

LIONHEART

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF INTERMOUNTAIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

— *SPRING 2022* —



MEET MR. PETHTEL!

The ICS community is excited to welcome its new Head of School, Gabe Pethtel! Gabe began his career as a middle school English teacher and wrestling coach. Since then, his resumé in the world of education as well as his passion for Christian education has only grown. Read a Q&A below to get to know Gabe and see why we are greatly looking forward to him joining our ICS community this June!

Q: Why are you passionate about Christian Education?

A: I am passionate about Christian Education because I firmly believe in the words of Psalm 24: “The Earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world, and all who dwell therein.” Trusting God through the grace of Jesus Christ as the foundation of all truth has opened my eyes to the amazing ways that our Christian faith integrates into all areas of learning and life. My wife, Dana, and I have been blessed to have two children attend Christian schools from pre-kindergarten through high school graduation with one graduating from the US Air Force Academy and one attending Baylor University on a full scholarship. We now have two younger children attending Christian school at the elementary and high school levels. Christian Education, the living witness of the teachers, the family atmosphere, the academic rigor combined with individual attention, the outstanding extracurricular opportunities, and the legacy of true faith in Jesus Christ and God’s Word have all been the greatest investment we could make as parents. My goal as Head of School is to partner with parents, students, teachers, and staff who feel called to ICS, so that they may receive the robust blessing of investing in the mission and vision of Christian Education.

Q: What are you looking forward to most in your new role as ICS Head of School?

A: I am most looking forward to getting to know the staff, teachers, parents, and students of ICS. My greatest desire is to listen to what they love about our school and also what they would like to see grow and develop.

Q: What motivates you?

A: I am motivated by a great mission and a compelling vision that displays the love, power, and mercy of Jesus Christ to people who are seeking Him. I also love seeing people achieve their dreams through prayer, hard work, and perseverance.

Q: Tell us about your family!

A: My wife, Dana, and I met our sophomore year in college. We both were college-level athletes who decided to begin learning more about Jesus and met through Campus Crusade for Christ. We dedicated our lives to Jesus and education at the age of 20 and realized that God was guiding us to such a similar mission and vision that we were better together. We have now been married and pursuing our passion as Christian educators for 27 years. God has blessed us with four wonderful children, Logan (pilot in the US Air Force), Caleb, (Junior at Baylor University), Emma (rising ICS Junior), and Hudson (rising ICS second grader). Our family loves music, dance, skiing (water and snow), and outdoor activities, including cooking outdoors. We look forward to living among the beautiful landscape of Utah and meeting new friends.



Q: What is something most people don’t know about you?

A: Most people don’t know that my brother and I started a band in college, with two other friends, that got to be a pretty big regional act around our college town and the greater Indianapolis area. We began by playing coffee house gigs for free on weekday nights, then practiced a ton, recorded a bit, and started playing larger and larger venues until a branch of MCA records asked us to tour with some up and coming groups. We eventually all decided to take jobs in the “real world” though, and now I just play guitar and sing for family and friends.

Q: Anything else you’d like to add?

A: I want people to know that I believe in three simple rules. Be Godly, be gracious, and be gritty!

My goal as Head of School is to partner with parents, students, teachers, and staff who feel called to ICS, so that they may receive the robust blessing of investing in the mission and vision of Christian Education.

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

By Jennifer Adema, ICS director of admissions

Heather's favorite part of her classroom is connecting with the students. It can be hard to teach math, because math is not everyone's favorite subject, but her students would agree that Heather approaches learning in a way that is captivating and she sets goals that are readily attainable.



Heather Harmon is our beloved middle school math teacher. Let's get to know her better! The Harmons (pictured bottom, left) moved to Salt Lake City from Houston, Texas in July of 2015. They were lured to the mountains because of a job opportunity for Bill, Heather's husband. They moved here with their three kids: Abby, Ethan, and Lauren.

The Harmon kids had been ICS Lions for three years when a job opportunity came up that Heather describes as her "dream job." ICS was hiring for a middle school math and science teacher. She applied, interviewed, and was so excited to receive the job offer! There was some trepidation in her acceptance as she had been out of the classroom for 10 years, but it did not take long for Heather to find her stride and confidently teach her students!

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Heather loves being a part of the middle school team. She often corroborates with Mr. Hobbs and Mrs. Smith to handle classroom management issues as well as cross-curricular goals.

Heather's reputation among her colleagues is that she has a great rapport with middle school kids. She is funny, caring, and kind. Of course as a math teacher, it helps that she thinks math is totally cool and loves teaching it! She truly invests in her students in and out of the classroom. She's always available for conversations, speaking into not just academic concerns for a student but social and emotional health as well.

Heather jumped in as an early adopter of TtT and initiated a unique FLEx project (see story titled, "Teaching for Transformation") which put several students in front of the ICS School Board sharing their findings. She's known as being a team player who is professional, prepared, and organized in all that she's asked to do! Heather has proved herself a great asset not only to the middle school students but to all of ICS.

When Heather is not solving math problems with middle schoolers, she enjoys being outside running or skiing. Heather also has two dogs, Hunter and JJ.

MUSIC TOUR 2022

By Shanna Hafemann, ICS music faculty



Before August 2022, the last time I was in a school, I was a student. A nervous wreck, I entered ICS on my first day, a teacher. I handed out the syllabus to my first class and shakily asked if there were any questions. Several hands shot up, and the question was asked, as if no other questions mattered, "Is there going to be a Tour this year?" All other hands went down.

ICS Music Tour is a long standing, dearly cherished, highly anticipated tradition at ICS. I remember answering that student with an emphatic "yes!" all the while having no idea what "Music Tour" actually meant. So I started my research. I spent a handful of class periods discussing with students their most memorable moments and their favorite traditions. I attended several meetings trying to understand the financial and schedule constraints. I looked up prior year's plans and yet I still struggled to find a way to clearly define what ICS's annual Music Tour actually was. So, with the little bit of knowledge I had acquired, a phenomenal co-planner, Amy Florell, and the tiniest bit of hope, we created something, having no idea if it would live up to the expectations of this beloved tradition.

This year, Tour was designed with two priorities in mind: service and connection. The first two days of Tour were spent serving our local community. Sunday we performed for the Rescue Mission and Valley Behavioral Health, where we were able to hold an intimate, sensory-friendly concert for those who might struggle to attend a larger event. On Monday, we hosted a music therapy program where our own pre-kindergarteners and a group of individuals with various disabilities were invited to attend (pictured right). As we researched and planned the event, we discovered that there was much we did not know or understand about people living with disabilities and their families. The biggest insight we gained is that their community is grossly undeserved. Many people misunderstand or are unsure of how to interact around people with disabilities and many facilities and families lack the resources and knowledge to adequately accommodate them. As we held our event, I looked around and observed my students connecting, including, and empowering other human beings using something they



loved, music. As one of my students so eloquently summarized the experience, “On Tours in the past, we would always have to leave the people we made connections with and wait a year to show love to them again. That was so painful. We don’t have to do that anymore, because the people we connected with this week are right here in our own hometown.” This community is one that I hope to continue to serve through Music Tour and other ICS music events.

The second two days were used to explore how we could use music to connect with each other, with ourselves, and with God. We played several games that pushed us out of our comfort zone, including a musical TikTok challenge. Needless to say, I have some incriminating evidence for how hilarious these students can be. We took time to worship together and allowed a couple of local pastors to speak into our lives. But even with all these special moments, there is still one I have yet to let you in on. I challenged the kids to get vulnerable, to get honest, and to get creative in a songwriting session. Imagine with me. You are in a large cabin with big glass windows and vaulted ceilings. The snow is falling outside and a tea kettle is heating on the stove. In one corner, a girl is humming and pauses to write out a lyric. A young man is strumming the guitar on a couch, while a piano is being learned in another corner. Someone else is editing loops on their laptop, while others retreat to a secluded place to write or sing out their thoughts. The last evening, several students were brave enough to perform their work. During many of the songs, there wasn’t a dry eye in the room. In just a few phrases and with a whole lot of vulnerability, we were able to glorify our God, empathize with our peers, and understand one another on a deeper level.

So, I survived my first Music Tour. How fortunate I am to lead this amazing group of students. After all this, I still can’t describe to you what it means to experience an ICS Music Tour. However, I can define why ICS’s Music Tour is so unique. Music is the tool we use, the commonality we each hold, both with our peers and our audiences. Tour is the journey God takes us on as we take the time to serve His beloved, lean into those around us, and learn what next steps He calls us to faithfully walk with Him.

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ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT

By Natalie Renaud, ICS alumna class of 2018

I attended ICS for three years and graduated in 2018. I am extremely grateful for my time at ICS and how it equipped me to find purpose and meaning through God’s will for my life. By incorporating the Gospel into every aspect of education, ICS faculty and staff oriented my life towards God and provided a lens with which to view the world as a Christian. Small groups, chapel, fall retreats, and field studies trips were a few of the unique and influential ICS experiences that strengthened and enriched my faith. After attending a large public middle school, I was amazed by the close-knit ICS community where you can learn and grow among fellow brothers and sisters of Christ.

While at ICS, I participated in women’s soccer, where I made some of my favorite high school memories. The program’s goal is to build women of good character and create a community that values feedback, accountability, and setting the bar high. I am incredibly blessed to be a part of this legacy of strong, hard-working Christian women with our eyes set on Jesus. The women’s soccer program is one of many examples of how my time at ICS taught me to actively cultivate my faith and place Christ at the center of my life, giving me purpose and direction.

I am currently a senior at the University of Utah, graduating with honors in May 2022 with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. This spring, I have had the incredible opportunity to work as a Registered Nurse Apprentice at Primary Children’s Hospital, where I have been able to transition into practice before I plan to work as a pediatric nurse after graduation.

My Christian education helped me discover and cultivate my compassionate heart and follow the call to love and serve others through nursing. The ultimate example of caring and kindness is modeled by Jesus Christ through His life and death, and I pray that His love shines through me in everything I do. With all of the trials and uncertainties awaiting me after graduation, I am reminded of how grateful I am for my Christian education, and I can rest assured knowing that God has a plan for my life.



TEACHING FOR TRANSFORMATION

Sounds great... but what does it really mean?

By Denise Buckley, ICS dean of academics

If you have been in our ICS hallways, you cannot help but hear about *Teaching for Transformation* (TfT). We have pictures showing TfT **Throughlines**, classrooms with TfT **Deep Hope** posters, and students who have been involved in TfT FLEx experiences. This all sounds intriguing...but what does it mean?

Teaching for Transformation is designed to combine excellent educational practices with an intentional Kingdom mindset. In other words, kids get to learn really well while also understanding their individual role in God's story. Here are some TfT components that highlight the richness of this program.

TfT learning begins with a **Deep Hope**. Each teacher will pray and think through their **Deep Hope** for themselves and their students and answer the question: what is the purpose and calling of my classroom to help students see and live God's story? Mr. Hulin is one of our TfT Early Adopters*. As he teaches physical education at ICS, his **Deep Hope** is this: My **Deep Hope** for myself and my students is that our responses and actions brought out by sports and competition point others to Christ as we care for our bodies through exercise.

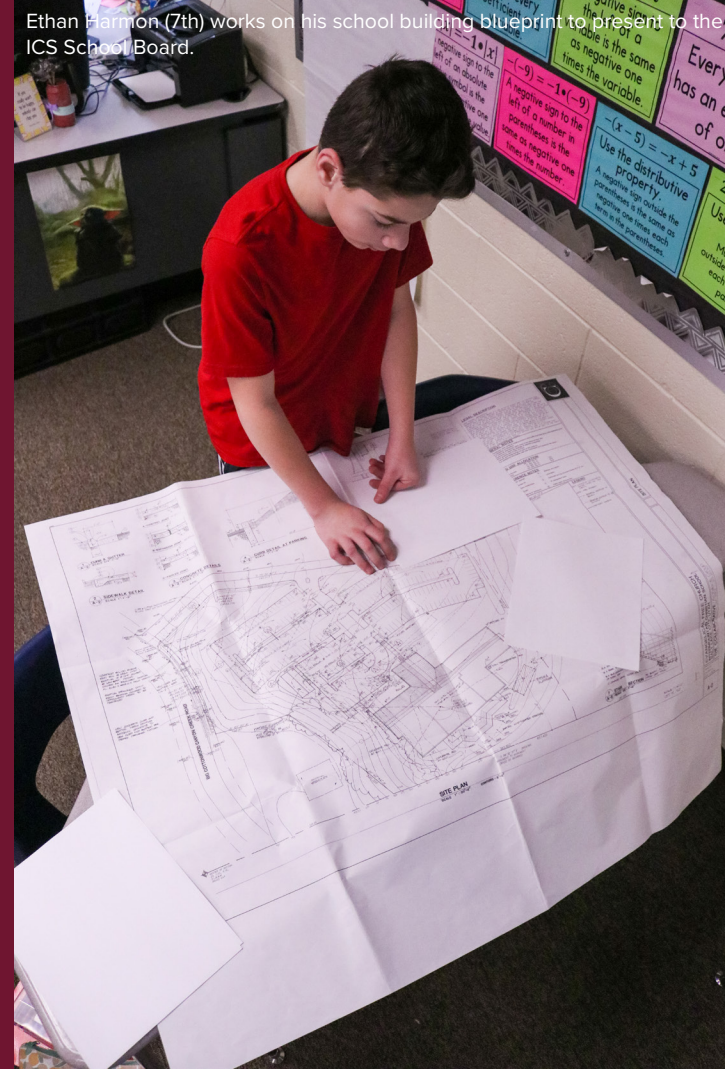
Next, teachers develop a **Storyline** for their classroom, a statement that uses our school's **Throughlines** to connect their **Deep Hope** to a compelling vision of God's kingdom. Storylines connect learners and learning to God's story. Mrs. Harmon's **Storyline** is God is >. He is greater than hard math problems, greater than personal challenges, and greater than anything that seems to hold us back. This **Storyline** connects to her **Deep Hope**: What if my students discover that they are uniquely equipped and capable of doing

hard things? I hope they are always curious and continually seek to find how they fit into God's story.

Throughlines are "Habits of Living" that we desire our students to embody. They include things like Servant Working; Community Building; Earth Keeping; and Justice Seeking. These ideas run through every part of our curriculum and help our students to reflect Jesus. TfT also employs **Habits of Learning**, including Curious Thinking, Gracious Communicating, Joy-Filled Collaboration, and Courageous Designing. These concepts work in tandem to build students' minds and character.

Another key practice of TfT involves **Formational Learning Experiences**. These FLEx opportunities ask students to engage in real work that meets the real needs of real people. Teachers invite students to use their skills, then nurture and empower them to tackle real-life problems. The FLEx opportunities allow students to practice **Habits of Learning** and **Habits of Living**!

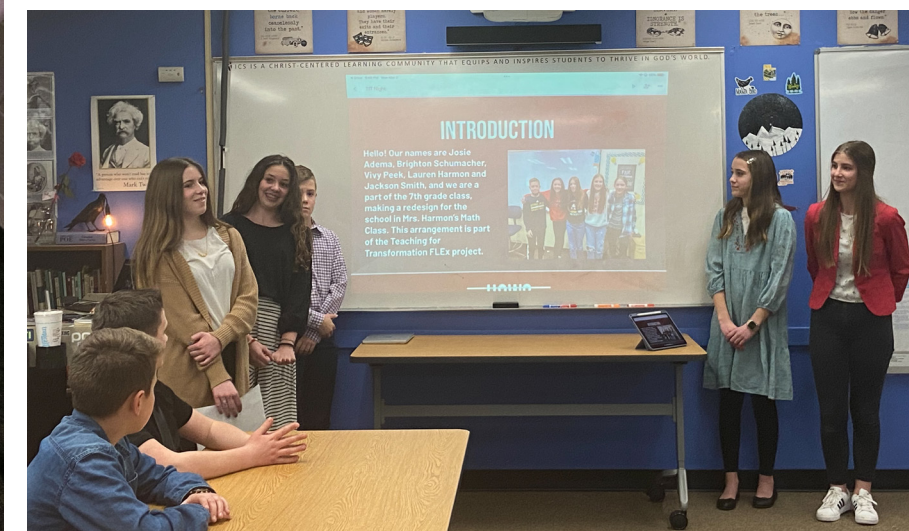
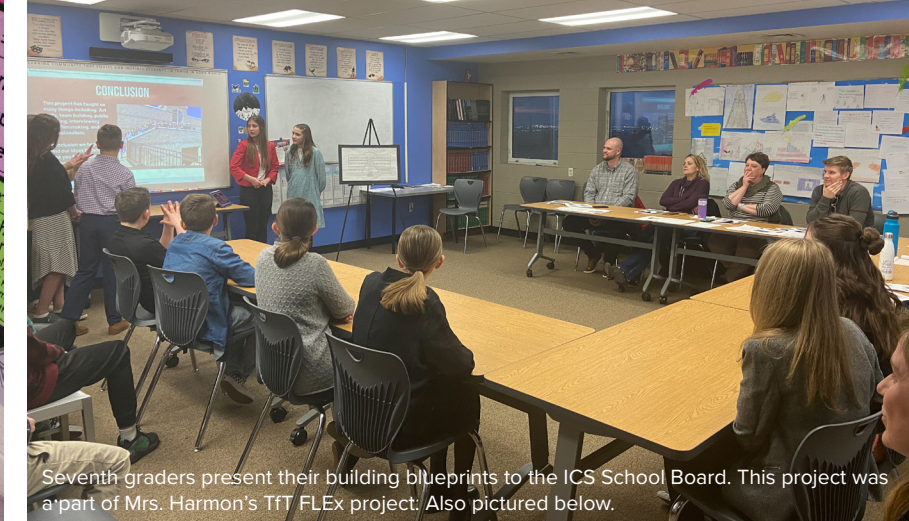
An example of a FLEx is Miss Potter's challenge to her students to consider how God has made each of them *one of a kind*, meeting the real need of respecting themselves and others. In conjunction with our English Language Arts curriculum, the third grade read about personal uniqueness and focused on Jesus- the One who is truly one of a kind! They observed a unique piece of art on a field trip and then created their own piece of art to reflect how Jesus made them one of a kind on purpose. Next, they wrote essays about how God has gifted them. Finally, they presented their learning to the seniors, sharing the important message that God has made each of us unique and on purpose!



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There is much more to TfT, and we will continue to keep you updated as we embark on this exciting educational and biblical journey. Please stop by my office anytime if you have questions or want to learn more about *Teaching for Transformation*!

*This year is what TfT calls the "Early Adopter Year," where a few teachers dive into TfT in order to help the entire team join the next school year. Our early adopter teachers this year are Laura Combe (pre-K), Paula Potter (3rd), Heather Harmon (MS math), Becky Schumacher (HS English), Ben Hulin (all school, PE) and Danielle Pimentel (all school Spanish).



Seventh graders present their building blueprints to the ICS School Board. This project was a part of Mrs. Harmon's TfT FLEx project. Also pictured below.



STATE CHAMPIONS

How ICS won the 2021 Volleyball State Championship, and why does it matter?

By Amy Florell, ICS volleyball assistant coach

Utah high school girls' volleyball has a new state champion. Intermountain Christian School launched an unprecedented title for their school when it won only the second high school athletic championship in the history of the institution (the first was boys' golf in 2008). There are not many things that can compare to the thrill, fanfare, and school-wide bonding that accompany winning a state championship, especially when it is a FIRST in a long time.

Although you will find much written on "what it takes" to win at this level, there is some mystery and providence involved that cannot be denied. Generally speaking, a volleyball state title involves having talented players, staying healthy, and getting a few breaks along the way. Additionally, championships are won when your team is at their best when it matters and the athletes have a special chemistry that propels them to unite: two necessities that are gifts from God and cannot be manufactured and two realities that were present for our 2021-22 girls volleyball team.

Under the leadership of a coaching staff that provided many years of experience, technical/strategic support, and valued unity, the team pushed through challenges that included two varsity starters being sidelined for serious injuries for a good portion of the front end of our season. The charge and harmony between those on the court and the bench never wavered and the chemistry that had been developing over the years amongst the seniors steadfastly held the culture of this team.

ICS won the championship game because it did to Panguitch what it did to Rich and various other schools within the tournament. With all six senior varsity starters back on the court, we were a different team which allowed for game-altering momentum and runs. The Lions found their gear and took it the distance to bring home the big WIN.

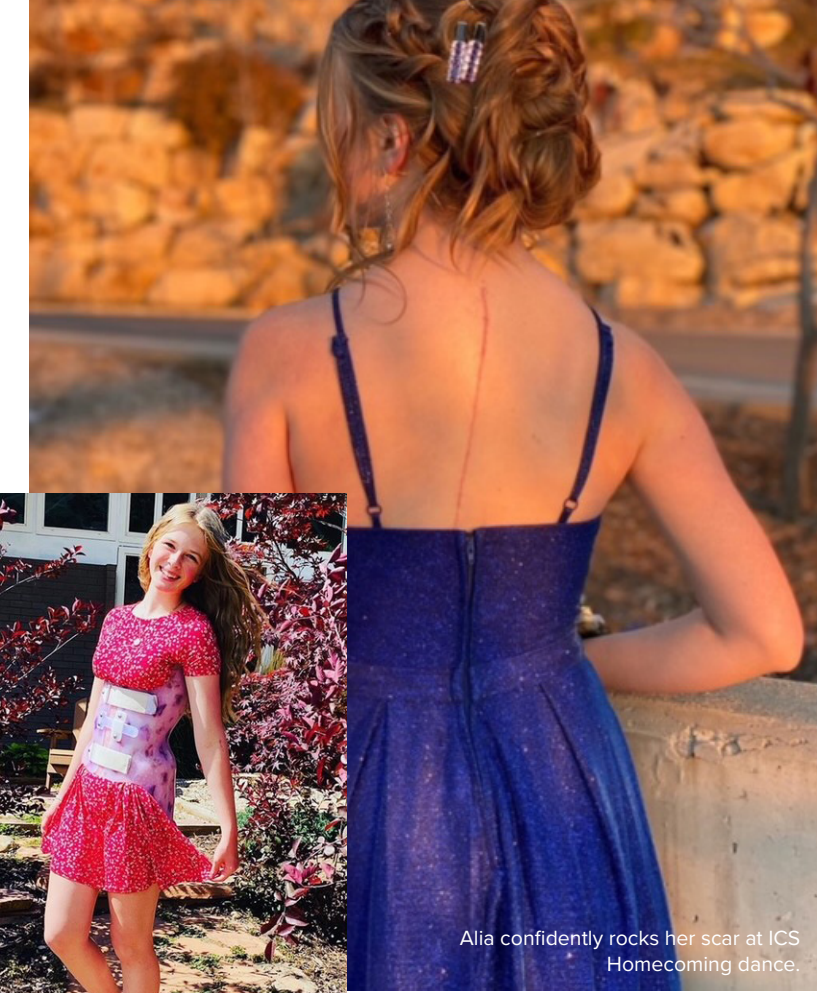
Just as we were taught as children to open the card prior to the gift in an effort to appropriately frame the experience with thankfulness to the giver first, may we in this moment draw attention to the One who put in place all of the gifts, abilities, people, and nuances that ordained peaking at just the right time to accomplish the goal. - Coach Florell

In a way, ICS won the trophy twice. The injuries that plagued the beginning of our season might have crippled a lesser team, but their fortitude, faith, and God's providence served toward championship caliber in every respect. It was an epic end for a team that now has their names in the history books of ICS.

MY SCOLIOSIS JOURNEY

By Alia Leonard, ICS junior

My journey with scoliosis began my freshman year, when the sideways curve in my spine had progressed to 38°. I was referred to a spinal specialist at Primary Children's Hospital and learned I needed to wear a custom-made, plastic, uncomfortable brace for 16 hours a day in an attempt to stop the curve progression as I grew (pictured right). After almost a year of bracing treatment, I was released from bracing as my curve had only progressed to 39°. My back developed chronic pain my sophomore year from my spine pulling at muscles and nerves, but I was happy to be done with bracing. In August of this year, however, I learned my back had gotten worse, against the odds. My curve was now 49°, past the degree of recommended surgery. I would need an extensive and very painful spinal fusion which would include two metal rods, 13 screws, and two hooks to fuse my spine. This would also come with a year-long recovery. My world turned upside down at this news, and I was terrified.



Alia confidently rocks her scar at ICS Homecoming dance.

I would not have been able to face my surgery if it weren't for my friends, peers, teachers, mentors, family, and God. The prayers and letters I received from those around me reminded me that even when I do not feel strong enough for trials, He is. Recovery has been the hardest thing I have ever had to do, but it taught me that I can get through anything I put my mind to. I am confident that God can turn anything for good. For example, my scoliosis journey has inspired me to raise awareness and become passionate about implementing scoliosis screenings in schools. Screenings are vital because early detection is key to avoiding what I had to go through. The earlier scoliosis is caught, the sooner bracing or other treatment can be utilized to increase the chances of avoiding surgery and progression. I am also passionate about spreading awareness online through my scoliosis Instagram account, while also being a mentor in a program to give advice to younger girls going through bracing or surgery.

ICS has supported me in more ways than I could have imagined. I have grown more than I dreamed possible, like learning how to love and be patient with my body, take action for what I care about, and to lean on and trust God.

Teachers willingly took extra time to help me stay caught up in school. Countless meals were provided for our family as I was in the hospital and recovering. Friends were always available to offer a prayer or a hug. ICS has supported me in more ways than I could have imagined. I have grown more than I dreamed possible, like learning how to love and be patient with my body, take action for what I care about, and to lean on and trust God.

You can support Alia and see more of her journey by following her Instagram account: @scoliosis_brace_sister



ICS upper school in 1996.

HAPPY 40TH BIRTHDAY, ICS!

By Tonya Baskett, ICS development assistant

When Intermountain Christian School opened in 1982, it was a kindergarten through 9th grade school with a student body totaling 122. The second year grew to include pre-k through 11th grades. As ICS turns 40 this year, the school celebrates four decades of God’s faithfulness. This year, the student body numbers 293 and will graduate 26 seniors in May. ICS has had 30 years in a beloved school building that we moved into in 1991, a move that many alumni will remember helping with in October of that year. The school said goodbye to 10 years in the “Fortuna Flying Saucer” with its circular racetracks, otherwise known as hallways, and said hello to the new 47,000 sq. ft. building that ICS rents from Evangelical Free Church of Salt Lake City. It was the culmination of nearly seven years of prayer, planning, hoping, giving, negotiating, cajoling, sweating, and sacrificing for the future of the school. God’s grace provided and the alumni numbers now include over 600 graduates!

When ICS opened its doors, there were high hopes to provide exemplary education in academics, athletics, fine arts, and community outreach. There have been many successes in all these areas. ICS has produced many plays over the years starting with the first ‘real’ play: “Our Town” in 1986. Other shows include “Charlotte’s Web” in 1994 and this year’s theater program will wrap up with “The Little Shop of Horrors.” Music Tour has been a long-standing tradition at ICS, leading to many memories and successful trips. Intermountain Christian School has had many students represented in the Utah All-State High School Art Show, including this year. There have also been State Tournament runs in cross country, baseball, girls volleyball, boys basketball, girls basketball, speech and debate, boys soccer, girls soccer and track. This year, the teams achieved two state championships in HS Girls Volleyball and HS Speech and Debate. ICS has always strived to be one of the highest academic

achieving schools in Utah and with a current SAT average of 1280 and ACT average of 27, the standard continues to be met. Intermountain Christian School has truly built upon its foundation of God’s love.

ICS will be hosting an Alumni Weekend, August 5th and 6th. All past graduates are invited to spend the weekend reconnecting with each other and celebrating 40 years of Intermountain Christian School. There will be time for alumni to reconnect over conversation, sports, a family picnic, and a formal dinner. Special guest speakers representing the last 40 years of ICS will be on hand to entertain us with memories from their time at the school. Mr. Bob Payne fulfilled many roles on faculty and administration at our school from 1982 – 1996. Mr. Bill Postma was part of the faculty from 1995 – 2002. Mr. John Gutman and Mrs. Sally Gutman were both on faculty for periods between 1990 and 2003. Mrs. Andrea Townsend was part of the faculty between 1993 – 2005. Mrs. Denise Buckley has been part of our school’s staff since 2017 and 2003 – 2012 before that. Mrs. Becky Schumacher has been part of the faculty since 2015. You don’t want to miss this event!

If you have not already received any notifications regarding this weekend, please be sure to update your contact information on our alumni website: intermountainchristian.org/alumni

MEET THE CIZIK FAMILY

By Jennifer Adema, ICS admissions director

After googling “Christian Schools in Salt Lake City,” the Cizik family found Intermountain Christian School. The Ciziks were moving from Seattle to Utah and finding a Christian school for Luke was important to Amy. Upon touring ICS during the summer of 2019, Amy was struck by the natural light in the hallways and the friendliness of everyone she met while at the school. The spiritual emphasis of the school solidified Amy’s desire to have Luke attend. The Ciziks moved to Salt Lake on August 11, 2019 and Luke started kindergarten on August 14! The family is grateful for the experience they’ve had thus far.

For Amy, the strong community at ICS is vital. She is assured that Luke’s teachers are caring and he has great friends in his class. Amy appreciates that parents are able to connect and talk with one another. The fact that there are 14 grades on one campus is a bonus too, as Amy’s family likes to support the school’s sports teams and theater productions! Luke looks forward to when he is old enough to participate in ICS sports! The Ciziks attend Hope Church and see many of their church friends at school too, solidifying that sense of community.

The Ciziks feel well supported at ICS and Amy says she knows of many teachers, administrators and staff that she could call/text if she were to ever need anything.

The Ciziks feel well supported at ICS, and Amy says that she knows of many teachers, administrators and staff that she could call/text if she were to ever need anything. Amy trusts that while at ICS, Luke, among his teachers and his friends, will continue to “increase in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.” Luke 2:52





Seventh graders Matthew Potner, and Brighton Schumacher

GOD IS WITH US

By Mitch Menning, head of school

“Mitch, I’m working on the Spring newsletter. There’s a section on the first two pages about Gabe. I also have some space on the second to the last page and was wondering if you’d like to write a ‘Parting Words’ article?”

Mrs. Hobbs caught me in a moment. It had been...a day. Would it be appropriate to write an ending article? Absolutely! How fitting to start a newsletter with a great spread introducing Mr. Pethtel and his family and to wrap it up with the departing Head of School’s words.

I, of course, said, “Yeah, I think that makes a lot of sense and could be cool. I’ll do it.”

Mrs. Hobbs, knowing her audience, replied, “Great! I’ll need it by Wednesday, April 13.”

Guess what day it is as I type these words? Exactly. Wednesday, April 13. Was I procrastinating or contemplative? Though most often the first word would be a better describer, this time, it was different. I truly was contemplative.

Do I share lessons learned? There are a lot and I’d surely forget some. Do I confess all my leadership mess-ups in the last ten years? I’m not sure this space would be long enough. Do I brag about all the progress ICS has made? Nope. Not the place and not necessary. Do I tell you about the team being assembled for the upcoming school year and how amazing it is? I like that one, but you’ve heard me do this before. I had writer’s block.

Then I went to our all-school Easter chapel this morning and sat on the bleachers in the back watching through tear-filled eyes. God is with us. Yes, he HAS BEEN with us, and yes, he WILL BE with us. But this was different. God is with us. That’s usually a Christmas message, but this year it hit me at Easter. He is with us and he is for us. He loves us.

Tim Drisdorn, our dean of student life, and some friends led us in worship which was incredible. I mean phenomenal. But the reality is that Tim won’t be at ICS next year.

Matt Parker, our former Operations Director and now MS Bible Teacher, planned the all-school chapel and it was one of the best I’ve been to in all my years at ICS. Matt won’t be with us next year either.

And me? I didn’t have a thing to do with the details of the chapel. I was just sitting in the back taking it in and being contemplative. The chapel was all Mr. Parker figuring out key elements, asking others to take part, and allowing them to run.



Do those realities cause me to lose hope for the future of ICS? Not. At. All. Is that because Pam Smith, our Dean of Student Life starting next year is going to be amazing and finished the chapel today PERFECTLY? Or is it because Shanna Hafemann is going to be the worship leader next year and will be FANTASTIC? Is it because Mr. Pethtel is a gifted Head of School? Those are all great reasons for hope! But neither Tim nor

Matt are the ones who caused the Spirit to move today. It was God! And it IS God. And he IS going to be with ICS in the future because he loves us and is for us. How do I know? The man on the middle cross said so.

Thanks for reading the ramblings of my thoughts this morning. I’m grateful for the ten years I’ve had at ICS.

Carry on in assurance. God IS with us.

LIFE WITH WAITING LISTS

By Jennifer Adema, ICS admissions director

“Please complete and submit our online application as soon as you’re able, as classes are filling up very quickly this year!” This is a statement I’ve found myself repeating quite a bit lately. In the admissions office there are ebbs and flows of work. There are predictable patterns where I anticipate an increase in inquiries, busy Welcome Wednesdays, and re-enrolling current students. One thing I could not predict, however, were the retention numbers for the 2022-2023 school year and the increased interest we’ve had in our school from new families.

We could try to determine the reasons for our uptick in numbers. We utilized a consultant to help us specifically with enrollment. We hired an outside marketing agency to create ads, target specific audiences in the local community, and manage our social media campaigns. We encouraged our families to leave reviews at school review websites. Families with young children are moving into Utah in record numbers.

I tend to think a bit more ethereally and say that when examining our “numbers,” we know each “number” is a student-an image bearer, a child that deserves a learning environment in which he or she will be known and pointed to the Creator. Our faculty knows the student body. They know the personality of each class. Our teachers know and practice creative ways to motivate each student to do their best.

Word is out that ICS is indeed a Christ-centered learning community that equips and inspires every child to thrive in God’s world. We have families that are excited to be a part of what God is doing at our school. We have students that are engaged and thriving in their academics and social circles. The value of an ICS education is seen through students celebrating each other’s successes, through teachers helping a student grasp a difficult concept, or through staff who regularly go above and beyond their job description.

I look forward, both personally and professionally, to remaining a part of the ICS community. Current families, keep spreading the word about our school and tell your friends that they should be a part!

When the time came for us to relocate from Michigan for a job, we were faced with the daunting task of which city would be best for our family. The nurturing, welcoming, and Christ-centered environment at ICS made the choice easy and we feel right at home within this school community. Our prayers have been answered and we are thankful for God’s faithful servants who guide our children each and every day. - ICS Parent Rachael Hobbs on how her family chose ICS for their children.



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