



SPOTLIGHT

HUDSONVILLE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

MAY 2010 | VOLUME 38 | No. 5

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Visit our website for more
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www.hudsonvillechristian.org

A Legacy Of Faithfulness



We're **PILGRIMS** on the **JOURNEY** of the narrow road
and those who've gone before us line the way
CHEERING on the faithful, encouraging the weary
their lives a stirring **TESTAMENT** to
God's sustaining **GRACE**.

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Most issues of Hudsonville Christian School's **Spotlight** focus on the bright future that God has given us to look forward to. This issue is about looking back. Sometimes we need to get a backward perspective to see why we have been so blessed.

As Bob VanderLaan retires this year, there is no doubt that our entire school community owes a huge acknowledgment of gratitude to him for his strong, steady, humble leadership, innumerable accomplishments, and godly character that has provided the tone for the administration of Hudsonville Christian for several decades.

Hudsonville Christian School hired Bob in 1968 when the middle school was a new building. He taught for 14 years there as a Bible teacher and then served for 15 more years as Middle School Principal and Athletic Director. Bob oversaw three building additions at the middle school, and under his leadership the staff developed an exemplary middle school program and schedule.

For the past 12 years, Bob has been the Administrative Principal. These twelve years have been anything but idle. One of Hudsonville Christian's "blessings in disguise" is that we have never had enough room in the entire history of our school. Building, remodeling, renovating existing space to adapt to new programs and student needs are continual. Bob oversaw many of these projects including the elementary school gym/all purpose room renovation, the renovation of the west hall, and the 2.3 million dollar addition which houses our 1st, 2nd and 3rd graders. Bob has also been an effective and visionary leader for new programs including the preschool program, SOAR (Gifted and Talented programming) and Spanish language instruction. It was also under Bob's wise management that our school became debt-free two years ago, and remains so today.

In addition to working with the HCS Education Foundation, the School Board, the Parents' Club, Hudsonville Public Schools, and Unity and the Eastern Ottawa Christian Schools, Bob has found time to give students Skittles on their birthdays. Students look forward to their birthday just to have that moment with Mr. VanderLaan. That small practice—which isn't really small considering it averages seeing 3 or 4 students each day—tells us something about Bob's priorities. For Bob it has always been all about the kids—and their parents. Our school family has come to know that Bob's door is always open, or will be as soon as that phone call is finished, and that they can come to him with their ideas and concerns. They will always be received with a listening heart and encouragement. People trust Bob. He is a principled man, always acting out of a belief or standard, if it is the right thing to do. Bob is also compassionate and a wonderful listener. When Bob tells someone he will be praying for him or her, that person knows that will happen because, above all, Bob walks close to the Lord with a very active prayer life and is a wonderful Christian role model.

As Bob and Marsha transition into a more leisurely life, we give thanks for a 42-year career that leaves a heritage of faithfulness. We wish them many years of blessings, safe travel, long bike rides, low golf scores, fun with the grandchildren and other family times, and continued productive service in other areas of God's Kingdom.

We have 5 teachers who are retiring this year. Each of them has had a wide variety of experience in serving in education and God has used each of them in serving His children. We are grateful for their gifts, for their service, and for their willingness to advance God's kingdom in this place. It is our hope and prayer that each of them will continue to experience God's leading in the years ahead.



Mrs. Postma

Eleanor Postma will be retiring after teaching part time kindergarten for 10 years. Eleanor began her career at New Era Christian School teaching preschool and grades K-3. She taught preschool at Hudsonville Public and preschool and kindergarten at South Olive Christian, giving her 25 years in education. Eleanor will be remembered by her well-run classrooms and her calm demeanor helping students grow and learn in their knowledge of God and His world. In retirement, Eleanor is looking forward to numerous volunteer opportunities in the church and community and spending more time with her grandchildren.



Mrs. DeVries

Faye DeVries has had a rich career in education and she has had the privilege of teaching 2nd grade her first 3 years at Hudsonville Christian School and ending her career the last 3 years teaching 1st grade at Hudsonville Christian. In between those times, Faye spent 19 years teaching with 14 of those years at Chattanooga Christian School in Chattanooga, TN. Faye works very hard to keep up on educational trends and to provide a classroom that is enjoyable for her students. We pray for God's blessings as Faye looks for other opportunities to serve Christ in her years of retirement.



Mrs. Fondse

Jan Fondse began teaching at HCS in the spring of 1989 as a long-term substitute who nurtured a class of first graders through a time of grief and loss after the death of their teacher, Mrs. Kathy Reitsma. Jan taught at Allendale Christian for 3 years prior to starting her family. Jan will be remembered as a teacher who was warm and gentle mannered; she always appreciated learning from her students and enjoyed affirming their interesting stories. After 27 years in Christian education, Jan plans to spend her retirement volunteering and spending more time with family, especially her grandchildren.



Mrs. VanWyk

Vonna Van Wyk is completing 25 years of service in Christian education, 20 years at HCS and previously 5 years at Seymour Christian School. Vonna will be remembered for her well-organized classroom, her sense of humor that is appreciated by her students and fellow staff members and for being an excellent team member. Vonna is looking forward to spending more time with her grandchildren.



Mrs. Duthler

Sherry Duthler is completing 31 years of service in Christian education, 28 of which were at HCS. Sherry is known for having an organized classroom and being well prepared. Sherry has also taught at Millbrook and Seymour Christian Schools. She is also known for knowing her students well. Sherry is looking forward to being able to spend more time with her grandchildren in her retirement.

Giving and Receiving

Did you know that a gift made to the Hudsonville Christian School Education Foundation through the Grand Rapids Community Foundation qualifies you for big savings through the Michigan Community Foundation Tax Credit? For example:

- Married donors, filing jointly, can receive a 50% tax credit of up to \$200 on a gift of \$400 to a permanent endowment fund.
- A single person can receive a \$100 tax credit on a gift of \$200.
- Michigan businesses have the potential to receive up to a \$5,000 tax credit (not to exceed 5% of total Single Business Tax) on a gift of \$10,000.

If you desire to give a donation through the GRCF to receive these tax benefits for 2010, please make your check out to the Grand Rapids Community Foundation and be sure to write "Hudsonville Christian School Education Foundation" on the memo line. Donations can be sent directly to the GRCF at 161 Ottawa Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503, or you can bring them to our office and we will forward them on for you.

Save the Date! Hudsonville Christian School Education Foundation Dinner, Monday, September 27 at The Pinnacle Center in Hudsonville. Our guest speaker will be U.S. Representative Peter Hoekstra. We hope you will join us!

HCS Parade

On May 28 Hudsonville Christian students and staff will be honoring Mr. VanderLaan's career at HCS with a PARADE beginning at 11:00 AM at the elementary building. In case of inclement weather, it will be held on June 4. The parade will culminate with a chicken barbecue lunch at Hughes Park. At this parade we will also be honoring five teachers who will be retiring this year.

This parade will feature entries by each grade on some aspect of Mr. VanderLaan's career or the school itself. Plan to attend the parade and enjoy a delicious lunch to begin your Memorial Day weekend!



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A Note From Retiring Administrative Principal, Bob VanderLaan



I wish to express my deep gratitude to God and to the Hudsonville Christian School community for allowing me to serve here for the past 42 years. I am often surprised by God's leading and privileged to have worked with so many families over the years that have taught me what is important in life and who have valued serving Jesus Christ in their families and in the upbringing of their children. I am grateful to students, staff, parents and all of our constituents who have provided a great deal of joy and meaning in my career at Hudsonville Christian. Some people have asked if I am looking forward to retirement. It has been a gradual acceptance of that role. I know it's the right thing to do, I am confident in the new administration that has been hired. I know that God has great plans for the future of Hudsonville Christian School, so, yes, I am looking forward to retirement and seeing what God will do at Hudsonville Christian in the years to come and also what He has planned in my life.

The other side of the coin is that, having enjoyed coming to work every day of the 42 years that I have been a part of HCS, it is leaving something that I love and I enjoy. There are things that I will miss. What will I miss the most? The children. Their spontaneity, their joy, their enthusiasm, and their desire to live life for Christ has been a wonderful encouragement over the years. After the children, it is the people I have been privileged to work with. We have an amazing staff at HCS; it has been a joy to work with them. I've also had the privilege of working with Board members, committees and parents who have been wonderful examples in Christian leadership and have taught me so very much.

My last word of encouragement is to encourage you to continue to be the involved, caring community that you have been in the past. The school doesn't just operate on its own; it's made up of students, parents, staff, grandparents and friends who pray for what goes on in the school on a daily basis and they give and give and give for Christian education in time, money and prayer. Hudsonville Christian School is in a good place right now. We are in a good place because everyone in this community has been willing to do their part. This school has not been built on a few people, but has been built by the strong efforts of all God's people and I encourage you to continue that kind of committed partnership in working together for God's children in this place.

Thanks again for your encouragement, for your support, and I will join you in praying for the new administration and for the future of Hudsonville Christian School. God will continue to bless this school as He has in the past. Continue serving Him well.

Serving Christ together,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob VanderLaan".

Bob VanderLaan, Administrative Principal

