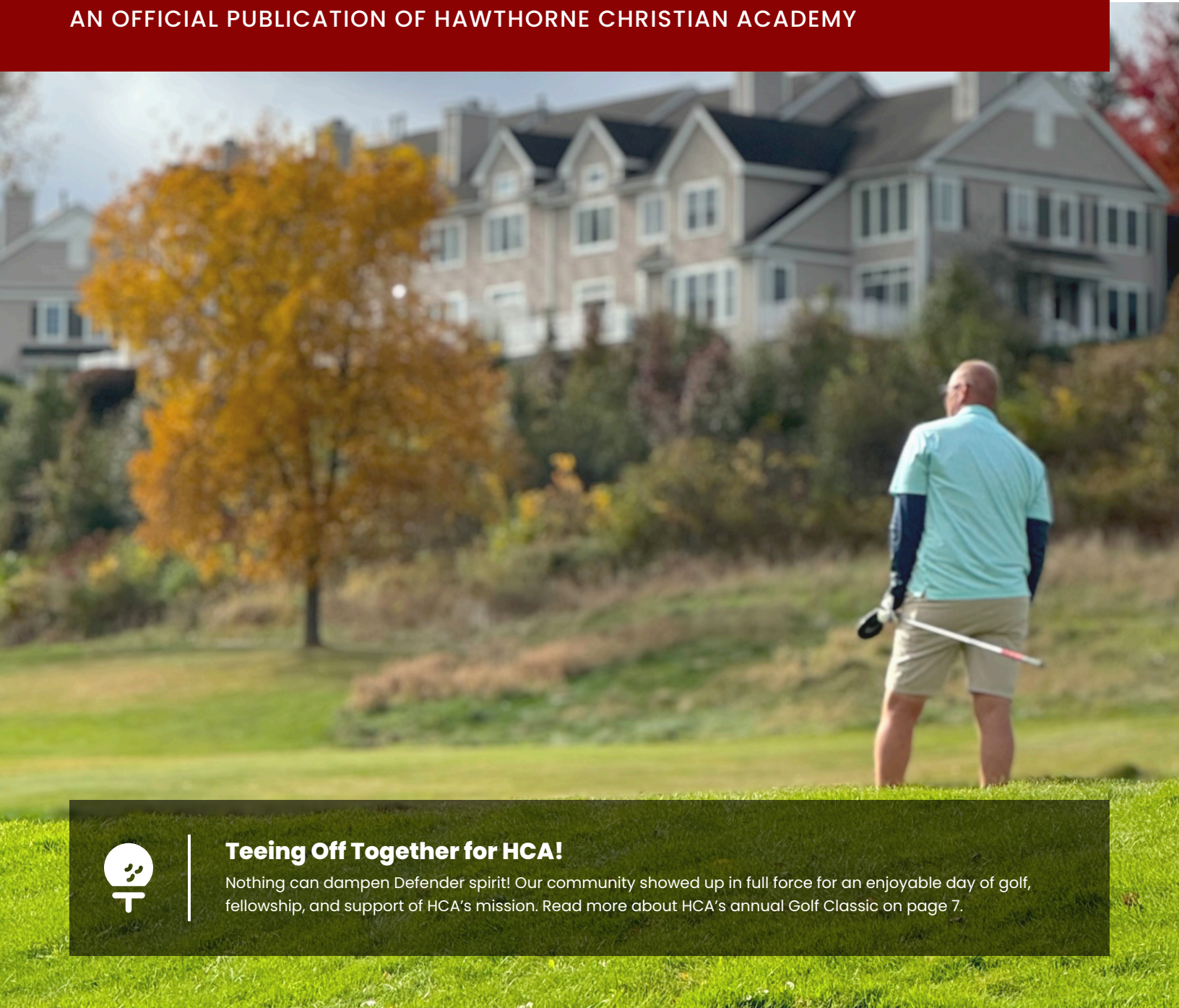




THE CHIMES NEWSLETTER

AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF HAWTHORNE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY



Teeing Off Together for HCA!

Nothing can dampen Defender spirit! Our community showed up in full force for an enjoyable day of golf, fellowship, and support of HCA's mission. Read more about HCA's annual Golf Classic on page 7.

FALL SEMESTER | 2025-2026 SCHOOL YEAR



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Our Mission

Hawthorne Christian Academy is committed to inspire and equip students to **grow** in spiritual maturity, to **achieve** academic excellence, and to **impact** the world for Christ.



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HCA Accreditations

- Association of Christian Schools International
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools

Chimes Photo Credit

- Photos by David Tierney & the HCA Yearbook Staff

HCA Leadership Team

-  **Todd R. Mitchell**
HCA Head of School
-  **Suzanne Bruno**
Interim Lower School Principal
-  **Ken Burres**
Director of Technology
-  **Jennifer N. Eelman**
Upper School Principal
-  **Deborah Fucci**
Director of School Counseling Services
-  **Wendy Littell**
Lower School Assistant Principal
-  **Tina Tatum** (Chimes Editor)
Director of Enrollment & Marketing
-  **Tyler Van Dyk**
Director of Athletics

Letters of Leadership

FROM THE DESK OF HCA'S HEAD OF SCHOOL

Make Him Known!

BY TODD R. MITCHELL | HCA HEAD OF SCHOOL

Psalm 105:1 declares "Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done."

Interestingly, this verse, written by King David, is a part of a fifteen-verse section of Psalm 105 that also appears in 1 Chronicles 16, following the account of David's relocation of the Ark to Jerusalem. At this time, David established enduring commemoration, praise, and thanksgiving, versus annual and neglected ritual. As a part of this new institution David assigned Asaph to lead the Israelites saying, "...give praise to the Lord in this manner..." (1 Chronicles 16:7). In context, it is clear that David was overjoyed at God's provision and thankful that the Ark would now reside in Jerusalem. His heart was full, and he wanted the people of God to be marked by continual praise, not by occasional ceremony.

Psalm 105:1 documents David's gratitude-anchored response for the Lord's goodness, kindness, and promised salvation to Israel. And what was that response? "Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done." Praise rises from the heart, proclamation flows from the lips, and testimony is carried outward. Thanksgiving that is rooted in the Lord's character does not stay private. It overflows into worship and witness as we declare, again and again, what God has done.

Throughout this year, HCA has focused on the theme, **Make Him Known**. Our desire, in keeping with our mission and purpose, is to lead students to both know Him and Make Him Known! Certainly this is inspired by a desire for each of our students to come to the

saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and a personal relationship with Him. We want our students to understand the gospel, to grow in spiritual maturity, and to operate from a biblical worldview. We desire that they would learn to love God with all their heart, to pursue truth with humility, and to walk in obedience to His Word.

But note, as is illustrated in this verse, that it is God's call for every believer, for every child of God, to proclaim His name and to tell others about our amazing God! Evangelism and discipleship are far more than obligatory compliance with the Great Commission, they are the spiritual overflow of our thanksgiving to an awesome God who loves us, provides for us, and saves us through the shed blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

As we meditate on the one and only omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God, we should be filled with awe. When we are struck by the truth that He knows us by name and calls us into a relationship with Him, we should fall to our knees. And when we recognize that this same God loves us and sent His Son that we might be saved from our sin to spend eternity with Him, we should be filled with joy and gratitude that compels us to proclaim His Name and to make known among the nations what He has done!

As we go about our day to day, may the Name of God and His mighty works be always on our lips as we praise Him and Make Him Known! Thank you for partnering with HCA as we pursue our mission to inspire and equip our students to grow in spiritual maturity, to achieve academic excellence, and to impact the world for Christ!

HCA Highlights

NOTEWORTHY UPDATES



HCA Class of 2026 Impacts the World for Christ!

BY TIMOTHY STANLEY | HCA BIBLE TEACHER & HGC PASTOR

What began as a mission to serve others quickly became a powerful reminder of how God meets His people when they step out in faith. Our senior class traveled to the Dominican Republic, believing we were going to an island to minister to the poor. Instead, God used the trip to minister deeply to us as well. We began at a local church, where students led worship, preached a message, and shared communion. Despite language barriers, God's presence united us as one church, reminding us that the gospel knows no borders.

One of the most impactful moments came during our visit to a children's hospital. Parents sat faithfully beside their sick children, many unable to afford the medications their kids needed. As we worshiped together through song, handed out Bibles, prayed at bedsides, and made balloon animals, the atmosphere shifted. Rooms once filled with heaviness were filled with joy. Through God's provision, we were able to help purchase medications for families, showing Christ's love in both word and action. This not only broke the hearts of students, it prepared them for God's work.

By day three, the heat was intense, yet the students persevered. We painted houses, ran a field day at a local school, played wiffle ball with local youth, handed out food and Bibles, ministered to children and teens with disabilities, and boldly shared the gospel. Each act of service seemed to energize the students and continued to prepare them for whatever God had next.

This trip not only impacted individuals, it unified our senior class. Through serving the Lord together, God built us up, drew us closer, and reminded us that true joy comes from knowing Christ and living for Him.

Fall Worship Night 2025

BY VERONICA PEREZ & GRACE HOW | HCA PTF PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

On October 31, PTF sponsored our second annual Fall Worship Night. We were blessed to gather again for a special time in faith and fellowship, and it was encouraging to see so many Defender families come out to worship together. Though the weather was challenging, we adjusted our outdoor plans and decorated the Pavilion to serve as our gathering place. Even with the wind outside, the joy inside the Pavilion was unmistakable. Our community enjoyed a rich time of praise and worship, led by Mr. Peterson along with our gifted student and faculty musicians. After singing, praying, and sharing in God's Word, Defender families then enjoyed a delicious BBQ hosted by our wonderful Desire 4 Hope ministry. Following dinner, our very own Michelle Delmar, HCA mom and owner of Eye Candy Buffets, curated a beautiful dessert truck with gourmet hot chocolate and specialty donuts, the perfect ending to a chilly but warm-hearted evening. These community-building events are made possible by parent volunteers and your generous fundraising from our annual Jog-A-Thon. Thank you for partnering with PTF to strengthen our school community. We hope to see you at our Worship Night next year. To God be the glory!



**From the lips of children and infants
you, Lord, have called forth your praise (Matthew 21:16b NIV)**

Faculty Features

WELCOME ABOARD!



Dr. Vanessa Almonte

- Middle School Science Teacher
- High School Science Teacher

Dr. Almonte holds a PhD in Biomedical Sciences from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Her research interest areas include cardiovascular disease, cancer biology, and molecular biology. After a life-changing encounter with the Lord in 2020, she felt called to serve through ministry and science education. At HCA, she teaches Physical Science and Anatomy & Physiology.



Mr. Kenneth Barrett

- High School Bible Teacher
- HCA Alumni Parent

Mr. Barrett taught for 36 years at Tenafly High School, teaching courses including World History, World Cultures, Comparative Religions, and American and European History. After retiring, he joined HCA, where he teaches Bible to 10th graders and leads a Bible elective. He has also served as an itinerant preacher and Bible teacher throughout New Jersey and beyond.



Mr. James Candela

- High School Math Teacher
- HCA Preschool Parent

Mr. Candela began his studies in accounting, but later sensed a call to teaching through campus and youth ministry. He attended Ramapo College, earning degrees in Mathematics Education and Instructional Design. He taught high school math and finance for six years before joining HCA. Now HCA parents, he and his wife, Sara, are blessed to begin this journey with their two children.



Miss Adriana Roa

- YMC Front Desk Assistant
- Transportation Coordinator

Miss Roa joined the HCA community as a student in 2018 and graduated from HCA in 2020. She attended Word of Life Bible Institute, where she developed a passion for biblical counseling and youth ministry. She earned a B.A. in Religious Education from Davis College in 2024, and is pursuing her counseling certification. Now the Front Desk Assistant, she serves at HCA with joy!



Mrs. Melanie Santiago

- Kindergarten Teacher
- Newlywed ♥

Mrs. Santiago has served in Christian education for seven years. She earned a degree in Elementary and Special Education from Liberty University and previously taught at a Christian school on Long Island. After marrying her husband, Eric, she moved to New Jersey and started her ministry at HCA. She enjoys time with family, singing, iced coffee, and serving the Lord.



Mrs. Wendy Littel

- Lower School Assistant Principal
- Incoming Lower School Principal

Mrs. Wendy Littel began serving this year as Lower School Assistant Principal, and will transition to Lower School Principal for the 2026-2027 school year. During this season, Mrs. Bruno continues as Interim Principal and is mentoring her through a gradual hand-off. A dedicated, godly educator, Mrs. Littel has served HCA since 2013, including three years as a Lower School Lead Teacher.

5+1

This school year, five new faculty and staff members and one new administrator began their service at HCA. All glory to God!

Homecoming 2025

WELCOME HOME!

Home Sweet Homecoming

BY BECKY VANDERBECK | ADVANCEMENT ASSISTANT

Homecoming at HCA was a day to remember. God truly blessed us with sunny skies and comfortable temperatures, setting the perfect backdrop for a joyful fall celebration on campus. From the moment families arrived, colorful decorations and the happy buzz of conversation made it clear that something special was underway. Throughout the afternoon, friends reconnected, new families were warmly welcomed, and our community enjoyed time together at an event that makes HCA feel like home.

School spirit was on full display as Defender fans gathered on the Turf Field and in the varsity gym to cheer on our soccer and volleyball teams. It was an especially exciting day to be a Defender, with every team earning a victory, and our student-athletes bringing energy to every point, play, and final whistle. One of the highlights was welcoming back our alumni, many of whom return year after year to encourage current students and reconnect with former classmates. Several Defender graduates laced up for the Alumni Soccer Game, reminding us that HCA school spirit stretches well beyond graduation.

HCA Homecoming 2025 reminded us that every good gift comes from above, and we praise God for the unity He graciously gives our school community. As the sun set on another wonderful Homecoming, we headed home with grateful hearts, thankful for a day of laughter, friendly competition, and the fellowship God continues to cultivate in the HCA Family.



A heartfelt thank you to our amazing PTF for generously providing the food and activities for Homecoming!

We praise the Lord for the generous service of our PTF and volunteers who made Homecoming such a joyful day for our school family. From bouncy houses and slides to face painting, carnival games, and lawn games, they provided activities that kept smiling faces everywhere. Cotton candy, popcorn, and an ice cream truck were a welcome way to cool off. We are also grateful for our junior class parents and students who served the BBQ lunch with kindness and hospitality: burgers, hot dogs, and fries! May God continue to bless our community as we celebrate together.

Annual Golf Classic

27TH FALL FUNDRAISER

A Swing of Support for HCA

BY TODD R. MITCHELL | HCA HEAD OF SCHOOL

HCA's 27th Annual Fall Golf Classic teed off on Monday, October 20, 2025 at Mansion Ridge Golf Club in Monroe, NY. Though rain forced a last-minute move from October 13, the Lord provided a great fall day of golf, fellowship, and an uplifting program. We thank God for our school community rallying together, rolling with the changes, and supporting our mission with joy and generosity.



Thank You, Golf 2025 Sponsors!

WITH GRATITUDE FROM THE HCA GOLF COMMITTEE

On behalf of the students, faculty, staff, and families of Hawthorne Christian Academy, the HCA Golf Committee would like to express sincere gratitude for your support, prayers, and participation in HCA's 27th Annual Fall Golf Classic. We are truly blessed that you are part of the HCA community.

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- Ramsey Auto Group

Specialty Sponsors

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- High Cord Corp
- Mr. & Mrs. Michael Jefferson
- Print Solutions
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- Tower Isle's Frozen Foods, Ltd.

Gold Tee Sponsors

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- Mr. & Mrs. Doug & Jenifer Hart
- HCA Academy Committee
- Koenig & Associates, LLC
- Uniti Solutions

Bronze Tee Sponsors

- Gospel Trick Ministries, Inc.
- Mr. George Kuryllo

Special Appreciation

JIM JOBSON | GOLF COMMITTEE CHAIR

HCA Advancement Team

- Todd R. Mitchell, HCA Head of School
- Tina Tatum, Director of Enrollment
- Lourdes Soto, Assistant to the Head of School
- David Tierney, HCA Media Teacher
- Becky Vanderbeck, Advancement Assistant
- Erica Witherell, HCA Technology Teacher

HCA Golf Classic Volunteers

- Gabriella Ceylan, HCA Staff & HCA Parent
- Iris Faasse, HCA Staff & HCA Parent
- Greg Littel, HCA Parent & Alumni Parent
- Ingrid Nawyn, HCA Staff & Alumni Parent
- Eli Slavin, Board Member & HCA Parent
- Melanie Vanderbeck, HCA Staff & HCA Parent

School Spotlight

CAMPUS ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Special Days at HCA!

BY SUZANNE BRUNO | INTERIM LOWER SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

In Lower School, we look forward to our special days each year. These moments enrich the learning experience, lifting lessons off the page and into the hearts of our Defenders.

One meaningful tradition at HCA is our Bible Bowl Chapel, where students in grades three through five compete to recall what they have learned from chapel messages in the weeks leading up to the event. Looking up into the balconies and seeing parents cheering on their children is a powerful reminder of the partnership between home and school and our shared commitment to growing in God's Word.

A favorite fall special day by far is Grandparents' and Loved Ones' Day. Visitors arrive in large numbers, filling our campus with joy and sending a clear message of love, support, and confidence to our students through their presence. Our opening Chapel is especially moving as children and their loved ones eagerly search for one another, exchanging waves, smiles, and blown kisses. Throughout the morning, classrooms welcome guests for lessons, stories, and special art projects. A beautiful brunch hosted by our Parent-Teacher Fellowship makes the day complete and unforgettable.

As we look ahead, we are grateful for the many special days still to come this school year, each one thoughtfully planned to celebrate learning, strengthen community, and create lasting memories for our students and families. We do so with thankful hearts, trusting in the promise of Psalm 127:3, "Children are a heritage from the Lord..." It is our joy and privilege to steward these moments well as the year continues.



M4M 2025-26

BY TINA TATUM

Year 2 of Mentors for Minis is thriving! 36 High School Student Ambassadors share monthly lunches with their 1st-grade Minis to pray, laugh, create, and connect; cultivating spiritual growth, enduring friendships, and a loving community.

Lower School Petting Zoo

BY WENDY LITTEL | LOWER SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

What an awesome day we had this fall! Our Early Education students delighted in our Animal Petting Zoo Day, held on a crisp October morning when the farm animals seemed just as happy to be on campus as our students were to meet them. We loved welcoming Den's Farm Friends, a traveling petting zoo, onto our campus. Preschool, kindergarten, and first-grade Defenders all joined in the fun. Our little ones even dressed in flannels, bandanas, and jeans - the perfect attire for a fall farm-themed Petting Zoo Day!

Our Petting Zoo was a wonderful way to bring hands-on education right to our campus. Learning and fun came together, as Den taught us about her goats, sheep, chickens, bunnies, pigs, and even a mini mule. Excitement filled the air as students softly petted and fed the animals. They practiced gentle hands, took turns with the feed cups, and listened closely as Den answered their questions. Students unanimously agreed that the visiting pig was the cutest and friendliest of our new farm friends!

One highlight was Simba the pig. He didn't look very big, but Den told us that he weighs more than 150 pounds, which brought plenty of wide eyes, astonished faces, and amused giggles. Animal-shaped snacks, red bandanas, flannel shirts, and even a happy cow made this special day one to remember. We are so thankful for days like this that make learning memorable as we experience joyful moments together.

Planning for Our Future

BY MICHAEL LAMITOLA | HCA CHAPLAIN, BIBLE & HISTORY TEACHER

In the Book of Lamentations, the Prophet Jeremiah is lamenting or mourning the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. The Southern Kingdom of Judah was warned by Jeremiah for years to forsake their wicked ways and turn back to Yahweh. Most of the people turned a deaf ear toward the Lord. They forsook Him, and so He, in turn, forsook them. The devastation was astonishing. In Lamentations 1:9, we read these haunting words, "she did not consider her future. Her fall was astounding."

We, and rightly so, plan for the future. We save. We invest. We seek to improve through education, etc. We try to eat well. We exercise. All of these things have their proper place in our lives. However, like Judah, how often do people consider their true future while planning out their earthly existence? We can be diligent about tomorrow and still be careless about eternity.

James reminds us that our lives are "a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes" (4:14 NIV). Jesus asks, "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit

their soul?" (Mark 8:36 NIV). Jesus is rightly reorienting our perspective about what really matters. The heart can be full of plans, while the soul is empty of God. The danger is not planning, it is planning without Him.

So let us remember as we plan for our future or our children's future that only one thing is truly needful. "...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33 NIV). He knows what we need, and He delights to provide for us, yet He calls us to set our hearts on His Kingdom. In other words, do not live like Judah, who "did not consider her future."

Our primary prayer for our children should never be, "Father, make them successful!" Our prayer should be, "Father, by your sovereign grace, make them your own." May we then, along with the Apostle John, say, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth" (3 John 1:4 NIV). Now that is success as God defines it!

A Canvas for the King

BY ELIZABETH WESTERMAN CORDES | HCA ART TEACHER

Our very talented AP Studio Artists, Amaya Faasse and TJay Adudans, set the vision and began painting this large 36"x 48" canvas for the school office, with help from fellow senior art students Danny Yuen, Hannah Garcia, and Ihanna Custodio Rodriguez. This painting is a visual reminder of this year's theme verse, Psalm 105:1, which calls us to give praise to God and Make Him Known everywhere.

The painting started with a colorful galaxy, representing the vast beauty and wonder of God's creation and reminding us how big and great our God is. Students then added the Earth turned toward North America, drawing the eye to where we live and inviting viewers to consider their personal calling to Make Him Known right here and right now. Through our words, actions, and daily choices, we are called to reflect Him and give praise to God, so the world may know our loving God and the creator of all things.






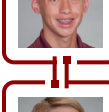


MAKE HIM KNOWN






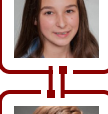
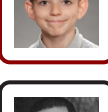

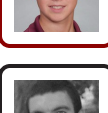

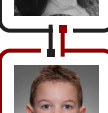
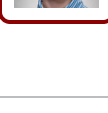
Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.

Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts (Psalm 105:1-2 NIV).

Building a Legacy

HCA LEGACY STUDENTS 2025-2026

	April (Gibello) Arnold HCA CLASS OF 2005		Kirk De Boer HCA CLASS OF 2001
	Jacob Michael Arnold HCA GRADE 02		Connor Allen De Boer HCA GRADE 07
	Matthew Bader HCA CLASS OF 1999		Morgan Joy De Boer HCA GRADE 05
	Nicole (Senak) Bader HCA CLASS OF 2003		Sadie Marie De Boer HCA GRADE 03
	Mackenzie Ellen Bader HCA GRADE 07		Kyle De Boer HCA CLASS OF 1994
	Christopher Cilderman HCA CLASS OF 1995		Landon Caldwell De Boer HCA GRADE 11
	Sara Mei Cilderman HCA GRADE 05		Wade Todd De Boer HCA GRADE 08
	LeighAnn (Eelman) Gordon HCA CLASS OF 1996		Everett James De Boer HCA GRADE 06
	Levi Stuart Gordon HCA GRADE 08		Stephen Halliwell HCA CLASS OF 2004
	Angel Grant HCA CLASS OF 2003		Grace Elizabeth Halliwell HCA GRADE 08
	Mia Aileen Grant HCA GRADE 11		Elijah Stephen Halliwell HCA GRADE 05
	Selah Roh Grant HCA GRADE 03		Joshua Richard Halliwell HCA GRADE K

	Jerry Jacob HCA CLASS OF 2007
	Lael Esther Jacob HCA GRADE PS4
	Julie (Thoman) LaGrotteria HCA CLASS OF 2003
	Emma Jule LaGrotteria HCA GRADE 07
	Nicole (Crittelli) LaGrotteria HCA CLASS OF 2003
	Madeleine Jolene LaGrotteria HCA GRADE 06
	Landon LaGrotteria HCA GRADE 03
	Russell Mack HCA CLASS OF 2000
	Jacob Russell Mack HCA GRADE 08
	Michael MacNeil HCA CLASS OF 2003
	Jenna (Kovach) MacNeil HCA CLASS OF 2005
	Matthew Theodore MacNeil HCA GRADE PS4

45 children of 27 alumni are enrolled at HCA this year, from Preschool through high school. God's faithfulness continues across generations! Do you see the resemblance?

	Jacob Minnema HCA CLASS OF 2004		Jaylene (Jardinico) Monteiro HCA CLASS OF 1994		Emily (Ciotti) Stanley HCA CLASS OF 2006
	Caleb Minnema HCA GRADE 04		Mia Jardinico Monteiro HCA GRADE 07		Gideon James Stanley HCA GRADE 04
	Ellie Minnema HCA GRADE 04		Rebecca (Sirinides) Quinn HCA CLASS OF 2007		Lydia Grace Stanley HCA GRADE 03
	Maggie Grace Minnema HCA GRADE PS3		John Aidan Quinn HCA GRADE 02		Hannah Stanley HCA GRADE 02
	Jordan Minnema HCA CLASS OF 2006		Micah Liam Quinn HCA GRADE K		Titus Stanley HCA GRADE 01
	Laityn Hope Minnema HCA GRADE 06		Jennifer (Parzek) Volz HCA CLASS OF 1992		Silas Stanley HCA GRADE PS4
	Evan Elijah Minnema HCA GRADE 04		Emily Elizabeth Volz HCA GRADE 11		Nancy (Davis) Zaengle HCA CLASS OF 1987
	Mason Jeremiah Minnema HCA GRADE 02		Noah James Volz HCA GRADE 08		Claudia Marie Zaengle HCA GRADE 10
	Kevin Standford HCA CLASS OF 1995		Bryant Weiss HCA CLASS OF 2007		Anna (Mingos) Zayac HCA CLASS OF 2005
	Jennifer (McCausland) Standford HCA CLASS OF 1995		Briana (Kovach) Weiss HCA CLASS OF 2007		Bria Katherine Zayac HCA GRADE 05
	Olivia Joy Standford HCA GRADE 09		Brooklyn Emma Weiss HCA GRADE 07		Nolan Zayac HCA GRADE 02
	Sienna Grace Standford HCA GRADE 07		Braelyn Madison Weiss HCA GRADE 06		Nolan Zayac HCA GRADE K

Academy Athletics

GO DEFENDERS!



Varsity Boys Soccer

Homecoming 2025 was a season highlight for Defender Athletics. Boys Soccer thrilled a packed Defender crowd, securing a dramatic 1-0 sudden-death victory, golden-goal overtime win!

- TJay Adudans (12): 2nd Team All League, HM All County
- Elias Atekpe (12): HM All League
- Benjamin Badee (12): 2nd Team All League
- Samuel Harris (12): 2nd Team All League, HM All County



Varsity Girls Soccer

Girls Soccer celebrated one of their best seasons in recent years!

- Gabriella Badee (9): HM All League
- Alexis Cappello (10): 1st Team All League, HM All County
- Gianna Cappello (10): 2nd Team All League
- Sophia Guingon (12): 1st Team All League, HM All County
- Lusungu Mahowe (11): 2nd Team All League
- Olivia Sabato (10): 2nd Team All League



Girls Volleyball

Girls Volleyball enjoyed one of its best seasons in program history, earning first-round games in the Passaic County Tournament and winning their home tournament match-ups. They competed with unity and commitment, all for the glory of God.

- Jordan Ng (12): 2nd Team All League, HM All County
- Leyla Rosa (9): HM All League, HM All County
- Olivia Standford (9): 1st Team All League, 2nd Team All County



High School Cross Country

Varsity Boys Cross Country runners Nathan Kim, Nico Nodar, Colby Oostdyk, Nicolai Chalet, and Noah Tsuei qualified for the NJSIAA Championship Meet and, to God's glory, helped the Defenders win the Lou Fraulo Invitational at Garret Mountain.

- Nathan Kim (12): HM All County
- Colby Oostdyk (12): HM All County
- Joya Prairie (11): HM All County, HM All League

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

1 Corinthians 9:25 (NIV)



Fall 2025 Defender Season Highlights

BY TYLER VAN DYK | DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS

Varsity Girls Soccer

HCA's Varsity Girls Soccer team celebrated a strong season with ten wins, advancing to the second round of the Passaic County Tournament and qualifying for the NJSIAA State Tournament. Six Defenders were voted All League, and Coach Kim was named NJIC Coach of the Year. We praise the Lord for their growth, teamwork, and Christlike sportsmanship on and off the field.

Varsity Girls Volleyball

HCA's Varsity Girls Volleyball team enjoyed a tremendous season, earning thirteen wins, one of the highest totals in Defenders Volleyball history, and advancing to the Quarterfinal Round of the Passaic County Tournament. Three Defenders were voted All League, and the team qualified for the NJSIAA State Tournament. We are thankful for the way they represented Christ with joy, discipline, and effort.

High School Cross Country

HCA's Varsity Boys Cross Country team made program history by taking first place overall at the Annual Lou Fraulo Invitational at Garret Mountain, held in Coach Fraulo's honor. It was a true team victory for Defender XC. The boys also qualified for the NJSIAA Group Championship Meet at Holmdel Park. To cap a successful season, longtime coach Chi Chi Van Dyk was named NJIC Coach of the Year.

Music Notes

AND ALL THAT JAZZ

From fall concerts to spring anticipation, HCA Music continues to lift hearts to the Lord. Our choral and instrumental ensembles shared Christ through worship at church celebrations, campus events, and local nursing homes, offering encouragement through song and Scripture. Now we look ahead to Dessert Theatre, March 6 and 7, as students bring their creativity to the stage in joyful fellowship.



Servants of the King: Fall Highlights in Harmony

BY CHRISTINE BROWER | HCA UPPER SCHOOL MUSIC TEACHER

Servants of the King, HCA's select choral choir, began the fall season by joyfully lifting their voices in celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Hawthorne Gospel Church. It was a wonderful day centered on glorifying the Lord through music, followed the next week by a performance at the Music Booster's annual Craft and Vendor Fair. Each event reminded us that our gifts are from God, and we sing to serve Him.

Later in the season, students were blessed to visit local nursing homes, where they ministered through music and Scripture, led a Christmas carol sing-along, and spent sweet time talking with residents. They listened, laughed, and offered encouragement, sharing Christ's hope in simple ways to those who needed comfort during the holidays, and their kindness was a blessing to all. We concluded with fellowship at Grace Bible Church, where students again ministered in song and joined together in praising the Lord.



Sneak Peek: Dessert Theatre 2026!

"A FIASCO AFLOAT" - AN HCA MUSIC DEPARTMENT PRODUCTION

Excitement is building as HCA prepares to host our 17th Annual Dessert Theatre on March 6 and 7. This beloved event showcases the creativity and talent of our students through a fully student-written production, with students also guiding set design and song choices. This year's show, "A Fiasco Afloat," promises mystery, comedy, and plenty of unexpected twists. Audiences can enjoy a cruise ship "whodunit" with a ticking clock, clever humor, and engaging characters, all while sampling delicious desserts. We praise the Lord for these gifts and invite our school family to join us for a joyful evening of laughter and fellowship, and celebrating the work He is doing!

Alumni News

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Lindsay (McDermott) Clowers ('13) and her husband, Shawn, welcomed their third child, Riley Marie, on April 21, 2025.



Christopher Eelman ('21) and his wife, Erin Wilson, were joyfully married on September 6, 2025, in Southampton, Pennsylvania.



Emma (Brown) Evans ('10) and Andrew celebrated the arrival of their daughter, Liliane Marlene, on September 20, 2025.



Casey & Courtney (Steinginga) Lamb ('09), with Evelyn and Adeline, welcomed Olivia Catherine into their family on May 30, 2025.



Sabrina Shay ('13) wed Mr. Robert Happe on November 14, 2025, at The Conservatory at the Sussex County Fairgrounds.



Sara (Grant) Salako ('16) and her husband Jimi announced the birth of Temiloluwa Grant Salako on January 7, 2026.



Home for the Holidays: HCA Alumni Christmas Party

BY TODD R. MITCHELL | HCA HEAD OF SCHOOL

On December 22, 2025, HCA held what we hope will become an annual tradition for our recent HCA graduates: our Alumni Christmas Party! HCA alumni from the graduating classes of 2021-2025 were invited for a festive evening of food, fun, and fellowship in the Fireside Room on the HCA campus.

Fifty-seven Defender graduates gathered for a catered meal, a Christmas Trivia Kahoot, and a Yankee Gift Swap! It was a wonderful time for them to reconnect, to share what God is doing in their lives, and to take a trip down memory lane. Thanks to a great group of alumni moms, there was also a terrific hot-cocoa bar and homemade Christmas cookies!

The prayer of HCA's Advancement Team is that our Alumni Network will strengthen in the years ahead as we host more events and bring even more veteran Defender grads together

under the maroon and gray once again. Our next planned event will be on April 17 as we host Legacy Parents (HCA alumni who have children enrolled at HCA) for dinner, fellowship, and an opportunity to explore how HCA can bless and reconnect all those who have called HCA home over the last 45 years!

If you are a Defender alum or former HCA student, we would love to connect with you! Please complete this Contact Form to update your information and let us know if you have ideas for, or would like to help with, future Alumni Events. Go Defenders!



Scan the QR Code to update your contact info and receive HCA communications!

THE CHIMES NEWSLETTER

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