

The Grapevine



Alumni Spotlight

4



That's Just Awesome

6



A Look in the Door

8

Bulkley Valley Christian School
3575 14th Avenue
PO Box 3635
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0
Tel 250-847-4238
www.bvcs.ca



TINY HANDS, BIG SPUD - Kindergarten and primary grades helped to harvest the BVCS garden. See page 2.

FROM THE EDITOR · PRINCIPAL CHRIS STEENHOF

The Grapevine, Re-imagined

For all of my 27 years at BVCS, The Grapevine has been a staple of our communications for BVCS. It's an important part of our tradition, our identity and our voice.

During this COVID-19 year, we realized that this is an excellent opportunity for us to re-imagine The Grapevine. As editor, I'd like to explain our thought process and what you can expect.

Why the Change?

For years, the Grapevine was an important tool for school parents and the wider community to stay informed on school news and announcements. Today we use email, the MyBVCS App, electronic newsletters, social media (Facebook and Instagram), and our web site to fulfill these needs. But the Grapevine still has an important role to play.

We want the Grapevine to better communicate our vision and mission to parents, grandparents and our supporting community. Through a mixture of reflection and celebration, we will tell the story of how this school impacts students,

alumni, Smithers and the world.

What will Change?

- An updated look with more visual elements
- Embedded online content (links to videos, photos, and other online content)
- Ensuring that our content communicates our vision of Christian education

What Will Not Change?

The Grapevine will keep you connected to our vision. In addition, it will be our expression of gratitude for the important part our supporting community plays in making BVCS such a special place.

We welcome your feedback as we continue this journey in re-imagining The Grapevine. Please share with us your thoughts, your encouragements, and stories or elements that you feel would meet our renewed mandate.

Chris Steenhof is Principal of BVCS and editor of The Grapevine.



Watch a video about this story online.
<https://vimeo.com/476500161>

Upcoming Events



For complete and up-to-date calendar and event information, please visit www.bvcs.ca

Christmas Break

December 19 – January 3

Merry Christmas!

Preschool & Kindergarten Registration Day

Wednesday, February 3

Time to register your little ones for the start of their educational journey. Watch our website for more information.

Spring Break

March 13 – 21

This year's spring break is one week long.

Grandfriends Day

Thursday, April 8

We love our grandparents and grandfriends! We hope to host something special for you, but please stay tuned.

Spring Society Meeting

Monday, May 10

We'll be reporting, voting and celebrating Christian education together. We'll host this as a combination of in-person and online attendance.

Golf Tournament

Saturday, May 29

We're planning for another fantastic day on the greens. Hope to see you there!

Arts Extravaganza

June 10

Enjoy the creativity of BVCS students through an evening of the arts.

Things can change. Watch www.bvcs.ca for more information.

Abide: Lessons from a Garden(er)

Eyes are wide and toes are tipped as little heads crane to see the bulging ears of corn to which a parent volunteer is pointing. "Oohs" and "aahs" sound in turn as little eyes meet the big ears. With the corn's glory duly witnessed, the group of primary school kids shuffles to the cabbage patch. Once again, eyes widen and tiptoe-balanced feet jockey their owners into the best position to view the bowling-ball (ten-pin) sized cabbages lying heavily on their leaves. Cabbages noted (and felt, and commented upon), rows of rubber-booted feet stomp over to the perennial favourite: the pumpkin patch. Here, eager eyes and quick hands push umbrella-sized leaves aside in search of some very respectably-sized pumpkins hidden amongst the foliage.

On this morning we celebrate dirty fingernails, ginormous cabbages, a gazillion potatoes.

After the tour of corn ears, cabbages and pumpkins comes what kids love best. Hands that came to school clean are about to push wrist-deep into soft, wet earth in search of autumn's abundance of spuds and beets. Piles of produce are about to form beside the garden boxes as little hands stack the garden's treasure—potatoes, cabbage, corn, carrots, beets and more—onto the wet earth. This morning is the latest installment in what has become a cherished annual tradition: the BVCS garden harvest.

On this morning we celebrate dirty fingernails, ginormous cabbages, a gazillion potatoes and pumpkins worthy of the honour of being turned into carriages (something no less magical than beets

Continues on page 3

BOARD CHAIR MESSAGE

Mind, Heart, Service

I was asked recently what it was that I appreciated about Bulkley Valley Christian School. It really came down to three things.

First: that everything is taught from a Christian perspective. It's the "eye glasses", so to speak, through which our children are taught to observe and understand this amazing world.

But this school goes further, much further. It brings the gospel to the students as well. This really gives me cause for great joy as I look back at my time as a student, then as a parent and now as a grandparent. Our students are not only taught to know God but also led to trust God and his salvation for their lives. Praise the Lord!

The third thing I appreciate about our school is the staff, administration and support workers, as well as our board and various committees. Having been blessed to serve on the Education Committee and the Board over the last twenty-five-plus years I can truly say that these people have poured their hearts into our children. They not only teach our children about God and his creation and about Jesus and his salvation but also how to live out of the gospel in this world that so desperately needs the answers and that peace that God can bring.

As I begin my last year on the board I look back and thank the Lord for so many years of families and staff coming together around God's calling to raise our children in the worship and knowledge of him, and it is my prayer that our school will continue to be faithful to and live out of that call.

Warren Vandenberg has been the chairman of the BVCS Board since 2015. He recently "retired" from dairy farming.



Abide: Lessons from a Garden(er)

Continued from page 2

being turned into chocolate cakes at our school-wide harvest lunch).

But beyond the celebration, there's also some pondering to be done. Consider: our food is formed from "the dust of the earth" (I've borrowed that phrase). Shouldn't this remind us of the substance from which we, too, are formed and to which we will return? From this dust, our lives are formed with the hope of a harvest. For we, like the humble potato, are being cultivated. We, like the noble carrot, have a Gardener.

Our Gardener tells us that He tends us in the hope of fruit. He prunes and cultivates, waters and trims. He plants us in the same soil from which we are made, and to which we will return, and performs something of a miracle: it's a miracle that goes beyond pumpkins-into-carriages, and beyond beets-into-chocolate-cakes. He produces patience and self-control out of the raw earth of redeemed humanity. He produces the grapes of love, joy and peace in the raw dirt of lives otherwise lived for selfishness, misery and war.

How? "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me" (John 15:4).

Even the youngest of our rubber-booted garden harvesters understands the importance of abiding: ginormous pumpkins need to be connected to a vine. Without that connection, dirt stays dirt: no pumpkins, no grapes, no corn. That's why we've chosen this year's school-



wide theme to be, simply, "Abide." It's a reminder that apart from Him, we can do nothing. By being connected to this Vine, we can produce good fruit.

The fruit we produce is a credit only to the Vine and the Gardener. I'm not going to pretend that this Gardener is always gentle. He cuts, prunes and digs. He tosses parts of the plant into the fire. All of us bear the scars of this always-loving-but-not-always-gentle Gardener. He can seem confusing, silent, distant or absent. And yet, apart from abiding in Him, we have no hope of transforming our life's "dirt" into anything good.

I wonder: after His cutting, and pruning and cultivating does our Gardener take the same delight as our elementary kids do in digging up produce? I mean

no disrespect in saying this: I wonder if, when He digs in the soil of our lives, He sees patience forming below the soil and expresses: "ah! what a delight to see this!" or "look at the size of this child's gentleness!" Where there is fruit, there is delight for the Gardener. And where there is fruit, it is credit only to the nutrients of the Vine.

Our school garden now lies fallow, emptied of its plants and awaiting a new growing season after the blanket of winter. But despite the quiet emptiness of our schoolyard garden boxes, BVCS will continue to bear fruit and be tended by a Gardener. For His glory, may we abide in Him and He in us.

Tom Grasmeyer is the BVCS Development Director and the husband of a wonderful gardener.

Without that connection,
dirt stays dirt: no pumpkins,
no grapes, no corn.



boost

thirty partners · twelve months

Your partnership in the Tuition Assistance Program at BVCS makes a difference. With a tax-deductible investment of \$100 per month for 12 months, you'll help open doors to families who might not otherwise be able to access Christian education.

To partner with us, contact [Tom Grasmeyer](#) 250-847-4238



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Josh Horlings (2012)

ABOVE · Visiting the DDay beaches as part of classes at the Royal Military College

As a regular feature of The Grapevine, we'll include an alumni story. For this edition, we caught up with Josh Horlings (2012) and were able to put some questions to him.

Tell us about your life journey after graduating from BVCS?

After graduating from BVCS in 2012, I attended the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario, where I received my Bachelor of Arts in Military and Strategic Studies. In between academic years I conducted military training at different bases in Canada in order to prepare me for my job after graduation. I graduated in 2016 and went to Gagetown, NB where I completed my training as an Armoured Officer. Following my training I was posted to an armoured regiment in Edmonton, AB named the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians). I worked as a Tank Troop Leader for two years during which I spent my time training in Edmonton and Wainwright, AB. I took part in two domestic deployments to assist with floods and fires in BC in 2018 and I deployed for the first half of 2020 to Latvia as part of the NATO mission there. Most recently, I have been assigned to a training centre in Wainwright where I teach soldiers about planning operations and I oversee the conduct of various leadership courses.

How has the Christian education you received at BVCS impacted this journey?

The education I received at BVCS impacted my journey as throughout all of the challenges and opportunities I have faced I have always been able to trust in God's plan and providence. In difficult or stressful times when I have not been surrounded with Christian friends or teachers like at BVCS I have found myself leaning on my faith and the lessons I learned at BVCS to strengthen and guide me. In my personal relationships I have also had to trust in God. From 2013 to 2018 my now wife, Amanda, and I dated long distance which was challenging as we didn't always know when we would see each other. We always found that trusting in God's timing helped us to make it through times apart and that God's plan always worked out better than our expectations.

Tell me about how your BVCS experience impacts the way you are living your life?

My education at BVCS gave me a solid foundation of personal belief and values which have continued to guide me. The values instilled in me at BVCS have aided me in making ethical and moral based choices at work and in my personal life. BVCS gave me a well-developed world view built around being engaged in the world we live in. Rather than just observe the world BVCS

I have found myself leaning on my faith and the lessons I learned at BVCS to strengthen and guide me.



ABOVE · Training in Wainwright in a Leopard 2A4M main battle tank.



TOP LEFT · Graduation from Royal Military College with Amanda, Mom (Nancy Horlings) and brother Jason. LOWER LEFT · International basketball in Latvia. My team (Canadian/Polish/Italian) won the camp tournament. RIGHT · A recent photo of Amanda and I.

taught me to try and change what I can and to bring restoration where possible. My teachers at BVCS always sought to provide different perspectives and challenge preconceived ideas. This has aided me since graduation as I have worked with and befriended people of all different religions, races, political ideologies, sexual orientations and worldviews.

How does your faith impact your career in the military?

My faith impacts my career in how I interact with those I work with and the soldiers I lead. In my job I often have the responsibility of completing administration that directly effects the well-being and health of my subordinates. In doing this administration and helping soldiers through tumultuous times I endeavour to assist them and treat them the way I would want to be treated; as Mark 12:31 says, “to love my neighbour as myself.”

I try to give a positive perspective on Christianity to those I work with. To show them that it isn't simply following a strict rule set or hiding away from the world but that it is a lifestyle and that the Christian church is dynamic and contemporary.

What about BVCS has stayed with you?

Being a small school, the sense of community at BVCS has always stuck with me. Walking down the hall and

knowing almost everyone around was something special that I don't think many schools can provide. Some of my best memories are from BVCS basketball where I learned to grow my confidence and build my determination. I can still remember some of the close wins and heartbreaking losses like it was yesterday. Bard on the Beach was an opportunity that I highly enjoyed with lots of good memories and maybe even a little appreciation for Shakespeare. In terms of classes, History 12 with Mr. Boone helped to grow my love of all things historical and although math was never my strong suit, Mr. Vis's classes helped me to get through university calculus. Of course, Mr. Van Driel's PE classes were a highlight and I remember trying to fit as many of his classes as I could into my schedule. School hiking, skiing and camping trips helped to build my sense of adventure and love of the outdoors. It will be hard for me to forget what is probably one of the coldest nights of my life I spent sleeping in a snow shelter during the Grade 10 winter camping trip. The friendships I made at BVCS are another highlight and I still look forward to catching up with my peers whenever I see them. I know my memories and experience at BVCS are positive because it is truly the type of experience and education that I would like my future children to receive some day.



You Really Otta.

The Grocery Card Program helps to keep tuition down.

It's Not Complicated.

1. Purchase grocery cards from the BVCS office, Aleeda Vis or Pat Vandermeer. You can pay with cash, cheque or e-Transfer.
2. Go shopping (Safeway, No Frills or BV Wholesale). Pay with your gift cards.
3. That's it.

If every BVCS family used this program, we could easily purchase

\$50,000+

worth of new technology, equipment and more for BVCS students (without raising tuition to do it).



FIND OUT MORE

Scan the code for animated fun, or visit bvcs.ca/grocery-card-program



CELEBRATING STUDENT SUCCESS

That's Just Awesome

In this section, we want to focus on student success stories in and out of the classroom as teachers and students work together to “appreciate, understand, and evaluate the world” (from the BVCS Vision Statement). In each edition, we will focus on a different area/grade at BVCS.

From our Education Support Services Program

This program supports students with different challenges and abilities. These students are an essential part of our identity a Christian school.

Austin: We (Mr. André and Austin) had been working through percentages and tricky equations together. Suddenly Austin looked up at me (Mr. André) with a smile and said confidently, “I’ve got this.” He then proceeded to spend the next twenty minutes buried in his lesson, working the problems, unfazed by the lunch bell, telling me that he wanted to finish the lesson. He nailed the answers, got up and nonchalantly got his lunch—as if what he’s just accomplished is par for the course. Now, I don’t know about you, but I think that’s just awesome.

“I’ve got this.” — Austin

Abida: Abida Best used her bottle collecting money to buy flowers to encourage and thank our awesome librarian, administrative assistant, and business director.

Walker: Walker Vis completed his first trot independently at [Horses Touching Hearts Therapeutic Riding](#).

Hans: Hans Best has averaged 121 points in bowling so far this year! (Mr. Steenhof will not be able to beat him this year!)

From our English and Drama Department

For an open-ended narrative assignment in high school English, Malika Hamelink, Gunner Kaiser and Isaac Cunningham created a short film that was exceptional. The film can be viewed by

visiting vimeo.com/473997503. After watching it as a class, there were many whispers of “That was really good. Like, really good” from their peers. Story-telling is an essential part of what it means to be human, and this film demonstrated creativity in telling a simple story through striking visual images.



ABOVE · “New Shoes”, a student-made video short.

Students in English 10 had a great discussion about equality after reading the text “Harrison Bergeron.” Through reading that text, we discovered that we should celebrate our unique, God-given gifts and talents, rather than try to create a false sense of equality by stripping away individual strengths and abilities.

Students in drama class explored the concepts of movement, creativity, and humour in creating lip-sync routines they performed for parents and other students. It was amazing to see great stage presence from students from whom you might least expect it.

From our Grade 6/7 Class

In the grade 6/7 students’ evaluation of the theory of evolution, many students were great team members. Together they were trying to build different bird beaks to see how their shapes affect a bird’s ability to find different types of food. Charles Darwin noticed that finches had different beaks depending on where they lived and what food was available.

STAFF PROFILE

Ms. Tracy Gingras (Leffers)



Students just call me Ms. T, as we thought this might be easier for the younger students.

I have had a busy year so far learning many new names. I am part-time staff at BVCS. I

teach elementary (K – 7) PE three days a week as well as grade 5 art. On Fridays I teach all day in the Grade 6/7 classroom.

I was born and raised in Smithers. I went to Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School and graduated in 1998 with no plans to attend college. But after working for two years, playing several sports and doing some coaching (I've coached at the lower levels in volleyball, basketball and a bit of hockey), I realized that I enjoyed

working with kids. I decided to pursue college to become a teacher. I did my first year and a half in Smithers at NWCC and then transferred to the University College of the Fraser Valley (Abbotsford). I received my BGA with a focus in geography, before completing my PDP for my teacher's certification through Simon Fraser University.

My family was started shortly after I received my teacher's certificate so I have actually never taught full time. For a couple of years, I was a kindergarten teacher at Ebenezer before serving as a teacher-on-call for a few years at Witset Elementary. Later, I returned to Ebenezer to teach high school PE, Home Economics and Socials.

God has richly blessed me with 4 kids who are new to BVCS this year as well. I have two girls Kayden (Gr 10) and Ashtyn (Gr 6) and two boys Wayde (Gr 7) and Grayde (Gr 4).

I was blessed to be raised a Christian and was a member of the Canadian Reformed Church for most of my life. About a year ago I moved my membership to the Bethel United Reformed church. As a Christian educator, I believe that we are to spread God's love and teach of His grace and compassion to all of our

As a Christian educator, I believe that we are to spread God's love and teach of His grace and compassion

students. God is the centre of everything and we must strive to equip students with the tools to follow Christ, defend their faith and let their light shine to others by the infusion of God's truth in our learning.

BVCS RE-ROOFING PLAN

Phase 1 Completed October 2019

1997 addition (MPR, science lab, lobby, room 221) and portion of front entrance.

Value: \$94,000

Phase 2 Completed July 2020

1984 gymnasium, portico over entrance near science lab.

Value: \$75,000

Phase 3 Scheduled summer 2021

1984 original/main building (admin & staff area, computer lab, spec ed rooms, foods room, room 202, library).

Projected value: \$140,000

2020 "Together" Annual Campaign

What is an annual campaign?

It's our annual giving event in which donors—parents, grandparents, staff, board and friends of BVCS—contribute tax-deductible donations to BVCS.

What is it for?

Every dollar we receive will go towards the final phase of our re-roofing project, scheduled for next summer. Campaign goal: \$50,000.



Scan the code to go directly to our Year-End Drive page on our website.

www.bvcs.ca/annual-campaign/

Why does BVCS do this?

Tuition and government funding go entirely to our *operating* budget. The capital budget (for things like roofs, buses, etc.) is funded by donations and fundraisers.

How can I contribute?

See the green box below. You'll get a charitable tax receipt for your donation.



How can I contribute?

Cheque
Mail or drop off your cheque before December 31.

Credit Card (online)
Secure online donations at www.bvcs.ca

Securities
Save taxes by donating securities easily through [CSS](#).

Donate before December 31 for a 2020 tax receipt



The Grapevine

A LOOK IN THE DOOR

What would you see if you were to drop in to BVCS on any given day? In each issue of the Grapevine, we'd like to give you 'a look in the door' on classroom and out-of-classroom learning in various areas of our school. In future editions of the Grapevine, we'll feature 'a look in the door' for Distributed Learning, High School and school-wide activities. For this issue, take a look in the door of our elementary school.



A LOOK IN THE DOOR

Elementary School

COVID-19 doesn't have the last word! Students and teachers are delighted to be back exploring, creating, and learning about themselves, about God, and about our place here.

- a. Kindergarten loves the fall.
- b. Gr. 6-7 hike to the radio tower
- c. Tired of crushing cans? Well, Morgan has a solution for you!
- d. See how happy preschoolers are to be in school?

- e. Kindergarten learned about Abraham's call and trusting obedience. Trust means counting on the One you trust to walk beside you.
- f. Grade 6-7 built Lego temples and palaces in social studies class.