

# Celebrate Success

Cedars Christian School

June 8, 2011

## Our Staff

August, Bev  
Bast, Dawn  
Beeksma, Jack  
Boyko, Heather  
Brown, Dave  
Burnham, Lara  
Buttenaar, Krista  
Collier, Harry  
Costley, Jim  
Crosina, Frank  
Denicola, Kathy  
Fisher, Heather  
Friesen, Tammi  
Gardy, Tara  
Gaunt, Julie  
Giesbrecht, Janice  
Goertzen, Debbie  
Goertzen, Gerry  
Gordon, Susanne  
Goudswaard, Sage  
Hedges, Ian  
Jansen, Marie  
Karpenko, Michelle  
Kibble, Vicki  
Kwitkoski, Heather  
Ludditt, Jeff  
Misch, Bev  
Nelson, Shane  
Nichiporuk, Rose  
Peltier, Joanne  
Phillips, April  
Price, Winston  
Ray, Lindsay  
Reimer, Sue  
Rempel, Dave  
Rempel, Krystal  
Rempel, Roland  
Scott, Andrea  
Scholefield, Erin  
Smit, Alice  
Smith, Patti  
Staves, Annette  
Stewart, Melissa  
Sturwold, Wilma  
Thomson, Sammy  
Toninato, Sherry  
Van Calsteren, Debbie  
Van Delft, Sharon  
Van driesum Joan  
Wessner, Jennifer  
Wiens, Jake

## From the Board Chair...

By Kevin Bedford

*"To every thing there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven."*  
Eccls 3:1

I thank each of you for taking the time to joins us at the Spring Society Meeting.

There are many things that I feel that I should write here and yet the amount of things that have taken place over the last 6 months since last we met could fill an entire book. In December the Capital Campaign met it goal of achieving \$600,000 dollars in cash and pledges for the new building. In January the Board the Board Chair position was passed onto me from our long serving Chair Judy Serup. Thanks to Judy for all her hard work over the last several years. In early February our High School Principal Gerry Goertzen accepted a position with Abbotsford Christian School. That coupled with the pending retirement of our Senior Principal Vicki Kibble left a large hole in our administration as both Vicki and Gerry played vital roles in the school.

However, in all these things we need to remember that Cedars is God's ministry and he has a plan that is greater than ours. In early February the Board approved a new administration structure that placed all of the administration under the guidance of a Lead Principal. Sage Goudswaard will remain in her role as the Director of Finance and Operations but will have an increased role in the area of development. Winston Price (current Vice-Principal High School) accepted the role of the Elementary Vice-Principal. Early in March after an interview process, Shane Nelson was offered and accepted the position of the High School Vice-Principal. Then in late March Curtis Tuininga of Centennial Christian School was offered

and accepted the position of the Lead Principal here at Cedars. When I consider where we started in February and where we are now, I can only believe that the Lord's hand was guiding all these events. We have an exciting leadership team in place for next year and I look forward to serving with you all.

In the midst of all this, the building project was and still is being planned. In April the decision was made to move the building to the new property based on many different factors brought forward by the building steering committee. An architect, a building contractor, a mechanical engineering, an electrical engineer and a structure engineer were hired to help create the formal building plans. As I write this, the final approval for the zoning on the new property is planned for the City council meeting tonight (May 30, 2011). The project is moving forward. However, I should note to everyone that a project of this size takes a lot of planning work. It is very important to make sure that the plan is correct before we break ground so please be patient. We need to get this done right.

There is so much more that is going on as well. I want to take a moment to thank a few people that have served at Cedars and are moving on. Thanks to Vicki Kibble for your many years of service to Cedars Christian School. Thanks to Gerry and Debbie Goertzen for your many years of service here. Thanks to Tim Burnham for your time of service on the Board. Thanks as well to all of our hardworking staff without whom the ministry of the Cedars Christian School would be impossible.

# Always a Story...

By Gerry Goertzen

There is always a story. And Cedars Christian School is a wonderful story. It is a story of visionary people, filled with God's grace and love, working together to create something far bigger than themselves, for children and families in Prince George.

It began before 1977 with Corrie and Ted Van Helden, Hans Kouwenberg, Jerry Vanegmond, Tony Romeyn and a group of people from several churches who had the original vision to create this school. From that small group of people, many others joined them along the way. The school grew with building projects, many of which were led by Harry and Charlotte Groot and volunteers from the CRC church. The school grew with enrolment almost every year, often pushing the facility to maximum capacity and forcing another expansion over and over again. It grew with programs and playgrounds and facilities and with remarkably gifted staff who God brought through the doors each year.

In the 1990s the Cedars' community was focused on creating a high school so that students could finish to grade 12 and graduate at Cedars. Visionaries like Gerry Simpson, Mark and Susan Brink, Greg and Gary Clarke, Bill Tolkamp, Tim and Nancy Plesko, John and Elisa Byl, Brian Kenna, Kit Wong, Ted and Corrie van Helden, Charlotte and Harry Groot were all instrumental in getting the high school building completed. Many of their great ideas (like the high school foyer, playing field and computer lab) have been put to very effective use over the past 15 years. Their tenacity and creativity to develop these spaces for learning has been well rewarded in the success of students over the decades.

In the 2000s the Cedars' community was focused on creating a facility to match the quality of the program. But these years were coupled with unprecedented growth and a lack of capital to create the building that was so desperately needed. Brian Nichiporuk, Richard Reich, Wayne Wood, Al Macdonald, Judy Kwiatkowski, Greg Nikkel, Joel Uy and many others were parent-leaders who watched the school grow and had a passion for creating a facility to house it. The school bought the 6 acre property next door and *every* idea, from buying and selling property to building condos and Tim Hortons, was explored.

Eventually, it became clear that something had to be done to create space for students and learning. Dick Byl donated a school bus, computer lab and video technology to help with programming and through a creative education committee, the idea was birthed to use volunteer labour to build cabins for classrooms on the new property. Most people don't know the enormous commitment that so many people made during the summers of '07 and '08 to build those classrooms for a fraction of the cost of a commercial build. Derek and Afton Zral committed 4 months of their lives to seeing that project through to completion, often working 14-16 hours a day through a long hot summer. And they had many

committed volunteers who joined them. Tim Burnham, Ian Hedges, Terry Stuparyk, Steve Weinard, Jim Brown, Lance Gordon, Joel Uy, and countless others donated huge portions of their summer and fall to see the project through. It was a miracle. Every time you look at those cabins surrounding the 'courtyard' of the playground, we should thank God for these people who were willing to give so much to practically support the vision of the school.

During these years, strong leadership was desperately needed. When Judy Serup stepped onto the school board as the chair, she had many huge challenges facing her. The school was being sued by the Brewery, the financial office was in transition, the enrolment was going through the roof and the 'cabin project' was in full swing. On top of all these challenges, Judy was the chairperson when Gateway Christian School asked us in late April if they could bring over all of their students and join us at Cedars.

Sixty new students wanted to join us and we had only a few weeks to put together a plan that would accommodate them all. Judy and Ted Binnemma led the school during those three tumultuous years with prayer, wisdom and discernment. There was incredible unity between the school board and the staff as each Tuesday morning for three years, Ted and Judy would spend an hour of their morning praying with the administration team. Sage Goudsward took over as the Director of Finance and Operations and made sweeping changes to the business office to improve our efficiency. Huge challenges and obstacles were overcome together as the school continued to grow. The enrolment passed 454 students (over 500 if you include the pre-school) and twin classes in the entire high school was on the horizon.

That spring it became apparent that four cabins were not enough and we needed another one, and a new play area to substitute for a gym, and a big renovation to the computer lab. And, we needed all of it by the fall. Bob Hillhouse stepped in to help and with a group of professional contractors got the job done in record time. The play area and the computer lab renovation have been remarkably effective for meeting the needs of our student body.

All during these years, a plan was forming for a new building. Through hundreds of hours of planning and consultation with staff, Bob Hillhouse put together a high school plan complete with walk-through videos and color doll-house images. That plan was 'sold' to the Cedars' community with 18 dessert nights in the high school foyer. Almost every family in the school attended to see a presentation complete with videos, PowerPoint, and pledge cards put on successfully by Annie Weinard, Brian Aitken, Gayle Anton and their development team. The school rallied and raised nearly \$300,000 in 8 weeks. But, it was clear that this wasn't nearly enough.

One year ago, a six year project became successful. In 2004 the first application was made to the Jim Pattison Foundation to fund a 29 million dollar expansion. That proposal was adapted 4 different times through the years and rejected each time. Hundreds of hours went into preparing these proposals, with little hope of ever having success (the foundation receives 1000 proposals a month and says 'yes' to only a handful a year). The Jim Pattison Foundation's matching grant of 4:1 is a miracle and it is one more piece in a puzzle that God has been putting together, through the work of his people at Cedars, for nearly 40 years.

The fact that last fall, in just a few months, our community over-shot our goal of \$600,000 shows the kind of commitment that we all share for this school.

The Cedars' story has no final chapter. A brand new

chapter in this story is about to begin this fall. There is great hope for our new administration leadership, successfully recruited by an effective search team led by Kevin Bedford and Karla Eby. Kevin has led the board with Godly wisdom for 6 months and is in the process of making visionary changes to the leadership structure in the school. The school has had a balanced budget for many years, increasing enrolment again for next year and all the funds in place for the exciting new building project that will be open in 2012.

What a beautiful story God has shared with us as we look at our past! What a beautiful story God is revealing to us as we look to the future. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for the opportunity of sharing in this story, for the glory of God, at Cedars Christian School. There is always a story.



# Building Committee

*By Sage Goudsward*

**Committee Chairperson:** Sage Goudsward  
**Committee Members:** Ian Hedges and Tom Whyte  
**Staff Stakeholders:** Shane Nelson, Jim Costley, Julie Gaunt, Jake Wiens, Roland Rempel, and Frank Crosina

We are currently in the preconstruction phase of the project and are working on finalizing the details of the building plan and budget. In February we learned that we required an architect on the project and have since hired Charlie Maddison of Boni Maddison Architects out of Vancouver. We also have our various engineers in place as well as our mechanical and electrical contractors. We hope to have the preconstruction phase completed by the end of June and will then need to go through design review with the City of Prince George.

We have decided to construct the building on our new property rather than attach it to the existing structure as it

became clear that there were a number of risks and greater financial obligations associated with tying the two structures together. Building on the new land also gives us many options for the future of Cedars. We have been working with the City for some time to rezone the new property and we are pleased that the rezoning is now complete!

We are all looking forward with great anticipation to our new building and the additional space. We plan to open the new addition in September 2012 in time for the start of the 2012/2013 school year.



# Finance Committee

*By Sage Goudsward*

**Committee Chairperson:** Sage Goudsward  
**Committee Members:** Jeff Janzen, Michelle Karpenko, Janet Masse, Heidi Strybos and Deb Taylor  
**Board Representatives:** Sage Goudsward & Bill Van Delft

The Finance Committee is tasked with ensuring the financial health of the School. We meet once per month. Members include Sage Goudsward (Chair and Director of Finance & Operations), Michelle Karpenko (Finance Assistant), William Van Delft (Treasurer), Jeff Janzen (parent rep), Heidi Strybos (parent rep), Deb Taylor (parent rep) and Janet Masse (parent rep).

The Committee reviews Cedars financials, compiles the yearly budget, oversees the issuance of yearly tax receipts and recommends financial policies to the board, among other duties. We strive to be careful stewards of the resources entrusted to us to most efficiently support the operations of the school.

We are very excited that the special focus for this year will be the upcoming expansion!

# Education Committee

By Karla Eby

**Committee Chairperson:**

Karla Eby

**Committee Members:**

Jasmine Bedford (until May, 2011), Tim Gray (until June, 2011), Dawn Isaac, Albert Sommerfeld and Jennifer Wessner

**Teacher and Administration:**

Janice Giesbrecht, Sharon Van Delft, Gerry Goertzen, and Vicki Kibble

It's been another great year at Cedar's, though not without its challenges and changes. We are sorry to see Gerry Goertzen leave us, and Vicki Kibble retire! God has blessed us greatly in the filling of these vacant positions and we look forward to change and trust God to continue to lead us. Winston Price will be moving over to the Elementary end of things, while Shane Nelson will step into the High School Administration. Curtis Tuininga will be joining us in August, and we look forward to getting to know, and working with this new team and structure in the fall.

In the fall report I mentioned the decision making process the Education Committee was going through in deciding to whether or not to implement full-time kindergarten. After much discussion, it was decided to recommend to the Board

that we offer the full-time kindergarten with the option of a part-time kindergarten within that.

Elementary classroom visits were completed in the fall, and the High School visits were completed this spring. Once again we as a committee felt blessed to visit these classrooms and see the environment our children are in, and the love the teachers have for God and the students.

The hiring committee continues to work toward interviewing and filling positions for the fall. I think we are nearly set!

I want to extend a huge thank you to both Vicki and Gerry for their continual guidance and input in the Education committee. It has been a pleasure to work with you both, and I wish you God's richest blessings on your next adventures.



Operation  
Christmas Child



# Building Committee

*By Sage Goudsward*

**Committee Chairperson:**

Sage Goudsward

**Committee Members:**

Ian Hedges and Tom Whyte

**Staff Stakeholders:**

Shane Nelson, Jim Costley, Julie Gaunt, Jake Wiens, Roland Rempel, and Frank Crosina

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# Employee Relations Committee

*By Robin Bjarnason*

**Committee Chairperson:**

Robin Bjarnason

**Committee Members:**

Laura Neuman, Jake Wiens (Teacher Rep), Patti Smith (Support Staff Rep),  
Winston Price and Sage Goudsward

**Board Representative:**

Judy Serup

This committee is a liason between the staff and the Board, addressing staff workplace concerns as they arise and striving to help make Cedars a great place to work.

We meet monthly, and because contracts go out each spring, most of our work in the last six months has involved researching and discussing various aspects of compensation and job satisfaction.

At Christmas we bought gifts for the staff as we do each year. In February we hosted the yearly Staff Appreciation Lunch on a Pro-D day. Parent and student volunteers served a hearty lunch and led some goofy games! Most recently we have arranged for gifts to honour milestones of service (eg 10 or 20 years) and have helped plan leaving/retirement celebrations.

