on their time at CCS. Special guests Mary Bowser and Jennifer Schild were chosen by the class to be the graduation speakers. The two shared wonderful stories and memories dating back to when the graduates were in kindergarten. They are such a great group of students and will be missed by all. We hope high school brings some many wonderful experiences, opportunities and memories for each of them. Best wishes Eliza McCullough, Miah Heath, Isaac Alvarez, Abram Ribbens, Elijah Lawrence and Kieler Smith.

The kindergarten class was a close-knit and fun group of kids that supported each other throughout the year. It was fun to watch them grow in their faith and their deep care for one another. Mrs. Butler and her assistant Mrs. McCullough did a wonderful job highlighting each student's gifts during their graduation ceremony.

The wonderful 4-year preschool morning and afternoon classes joined together for one big celebration. They were such a blessing to watch, learn and grow together. We were so happy to have Ms. Victoria finishing the school year as the lead teacher, along with new staff Ms. Amanda. It was Ms. Victoria's third year as staff in the preschool room and she is a great blessing to the program. Her love for God and the children is the focus of all she does.

### A flurry of send-off events

We were blessed to wrap up the school year with the all-school field trip to Living History Farms, thanks to the financial support of PTF. It was a beautiful day to be in Clive to learn about farming in Iowa. The students, teachers and parent chaperones had a wonderful day together.

The last full day of school was a great day to celebrate all students. We start with the awards ceremony where teachers recognize students' abilities, gifts and special talents. And the afternoon is the all-school Talent Show. Students performed a wide variety of ways including singing, playing instruments, and even doing card tricks. Two guest judges gave helpful comments to the students following the performances and selected the top three performers – Elijah Lawrence, Miah Heath, and Isaiah Lawrence.

On the final half-day of school, we help the kids go out with a bang with field events, group art installations, kickball, and fun food provided by PTF (cotton candy, popcorn and ice cream sandwiches). We send them off with a water balloon fight and gather at the flagpole for a final prayer. Sending kids off for the summer after a wonderful school year is bitter sweet but the memories of all the great things that were accomplished by students and staff helps soften the emptiness of the building as May turns into June.

### Blessings

My final thought is from Eph.1:4 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.”

“Comments” is a column written by CCS Principal  
Stephanie Coble-Day

## Tasks accomplished!

Several improvement projects have been undertaken at CCS this summer – including the replacement of some exterior doors. Pictured are two of the completed projects.



CCS Administrative Assistant Lauri Wendell stands next to a screen near her office desk which contains up to 16 views from security cameras that have been installed inside and outside the school building.



Sarah (Butterfield) Diaz installs a carpet square in the school chapel.



The volunteer team of carpet layers pose for a photo after finishing the job of recarpeting the entire chapel area. From left are Steve Slife, Stephen Butterfield, Jill (Butterfield) Luedtke, Carlos Diaz and Sarah (Butterfield) Diaz. Jill did a lion's share of the work and several other volunteers not pictured also pitched in. The Butterfields are all CCS alumni. “We love CCS,” Sarah said.

# Nelson is alumni scholarship winner

**MORGAN NELSON**, a 2023 graduate of Fort Dodge Senior High, is the winner of this year's \$250 CCS Alumni Scholarship. She is the daughter of David and Fonda Nelson and attended CCS from preschool through seventh grade. Her Dad also attended CCS. Morgan will be a business major at Iowa Central Community College this fall. She is a widely-accomplished barrel racer and plans to participate in the ICCC rodeo program. Below is her scholarship application essay.



*Scrolling way back to the fall of 2007, I took my first steps into Community Christian School. From three-year-old preschool all the way to seventh grade, I grew not only in book smarts but also in my relationship with God. CCS's main point was bringing kids to God and applying it to learning in the classroom. Without this school, my relationship with God would not be half of what it is today. They instilled in me from a very young age that everything is possible with God, so why would you not want Him in your life?*

*'Their voices in the back of my head...'*

*Throughout those years at CCS, I had very Godly and motivating teachers. My all-time favorite was Jennifer Schild. She was my kindergarten teacher but also my life-time teacher. She always made school fun and brought it back to God. Even beyond kindergarten she has continued to check in and encourage me through my growing years. I had many other good teachers that really pushed me to be the best I could be because they saw the potential in me that I did not. They helped me prepare for the harder times and classes that were to come. Now, when I face a problem in life, I can hear them saying, "Ask God for help" and "You can do anything you put your mind to." Their voices in the back of my head have really helped me through the harder days I have experienced.*

*'I soon did not want to be like everyone else'*

*As I entered high school, I was very nervous and scared that I would not fit in, or would not be smart enough, or would not be like everyone else. But the longer I was at Fort Dodge Senior High, the more I started to realize the difference I had was a good one. I soon did not want to be like everyone else and was glad the way God made me. I was so happy that I had Christ in my heart because He helped me through the hard assignments that other students struggled with, and He helped me give teachers the respect they deserved. The learning style at Community Christian made the FDSH classes so much easier because CCS made classes hard and challenging. So, once I got to Senior High, where it seemed like the learning level was aimed at the lowest student in the class, I flew right through the assignments with no problems. I was usually weeks ahead in every class with straight A's.*

*'I will never take it (CCS) for granted'*

*CCS has impacted me in all positive ways and I will never take it for granted. I developed a strong relationship with God and a hard work ethic. I believe in myself and the abilities God has stored inside of me. I now use those strengths and abilities for His glory. Everything I do in today's world I do for Him. I will forever be grateful for Community Christian School for all of the connections, friendships, learning abilities, and my relationship with Christ it has put in my life.*





*Mary Bowser, at left in the above photo, and Jennifer Schild were chosen by the CCS class of 2023 to be their graduation speakers. The result was an emotional combination of laughter and tears.*

*Jennifer was their kindergarten teacher while Mary was a school volunteer who also knew them from kindergarten. Mary, the CCS librarian, had the class sit on the floor with her as she spoke – just as she had done during library story time throughout the years. Jennifer played ‘Gator’ the guitar and led everyone in the singing of ‘Apple Red Happiness’ – a song she taught to most of her 30-some kindergarten classes before retiring in 2017.*



## Mrs. Barton steps away

Hannah Barton, who has been the CCS 7th-8th grade teacher for the last 6½ years, is stepping away from teaching to become a full-time stay-at-home wife and mother for her husband Jonathon and their three young children. She started at CCS at the beginning of the second semester of the 2016-2017 school year. We’ve been blessed to have her as such an important member of the CCS family and we pray for God’s blessings on her and her family moving forward.



*Abram Ribbens displays his Pig Award certificate.*



*CCS Board President Dan Jacobson addresses the graduates.*





The CCS entry in the Frontier Days Parade earned first place among religious entries and second place for theme. It was a covered wagon titled 'The Traveling Crusaders from Community Christian School.' The parade theme was 'Tall Tales of the Frontier.'

Grads honored...  
continued from Page 1

# Art Show Sampler

**ABRAM RIBBENS** is the son of Jason and Erin Ribbens and plans to attend St. Edmond High School in Fort Dodge. "Abram, this is going to sound really bad and I'm sorry, but Abram gets the Pig Award," Mrs. Barton announced, to much laughter. "It's because he's always ready to ham it up. He likes to smile and make others smile and bring joy to the classroom," she said, as many students cheered.

**KIELER SMITH** is the son of Chris Smith and Lisa Johnson-Smith and plans to attend Kuepfer High School in Carroll. He gets The Great White Shark Award, "because sharks always have to keep moving forward or they can't breathe," Mrs. Barton explained. "Kieler has a talent for doing what he needs to get done and then being ready to move on to the next thing, and he does a good job on it, whether it's in academics or in life."



**Slab Clay Pots**  
5th and 6th Grade  
The fifth and sixth graders learned how to roll their own slabs of clay and some added texture to their slabs using different objects. They then learned how to assemble the slabs into a pot using the score and slip method so that the walls would stay strong! Adding color to these pots enhances the texture and gives them personality!



**Circle Weavings**  
2nd Grade  
The second graders learned about different elements of weaving and then painted plates to use as looms for their own weavings! They learned to warp their looms and used all different types of yarn to weave and make beautiful designs!



**Dragon Eyes**  
5th and 6th Grades  
The 5th and 6th graders practiced drawing detailed dragon eyes focusing on scale, texture, and variety! They then used different colored pencil techniques to create value and focus on a color scheme. Adding different scales, horns, and details make these dragons all one of a kind!



**Line and Rainbow Paintings**  
Kindergarten  
The Kindergartners learned about all different types of lines and even invented some of their own! They filled their paper by drawing lines all the way from side to side with an oil pastel. Then they painted in-between their lines in the correct rainbow order!





**Will any of these 2023 kindergarten graduates have their own children attend CCS some day? From left are Molly Anderson, William Behrens, Jeremiah Chavez, Charolette Fisher, Colson Fisher, Lydia Grim, Julieta Guitron Palomera, Ava Huffman, Koralyne Peart, Maddie Pettit and Wyatt Rentz.**



## Long-time aide McCullough has come full circle at CCS

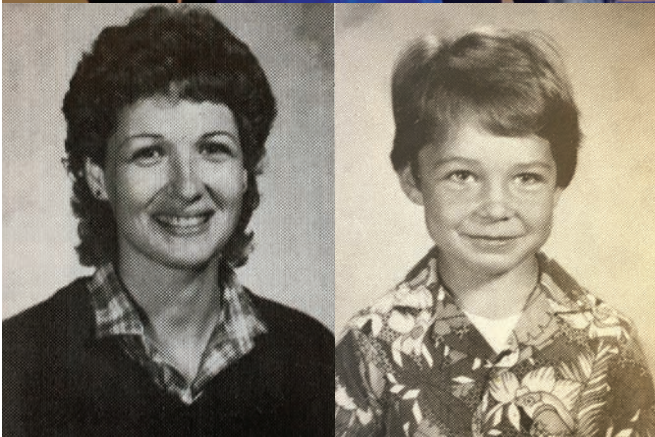
In a sense, Ruth McCullough has come full circle as a CCS aide. At least that's how it must look to CCS board member and treasurer Clayton Anderson. You see, Ruth was a pre-school aide when Clayton was in CCS preschool back in 1987. And this year – 35 years later – Ruth was a kindergarten aide with a class that included Molly Anderson, the youngest of the four children of Clayton and wife Tawny (who first met as CCS elementary students).

Ruth and husband Roger are perfect examples of the multi-generational, family nature of Community Christian School. Their son Ryan graduated from CCS as a senior in 1990 when CCS had a high school. And Roger recently completed a term on the school board.

Ruth started as a CCS library aide alongside Jean Barnett in 1983, when Ruth's son Reed was in kindergarten. Reed recently has been a school board member and CCS athletic director and coach. And Reed's daughter Eliza, Ruth's granddaughter, just graduated from eighth grade this year.

"It's been so much fun," said Ruth, who is also a library aide this year. She has been an aide in numerous different grades throughout the years. "They've all been awesome years," she said. Her time at CCS hasn't been continuous. For 9½ years she worked at the Fort Dodge Public Library and for 15 years she was bookkeeper at her church. She returned to CCS when Eliza was in kindergarten.

**Ruth McCullough, left, was a kindergarten aide for Molly Anderson this year and a pre-school aide for Molly's dad Clayton in 1987-88. At bottom are yearbook photos of Ruth as an aide in 1983 and Clayton as a preschooler in 1987.**







## Beach Fun!

**LEFT PHOTO:** CCS alum Carson Norine, right, and daughter Anna pose for a colorful picture with 5th-6th grade teacher Rick Mandernach during the Beach Fun Night all-school fundraiser in March. Carson, who attended CCS from K-8, is beginning his 15th year of teaching this fall including 14 in Blair (Neb.) Community Schools – five years as a sixth-grade science teacher and nine years as K-12 HAL (High Ability Learner) Coordinator. He also taught one year of high school robotics and four years of high school STEM during that time, and he is the school's head cross country coach.

**RIGHT PHOTO:** Daycare buddies Aston Myer, left, and Ezekiel Pena roar like hungry tigers at Beach Fun Night. Both will be in the CCS 4-year preschool this fall.

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