



Dearborn Christian School HAPPENINGS

Final 50th Anniversary Edition

November 2008

A Special Day

By Allen Gelderloos, '80



Nancy Horlings, Scott Johnson, Brad Evans and Allen Gelderloos in one of the many "reunions" in the school hallway.

DCS's 50th Anniversary was held on May 30, 2008. What a special day! Over 250 former students, their parents and teachers attended, including two members of the first graduating class.

In our planning for the event, we set up tents and tables with chairs outside for people to sit and chat. However, no one made it that far. It seemed that after the registration table, people immediately saw old friends and started reuniting in the school lobby and hallway. Or, many of the conversations took place at the original school.

It was remarkable how little had changed at the old school; from the hallway, to the old school rooms, to the sanctuary. The one thing that had changed is that the gravel parking lot – of which there were many bloody memories – had been paved with asphalt. The tour of the original school brought back a lot of great memories for many, including Gail Elenbaas. "Innumerable memories flooded over me," she said, "as I once again walked the halls of the dearly familiar building. Lining up to drink at the little drinking fountain just inside the school door, having our day scheduled by the regular ringing of the loooong school bell, and trying to walk, not run, down the basement steps are a but a few."

The current school rooms were decorated with class pictures by decades that our alumni sent in. Our activities committee made copies of these class pictures and asked those attending the reunion to fill in the names of the students. By the end of the night, a lot of the names were filled in.

The program was a special time of remembering those people and events that made the school experience unique. Two former principals, Mr. Mulder and Mr. Weidenaar, and the current principal, Mr. DeRoo, shared their memories. Also, a number of former students produced video clips of their memories, including David VanderHaagen, '61, Carl Jasperse, '69, Greg Mellema, '62, Randy VanDoornik, '80, Greg Baker, '93, Stephanie Auwers, '02, and Kerri Pomeroli, '88. Most importantly, it was also a time to remember God's faithfulness to our school and sing praise to Him.

The reminiscences, program and dinner made for a memorable day. In fact, the husband of one alumnus commented that in seeing how the people interacted with each other at DCS, the ownership and loyalty he saw displayed, convinced him that DCS would be a great place for his children! Join us in prayer for the continued success of DCS and for the strong foundation that is established through its Christian education.

Dearborn Christian School is a parent-sponsored day school striving for academic excellence in a Christ-centered educational environment where God's Word permeates all areas of learning and is the pattern for all relationships.



Elaine Gritter (left) and Dorothy Ponstein (right)

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Memories of DCS from Students and Parents

The memories of the school on this page were provided on the “Memory Wall” at the Reunion. See the full letters and memories on our web site at DearbornChristian.com. For additional photos and social networking on DCS’s Facebook account, contact the school secretary at dearbornchristian@juno.com to be “invited” to the site.

“Greetings from a member of the first 8th grade graduating class of DCS and congratulations on achieving a significant milestone in your history. Our class selected for its motto the words of Phil. 4: 13: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” In the past 50 years, the school and its graduates have indeed accomplished many great things.”

Read the rest of Matthew’s letter on-line

Matthew Vanderhill, Class of 1961

As parents of two daughters, Nancy and Joan, we are thankful for the fine Christian education they received going to DCS. Although the school was small, many friendships and lasting memories were created: being room mother; providing monthly hot lunches; and, it was a nice relief not having to make lunches for one day. However, that didn’t last long, as Nancy got real sick eating hot dogs – to this day she will still not eat one! *Read the rest on-line*

Bob and Ruth Knott, Parents

Memories of Dawn (Storteboom) Schotanus (1987)

- Wow, it’s amazing how many good memories I have of DCS – I keep coming up with new ones. I loved DCS, I loved knowing all the kids at the school and being able to play with anyone – no matter how much older or younger they were than me.
 - That we prayed and talked about God in school.
 - Miss Knapper & book worms & “Board of Education.”
-

Memories of Kristen (Peterson) Sucher (1976)

I remember falling face down from the monkey bars doing “around the world” from about 5 ft off the gravel covered lot. Crying and bleeding, I went inside to find an oval-shaped pebble in the center of my forehead. My mother was unavailable, so Mrs. Beth Dykstra took me in and offered much kindness and tlc. (I can still see the scar!)

Read more on-line

Memories of Leah (Zuidema) VanDoornik (1990)

I remember Monday morning chapels – listening to speakers, singing all kinds of songs (many of which I still know by heart) and making up alternate words to the pledge of allegiance that my friends and I thought were hilarious. My teachers may have disagreed.

Read the rest on-line

Memories of Dan Hoekema (first grad class of 1961)

- That my dad, Andrew Hoekema, hired the school’s first teacher, Emma Knapper, from Canada. He was concerned about getting her a work visa before school started in September 1957.
 - That all five grades that first year met in one room, taught by Miss Knapper.
 - Graduation night when all eight boys had to wear sports coats and ties.
 - *More on-line...*
-

Memories of Eric Veenstra (1975)

- Playing softball in the (original) school lot. Instant home run if you hit the ball on the roof of the school. This was necessary because someone had to climb on the flat roof and retrieve the ball.
 - Skinned knees and hands from the playground
 - Going to Proud Lake Recreation area for one week of Science Camp. We learned of God’s creation at our fingertips, fought off a few bugs and walked and played in the woods.
 - *More on-line...*
-

Memories of Lori (Jasperse) Redmer (1981)

Jack Miner field trips, tormenting Mr. Weidenaar ☺, Iowa tests, filmstrips, creative writing – News and Views, graduation, 8th grade dinner and field trips, coming back to help with campout after graduation, Not taking the bus.



Allen Gelderloos (1980) was the MC for the program.



A total of 268 people (a record number of people for one sit-down meal at the church) enjoyed food and conversation in the Fellowship Hall. Thanks to Nancy (Ponstien) Scott and her committee for organizing this dinner.



Current and former teachers join together to sing "May the Ones Who Come Behind Us Find Us Faithful"



Justin Makowski (2005) shows the audience the magical way in which diplomas are made at DCS.



Former principals Mr. Weidenaar and Mr. Mulder reminisce about their time at DCS.



The DCS alumni band shows they can still make great music.



Old friends reconnect in the hallway of the original school, which was open for tours.



Mary Sue and Kathy Botts enjoy dinner.



Former teacher, Kathy Broege, reminds the audience of God's faithfulness to the school.

An Update from the Principal

By Bob DeRoo, Principal



Bob DeRoo asks if anyone had contact with Miss Knapper's Board of Education.

What a great 50th anniversary celebration! It was great to see so many faces from the past. I was pleasantly surprised to see so many parents of former students at the celebration. I think that says something special about the family nature of our school.

What is going on now at DCS? Our present enrollment is 72 students in grades K-8. We

continue with many of the things you might be familiar with from your days at DCS. Soccer season just wrapped up. Also, the magazine sale just ended, with students in grades 6-8 working hard to earn money for their class as well as prizes for themselves. Students are enjoying playing at recess time. Learning continues in the classrooms. The "Letter People" continue to be a foundation in the kindergarten class. "Gumball words" still roll in the first and second grade room. We meet for chapel on Monday mornings to worship and praise God. Students are still in combined classes in 7 & 8, 5 & 6, 3 & 4, and in 1 & 2. Kindergarten continues to be in a class by itself. We continue to provide a quality Christian education for the students at DCS.

What can you pray for? We need more students. With the present hard economic times, especially in the Detroit area, many people are finding it hard to come up with tuition to send their children to our school. We need more money. To continue to provide Christian education to children in our area we need money to operate. We are searching for new ways to come up with the money we need, but still depend on the contributions of our supporters.

If there is any specific information you would like, feel free to call me and I will try to get it for you.

Fundraiser Update

Because of generous contributions from current and former parents and former students, \$23,500 was raised for the 50th Anniversary. From all of the current families at DCS, we thank you for your generous support!

Please remember DCS in your year-end charitable giving. A self-addressed envelope has been included in this newsletter. Thank you.

Matching Gift Donor

We are pleased to announce that one of our supporters is willing to match donated funds on a \$1 for every \$2 donated for non-regular budget items. We have identified \$1,200 in improvements to the art and second grade classrooms, including bulletin boards, white boards, book case and a math kit.

Please consider donating to this cause so that we can take advantage of this generous offer.

What's New at DCS?

- *This year, our preschool expanded its offerings to include various attendance periods, up to full-time.*
- *We hired a promotions director to help make our school better known in our community.*
- *Last year, we added latchkey/before and after care for our families.*

Additional photos of the reunion are on-line. Go to dearbornchristian.com or contact the school secretary at dearbornchristian@juno.com for details.

Also, CDs of the audio portion of Anniversary Program are available. Request a copy from the school at dearbornchristian@juno.com.