



Joyful Noise

School arts program reaches new heights



A BAKERSFIELD CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY MAGAZINE | FALL 2012

Impact

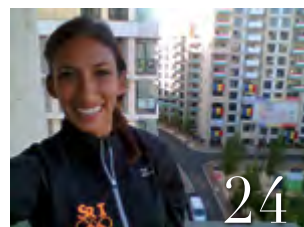
INSIDE: Get to know BCHS' new president and what he plans next



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NEW PRESIDENT: 'God has many more exciting things in store'



Stephen Dinger

President Stephen Dinger sat down with *Impact* to discuss his past, present and future work at BCHS.

What brought you to BCHS?

Well, there's the technical answer and then there's the spiritual answer. And, the spiritual answer is the most important. I believe the Holy Spirit brought me to BCHS. I believe that God has plans for each of us individually and institutionally, and He knows those plans and has them all set out. We all serve for a season, at a place, hopefully we leave that place better than how we found it. Certainly Mr. Cole did just that. Now it's a season for new leadership. And, I feel firmly that the Holy Spirit brought me to BCHS at this time.

Now, the technical answer is, one day, out of the blue, Mr. Larsen, our chairman of the board, called and asked to sit down and meet. We did, and out of that came an invitation to serve as interim president. I'd been serving at St. John's Lutheran (School) as Superintendent and Director of Operations. I knew BCHS and I'd admired what BCHS was doing. So, I felt like it was something I'd be honored to do, and, I knew it was a difficult time for BCHS as it is any time there is a change in leadership. I felt that I could bring some healing and direction.

Originally, when they asked me to serve as interim it was really two-fold. One was to continue fulfilling the responsibilities and roles as president and the other was to help with the search process. Then, a few months into it, the board decided I should not be involved in the

search process. I wasn't sure exactly why, I guess because I had enough to do, which I did, but, as it turned out, I think they were beginning to have questions as to whether or not I might be able to serve in that capacity long term. So, I think it was around Christmas, somewhere in there, they asked if I would consider doing it full time. And, I took a month or so to consider that and then accepted the position.

What jobs have prepared you to serve as president?

It may sound corny, but all of them. I've really been blessed in my career to have lots of different, varied experiences. So, I understand teaching, because I did teach. I understand school administration and schools because I've always been involved in schools, except for a few years where I was a public official. There are probably a couple of things that most prepared me. One is I had a period of time when I served as Dean of Admissions so I understand the whole recruitment process and what's involved in that. I also served as Dean of Administration and oversaw all the development. As Head of School, I've had to raise funds, so I understand what that's about and the importance of that and networking in the community. The other big piece that I think is helpful, especially here at BCHS, is that for about eight years I served an organization that worked with all of the private

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ABOVE: Stephen Dinger, right, and his wife Nancy, left, are seen here with BCHS parents Kathy and Mike Fackler at The Key Event annual dinner auction.

ABOVE RIGHT: Stephen Dinger, left, and Board Chairman Alan Larsen watch the 33rd annual commencement ceremony.



Left to right: Head Football Coach Jerald Pierruci, President Stephen Dinger and Athletic Director Blake Van Der Schaaf strategize for the coming school year.

schools in the State of Washington, so it really helped me to see how various denominations approach Christian education, and non-church affiliated schools as well, how they approach education, which really kind of honed my commitment to what I think is important about Christian education.

It caused me to work with a diverse group of people who may have a little different perspective on things, but share something in common as far as wanting to provide kids with a quality education – so, just a whole variety of experiences. I haven't just been a classroom teacher, or I haven't just been a school principal, so it gives me a breadth of understanding the different functions that this role requires.

How long have you been involved in Christian education?

On and off in different forms, at different levels, almost 40 years.

Why are you passionate about Christian education?

That one is real easy and real personal – I went to Christian schools all of my life, church-related schools, and they've made me a different person, they've made me who I am today, and played a very significant, life-changing role in my life. And, I want that experience for other kids. I want us to be a place that touches lives and changes lives.

What occupies your time outside of work?

I love to read. I'm an avid reader, in a lot of areas, but I especially love mysteries – the intrigue of trying to figure out "who

done it?" I love to golf. I like to get away and spend time with my wife. I wish we had more time with our grandson. We have one grandson that lives in Nashville, Tenn. We may retire there somewhere down the road, we'll see. We have a son, Jason, who lives there in Nashville and is a hospital administrator, and our daughter, Rachel, who is a middle school Spanish teacher in Portland, Ore. Both of them attended Christian schools as well. Our son graduated college from Vanderbilt University and our daughter from Linfield College in Oregon.

What's the current state of the school?

In a word, I would say the state of the school is optimistic. I think that **we are working very hard at being a healthy organization**, and, that means doing some tough self-examination – Is everybody in the right seat? Are we focused, laser-like on the same goals? And, are we willing to make this "not about me"? And that applies throughout. We're here to do God's work. **We're here to advance a school that is committed to honoring God in what we do, what we say, how we act, how we behave, how we make decisions and how we treat people. We're here to help kids thrive, to do the best they can possibly do. If people are committed to that, we're going to be a healthy place and honor God in the process.**

In this day and age, finding healthy organizations, truly healthy organizations, is not easy. And it takes hard work to be a healthy organization, it takes candor, honesty, it takes being forthright, it takes trust. And, we're committed to being a healthy place.

We have some absolutely phenomenal people here all the way through from students, to parents, to support staff. The more I get to know people, the more I'm just amazed at the caliber of

the people involved and the depth of commitment they have to serve the Lord and to do the right thing.

So, I'm really optimistic, and people have been very gracious and generous and supportive.

What's your long-term vision for BCHS?

I probably said it already, and that's to be a healthy place. And, that means to me, above all, to bring God glory in what we do – first, and foremost. The way we do that at a secondary school is to help kids thrive and to help kids really soar, regardless of their abilities. But, we help our students to stretch and to try to achieve the highest degree that they possibly can, to set goals and dreams out there that are a stretch for them perhaps, but a necessary challenge. **If we can bring the best out of kids in every dimension of their lives, then I think that's an honorable vision.**

Now, we could get more pragmatic and say that part of the vision for BCHS is to be a school of 750 students, which I think is an optimal size for a high school, and, to be the high school of choice in this city. I think if we're honoring God in what we do and we're helping kids thrive, then we'll be that school of choice.

What exciting changes are on tap this school year?

I think there are a number of them. I'm excited about Mr. Ward moving into the position he has as Vice President of Student Life. He's an incredible man of God, he's a gifted teacher, he loves kids, he relates well to kids. I think separating out the duties of student accountability, or as some would call it "discipline," from academics and to have Mr. Root focus solely on academic growth of faculty and students is exciting. That he (Mr. Root) can be laser-

focused on that area to really elevate that and Mr. Ward can be laser-focused on creating a culture of kids that are accountable and respectful and having a good time all at the same time. Christians don't have to be dour and we don't have to be overburdened by all sorts of rules. Although we are set free by the gospel, we're also accountable in that process and Mr. Ward is going to a great job of articulating that.

We're making some changes on the board by instituting term limits, which the board has just approved in their bylaw revisions. We have an outstanding board who is committed to excellence, and I think we're getting right between us what the role of the board is and what the role of the President is. That will make us healthy.

On a lesser level, we've done some other physical things. We're putting in a weight room, a training room for students. It will be ready this fall. It will be a state-of-the-art, fantastic facility for all students, not just athletes. We've gotten rid of all the modular, portable buildings to make our campus, which is already attractive, more attractive, and maximize the space we have, which is just good stewardship. We've relocated the Student Store to a more central location that will be accessible to kids. We brought in some new coaches who are excited about what they're doing and are great teachers of the sport as well as great teachers of young men and women. We have the retention of some outstanding, stellar faculty members who are committed to giving their very best for kids in every academic discipline.

Those are the changes that come to mind as to some of the exciting things that are going on right now. But, stay tuned. **God has many more exciting things in store for BCHS and I, for one, am ready to see Him reveal them to us when He's ready and we are too.**

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Forensics team makes strong argument for importance of debate in education

A well-known theorem states that if one puts 1,000 monkeys in a room with 1,000 typewriters for an infinite amount of time, they will produce the complete works of Shakespeare. If one puts four intelligent, argumentative and highly idiosyncratic individuals into a room for sixty-eight minutes, they will produce debate.

by Joseph Stearns, BCHS student

Debate is far more than people shouting arguments at one another, as some may believe. Dustin Adams, the forensics coach at BCHS who has more than 14 years combined experience as a debater and coach, describes debate as “structured argumentation.” Sam Taylor, last year’s debate captain, calls it “verbal chess directed by Christopher Nolan.” Veteran team member Cody Cloud describes

it as “an art form.” Jake Riggs, a second-year debater last season, who qualified to the State Forensics Tournament, says debate “is what we do every day. It’s not merely two or more parties shouting back and forth, nor is it an aggravating and pointless struggle with words. Debate isn’t just a skill in the real world – it is the real world.”

Debate always involves two sides, arbitrarily chosen before each round (a match involving two debate teams) of a tournament. One side

presents a plan of action, and the other side critiques this plan. Because a team doesn’t know whether it will be the team that proposes the plan (the affirmative team) or whether it will be the team that opposes and critiques the plan (the negative team), it needs to prepare arguments for both sides.

The forensics team at BCHS specializes in two debate events in particular: policy and parliamentary debate.

Taylor describes policy debate as where “students from all over the nation research a single topic in incredible depth for an entire year.” The evidence amassed by these students is then framed into a plan by the affirmative team and organized by the negative team into both general and specific refutations of affirmative plans.

Policy debate is very logical and driven by evidence, and all arguments are carefully built with evidence from highly qualified sources.

Parliamentary debate is, as first-year debater Kirsten Watkins puts it, “where you take a topic that is given to you 20 minutes before the round and then pull things out of your mind about it.

“You don’t get references, you don’t get anything put in front of you, you just have to pull knowledge from your brain and debate with it,” she says.

Parliamentary debate involves a great deal of persuasive speaking and requires its participants to be particularly quick-witted, as both teams must craft their arguments on the fly.

Last year alone, BCHS swept the Pepperdine Forensics Tournament in parliamentary debate and sent all of its policy teams to the State Forensics Tournament, the highest echelon of forensics tournaments besides the Tournament of Champions.

No matter the event, the skills learned in forensics are highly

valuable to a person’s life. Taylor, in true forensics fashion, lists off reasons why debate is so useful:

- It teaches critical thinking
- It teaches research skills
- It makes its participants comfortable with public speaking
- Colleges love it
- It allows for depth and breadth of education

“Debate is useful for everyone: introverts, extroverts, students who are in advanced-placement classes, students who are in college-preparatory classes,” the forensics coach says. “It’s good for everyone, because everybody needs to utilize the skills of reason and persuasion.

“Yes, to be good at it, it takes effort, it takes time,” Adams continues. “Some people have a natural gift for it, some people need to work harder than others, but, by and large, you’re not going to regret your experience with it. Unlike sports, which have a set of skills that will only apply to that sport, the skills you utilize in debate apply everywhere.”

ACADEMIC AND LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

Forensics

The parliamentary debate team of Sam Taylor and Jake Riggs won first place in the Pepperdine Invitational Tournament in January.

Six students competed in the State Forensics Tournament in San Francisco in April – the policy debate teams of Riggs and Joseph Stearns and Jaston Epp and Taylor; the parliamentary debate team of Dakota Bradford and Cody Cloud. Both policy debate teams made it to the top 32.



Left to right: Joseph Stearns, Jake Riggs, Sam Taylor, Jaston Epp, Cody Cloud, Dakota Bradford and Forensics Coach Dustin Adams display their trophies from the Southern Valley Forensics League state qualifier tournament.

National Merit

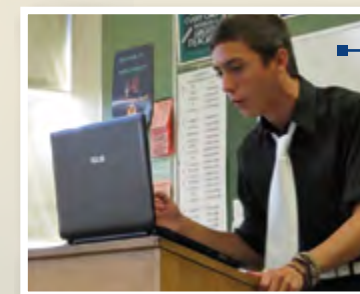
Jacob Braun, Michael Clausen, Nicole Foy, Joseph Stearns, Patrick Stewart and Sam Taylor received certification of commendations from the National Merit Scholarship Program.

Foy and Kevin McClain were named National Hispanic Scholars.

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INSET PHOTO: Jake Riggs competes in policy debate at the State Forensics Tournament in San Francisco last April. He is one of six BCHS students who participated at the state level.

MAIN PHOTO: Left to right: Joseph Stearns, Cheyenne Mitchell, Sam Taylor and Kirsten Watkins hone their skills during a mock debate in forensics class.



Leadership

Four BCHS students were awarded at the Teen City Government Day on Nov. 16, 2011, as part of Optimist International's Annual Youth Appreciation Week. The Optimist award recipients were Jacob Braun for scholarship, Dylan Wilson for leadership, Sarah Hill for school and community service and Nicole Foy for the Glendon Rogers Award, which includes excellence in each of the other three award categories.

Kenton Crabtree, Emily Guerard and Garrison Moratto were selected to represent BCHS at the Business Leadership and Ethics conference on Feb. 28, sponsored by the Kern High School District and Rotary Clubs of Bakersfield. The goal of the conference was to examine ways in which leadership development can become a conscious task of educational institutions.

Crabtree, Caitlyn Reeves and Gabby Tkac were selected for the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards. The training program held April 19-22 in Ojai emphasized leadership, citizenship and personal growth.

Science

Nearly 40 BCHS students competed in the Kern County Science Fair on March 13 at Rabobank Arena. Numerous projects received awards, including second-place finishes for Patrick Stewart and Cameron Wilbanks' solar panel project, Nathaniel Tweed's oil cleanup project, and Emily Guerard and Ricky Sottile's plant biology project.

Each of these projects, along with the third-place finish of Morgan Trembush's environmental impact of oil on water plants project, qualified for the California State Science Fair.

Special awards were presented to Melissa Hardy from Naval Sciences, Guerard and Sottile, and Sarah Norville and Lindsey Gentry from the California Association of Production Consultants, Gathenji Njoroge from National Association of Corrosion Engineers, and Tweed and Connor Kingsbury from American Petroleum Institute.



Left to right: Phoebe Lou, Daisy Hu, Teacher Paul Sadowsky, Peter Zhang and Jacob Braun demonstrate their teamwork as they show their first-place finishes from CSUB's Math Field Day.

Mathematics

Jacob Braun, Daisy Hu, Phoebe Lou and Peter Zhang placed first in the Varsity Math Bowl at California State University, Bakersfield's Math Field Day. Hu, Lou and Zhang also earned first in the Varsity Team Medley. Lou placed fourth in the Varsity Individual Medley, while Roy Jim placed fifth in the Junior Varsity Individual Medley.

Lou also placed first and Hu placed third in the individual portion of the Bakersfield Math Council Advanced Placement Calculus Contest on April 30. Additionally, the team of Hu, Emily Lin, Patrick Stewart and Del Zhou placed second and the team of Braun, Lou, Zhang and Andrew Xiang placed third.

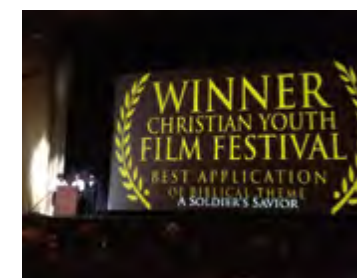
Separately, Lou participated in Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Math Prize for Girls last September. She scored 35 out of 36 points on the California Mathematics League six-test contest in February, which placed her ninth in the state, and she also advanced to and competed in the American Invitational Mathematics Examination March 15.

Film

BCHS students Greyson Stewart, Daniel Bligh, Daniel Cherry, Jake Taber, Brock Jennings, Ellie Johnson and Julia Stewart, along with five students from RiverLakes Community Church, won Best Picture in the 18th Annual Kern Christian Youth Film Festival on March 4 for their movie, "A Soldier's Savior."

The film also won Best Editing, Best Sound and Best Biblical Application. Additionally, Stewart won Best Actor, while his cousin Ben Hess, from Stockdale High School, won Best Director.

"A Soldier's Savior" is a short film about a group of four soldiers who step into hostile territory but soon come to find out the real battle lies within themselves as they encounter personal choices that could very well be the difference between life and death. Watch "A Soldier's Savior" on You Tube.



Dream Builders participant blessed by 'humbling experience'

Cory Camp, a 2012 graduate, embarked on a yearlong journey after being selected to participate in the Dream Builders program.

"It's a humbling experience when you realize you got into the program, since there are only 32 (students selected)," Camp explained.

The Jim Burke Education Foundation teams Bakersfield students with corporate partners to teach civic responsibility and community involvement through the Ford Dimension and Dream Builders programs.

Camp's team of eight, who was sponsored by Bright House Networks, partnered with Garden Pathways in downtown Bakersfield to work in their afterschool program for underprivileged children. The team launched a program to expose the children to various aspects of the arts they might be interested in pursuing later in life. Camp and his fellow Dream Builders spent two and half hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays for eight weeks teaching art, drama and dance to the children, as well as bringing in professional artists from the community with various concentrations to work with the children.

At the end of their time working with the children, Camp and his team hosted a special time for parents to come and watch a video showing highlights of their time with the children at Garden Pathways. They also displayed the student's work, from paper maché projects to personalized scrapbooks.

Additionally each of the four Ford Dimension and Dream Builder teams presented their projects to their own families, the community and the local media on April 12 at the Bakersfield Museum of Art.

Through the experience, Camp said his desire to stay active in community service after high school was strengthened. He also grew more grateful for his own blessings after seeing the appreciation from the children in the program, he said.

"Why would God give us so much if He didn't want us to give back?" Camp said.

Seniors Robert Keathley and Connor Kingsbury were selected to participate in the leadership program this year. Keathley for Dream Builders and Kingsbury for Ford Dimension.



Special Guests

Two-time Grammy-winner Laurence Juber, the lead guitarist for Paul McCartney's Wings, came to BCHS on Oct. 6, 2011, to discuss technique and demonstrate his skills for the guitar students. Juber is a world-renowned guitar virtuoso, composer and arranger and is known for creating a multifaceted performance that belies the use of only one acoustic guitar. As a participating artist in Guitars in the Classroom, Juber trains teachers to play the guitar to deliver instruction in music standards while integrating music across all other areas of the curriculum.

Lord Christopher Monckton, an expert in the field of global warming, along with Assemblywoman Shannon Grove came to



BCHS student Austyn Parker, middle, assists Assemblywoman Shannon Grove, left, during Lord Christopher Monckton's visit to educate science classes on global warming on March 23.

campus March 23 to enlighten the third-period science classes on his viewpoint regarding the data and configurations of California's emissions presented by politicians and some media. Monckton has traveled around the world debating the issue of global warming against top professors, researchers and politicians.

Jeff Sweerink, who has a doctor-



Two-time Grammy-winner Laurence Juber autographs Hunter Mitchell's arm while other guitar students watch. Juber spoke to the guitar classes on Oct. 6.

ate in astrophysics and teaches at the University of California, Los Angeles, was a special guest during Spiritual Emphasis Week. On Thursday, March 8, he spoke to students and parents at a forum about intelligent design. Sweerink also met with the Bible classes throughout the day and discussed ways that scientific discovery matches scriptural imperatives.



Summer missionaries find faith, future fulfilled

BCHS sent 19 students into the international mission fields last summer. Partnering with Word of Life (Palabra de Vida), seven students spent seven days in Puente Alto, Santiago, Chile, while 12 students partnered with Students International for a 12-day mission in Lautoka, Fiji.

Impact magazine sat down with 2012 graduates Cody Storm and Jared Kaing and seniors Emily Meurer and Caroline Webb to talk about each trip.

Why did you decide to participate in the mission trip?

Jared: At first I decided to go because my friends were going, but then, the three friends that I wanted to go with didn't even end up going on the trip. I just thought it was a really good opportunity, because I knew that I was interested in missions beforehand, so I really wanted to get a taste of what the mission field was like.

Emily: I know that my purpose in life to serve God is through missions, and I hoped that going on this trip would help me realize that this was my calling – to go serve.

Cody: I want to do missions as a career and be in that for the rest of my life, so, going on a mission trip was obvious for me. But going to Fiji itself was kind of because of the Fiji water bottles. I always liked them and I just thought it would be cool to go there.

Caroline: Something hit my heart when I saw the video at the missions forum, and I thought, "I need to go there."

What was your mission while in Chile/Fiji?

Jared: (Chile) Each day was specified to going to a certain school or orphanage and be able to minister. Basically we went there and interacted with kids and played with them, and we were able to share the gospel with them.

Emily: (Chile) We restored a cabin at the campsite that we stayed at, we also went to two orphanages and two schools and at those locations we presented the gospel message to them, then just fellowshipped with the students and children and taught them about God and Christ.

Cody: (Fiji) So, we worked with Students International, and they have so many sites in the city that you can work with. And, so, I had the chance to work with preschool for a couple of days and then the special needs school, which was really awesome. And also, I had a chance to speak at a prison in Lautoka.

Caroline: (Fiji) They had a primary school, preschool, special needs school as well as a prison ministry, golden age home (which is kind of like a retirement home, but definitely different) and construction. I originally felt called to go to special needs, I've always had a heart for people with disabilities ... however, when we got there no one really wanted to go to the golden age home, there were really only two other people besides myself on the first day ... and that sort of tugged at my heart.

In what ways did you see God move through your team?

Jared: It was definitely cool to see our team getting closer, to see each of us mature spiritually, and to see a new side of people come out, a side I'd never seen before in school.

Emily: We just forgot about any worries that we had and just found joy in serving the Lord. I know many of the students that went on the trip realized that missions were part of their future.

Cody: A revelation for me was that if I want to grow and take a step toward God, I have to be involved in His kingdom work, I mean actively. I can't just sit down and say, "God, I want to grow closer to you," and then not do anything about it. I have to take steps to be involved in His work and with His people.

Caroline: There were so many. Where I saw Him immediately in front of me was with the relationships Brooke (Staley) and I developed with the women in the golden age home.

In what ways did you grow spiritually from this experience?

Jared: It definitely encouraged me and motivated me to see how the missionaries in Chile were so focused and so one-track minded in their relationship with God, it just made me want to do the same.

Emily: I've definitely been encouraged to read the Bible more and spend more time with God because of this trip.

Cody: My team didn't just consist of Californians, but also of New Zealanders. So, for me, seeing the Bakersfield Christian team grow and coming out of our shell and be really open about their faith was really awesome. And, also, getting to see the New Zealand team, cause they were older than us and in college, and so it was really neat to see the wisdom they had and the maturity, and they were kind of role models to us.

Caroline: I grew in the aspect of being able to share my life with people. Here, sometimes I'm more reserved and I don't talk as much, but there I had to give my testimony for the first time ... but I prayed

a lot before I did it, and I got through it, and there was this feeling of relief and happiness that I could be able to get to that point and be able to share and be able to share parts of it with the women at the golden age home. That strengthened my relationship with God.

What advice would you give fellow classmates who are considering participating in a mission trip?

Jared: Well, obviously, first of all, you should pray about it. And, second of all, it's an opportunity that's out there, so talk about it with your parents, talk about it with your friends and your teachers and see if it's the right fit for you.

Emily: You go to serve God, whether missions will be what you do in life or not, it's still a good experience to be humbled and to see God working in ways you do not see here in America.

Cody: Definitely do it. Like Jared was saying, pray about it, but also, we're called, like in (the book of) Matthew to spread God's word across the nations, here and everywhere we can go. There's tons of people that haven't heard the gospel that need to hear the gospel, and so I'd really encourage prospective students to go do it, because it's a great opportunity. Not only will you get to serve but you'll grow tremendously in your faith.

Caroline: Oh, do it. Don't even think about it, just sign up. It's an experience you'll never forget. You should do it and go, it may not be Fiji, it may not be Chile, but just go, and God will move your heart in a big way. And He will make you love even more than you ever thought possible.



'Sound of Music' both grand and intimate



"Everything I knew before about singing and acting changed and it took me to another level."

— Lindsay Book (played role of Maria)



BCHS took on the challenge last spring of staging its largest musical to date: 77 cast and crew members, more than 200 hours of rehearsal, 25 musical numbers and more than 1,000 audience members in four performances.

But, the production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "The Sound of Music" was about much more than raw numbers. It was about showcasing the students' talents while telling the story of an aspiring nun hired to watch over a widowed Austrian captain's seven children in the days before World War II erupted.

"I wanted to do a piece from the golden age of musicals, an older piece," said director Scott Neese, who teaches both choir and theatre at BCHS.

Neese explained that the musical had some interesting religious themes he thought were worth exploring.

"In reading the script, the last scene where the Mother Abbess quotes scripture and talks about how you will go out with joy and be led forth with peace, and the mountains will go before you in song, is the whole reason for the play to be called 'The Sound of Music,'" Neese explained. "You don't get that from the movie."

Since the musical both begins and ends in the abbey, a convent ruled by an abbess, Neese said

it deals to a large extent with the "influence of the church on a person's life" and the discovery that "God can be found in the everyday things of life, as well as the things that we think are spiritual."

This was the second BCHS musical performed at St. John's Lutheran Church, a location that provides several advantages over the school's facilities. Video screens can display background scenery, which was useful in "The Sound of Music" as the Von Trapp family climbs the Alps to escape from Austria. Also, the large stage allows more room for props and a larger cast.

A number of elementary students auditioned for the roles of the younger Von Trapp children. Though only five were needed, Neese said he was so encouraged and impressed with the turn out and talent that he cast an additional two as nuns and one as a Nazi soldier.

BCHS cast member Jake Wattenbarger made his acting debut as Max Detweiler. Though Wattenbarger was reluctant to audition, encouragement from

friends and family led him into what many said was an excellent and natural role. Now, he is looking forward to acting in another production during his senior year.

"It was really fun,"

Wattenbarger said. "Mr. Neese is a really good director, and he had a really good vision of what he wanted (for the musical), and it turned out really amazing."

The production had a profound impact on not only rookie actors, but veteran performers as well.

"'The Sound of Music' had one of the best casts I have ever done a show with," said actress Lindsay Book, who played the lead female role of Maria. This was Book's fourth role at BCHS. "We truly became a family after all of our preshow warm-ups and late-night rehearsals. We all made so many memories that everyone will never forget."

But, beyond her connection to the other cast members, Book demonstrated her deep connection to God, expressing her admiration for her character's "beautiful faith" and Maria's desire to "share the joy that God has given us" through song.

Such a statement truly captures the whole meaning of the "The Sound of Music."

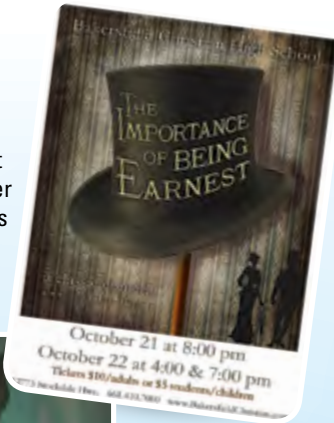
Contributing writer Jacob Braun, BCHS student



October 8-9
Kim Marshburn, Emily Pariseau, Kelly McGiffney, Yitong Shi, Qiuzi (Emily) Lin and Vanessa Curless participated in Via Arté, an annual community event held at The Marketplace.

August–November
Pep Band promoted BCHS spirit at home football games

October 21-22
Ten cast members, four tech crew and two stage managers worked alongside director Scott Neese, parents, alumni and other volunteers to produce this year's fall play, "The Importance of Being Earnest."



January 29
Rebecca Spickler (percussion) and Brian McClain (trombone) performed in the All Southern California Honor Band at Redlands University.



November 16-18
Elsa Braun participated in the California Central Region Honor Choir.

December 2
Art field trip to Hearst Castle and local art galleries in Cambria.



March 29
Twenty-two jazz students performed in the annual Big Nite O' Jazz. The audience enjoyed dinner and swing danced to the tunes of Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller.



February 16-19
Zeke Eicher (Baritone), Aaron Levins (trombone), Shane Spencer (trumpet) and Jimmi Futrell (tenor sax) performed in the California Band Director's Association All-State Band in Fresno.

February 28
The Calvary Chapel High School Choir from Las Vegas, Nevada performed for the BCHS choir as they kicked off their choir tour. The BCHS choir in turn performed for Calvary Chapel.

April 12
Mixed and women's choirs and theatre students performed at Stockdale Christian School.

April 26
The Wind Ensemble presented their spring Pops Concert. The nine graduating seniors as well as their parents were honored.

April 27
The Wind Ensemble earned first place in the small ensemble division at the Biola Festival.

April 15
Megan Spencer performed a flute solo with the Bakersfield Youth Symphony Orchestra after winning the concerto competition.

2011-2012 Students showcase talent



October 5-7
Band Tour – The Wind Ensemble took a 600 mile-tour to venues including Grace Lutheran School in Visalia, Fresno Pacific University and San Francisco City Academy where they played for a variety of audiences.



December 13
The Wind Ensemble performed in a Chamber Ensemble Recital at St. John's Lutheran Church.

September 10
Megan Spencer (flute), Paige Kobdich (oboe), Robert Wood (bassoon) and Andie-Vawn Winter (French horn) played first chair for Bakersfield Youth Symphony Orchestra.

December 1
The Colors of Christmas featuring "Let It Be Christmas" displayed the combined talents of 230 band, choir, guitar, theatre, art, photography and animations students.



January 31
Jimmi Futrell (alto saxophone), Robert Wood (bassoon), Andie-Vawn Winter (French horn), Claryce Lazerson (violin), Victoria Bruick (clarinet) and Gathenji Njoroge (bass clarinet) played in the Kern County Honor Band/Orchestra.

March 1
Mixed and women's choirs and theatre students performed at St. John's Lutheran School chapel.

March 20
The Wind Ensemble received a unanimous superior rating at the California Music Educators Association Ratings Festival for the third consecutive year.

March 16
Mixed and women's choirs and theatre students performed at Heritage Academy.



May 3
Both the mixed and women's choirs performed their spring concert in the atrium, while an art show which highlighted about 85 art pieces was held in the library.



April 19-22
A cast of 40 comprised of students from high school to 2nd grade presented "The Sound of Music."

Former stars at BCHS, these 7 are cashing in for a higher education

Chelby Cooke Santa Clara University

The last decade of hard work is about to pay off for recent BCHS graduate Chelby Cooke.

She began playing competitive tennis at a young age, and, for the past four years, she has racked up numerous championships, including four team titles at both the league and Valley levels and a pair of individual titles at both levels. Additionally, she has been named The Bakersfield Californian Player of the Year for the past two years.

"I really owe a lot of my success to (Coach) Frank Thiessen," Cooke explained. "He just puts everything he has into the team every season. He has been here for so long and in the sport for so long, and he just has so much knowledge."

Cooke has certainly made a name for herself in the world of amateur tennis, and she isn't finished yet. This fall, Cooke will be facing opponents in the Pac-12 as she takes the court for Santa Clara University.

"Santa Clara is like a college version of (BCHS). It's small. I really connected well with the coach and the girls," Cooke said. "And, it's definitely a benefit that it comes from a spiritual background, and I'll be able to carry over that aspect of this school."

Though Cooke's private coach made the recommendation to skip playing at the collegiate level and go the professional route, Cooke said she doesn't have an interest in that sort of life. The "A" student with a 4.2 GPA said she envisions a family and career in her future.

"Tennis has been great to get me to where I am," Cooke said, "but I wouldn't want to make it my life."

High school athletics was a stepping-stone for seven members of the most recent graduating class. They will head to college on scholarships totaling more than \$600,000 over the next four years.



A.J. Ramirez University of Southern California

Former Eagles shortstop A.J. Ramirez comes from a strong baseball background, so it's only natural that he's drawn to the tradition of the University of Southern California Trojans.

USC leads the nation in all-time collegiate baseball championships with 12, and Ramirez, a freshman this season, hopes to win No. 13 on his watch.

Ramirez is no stranger to knowing what it takes to be a part of a championship team, with the Eagles earning their first Valley championship his junior year, followed by a league title his senior year.

"(Playing at BCHS) has really helped me develop a lot of character," Ramirez said. "We have a great, awesome group of guys, best teammates I could ask for. We're pretty much a family."

Ramirez's athletic talents don't fall far from his family tree. His father Roberto was a right fielder and big bat for 13 years in professional baseball. A.J. Ramirez said he remembers playing from sunup to sundown during the summers in his father's native Dominican Republic.

"(I've) always just had that fire to play baseball all the time," he said. "It never really gets boring."

Ramirez has worn blue and gold not only on the baseball field, but also on the basketball court. The natural athlete also played on a local hockey team, but the summer before his senior year, he left the hockey rink to concentrate on getting in shape to play baseball at the college level.

USC was not the only school to notice Ramirez. He was looked at by the more than a half dozen other schools, including Fresno State, University of Oregon and Niagra University in New York.

"I'm just excited to play at USC," Ramirez said. "Not many people have that opportunity. I'm really blessed."



Jimmi Futrell Girls' Tennis Biola University

"Coach Thiessen really emphasized that we have to have a good attitude while we play, all the time.

So, that's been instilled in me, and I've really taken that to heart. It doesn't really matter if you win or lose, you have to have a good attitude no matter what, and I've been able to apply that to all areas of my life."

PHOTO CREDIT: THE BAKERSFIELD CALIFORNIAN

Sarah Hill Track and Field Fresno Pacific University

"I've been told that the track team are the spiritual leaders of the campus, and they're a big family. I think it will be really fun to make close connections with those friends and be able to share the gospel with people who don't already know it, understand it or believe it."



Tyler Harris Boys' Basketball U.S. Air Force Academy Preparatory School

"I think (playing at BCHS) has given me confidence more than anything else. The coaches and everyone surrounding the basketball program treat me like I'm supposed to be in the Div. I level, so the fact that they're telling me that every day and they believe that made me believe that myself."



Casey Bloomquist Baseball California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

"(I look forward to) the whole experience — traveling with the team, going all over the country, just playing the sport that I love and honoring God with it."

Hannah Wilkins Volleyball California State University, Chico

"I went on my official visit and I just fell in love with the school, regardless of volleyball... I kind of felt like it was a God thing. It all came together. I wasn't really searching for Chico, it just kind of came to me, and I think it's where I'm supposed to be."





PHOTO CREDIT: THE BAKERSFIELD CALIFORNIAN

Sarah Hill earned fourth place in the high jump at the California CIF State Track and Field Championships. Hill set a personal record at 5-foot-7. She was one of seven medalists from Kern County. Hill is only the second athlete in BCHS history to compete in track and field at the state level. The first was 2005 alumna Christine Merrill, who competed in the London Olympics.

Read more about Merrill on page 24.

Hannah Rehkoph led the girls' soccer team with 45 goals, breaking the school record and tying the Kern County record. Rehkoph's scoring output was second in the Central Section and sixth in the state. She was the nation's No. 1 freshman goal scorer last season.



Head Football Coach Jerald Pierucci is moving up the chain of command at BCHS. Pierucci, who served as an assistant football and junior varsity boys' basketball coach last season, played his high school ball at Shafter followed by Div. I college football at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He has his teaching credential from Sierra Nevada University in Lake Tahoe and is a teacher at East High School. He is married and has two daughters, ages 5 and 4. Pierucci began his coaching career in 1999.



Total Teams
28

Varsity Teams
19

Junior Varsity or Frosh/Soph Teams
9

CIF Championships
2

League Titles 6 **Individual Titles** 13

First Team League Selections
34

First Team All-Area Selections
9

THE SCOREBOARD

California Interscholastic Federation Central Section Division Titles

Girls' Tennis (Div. IV)
Boys' Tennis (Div. IV)

South Sequoia League Titles

Baseball
Boys' Tennis
Girls' Golf
Girls' Soccer
Girls' Tennis
Volleyball

The Bakersfield Californian Player of the Year

Chelby Cooke, girls' tennis (singles)
A.J. Ramirez, baseball (Co-Player of the Year)

Individual Valley Titles

Chebly Cooke, girls' tennis (singles)
Sarah Hill, track and field (high jump)

Individual League Titles

Girls' Tennis
Chelby Cooke (singles)

Track and Field

Shannon Foy (high jump)
Sarah Hill (triple jump, long jump, 300m hurdles)
Kelly McGiffney (shot put, discus)

Swimming

Claryce Lazerson (100 butterfly stroke, 100 backstroke)
Delaney Goltry (500 freestyle)
Jon Petris (diving)

SSL First Team Selections

* = All-Area First Team

= League MVP or Player of the Year

+ = National Christian School Athletic Association All-American First Team

Baseball

Casey Bloomquist*# (Co-MVP)
Andrew Heideman# (Pitcher of the Year)
Matt Huckaby
Cody Mashburn# (Rookie of the Year)
A.J. Ramirez*# (Co-MVP)
Ricky Sottile
Ryan Unruh
Jake Thompson

Boys' Basketball

Tyler Harris*+

Boys' Golf

Ryan Roodzant# (Player of the Year)
Owen Schoneveld

Boys' Tennis

Sullivan Roche*
David Rodriguez
Nolan Schuler

Cross Country (All-League)

Kali Navea-Huff

Football

John Schoneveld
Jacob Thompson

Girls' Golf

Megan Cho*
Genna Edwards
Julia Stewart

Girls' Soccer

Nicole Foy
Hannah Rehkopf*
Kyllie Rivera
Reagan Staib
Mary Woodall

Girls' Tennis

Chelby Cooke*
Jimmi Futrell*

Softball

Jessica Menga

Track and Field

Sarah Hill*+
Kelly McGiffney
Shannon Foy

Volleyball

Jayann DeHoog
Callie Gonzales
Hannah Wilkins#+ (MVP)



Van Der Schaaf scores AD job he's been working toward

Blake Van Der Schaaf realized his career aspiration when BCHS hired him in the spring to oversee its sports programs.

The new athletics director has been working toward the role, having played at the college level, having coached at the high school level and having earned a graduate degree in athletic administration.

The Iowa native got his first role on a sports team as a ball boy for the Iowa State men's basketball team back when he was in elementary school. His love of sports has only grown since.

He played on championship basketball teams in high school and continued playing at three different colleges before moving into the coaching arena.

With more than a decade of coaching experience, most recently as head boys' basketball coach at Central Valley Christian School in Visalia, Van Der Schaaf is excited about his new role and looks forward to growing BCHS' already successful athletics program.

Van Der Schaaf said his focus is hiring the best coaches, implementing three competition levels – freshman/sophomore, junior varsity and varsity – for each sport, and leveraging technology and social networking to promote athletics both inside and outside the school.

"I just love working with kids. I love to see the look on their faces when they improve at something," said Van Der Schaaf, hailing sports as a great tool to improve "character, integrity and motivation" in students.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN 2011-12

one or more sports
65.6%

two or more sports
22.3%

three or more sports
3.9%

NCSAA All-American Teams were not announced for soccer, baseball and softball before **Impact** went to press.

Boosters help Eagles fly higher

They've been cheering in the bleachers, cooking in the concession stand and selling spirit wear behind the merchandise table. During their inaugural year, the Eagles Club members have made their presence known at every game, supporting BCHS athletics.

"We want it to be hard not to notice that we are here," said Eagles Club President Carrie Balfanz.

With more than 80 members consisting of parents (past, present and future parents) as well as BCHS faculty and staff, they have certainly made a mark on not only the athletics department but also the overall school spirit.

"The booster club's main purpose is to provide support for the athletics department through athletic improvements to fields, to concessions, to all the different athletic teams equipment, uniforms, and even beyond that, and I think even more importantly, is to increase and boost spirit at BCHS," Balfanz said.

Through hosting events — a rally and barbecue at the beginning of the year, the Spiritize your Ride contest, multiple games



and contests during each athletic season — the boosters have increased the level of fun for the fans and athletes.

"It's been a terrific way for the parents to carry the excitement of their own students who may or may not be involved in sports," said Bryan Lynn, parent and booster club member. **"But, it's also a way to deliver their passion for the school in giving back through serving and through building the school spirit."**

Beyond building school spirit, Balfanz said she was pleasantly surprised that the club was able to raise around \$250,000 through memberships, field signs, concessions and merchandise sales, which has enabled it to financially underwrite improvements on many projects throughout the year, plus

leave a sizable balance to carry into the next year for bigger projects down the road.

In addition to obvious external projects, such as buying sports equipment, the Eagles Club undertakes internal projects to make it more effective, such as using a golf cart for the "flying café" to provide concessions for baseball, softball and tennis.

The boosters' largest project undertaking to date was much-needed track-and-field improvements, such as curbing, slabs and pits for the pole vault, high jump, long jump, triple jump, shot put and discus throw.

"As boosters grow, we'll be able to invest money in the campus and the school and ultimately in the students to make the sports experience for all students who go to (BCHS) a better one," Lynn said.

Changes, challenges abound for international students

The transition for any teenager entering high school can be a difficult one, but for the 32 international students at BCHS last year, they had a few extra cultural challenges to overcome.

What's that you say?

Though most of the international students at BCHS have learned English in their home countries — such as China, South Korea and Cameroon — since they were young, being thrown into an immersion environment for the first time can be overwhelming.

Korean student Jae Kuen (Jay) Park recalled his freshman year at BCHS, when he hardly spoke English and had no friends. It was a totally new start. Park said he felt misunderstood by others. People thought he didn't want to speak English or that he didn't want to talk to them, but, in reality, he was afraid of making grammar mistakes or having people not understand him. Now, after three years, things have changed. Park now catches himself speaking English when he's in Korea during summer vacation.

Hitching a ride

A wide-open high school campus full of one-story buildings and grassy spaces is a strange sight to some international students, who are used to the concrete jungles of overseas big cities.

But, the way of getting around is an actual challenge. They come from countries where public transportation makes it easy for teenagers to independently get where they're going. Now, they're living in a country where most of their peers drive personal cars. International students are suddenly reliant on their friends and host families to cart them everywhere.

Twenty-five of BCHS' international students pose with a representative from the chancellor's office during their visit to University of California, Merced during their International Education Week last November. IEW celebrates the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide. BCHS' International Program also took students to visit and tour California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo last April.

continued ►



International students, continued

Family circle

Any student coming to a new school has to make new friends, but international students must also make new families – host families.

Twenty-six school families opened their homes and their hearts to international students. But, a new environment takes some getting used to. They're learning household chores, house rules and family rituals, such as going to church on Sundays.

"When you live with a host family, you have to adjust to what they do, and you have to interact and communicate with them, cause if you don't, it's not actually a family," Park said.

Eye on the prize

Director of Admissions and International Program Alice Abril said the true purpose behind the move to America is to get an American education.

Yingke (Daisy) Hu, like many international students, enrolled in an American high school with the specific purpose of getting into an American university.

This year's graduating international students have been accepted into a variety of prestigious American schools, such as the University of California, Los Angeles and Penn State.

Many of the international students excel in math or science, but classes in English, history and the Bible offer a real challenge.

Teacher personalities and classroom logistics are also much different. In Korea and China, for example, students stay in one place and teachers come to them.

"Here, teachers have more interaction with the students," Hu said. "In China, teachers give a more strict impression and keep distance from their students, only spending time with them in class. Sometimes, it's even hard to ask them questions after class."

Game on

Both Park and Hu said participating on American school sports teams is a great way to make friends.

Park said school sports are much different in Korea, where classes compete against other classes in the same school instead of forming rivalries with other schools.

In China, Hu said physical education classes allow students to dabble in different sports, but they don't have school teams.

Second home

Even with all the differences, these international students said they have come to love and appreciate America during their days at BCHS.

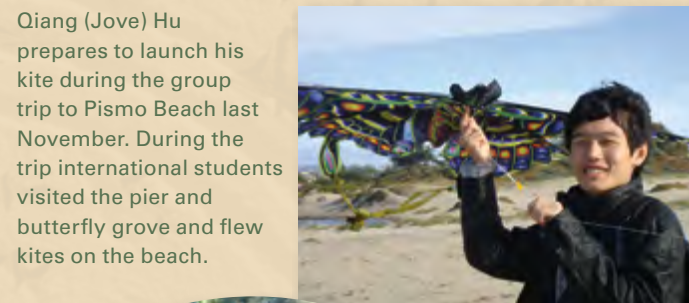
"America is my second home," Hu said.



Yiteng (Kobe) Qi, Xing (Chris) Chen and Zheqi (Zachary) Chen work together on the ice breaker game during the annual new student breakfast on Aug. 12, 2011.



Wei (Clover) Zhou blows out her birthday candles during the celebration at Panda Palace that invited international students to share Chinese New Year with their host families and some BCHS faculty and staff.



Qiang (Jove) Hu prepares to launch his kite during the group trip to Pismo Beach last November. During the trip international students visited the pier and butterfly grove and flew kites on the beach.



Qiuzi (Emily) Lin and HeeJu Park show off their pumpkins during the visit to Banducci Farms where the international students picked then carved pumpkins and had a harvest devotional last October.

CLASS OF 2012



College Acceptances of our 2012 Graduates

* = multiple acceptances

- Abilene Christian University
- Arizona State University*
- Azusa Pacific University*
- Bakersfield College*
- Baylor University*
- Biola University*
- Boise State University
- Boston University
- California Baptist University*
- California Lutheran University*
- California Maritime Academy
- California Polytechnic State University, Pomona*
- California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo*
- California State University, Bakersfield*
- California State University, Channel Islands*
- California State University, Chico*
- California State University, Fresno*
- California State University, Fullerton*
- California State University, Long Beach*
- California State University, Los Angeles
- California State University, Sacramento*
- Calvin College
- Case Western Reserve University
- Cedarville University*
- Clemson University*
- Colorado Christian University
- Colorado School of Mines*
- Concordia University*
- Corban University*
- Creighton University
- Crown College
- Cuesta College*
- Dowling College
- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Prescott
- Emory University
- Fresno Pacific University*
- Friends University
- George Fox University*
- Grand Canyon University*
- Humboldt State University
- LA Music Academy
- Laguna College of Art and Design
- Marist College
- Northeastern State University
- Northern Arizona University
- Oklahoma City University
- Ouachita Baptist University
- Pennsylvania State University, University Park
- Pepperdine University
- Point Loma Nazarene University*
- San Diego State University*
- San Francisco State University
- San Jose State University
- Santa Clara University
- Seattle Pacific University*
- Tabor College*
- Taft College*
- Tennessee State University
- Texas Christian University*
- The Art Institute of Atlanta
- The Master's College*
- The University of Texas, Austin
- The University of Texas, Dallas
- United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School
- University of Arizona
- University of California, Davis*
- University of California, Irvine*
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, Merced*
- University of California, San Diego*
- University of California, Santa Barbara*
- University of California, Santa Cruz
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- University of the Pacific*
- University of San Diego
- University of San Francisco
- University of Southern California*
- University of Washington*
- Vanguard University*
- Virginia Commonwealth University - The Honors College
- Washington State University
- Washington University in St. Louis
- Wayland Baptist University
- West Texas A&M University
- Westmont College*
- Whittier College*
- Whitworth University
- University of Wyoming

The Class of 2012 graduated 123 students, among them are Valedictorian and AP Scholar with Honor Jacob Braun, Salutatorian Patrick Stewart, Eagle of the Year Vanessa Curless, and National Hispanic Scholar and AP Scholar with Honor Nicole Foy who sat down with *Impact* to share some of their experiences at BCHS.



Jacob Braun

College: University of Southern California

Intended major: Physics

Career goals: Teach, research-and-development or go into applied sciences and engineering

High school achievements: Valedictorian, AP Scholar with Honor

Q: How has BCHS challenged you?

A: I think BCHS challenges you in a number of ways. Obviously, academically and spiritually, but overall I think the real challenge that BCHS presents is to "in whatever you do, to do it for God's glory." Basically, just strive for excellence, strive to do well, but, as the Bible says, do it not as if working for men, but as if working for God. That, I think, should motivate you to want to give your best in all you do, whether you're a great athlete, a great student or good at some extracurricular activity. I think that's really the

message of BCHS. I guess in my case I want to be a scientist. A lot of scientists are atheist or agnostic. The real challenge is for me to represent God through science, and it's not easy, because you'll basically be ignored and/or laughed at by a lot of your peers, because they believe that believing in God is not scientific, it's not rational, and it's crazy. So, I think personally for me is that BCHS has challenged me to continue to represent God.

Q: What is one of your favorite memories during your time at BCHS?

A: A really good memory was Hume Lake last year. After one of the chapels at night, I stayed after for about an hour, and I talked with Mr. Martin and Mr. Sutherland about philosophical stuff. It was so cool, because they are so intelligent and bright. I felt really privileged that I would be able to just sit there and talk to them and that they would want to talk to me.



Vanessa Curless

College: Whitworth University

Intended major: Double major in Spanish and art

Career goals: Work as a graphic artist

High school achievements: Eagle of the Year

Q: How has BCHS helped you grow academically?

A: It's helped me not to procrastinate, because I used to wait until the very last minute to do anything, and this year, especially, I found out you can't do that. It's also taught me that if you are having a really tough time with an assignment or something to just keep pushing through, because if you are having issues, your teacher will help you. Keep pushing on, even if it's hard because you can do it.

Q: How has BCHS helped you grow spiritually?

A: It's shown me why I believe what I believe and how to defend what I believe. It's made me a lot more sure of my views on everything and my faith. I feel like I'm a lot closer to the Lord. I've also been on three mission trips with this school. I've been to the Dominican Republic twice, and I just came back from Chili. They were amazing experiences. It was awesome to see the Lord at work and be able to follow what He wants us to do and also grow spiritually myself.



Patrick Stewart

College: University of Texas, Dallas

Intended major: Biology

Career goals: Work as an oral and maxillofacial surgeon

High school achievements: Salutatorian

Q: How has BCHS impacted you?

A: I grew up in a public school background, and you get that worldly influx everyday, and it starts to wear on you. I was able to experience joy and happiness here. ... By experiencing an environment like this, it's actually setting you free. You are not bound by the world. That's why I was always so thankful to come to BCHS, because I knew what it was, and the contrast, the freedom, was amazingly different.

Q: How have you impacted BCHS?

A: I don't like this question. I am just outright going to say it, because I don't like to look at my impact on anything. If I have to say anything, I liked talking with the underclassmen and encouraging them a little bit more. Like in Philosophy Club and men's Bible study, I would always tend to focus on the underclassmen and try to build them up, because they are the future of BCHS. I wanted them to have a strong spiritual backing, and I wanted them to be able to be strong men of God so that they could have a strong stand-in for the other underclassmen and the other people in their class. You have to plant seeds somewhere. Why not start young?

Nicole Foy

College: Biola University

Intended major: Double major in journalism with an emphasis in writing and publishing and linguistic anthropology, plus a minor in Spanish

Career goals: Be a writer or missions' journalist to travel and tell the stories of missionaries

High school achievements: National Hispanic Scholar, AP Scholar with Honor

Q: What will you miss most about BCHS?

A: Everything. We are not going to get the same thing that we have here anywhere else. I'm expecting Biola to be amazing, but it's still a bigger school. Our community is so great because it's a close community of close friends. We have great teachers who are actually accessible, and we have plenty of room for opportunity in anything. If you want to be the president of a club, if you want to get good grades, if you want to be on a good sports team ... it's all here. We are so lucky.

Q: How has BCHS shaped your life?

A: I know I am definitely a changed person because of BCHS. I can't even remember what I was like before BCHS just because you change so much. Not only because they're your formative years but because you are guided instead of just being left to go on your own. I'm blessed with good parents who guide me, but I was also able to come to school with peers who supported me and teachers, especially, who always guided me and supported me and gave me advice.



**Former Eagle
jumps for
Olympic
Opportunity**



Christine Merrill has been nudged time and time again to get on the track. Others seemed quicker to recognize her talent, but she put in the hard work to seize each opportunity.

This summer, Merrill became the first former Eagle to compete in the Olympics. Merrill specializes in the 400-meter hurdles.

The Olympic journey began Merrill's junior year at BCHS — the year the school moved to its current campus and launched a track and field team.

Merrill was already an athlete, competing in tennis, basketball, volleyball and softball. The new BCHS track coach, Dennie Watson, saw Merrill run and knew he had something special if he could get her on his team. With a little prodding from Watson and her parents, Merrill dropped softball for track and discovered a new passion.

"They knew what was best for me, and it turned out to be a lot of fun," Merrill said.

In high school, Merrill competed in the long jump, triple jump, 100-meter, 200 and relay. Off the track, she earned the titles of valedictorian and homecoming queen. Merrill ran off to UC San Diego without intentions of continuing her track and field career. She was focused on engineering school.

Once again, others saw her talent and asked her to compete. The college track coach wanted her to join the Tritons, at least for a year to see if she liked it. Five years later, she had earned multiple All-American honors and set UC San Diego records in both the 400

hurdles and 400 dash. She also won the NCAA Div. II title in the 400 hurdles her junior season.

Merrill thought she would be done running after college. It was time to settle into a career as a mechanical engineer. She landed a job at Solar Turbines Inc.

Her grandfather and the Sri Lanka Athletics Association had other plans.

Merrill holds dual citizenship from the United States and Sri Lanka. She was raised in Bakersfield, but her grandfather still lives in the island nation south of India. The proud grandpa published a small newspaper article about his granddaughter's track and field accomplishments, and the Sri Lanka Athletics Association took notice.

The federal athletics organization recruited Merrill in 2009, and she took the opportunity to compete internationally.

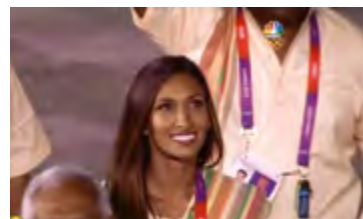
Merrill, who competes under her Sri Lankan middle name of Sonali, took bronze last summer in the 400 hurdles at the Asian Athletics Championships and placed sixth

at the IAAF World Championships. She also set a Sri Lankan record of 56.83 seconds in the 400 hurdles.

Sri Lanka then punched Merrill's ticket to the London Olympics as its female wild card entrant. Representing her mother's native land, Merrill ran in the qualifying heats of the 400 hurdles.

Merrill promised to keep seizing opportunities on the track.

"Can't believe all my sacrifices and hard work have led up to this point," Merrill said during the Olympics. "And this is just the beginning."



Merrill walks in the Parade of Athletes at the London 2012 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony.

ALUMNI ACTIVITIES



Alumni returned to BCHS' campus for the three alumni events last year. From worshipping together during Alumni Chapel to starting new traditions with an alumni float heading up the Homecoming float parade or cheering on the teams at the annual Powder-puff game, alumni were able to make new memories and catch up with former classmates and teachers.

■ **Tim Hubbell (1983)** became a certified public accountant after attending Westmont University and California State University, Bakersfield. He currently practices tax/bookkeeping/payroll in Bakersfield. Hubbell and his wife Tami of 24 years have two daughters — Morgan, 20, and Maddie, 17.

■ **Shannon (Boone) Brown (1990)** is a graduate of the University of Phoenix and works for the family business called CoreTex Products. She has been married for 10 years and has two children and two stepchildren. Brown said she loved the Third Day concert that was held at BCHS last spring.

■ **Jenny Orndorff Avila (2002)** graduated from University of California, Santa Barbara with a degree in philosophy and began working with Reformed University Ministries at the University of Connecticut, where she mentored students and helped run weekly large-group meetings. She is currently halfway through a master's degree in social service administration at the University of Chicago. This year, she completed an internship at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in the Outpatient Psychiatry Mental Health Clinic. Avila and her husband Joel attend Cityview Presbyterian Church in downtown Chicago and volunteer at Breakthrough Urban Ministries, a homeless shelter and transitional living agency in the city.

■ **Paul Neis (2006)** graduated from Point Loma Nazarene University with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology. He is applying for law enforcement positions. Neis accepted Christ while attending BCHS and said he is thankful for his BCHS experiences, such as Hume Lake.

■ **Nathan Witmyer (2006)** graduated pilot training at Columbus Air Force Base in Mississippi and received his wings last February. This qualified him with commercial ratings of single-engine land, multi-engine land, instrument, Beechcraft 400 and Mitsubishi 300. His current assignment is to fly the RC-135, with primary missions of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance over foreign lands. He is stationed at Offutt AFB in Omaha, Neb. Along with being in active duty for the military for the last two years, Witmyer is working on his master's degree in economics with a focus in managerial economics through the University of Oklahoma.



■ **Katie Camp (2007)** is using her bachelor's degree from San Diego State University in recreation and tourism management to build a wedding and event-planning business called Signature Event Group and Signature Weddings with partner business Lili Marsh. So far, Camp has planned weddings in California, political events for Sarah Palin and Laura Bush, fundraising and charity events, as well as corporate events. Camp and Marsh are working to grow the business and deepen roots throughout the community.



Left to right: Cory Camp (2012), Katie Camp (2007) and Clay Camp(2009) enjoy a family vacation in Australia.

■ **Brennan La Mar (2007)** graduated from Vanguard University of Southern California in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in business administration and a minor in religion. He currently works for Kern County Teen Challenge, a nonprofit organization that provides a one-year free residential recovery ministry for anyone struggling with life-controlling addictions. He recently purchased his first house and will marry Eva Toy in November. La Mar said he is pursuing the Lord's calling on his life daily.



Brennan La Mar speaks at Alumni Chapel.

■ **Hannah Schuler (2007)** graduated from Northern Arizona University in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in special education and in general elementary education. Schuler lives in Phoenix and teaches third-through sixth-grade special education self-contained and resource.

■ **Tiffany Tjaarda (2007)** is completing a dietetic internship at California State University, Long Beach after graduating from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in nutrition. Tjaarda will then be taking the registered-dietitian exam and begin her career as a dietitian.



Abby (Shane) Reed and Randy Reed

■ **Abby (Shane) Reed (2008)** was married in August 2011 to her best friend Randy Reed.

■ **Allie (Berkshire) Gutierrez (2009)** runs a tutoring and homeschooling business. She is also writing a book with her mother. Last May, she married Fernando Gutierrez.



Allie (Berkshire) and Fernando Gutierrez



Katie Camp, right, poses with event coordinator extraordinaire David Tutera.

Alumni, what have you been up to?
 We want to know about your adventures, marriages and other accomplishments!
 Share your news and updates. Email them to alumni@bakersfieldchristian.com.
 Find us on Facebook: [Bakersfield Christian High School Alumni](#)

2012 college graduates

Graduate Degrees

■ **Stacey R. Butler (2007):** Master's degree in social work; University of Oklahoma; completing an internship at the Cancer Treatment Centers of America and wrapping up some research for the OU School of Pharmacy, all while applying for jobs and seeking the Lord's will.

Undergraduate Degrees

■ **Michelle Coulter (2008):** Point Loma Nazarene University; Bachelor of Arts in business administration; looking for a job in the nonprofit industry.

■ **Megan Lewis (2008):** California State University, Stanislaus; Bachelor of Science in biology with a concentration in zoology; working in Texas at a wildlife rehabilitation center.

■ **Michael McClain (2008):** Biola University; Bachelor of Arts in cinema and media arts with an emphasis in production; magna cum laude; planning to remain in Los Angeles.

■ **Isaac Nacita (2007):** University of California, Los Angeles; Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering with a minor in mathematics; magna cum laude; plans to work as an Air Force engineer.

■ **Abby (Shane) Reed (2008):** Wheaton College; Bachelor of Arts in English writing; pursuing a Certificate of Soul Care at Denver Seminary.

■ **Cassie Reeves (2008):** California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo; Bachelor of Arts in English; serving as a missionary intern with Mexican Medical Ministries.

■ **Nathan Vanden Berge (2008):** University of California, Irvine; Bachelor of Science in biological sciences; attending medical school at University of California, Davis School of Medicine.

■ **Michael White (2008):** California Baptist University; Bachelor of Applied Theology; will be attending Samford University's Beeson Divinity School Birmingham, Ala., for a Master of Divinity.

■ **Lindsay Woolley (2008):** San Diego State University; Bachelor of Science in criminal justice; becoming a probation officer for the county of San Diego.



Stacey R. Butler



Michelle Coulter



Megan Lewis



Michael McClain



Isaac Nacita



Abby (Shane) Reed



Cassie Reeves



Nathan Vanden Berge



Michael White



Lindsay Woolley, left

Events connect community to campus



Third Day was welcomed by around 800 fans in the BCHS Sports Center for a concert presented by Jesus Shack on April 15.



Grandparent's Day celebrated about 200 grandparents on campus. Highlights of the day included a continental breakfast, a special chapel and classroom visits. Grandparents also had the opportunity to take their students off campus for lunch.



Veterans Day Chapel brought Iraqi War vet Jeremy Staat to campus to address not only the BCHS students, but also more than 30 other veterans and their families. Staat is known in the Bakersfield community not only as a former Pittsburgh Steeler in the NFL, but also for the Jeremy Staat Foundation which raises awareness and support for our nation's veterans.

Youth Unity Movement Worship Night

gathered more than 100 local high school students to BCHS for a night of testimony, prayer and worship on April 14. The spiritual life committee is in the planning stages for making this a semiannual event.



Scan this image using your smartphone's barcode app to learn more about BCHS.



Parents of alumni: If you are receiving multiple copies of *Impact* for alumni whose permanent address has changed, please contact the Advancement Office at (661) 410-7000 or alumni@bakersfieldchristian.com. We'll be happy to update their addresses.

Calendar: What's coming up in 2012-13

- Aug. 15..... First Day of School - Instruction Begins
- Aug. 22..... Alumni Chapel
- Aug. 30 – 31..... The Fall Milk Bowl
- Sept. 11 – 13..... All-School Hume Lake Retreat
- Sept. 17..... 9th Annual Eagle Golf Classic
- Sept. 20..... College Fair
- Sept. 26..... Grandparents Day
- Oct. 4..... Admissions Visitation Day
- Oct. 12 – 13..... Fall Play
- Oct. 19..... Homecoming, Alumni Event
- Oct. 29 – Nov. 3..... Annual Fund Emphasis Week
- Nov. 1..... Admissions Visitation Day
- Nov. 3..... Giving Thanks Pancake Breakfast
- Nov. 8..... Veteran's Day Chapel
- Dec. 6..... The Colors of Christmas (Fine Arts Festival)
- Jan. 28..... Admissions Open House
- Jan. 31..... Science Fair
- March 15..... Powder-puff Game
- March 21..... Big Nite O'Jazz & Honors Art Show
- April 4..... Ironman Volleyball Game
- April 20..... 5th Annual The Key Event ▶▶▶**
- May 2..... Spring Choir Concert
- May 23..... Eagle Awards of Excellence
- May 23..... Last Day of School
- May 25..... Graduation
- June 30..... End of 2012-13 Fiscal Year,
 Last Day to Make 2012-13
 Annual Fund Gifts

African-themed event brings in \$330K for student aid



BCHS' fourth annual The Key Event, held at Seven Oaks Country Club on March 20, raised more than \$330,000 for BCHS students who receive a portion of their tuition from the school's need-based financial aid program. Highlights from the dinner auction included a compilation of songs from "The Lion King" musical performed by BCHS students and exciting auction items, including a once-in-a-lifetime African safari adventure.

