

The background of the entire cover is a close-up photograph of various wooden planks and beams, stacked and arranged in a way that creates a textured, layered effect. The wood has natural grain patterns and varying shades of brown and tan.

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

IMPACT

R E P O R T

2018 ————— 2019



COVER PHOTO / PRAYER WALL

The Grand Rapids Christian High School prayer wall is a unique, living feature designed to be shared by all high school students, staff, and teachers. Staff utilized wood from decades of shop storage to complete the project, which was initially inspired by a GRCS student who requested that a friend tuck a prayer in Jerusalem's famous Western Wall. Designed as a wooden representation of the wall in Jerusalem, the Prayer Wall is a safe space for prayers and devotions and serves as a tangible example to students of how we are to live in community – sharing our prayer requests with our fellow Christians and together bringing them to God.

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DEAR FRIENDS,



2018-2019 was a dynamic year. Together, we witnessed the accomplishments of nearly 2300 students as they navigated their own personal journeys, grew in their relationships with God, participated in hundreds of co-curricular activities, and weathered an unprecedented number of snow days!

At the end of the year, 210 students became high school graduates at commencement, representing the 99th graduating class of Grand Rapids Christian High School — taking their next step toward continuing education, service, or work — prepared to be effective servants of Christ in contemporary society. We pray for them in their continued journeys of faith and action.

These high school seniors, in addition to all of the students at our five campuses, were guided by our dedicated faculty and staff, the wider community, and the annual themes that permeated each classroom throughout the year. These themes, thoughtfully developed by the staff at each school, anchored the students and teachers as they explored together God's call on students' lives through meaningful lessons learned both in and outside of the classroom.



WORKING IN GOD'S GARDEN

GRCES IROQUOIS
PSALM 24:1

*The earth belongs to the Lord
And so does everything in it.*

COMMUNICATION IN GOD'S CREATION

GRCES EVERGREEN
PSALM 105:1-2

*Give thanks to the Lord, call
on His name; make known
among the nations what He
has done. Sing to Him, sing
praise to Him; tell of all His
wonderful acts.*

HOPE ANCHORS THE SOUL

ROCKFORD CHRISTIAN
HEBREWS 6:19A

*We have this hope as an
anchor for the soul, firm
and secure.*

BUILD THE KINGDOM HERE

GRCMS
MICAH 6:8

*He has shown you, O mortal,
what is good. And what does
the Lord require of you? To act
justly and to love mercy and
to walk humbly with your God.*

LEAVE YOUR MARK

GRCHS
1 TIMOTHY 4:12

*Don't let anyone look down
on you because you are
young, but set an example
for the believers in speech, in
conduct, in love, in faith, and
in purity.*

The 2018-2019 Impact Report is devoted to exploring how each school lived out its unique theme. At the Iroquois Campus, Krista Vanderzee and Rachel Jen's second-grade Spanish Immersion class developed new ways to decrease waste in their classroom, demonstrating how even small children can "work in God's garden" to protect and preserve the Earth. At GRCMS, Stephanie Tanis' annual health fair guided students in the exploration of serious health topics, encouraging empathy for the struggles of others as they "build a kingdom" of understanding and support. At Christian High, Eagle Way Award winners demonstrated grace and perseverance in their journeys toward graduation, "leaving their mark" on a diverse world.

These stories and many more showcase Grand Rapids Christian's dedication to upholding Christian teachings while implementing unique, comprehensive learning across disciplines. Join us as we celebrate the tangible ways in which students and graduates of Grand Rapids Christian Schools embody our mission today and the many days to come.



Tom DeJonge,
Superintendent

2019 EAGLE WAY AWARD RECIPIENTS EMBODY PERSEVERANCE AND DEDICATION

At Grand Rapids Christian High School, students and staff are guided by The Eagle Way, a set of core values that enable students to grow and learn in the classroom while preparing to be servants of Christ in contemporary society.

These values include:
honoring God,
maintaining integrity,
striving for educational
excellence, fostering
relationships with
others, serving their
home and church
communities, and
seeking the mindset of
Christ through service.

Each year at Senior Awards Night, two Eagle Way Award recipients are chosen that embody these values. Senior Award recipients are chosen by faculty and staff for the manner in which they have discovered their gifts and have begun to live them out, leaving an indelible mark on the GRCS community. In 2019, **Olivia Haverkamp** and **Ben Swedberg** received the Eagle Way Awards.

OLIVIA HAVERKAMP

Olivia, who attended GRCS for her entire schooling, except for one year at Zoo School, has a passion for learning. “I love school, studying,” she says. Olivia maintained her excitement for education even after she was diagnosed with sarcoma, or bone cancer, during her sophomore year. As she battled her illness and spent much of her time in the hospital, Olivia yearned to be in the classroom.

“School was just my favorite thing. That’s where I always wanted to be when I was an inpatient in the hospital...something that I could focus on.”

Olivia continued her education at GRCS and went on to achieve a 4.17 GPA. It was this achievement and perseverance that earned her the Feenstra Scholarship for pre-med students at Calvin College, a joint partnership with the University of Michigan that pays for her undergraduate education and guarantees her an interview at U of M medical school. “I just want to say thank you to all of the staff and everyone at GRCS,” says Olivia. “I couldn’t have done any of it without them.”

1 TIMOTHY 4:12

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity.



BEN SWEDBERG

Ben Swedberg lives out the advice of one of his favorite teachers, Steve Tuit: "It's not about the work, it's about the process." During his time at GRCHS, Ben reveled in each experience, participating in theatre, peer listening, improv, and forensics.

"These extracurriculars provided me with confidence, skills, and an outstanding group of friends," he says. "They helped me to surround myself with like-minded people who were focused on building supportive relationships and pushing each other."

Ben was also a devoted student, favoring AP Psychology, AP European History, and AP Calculus, the latter of which was the most challenging. "There were nights that I would spend three to four hours on one homework assignment," he says. "However, after all that work, there was always the moment in which a skill became cemented or the rationale behind a theorem became fully apparent. These were some of the most gratifying moments I experienced in high school."

Having worked at Camp Roger's day program Camp Scottie this summer, Ben is attending Northwestern University this fall, majoring in communication studies and international studies. Confident but flexible, Ben looks forward to the unknown. "Ultimately, I'm not really sure what life after graduation holds for me," he says. "I'm glad to say, though, that I'm confident in my ability to face it head-on after four years at GRCHS."



ANNUAL HEALTH FAIR BUILDS EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING

Health can be a tricky subject at any age. No matter your background, you likely have struggled with a health issue — big, small, or somewhere in between. And you've probably found that information is key to understanding and treating your illness.

For seventh graders at Grand Rapids Christian Middle School, this lesson is applied thoughtfully over the course of a six-week project in Stephanie Tanis' science class. Pairing scientific research with critical thinking and writing in Jennifer DeBoer's English language arts class, the two collaborate annually to inspire students to research and present health topics of their choice at the school's health fair.

A Grand Rapids Christian graduate herself with an interest in science and health, Tanis launched the first health fair at GRCMS during the 2012-2013 school year. "I thought it would be a good idea for the kids to write a bigger research paper related to science," says Tanis, who also guided her students through the creation of a display board and oral presentation.

The first year of the fair was a success, and Tanis realized that she had curated a project that was not only a useful academic tool, but a personal one. Encouraged to consider thoughtfully which topic they will research, students almost always choose a health issue that has affected themselves, a friend, or family member. Others have investigated their own diagnosis and symptoms of ADHD or learned more about the stigma surrounding mental health disorders like depression and anxiety.

"It's very empowering to understand your own symptoms," says Tanis. "It really does connect with the kids."

Working collaboratively with Jennifer DeBoer for the past six years, Tanis has realized the scope of this long-term, cross-disciplinary project. "It covers so many skills that kids need to have," she says.

"Steph and I want to make sure that the students are getting the whole experience, so writing the paper in ELA makes sense," says DeBoer.

"I spend the first two weeks after iXplore teaching them how to make a provable claim about their topic and then how to research based on that claim. This is the culmination project of seventh grade ELA as well because it allows students to put together all the skills they have learned thus far in ELA with regards to writing a research paper. We really promote this as higher-level learning."

MICAH 6:8

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

“We are preparing students to be thinkers and decision-makers in the real world.”

After choosing their particular topic, students then make a scientific claim and begin compiling and explaining the evidence in the form of a research paper, oral presentation, and display board for the health fair.

“This project is filled with authentic learning that requires students to think about a particular topic but then to decide what they think about that topic and research accordingly. We are preparing them to be thinkers and decision-makers in the real world,” says DeBoer.

Held at the end of May each year, the health fair is open to the GRCS community and gives the students an opportunity to showcase what they’ve learned and connect with community members on their topic.

“Kids have had some cool experiences,” says Tanis, recalling one instance in particular in which a woman with functional schizophrenia approached the student reporting on that issue and discussed her first-hand experience living with the disease.

Each year, Tanis and DeBoer are further impressed with their students’ ability to explore a topic that interests and excites them. With just the structure and support to get going, “They will just go way beyond what you anticipate,” says Tanis.

By diving into the research of real-world problems and definitive solutions, students connect with each other and community members. “The health fair enabled a further sense of empathy for others as I learned about different ways people struggle,” reflects current ninth-grader Olivia May. “It was helpful and interesting to learn more about the human body and how someone’s surroundings can easily affect their health.”

Combining science with language arts, personal experience with polished presentations, Tanis and DeBoer have created a cornerstone project for seventh graders that will impact their education for years to come.

“The health fair was a great way for me to learn about certain disorders, addictions, or diseases on a personal level, knowing that they have affected people in my family,” says eighth-grader Caebre Baty. “The 2019 health fair was amazing and something I will never forget.”

FINDING HOPE IN RESTORATION: OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROVIDES FRESH PERSPECTIVES

Twenty years ago, Greater Grand Rapids was home to only a handful of environmental programs for local students. Inspired by a model that would anchor itself in the study of the great outdoors, encourage students to learn outside daily, and care for God's creation, a small group of Grand Rapids Christian community members — including current teacher Phil Warners — was inspired to start their own program at Rockford Christian School.

"We want to care for our world because it is God's gift to us," says Warners, who notes that he gets to "plan adventures" for his students every week. These adventures are many and varied, taking place at local spots like Camp Roger and the school's adjacent roadway, as well as farther-flung destinations like Au Sable Institute near Mancelona and Sleeping Bear Dunes.

Each month, fifth and sixth graders focus on a new, unique issue that is applied outside and in the classroom itself. In 2018-2019, the students studied a wide range of topics, including invasive species, water issues, and dependency on plastics.

Each week, regardless of the monthly topic, the students also spend one day at Camp Roger caring for their particular plot of land. Here, the students build their own shelter, study plant life, explore seasonal changes, and record it all in their environmental journals. "Every time we go outside, they're writing about it," says Warners.

Though the study of environmental impact can be a daunting one, Warners argues that fifth and sixth grade is the perfect time to jump in. "I would say this is an optimal time of life," he says about students in this age group who maintain a certain energy and optimism about their impact on the world. "The truth is, they do have the ability to change things," says Warners.

Students in the program work on a capstone project that focuses their attention on one particular issue that sparked their interest or passion throughout the year.

Each year, students in the environmental program are afforded the opportunity to view their lessons from a different perspective, all while breathing fresh air and contributing to the care and restoration of their environment. Here, they find hope in each small project and new revelation.

"We become environmentalists not because we love the world but because we love the Creator who gave us this world," says Warners. "Hope can definitely be found when progress is made in certain areas and when we are seeing restoration."





HEBREWS 6:19A

We have this hope
as an anchor for the soul,
firm and secure.

Kendall VanderPloeg was inspired by
the Kent County Recycling Center.

“I saw God in the engineering
that went into the building and
machines. God made us smart,
and we are caring for His world.”

Charlotte Segard was excited by the
animal life at Pickerel Lake.

“I saw God through all the
swans and geese we saw on the
lake because they know when to
head south and leave Michigan;
only God could do that.”

Josh Statema saw the beauty of
communication at Camp Roger.

“I saw God through teamwork
because people shared their
ideas and helped each other
like God would want us to.”

2ND GRADE SPANISH IMMERSION CLASS DECREASES WASTE FOR A HEALTHIER WORLD

*How much daily
waste can
a second-grade
classroom
really produce?*

According to Spanish Immersion teachers Krista Vanderzee and Rachel Jen, quite a lot, and this year, the class' group project aimed to reduce their carbon footprint while learning vital lessons about sustainability.

For the past three years, Vanderzee and Jen have guided their students through large-scale projects connected to a particular spiritual discipline or theme. In the past, students have studied endangered animals or migrant workers' rights.

Though facilitated by the two teachers, the theme is driven by general consensus in the class after determining where each student's passions lie.



PSALM 24:1

The earth belongs to the Lord.
And so does everything in it.

The class vastly decreased their daily trash by recycling, reusing, and composting.

Through an open class discussion in early spring, the class decided they wanted to learn more about their own waste production, and how this can affect both animal habitats and the students themselves. Then over spring break, Vanderzee and Jen got to work developing a learning model that reflected the Iroquois theme of Creation Care, and the project began.

Over the next month or so, the class vastly decreased their daily trash by recycling, reusing, and composting; collected and sorted waste and graphed the results of their efforts; read articles about sustainability and wrote reflective paragraphs; posted about their work throughout the Iroquois building; and shared their efforts with parents.

After two experimental weeks of reducing their waste through intentional efforts, the students were more engaged than ever. "It was extra work for them," says Jen. But "they wanted every single change that we had implemented to continue for the rest of the year."

Because of this passionate response, Vanderzee and Jen continued guiding the students through their sustainability efforts, and over the course of the project, the class was able to decrease their waste by two thirds.

At the end of the project, Vanderzee and Jen were surprised and delighted at the students' passion for and commitment to a healthier environment for all. Working on potentially tackling this topic again this year based on overwhelmingly positive feedback, the Spanish Immersion teachers now have a model for an effective, cross-disciplinary project that connects students with their faith and with the world.

5 QUICK TIPS to make lunchtime more environmentally friendly:



PACK LUNCH
IN REUSABLE
CONTAINERS



BUY REUSABLE
BEVERAGE
CONTAINERS



PACK CLOTH
NAPKINS AND
SILVERWARE



PURCHASE
BULK SNACKS



SHOP
SEASONALLY

OUTSIDE OR IN THE LAB: EVERGREEN FLEX WEEKS OFFER DIVERSE EXPERIENCES

At Grand Rapids Christian Elementary School's Evergreen Campus, a balanced learning approach is at the core of every experience. Focused on "learning with less interruption," the campus adheres to a balanced calendar that adds days at the end of the school year and redistributes them throughout the year.

Two of these weeks, one in the fall and one in the spring, are activated in the form of enrichment opportunities that take students outside of the classroom to gain a different perspective.

In the fall, Evergreen students visit Camp Roger in a four-day program focused on outdoor education. "They're outside almost the whole time that they are at Camp Roger," says Principal Ann Bakker. Learning valuable skills like canoeing, map reading, orienteering, archery, outdoor survival including making shelters, and more, students are immersed in the West Michigan forest.

"It is a really wonderful change of pace that seems to be very beneficial for staff and students alike," says Team 3 Teacher Graham Schultze.

Camp Roger staff also worked diligently to incorporate the school-wide theme of "Communication in God's Garden" into their curriculum, demonstrating the communication necessary in lessons like outdoor safety. "They did a really nice job of focusing in with our theme," says Bakker. "Communication is not just about talking, but it's about everything we do in our daily lives."



PSALM 105:1-2

Give thanks to the Lord, call on His name;
make known among the nations what He has done.
Sing to Him, sing praise to Him; tell of all His wonderful acts.



In February, students were afforded a much different experience, heading indoors to the labs at the Van Andel Education Institute. “It was pretty amazing,” says Bakker. “We were the first school group that did on-site education for a whole week at Van Andel Institute.”

Bakker and Schultze worked with Student Program Manager Randy Schregardus, M.Ed., who crafted a four-day program for the Evergreen group. Working in two different buildings, the students were immersed in three to four different activities throughout the week, such as creating microhabitats for aquatic animals or building a structure that could withstand a simulated earthquake.

Small groups also ventured uphill to the research center for face time with the scientists. “The instructors at Van Andel were just phenomenal, and the kids were totally engaged,” says Schultze.

Schultze also notes that the benefits of Evergreen’s multi-age structure are even more evident in these unique environments outside of the classroom. “You get to see something that the Evergreen students already love so much go to the next level,” he says.

By allowing students to take a break from traditional classes during their flex weeks at Evergreen, optional enrichment opportunities like these offer a deeper look into a certain field of study, as well as a refreshing pause from the classroom. “Flex weeks offer a little bit of respite from the day-to-day...without totally jarring kids out of rhythm,” says Schultze.

Confident in their tried and true education partner in Camp Roger and hoping the Van Andel Institute experience was only the first of many, Bakker and Schultze are committed to these distinctive weeks available only at Evergreen.



“We were the first school group that did on-site education for a whole week at Van Andel Institute.”

EAGLES ALWAYS

After graduating from Grand Rapids Christian Schools, alumni go on to accomplish great things. Whether making their mark on the entertainment industry, building leaders and transforming communities, contributing to rain forest conservation, or using their athletic skills to inspire the next generation, the paths for GRCS alumni are as diverse as they are exciting. Catch up with these seven alumni who look back on how their experiences at GRCS prepared them to pursue their passions and explore God's plan for their future.

TAELYNN OTTE

GRCHS class of 2011

*Wyoming Public Schools
Special Education Teacher*

WHY HOCKEY IS AT HER VERY CORE:

I started playing hockey when I was five years old. It has always been much more than just a game for me. For as long as I can remember, it has always been one of my favorite ways to glorify God.

HER BIGGEST SUPPORTERS AT GRCS:

Daimond Dixon and Joe Kolet are the two most influential trainers/coaches that helped me in achieving my life-long goal of playing Division I college ice hockey. Both of these coaches believed in me and supported me through all my injuries. I couldn't have done it without them pushing me and having my back.

WHY SHE BELIEVES IN A GOOD SUPPORT SYSTEM:

School didn't always come easy to me; I struggled with English and received help through the Student Support Services program at Grand Rapids Christian. I am a very hard worker and strived to receive good grades. I graduated with a high 3.8 grade point average which wouldn't be possible without the help from my school tutors and family supporting and encouraging me to never give up and always work hard.

HOW SHE PUTS HER EXPERIENCE TO GOOD USE AS A SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER:

My passions have driven my career goals, and now I am living them out every day as a coach and a special education teacher. I have always had a passion for working with youth who have mental and/or physical needs. I know God has given me the gift of seeing these children in His light, and I am able to learn so many amazing things through my students every day.

GREATEST PASSION:

Working with youth who
have mental and/or
physical needs

A portrait of Dr. Justin Beene, a man with dark curly hair tied back, smiling. He is wearing a dark blazer over a red and black patterned shirt. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery.

DR. JUSTIN BEENE

GRCHS class of 2002

*Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation
Founder*

THE THREE CLASSES THAT INFLUENCED HIS CAREER:

Math class with Ms. Ricketts, Bible with Mark Kuiper, and Psychology with Mr. Grasmeyer. I have never really thought about it, but it makes sense now since I have spent my career engaging in the cross-section of business, theology, and society.

HOW HE BREAKS DOWN HIS IDENTITY AS A SERIAL ENTREPRENEUR AND CONSULTANT:

I have started a number of companies, from landscaping to construction, a café to a failed coconut manufacturing venture in Guatemala.

Now I provide consulting and executive coaching to a wide variety of for-profit and nonprofit leaders in Grand Rapids, around the country, and around the world who are seeking to lead from a place of deep conviction and excellence.

Most of my time locally I spend leading the partnership of five organizations called the Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation: a new model of innovation in the city. The Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation is a collective between non-profits: Bethany Christian Services, NAACP of Greater Grand Rapids, GR Nehemiah Project, and two social enterprises, Building Bridges Professional Services and Rising Grinds Café — partners working together to create a flourishing city.

GREATEST PASSION:

Change, equity, truth-telling, theology, business, and the intersection between these things in the urban context

WHERE BUSINESS AND FAITH MET IN HIS RESEARCH:

I am passionate about change, equity, truth-telling, theology, business, and the intersection between these things in the urban context. My dissertation research really looked at theology and business for social impact in global cities. My unique study was on transformative business principles that actually create equity and model the person of Jesus within the DNA of the business model.

I think these passions to see businesses as the normative way in which people move out of poverty, create wealth, and help Christ-followers sacrificially live into the likeness of Christ came from racial and economic struggles of my own.

HIS HOPES FOR A FUTURE OF TRANSFORMATIVE EQUITY:

From an educational perspective, with all the excellent and superb educators, facilities, connections, family businesses, wealth, and relationships that the GRCS community stewards, I think that we have a great responsibility to not simply maintain the currently existing structure of only traditional charity — in which we have a long and outstanding track record of having a heart for the poor. But we also need to ask ourselves how to really form the young minds of our students so that they see politics, business, education, or whatever careers they enter, or choices they make, to consider the poor and disenfranchised. This will help us move away from poverty alleviation but to one of wealth creation.

THE
BROTHERS

LIVERANCE

JOHN
LIVERANCE

GRCHS class of 2014

*DreamWorks Animation
Production Assistant*

HUDSON
LIVERANCE

GRCHS class of 2013

*Paramount Pictures
Page*

RICH
LIVERANCE

GRCHS class of 2010

*DreamWorks Animation
Animatic Editor*

**FAVORITE
CHILDHOOD
ACTIVITY:**

Making movies
together

After graduating from GRCHS, Rich, Hudson, and John all pursued different paths that led them to careers in entertainment. Here, they break down their love for film, what unites them, and what makes them unique.

THEIR FAVORITE CLASSES AT GRCHS:

Hudson: My favorite class was German, taught by Donna Kamerman-Houskamp (or as we call her, Frau KH). I took it all four years, and I had a blast in every class.

Rich: My favorite class in high school was also my most challenging. I took an art class with Mr. Quist my junior year at GRCHS where we focused on clay sculpting... I ended up with a model I was pretty proud of and was actually one of the pieces that helped get me accepted into art school.

John: I loved any class that dealt with stories: English classes, art classes, and Bible classes.

THEIR SURPRISINGLY DIFFERENT MAJORS:

Hudson: I originally went to Auburn to become a pilot. I was a Professional Flight Management major and was in Air Force ROTC. After a year of flying, I realized that while I had a lot of fun doing it, my true passions were film and music. I then switched to a major in visual media with a minor in music.

Rich: I majored in art and design at the Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design at the University of Michigan. I graduated with a bachelor of fine arts degree.

John: I attended Auburn University where I majored in film/television with a minor in creative writing.

THEIR CURRENT POSITIONS:

Hudson: I am a Page at Paramount Pictures. My main responsibility is giving tours around the studio lot. The Page Program is a two-year program.

Rich: I'm an Editor for animation at DreamWorks Animation Studios. I just wrapped up editing a recently announced Netflix series called *Kipo and the Age of Wonderbeasts* and have moved on to a *Jurassic World* animated series.

John: I am a Production Assistant at DreamWorks Animation. I assist every creative position (producers, directors, editors, writers, artists, etc.) with any of their production needs. I support them in the hopes that they only have to worry about being creative.

WHY THEY THINK THEIR BROTHERS ALSO WORK IN ENTERTAINMENT:

Hudson: We all fell in love with movies together. We spent our days making movies in our basement and building Legos for our stop motion animations. Every weekend, we were at the Celebration Cinema next to our house. It has always been a team effort, and hopefully, it always will be.

Rich: As cool as it would've been to have brothers who were pilots, I'm glad they switched to media studies. I can't start Liverance Bros. Studios without them.

John: Both of my parents have a good grasp of storytelling. When they were raising us, they presented God to us as the Ultimate Storyteller. This relationship between faith in Jesus Christ and my love of entertainment keeps me motivated as I begin my career, and I know it's no accident that I get to tag along with my older brothers.

NEXT STEPS IN THEIR CAREERS:

Hudson: The next step of my career will be whatever Paramount offers me. I can't wait to see what that is.

Rich: I try my best to put full faith in God's plan for my life, and He's blessed me with so much already. Now I'm trying to identify what next steps will be most glorifying to Him.

John: I want to move into a more creative position.

THEIR FAVORITE MOVIES:

Hudson: Tied for first is *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, the Marvel Cinematic Universe, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *That Thing You Do!*, *West Side Story*, *Up*, and the entire filmography of Tom Cruise. My top 10 is actually about 83 movies.

Rich: Whenever someone asks me this question I always say, "you mean besides all three *Lord of the Rings* movies?" (It's a fact that they're perfect movies.) So I'm going to say besides *LOTR*, my favorite animated movie is *Monsters Inc.*, and my favorite live-action movie is *Casino Royale*.

John: _____ by Steven Spielberg. I would end the joke there, but I owe it to *A Few Good Men* to also say *A Few Good Men*.

JOEL BETTS

GRCHS class of 2010

*Global Wildlife Conservation
Associate Scientist for Mesoamerica*

FAVORITE PLACE:

The water or
the woods

HIS FAVORITE CLASS AT GRCHS:

Honors Biology with Ms. Kits. I appreciate the quality of work that Ms. Kits asked of us in biology class, as well as the great hands-on opportunities.

WHAT BEING A FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR MEANS FOR HIS CAREER:

It gave me the opportunity to spend nearly all of 2018 in Central America conducting my master's research. I care a lot about rainforest conservation and about streams and fish; it was awesome to have the chance to merge those interests with a meaningful project. This opportunity also helped me to keep improving my Spanish language proficiency. It opened up the possibility of future work in Central America, like the projects I will be working on with Global Wildlife Conservation over the next few months.

WHAT HE'S RESEARCHING NOW:

My main research project assessed the impact of illegal deforestation on the river resources of the forest reserves of Southeast Nicaragua. In 2018, I spent 10 months in the field and lab in Nicaragua and Costa Rica working with local students and guides to gather data on the fish, insects, and shrimp that live in small streams, in primary rainforest areas, as well as in areas recently converted to cattle pasture. The Nicaraguan indigenous Rama and afrodescendent Kriol are concerned that the illegal deforestation for cattle pasture in their rain-forested territory is going to impact the health of their fisheries. My goal was to provide hard evidence of these impacts so that they can use this evidence to strengthen their management and advocacy efforts.

WHAT HE WANTS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION:

I hope that our generation will not be the last to know the thousands of species of plants and animals that are on the brink of extinction. I hope that future generations will not look back to our time with regret as the time that we did not make the lifestyle and energy transitions we needed to make in order to keep climate change from irreversibly changing the world's ecosystems. I hope that in this increasingly connected multicultural world, people will do the hard work of listening to and learning from people who have a different upbringing and beliefs from them. I hope ultimately that people will work together to promote the mutual flourishing of all living things.

RACHEL EPPERLY

GRCHS class of 2014

Fulbright Scholar
Ewha University, Korea

HER FAVORITE CLASSES AT GRCHS:

I was influenced by Mrs. Knol's literature and religion classes. I particularly appreciated the balance of critical and creative thinking in her teaching. In her literary analysis, Mrs. Knol focused not only on writing mechanics but also the abstract, sensory, or intangible effects that made a work successful. This balance made her class a naturally welcoming environment for students with a variety of learning styles.

A FORMATIONAL EXPERIENCE AT GRCHS:

One formational experience at GRCHS was developing friendships with the GRCHS international student community. These friendships were very meaningful and deepened my awareness of many cultures.

HER PLANS FOR THIS FALL:

For my Fulbright research, I will be in Seoul from September to July studying the traditional Korean vocal genre, *pansori*. In addition to my vocal training, I will compose and perform a staged song cycle informed by *pansori*.

My project is focused on exploring the vocal, narrative, and compositional intersections between contemporary *pansori* and classical/indie genres. My affiliated university is Ewha University, where I will likely be taking Korean language classes as well.

WHAT BEING A FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR MEANS FOR HER FUTURE:

The study of Korean music is one of my long-lasting passions, and I predict that it will shape my entire career. However, resources for studying Korean music are scarce in the US. By granting me the opportunity to live in Korea and be immersed in Korean music for 10 months, Fulbright gives me the resources to actualize my career-defining passion.

HOW SHE FIRST HEARD OF THE TRADITIONAL KOREAN VOCAL GENRE, *PANSORI*:

The internet is an incredible resource for students, particularly for learning about other cultures. I first heard of *pansori* on YouTube and used websites to teach myself the Korean language. I also participated in Stanford University's online Korean culture and history course and wrote online reviews of Korean indie music while I was in high school.

THE UNKNOWNs OF TRAVELING TO KOREA:

The concept of my Fulbright is still daunting to me, and there are several unknowns: how my music and identity will change, what language or cultural barriers I will face; however, fear and excitement are closely related, and I know that these fears are probably just disguised excitements. Just like what they say with performance anxiety, nerves can actually be a source of positive energy!

UPCOMING DESTINATION:

Seoul, Korea

EAGLES/ ALWAYS/

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE NEXT STEPS...

THE CLASS OF 2019



78 HIGHEST HONORS

78 out of 210 seniors received highest honors – 3.95 GPA or above



4 NATIONAL MERIT

2 National Merit Scholarship Finalists
2 National Merit Commended Scholars

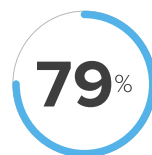


\$2 MILLION PLUS

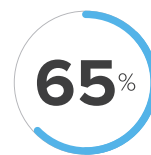
Earned over \$2 million in first-year merit-based scholarships

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

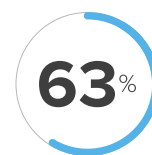
In 2019, 327 students took 633 Advanced Placement Exams in 15 subject areas. Students earned at least one score of three or higher in 79% of AP exams. This far exceeds state and national averages of 65% and 61%, respectively.



GRCHS



MICHIGAN



NATIONAL



AP Scholar is granted to students who receive a 3 or higher on three or more AP Exams. **55 GRCHS students earned AP Scholar recognition.**



AP Scholar with Honor is granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams. **29 GRCHS students were recognized with this honor.**



AP Scholar with Distinction is granted to students who receive an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams. **43 GRCHS students received this honor.**



National AP Scholar is granted to students in the US who receive an average score of at least 4 on all AP Exams taken, and scores of 4 or higher on eight or more of these exams. **Two GRCHS students were recognized with this honor.**

COLLEGE TESTING

ACT and SAT scores are one measure of college readiness.

The average ACT Composite score for our senior class is 24.9, compared to the national average of 20.8.

GRCHS

24.9

NATIONAL

20.8

The average SAT score was 1144, compared to the national average of 1068.

GRCHS

1144

NATIONAL

1068

WHERE ARE THEY NOW...



80%
4-YEAR
COLLEGE



11%
2-YEAR
COLLEGE



1%
GAP YEAR



6%
WORKFORCE



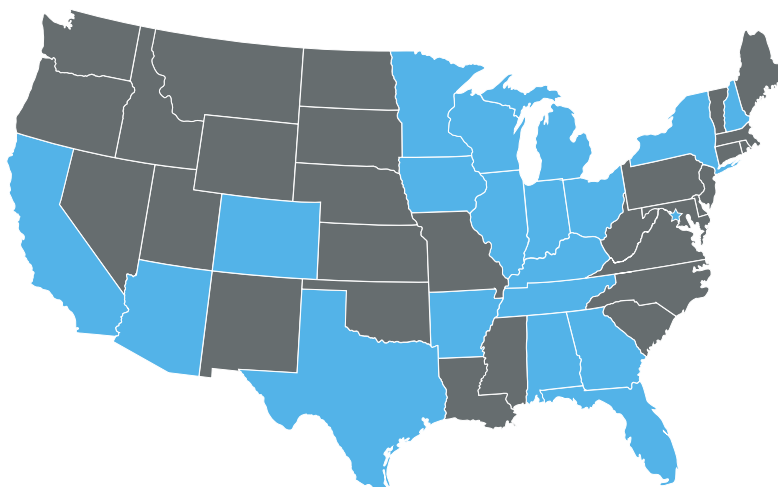
1%
MILITARY



1%
UNKNOWN

24% OF STUDENTS ARE ATTENDING SCHOOLS OUTSIDE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN:

Alabama	Kentucky
Arizona	Massachusetts
Arkansas	Minnesota
California	New York
Colorado	Ohio
Florida	Tennessee
Georgia	Texas
Illinois	Virginia
Indiana	Washington DC
Iowa	Wisconsin



AMONG THE MICHIGAN SCHOOLS, OUR GRADUATES ARE ATTENDING:

Albion College
Aquinas College
Calvin University
Central Michigan University
Cornerstone University
Davenport University

Ferris State University
Grand Valley State University
Hope College
Kuyper College
Lake Superior State University

Michigan State University
Michigan Technological University
Spring Arbor University
University of Michigan
Western Michigan University

What started with just a few people and a small idea 15 years ago has become one of the finest thrift stores in Grand Rapids.

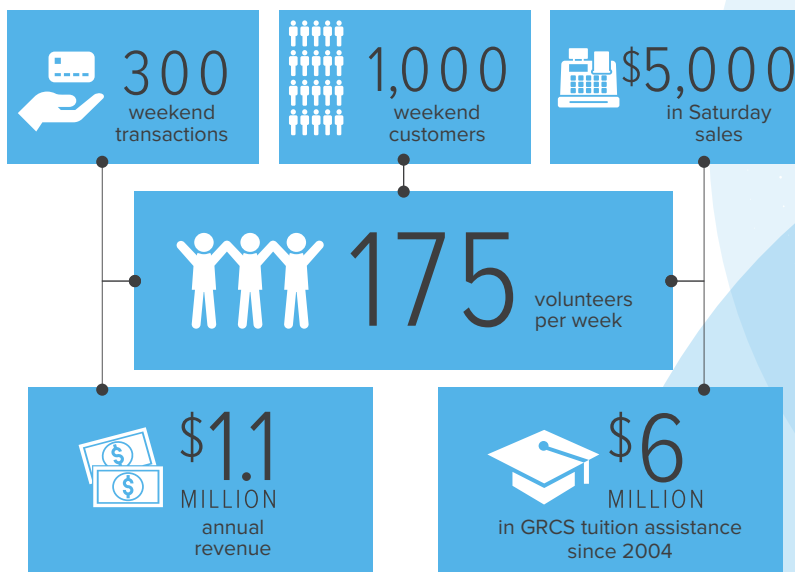
New 2 You, a self-sustaining nonprofit founded to offset the tuition of Grand Rapids Christian Schools' students, has grown much past its original location and design, having contributed \$6 million in tuition dollars over its lifetime, and \$330 per student for the 2018-2019 school year alone.

Now in its 15th year, New 2 You is just getting started. "We're growing," says General Manager Karen Witte. A committee has been formed to determine the next steps for the evolving store.

Witte reflects on the strong foundation on which the nonprofit was built. In 2004, New 2 You was founded on the three-legged stool model. "In order to be successful, you have to have three important things of equal value. If you do not have all three, you should not even start." These three elements are a healthy customer base with a good location, ongoing donations of goods from the community, and a large volunteer base to offset labor costs. "You have to have a lot of volunteers," says Witte. And indeed they do.

As general manager, Witte oversees the 175 volunteers that donate their time each week, sorting donations, steaming garments, running the cash register, washing donated glassware, or organizing the sales floor. New 2 You relies on these volunteers to keep the store — which typically earns \$1.1 million each year — humming along at a healthy pace.

HOW A THRIFT STORE CONTRIBUTED \$6 MILLION TOWARD TUITION ASSISTANCE: NEW 2 YOU CELEBRATES 15 YEARS



The store's volunteer base is made up of students, grandparents, and parents of current GRCS students as well as members of the greater Grand Rapids community. "It's an important touchpoint and connection point with our parents," says Witte, who appreciates each and every three-hour shift.

"Volunteers are really good people to work at New 2 You," says store Board Member Ken Baker, who notes that the majority of the current volunteer base are grandparents. The challenge is attracting more current parents and community members.



New 2 You relies on volunteers to keep the store humming along at a healthy pace.



And these valued volunteers are the lifeblood of the operation. They prepare and sell thousands of individual items each week. On a typical Saturday, notes Witte, the store averages approximately 300 transactions for about 1000 customers totaling \$5000 to \$6000. “That is a lot of goods, a lot of transactions, a lot of things that we have to sell,” she says.

These goods are donated daily at New 2 You’s convenient drive-through drop-off station. Donors are greeted at their car and assisted with bringing in boxes of clothing, jewelry, home goods, etc. “Our donors give us great stuff,” says Witte.

The ease with which community members can donate was part of a renovation four years ago that reimagined an intentional donation space. “This was a pretty big thing that happened over five years ago, right when I started,” says Witte, who adds that the parking lot, entrance, and signage was also redesigned to make the store as inviting as any typical retail space.

This, along with the cultural shift toward shopping at thrift stores, has contributed to New 2 You’s increasing popularity over the years. It has earned the award of the “Best Thrift Store in Grand Rapids” two years running by Grand Rapids Magazine. “That’s a big distinction for us,” says Witte, who adds that the store was in competition with other local nominees like Goodwill and Salvation Army.

Looking forward, Witte, Baker, and the staff and board members at New 2 You will continue to strive for excellence as they combine a stellar location with a steady flow of quality donations and a dedicated group of volunteers. “That need is still there,” says Baker, who supports the mission of offsetting tuition for the thousands of students that call GRCS home.

LEARN MORE ABOUT NEW 2 YOU:

phone: 616.942.2929

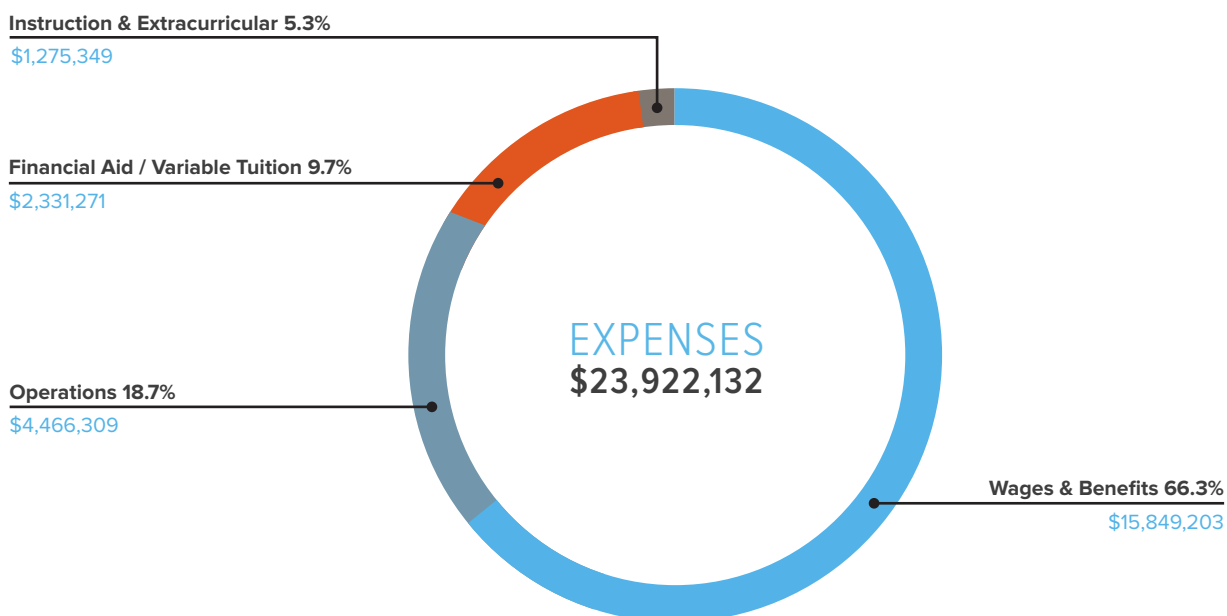
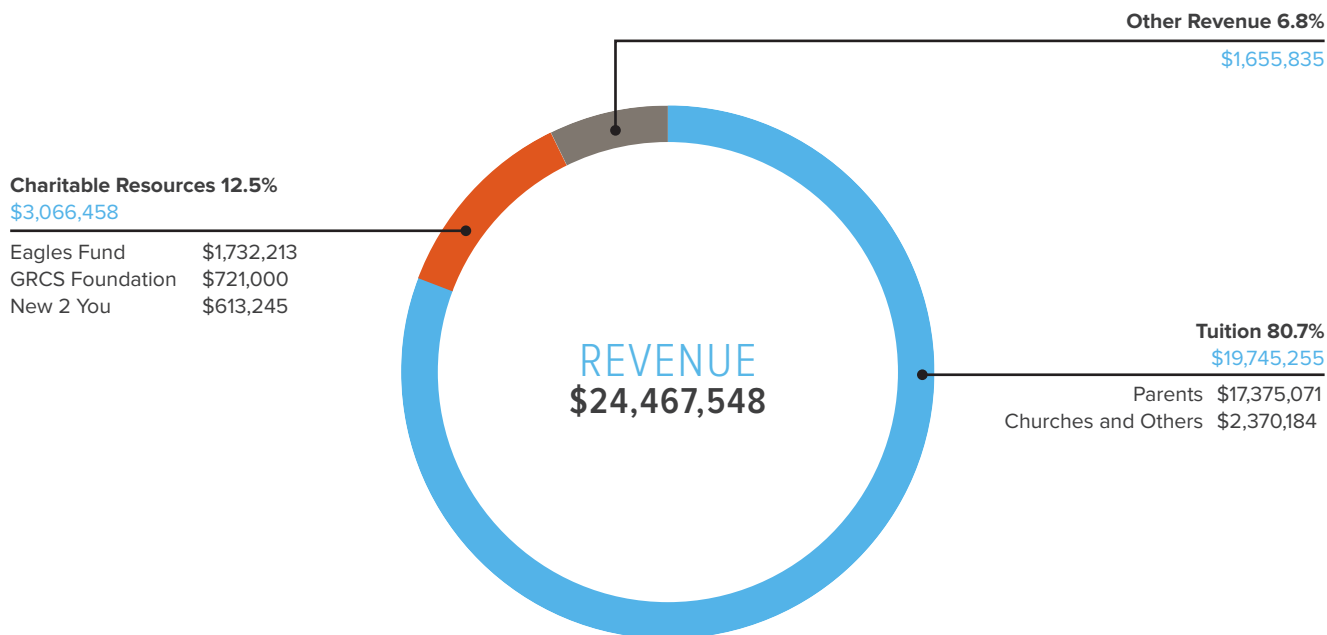
web: new2youshop.org

email: new2you@grcs.org

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS OPERATING FUND

We are honored to receive many forms of revenue to fund our educational and co-curricular programs. Below are two charts showing the sources of this revenue and how these funds are utilized to ensure students achieve at high levels and are equipped to be effective servants of Christ.



GRAND RAPIDS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION 2018 / 2019

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	As of 6/30/2019	As of 6/30/2018
ASSETS		
Investments at market value	\$17,375,271	\$16,284,941
Pledges receivable	\$6,910	\$6,660
Prepaid expense	\$337,262	\$320,130
Cash surrender value of life insurance	\$235,453	\$216,994
Total assets	\$17,954,896	\$16,828,725
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
<i>Liabilities</i>		
Accounts payable	\$4,040	\$187,952
Charitable gift annuity liability	\$14,141	\$14,700
Total liabilities	\$18,181	\$202,652
<i>Net Assets</i>		
Total net assets	\$17,936,715	\$16,626,073
Total net assets and liabilities	\$17,954,896	\$16,828,725

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

	As of 6/30/2019	As of 6/30/2018
REVENUES AND GAINS/(LOSSES)		
Bequests and gifts	\$1,896,629	\$616,246
Investment income	\$380,420	\$383,559
Gain/loss on sales of securities (realized and unrealized)	\$909,457	\$971,661
Change in value of life insurance	\$18,460	\$19,362
Total revenues and gains/(losses)	\$3,204,966	\$1,990,828
EXPENSES		
Grants and financial aid authorized	\$1,365,262	\$1,046,282
Special fund support	\$300,000	\$300,000
Investment management fees	\$109,675	\$35,576
Professional services	\$0	\$7,683
Other services	\$123,675	\$118,224
Total expenses	\$1,898,612	\$1,507,765
Net income/(loss)	\$1,306,354	\$483,063

METHODS OF GIVING

There are many ways to express your support of Grand Rapids Christian Schools. No matter how you make your gift or where you direct your support, it is needed and deeply appreciated.

EAGLE



CURRENT GIFTS

CASH, CHECK, CREDIT CARD, OR ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER

You can make a one-time gift or pledge your gift over a period of time. This is a very simple way to express your commitment to and support of GRCS.

STOCKS, BONDS, MUTUAL FUNDS, OR OTHER SECURITIES

If you own stocks, bonds, mutual funds, or other securities, please consider using them to make your gift. Giving gifts of appreciated assets can provide you with maximum tax savings.

OTHER TYPES OF GIFTS

GRCS is familiar with handling non-publicly traded securities, real estate, and other assets used in charitable giving. If you would like to make a special-type gift, we will be happy to help you do so.



PLANNED & DEFERRED GIFTS

WILL OR TRUST

The simplest way to make a gift is to name GRCS in your will or trust. Your gift becomes a part of the Schools' permanent endowment.

BENEFICIARY OF YOUR IRA, 401(K), 403(B), LIFE INSURANCE, OR OTHER QUALIFIED PLAN

Designate GRCS as a beneficiary of your retirement plan or life insurance policy. Ask your financial professional for assistance or call the Development Office at 616.574.6017.

CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY

This is a popular way to receive income for life while making an immediate, significant gift to GRCS. For additional information, please contact the Development Office at 616.574.6017.

REAL ESTATE

Make a gift of your home, land, vacation property, or business property and retain the use of the property for the rest of your life.

OTHER

For additional information on how to provide a gift of any amount, please feel free to contact the Development Office at 616.574.6017.



GIVING TIP

Making a multi-year pledge or designating an ongoing monthly or quarterly gift increases the impact of your giving considerably and provides ongoing support to a critical area of need.

GIVING OPPORTUNITY

On average, families that are awarded financial aid support receive \$3,300 per student.

Make a Christian education accessible to a deserving student through a partial, single, or multiple student award pledge.

Students, teachers, parents, grandparents, alumni, and friends are all essential to helping Grand Rapids Christian Schools thrive. Here are some ways you can make an impact.

IMPACT

MAKING AN IMPACT

EAGLES FUND

Each and every Eagles Fund gift given provides immediate resources that have a long-lasting impact on our students.

When you give to the Eagles Fund, you are helping support the **700 students who are receiving financial aid** from Grand Rapids Christian Schools and the **450 students who are receiving Student Support Services**. The Eagles Fund also maintains the Schools' high-quality academic and fine arts programs, all while enhancing the educational experience for all of our students.

PERMANENT ENDOWMENT

The Grand Rapids Christian School Foundation builds a permanent endowment, now totaling over **\$17 million**, to ensure the future of quality, Christ-centered education in Grand Rapids.

For over 50 years, the Foundation has helped donors support the Schools by reducing the cost of tuition for all families, providing need-based financial aid, underwriting important academic programs, supporting teachers' professional development, and sustaining facility maintenance.

The Foundation accepts all forms of charitable giving, including current, planned, and estate gifts.



GIVING TIP

You can help ensure that students have the opportunity for a Christian education by making a gift in your will or estate plan.

Supporting GRCS through a bequest is the easiest way to make an impact for years to come; simply name Grand Rapids Christian Schools as a beneficiary in your will. Sample wording to make your bequest is available by calling the Development Office at 616.574.6017.

When you make a bequest to GRCS, you join the J. Herman Fles Society. This society was created in 2005 and is named after J. Herman Fles, who founded the Grand Rapids Christian School Foundation in 1965 and was its first donor and board president.

GIVING OPPORTUNITY

Establish an endowed fund during your lifetime or through your estate plan. Several options are available that provide current tax and estate planning benefits while helping you support GRCS. Options include:

Unrestricted Fund – An annual grant is made from your fund to the Schools in an area where financial resources are needed most.

Financial Aid Fund – An annual grant is made from your fund to a family that is unable to afford the full cost of tuition.

Field of Interest Fund – An annual grant is made from your fund to the Schools in an academic area important to you, such as mathematics, science, or the fine arts.

All gifts to GRCS are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

2018 / 2019 Donors

Grand Rapids Christian Schools gratefully acknowledges the gifts of its donors, whose contributions during the past year have provided significant support in advancing our mission.

A

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Ronald and Myra Boss

“My experiences in GRCS helped prepare me for embracing difficult dialogue and thinking critically about social issues; even more, they helped me consider how my faith informs my position on those issues. I recognize key teachers and staff who supported and challenged me in ways that facilitated my growth.”

DAVID J. LUKE, PH.D. '03

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“Grand Rapids Christian High School has prepared me well for college life and even life after college. At this school, I have learned how to think critically and use my own personal skills to the best of my abilities. GRCHS has provided me with many opportunities in which I can grow my faith and even just explore who I am as a person. I am a much different person leaving high school than I was as an incoming freshman.”

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LEAH WYNBEEK '19



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For many years, churches throughout the greater Grand Rapids community have provided tuition support to their members. The connection between church, home, and school remains a core value of our Christian school community. We are deeply grateful to the following churches for helping families afford a Christian education for their children.

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The J. Herman Fles Society recognizes the generosity of individuals who have left an estate gift to Grand Rapids Christian Schools. The Society is named in honor of J. Herman Fles, who founded the Grand Rapids Christian School Foundation in 1965, was its first donor, and served as board president (*in memoriam).

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