



ILLIANA CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED PERIODICALLY BY THE SCHOOL BOARD

WINTER 14-15

A View from **THE BOTTOM**

I have seen articles by school leaders entitled “The View from the Top,” but this one is entitled “a View from the Bottom.”

I KNOW WE TEND TO THINK that a school principal is at the top of the organizational chart or in the top spot or at the top of the heap, but I like to think of it as being at the bottom. That is not because the school rests on me or that I am a bottom-feeder or that I have bottomed out. It is just because I think of my role as serving to support, not crowned to command.

This is a very exciting time at Illiana. There are grand and expansive plans being made and new ways being considered. While it is sometimes a bit overwhelming, it is mostly very exciting. For those of you that do not get to see that excitement from my chair I thought I would show you around...

1 A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO I authorized increasing our bandwidth from 20 mpbs to 50 mpbs. It is an indication of the growing use of technology in the service of learning at Illiana. In a classroom I visited today students were reviewing tweets that had been sent to their teacher in Spanish. Another classroom was an artful blend of downloaded videos and other digital resources with direct classroom instruction. I spoke yesterday with a teacher who is experimenting with flipped teaching and finding it makes for much more classroom interaction with students. (Flipped teaching is where the lessons are presented online by a teacher-created video so that the class time can be spent collaborating on “homework.”) We are also trying to figure out how to transition to a more “digital-rich” learning environment with students using their own “electronic learning devices.” It is fascinating to think of where we can go with this exploding technology.

2 SPEAKING OF CHANGING TECHNOLOGY, during the recent cold snap we had a ceiling heating unit crack and spray water across the photography room. Making lemonade out of this lemon we ripped down the walls of the old darkroom and tossed all the darkroom technology

to create an open space that we then used for portrait photography that will be featured in the promotional materials for the campaign for a the new campus. You may have seen that we recently had a casting call for kindergarten students who will be featured in the next Illiana video. These various projects will be used in a multi-media campaign to encourage financial support.

3 SPEAKING OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT, we have been very encouraged by the progress of the somewhat silent part of the capital campaign. We have also seen the annual support for the school continue at previous rates despite the campaign. This is very important as our enrollment is a bit below projection this year and we have to assume it will take another dip next year. This is making setting a budget for next year very challenging since we are determined to maintain and develop programs even as we might experience a slip in enrollment.

4 SPEAKING OF ENROLLMENT, we continue to pray for Liz Metcalfe, our Admissions Counselor who has been disabled by cancer. She is responding well to treatment. She stopped by to visit just this week. Meanwhile Andrew Knot has been doing fine work as we have begun interviewing candidates for more long-term service.

5 SPEAKING OF SERVICE, we have a full team of 29 teachers and students heading to the Dominican Republic this coming Spring Break. The place where the teams of previous years have been staying has moved so we have to make other arrangements. Our students have been doing a great job requesting support from their churches and seeking sponsors among their own family and friends. This year we were able to get plane tickets for a little less than last year. We are hoping many come to the group’s fund-raising spaghetti supper on the Saturday of the musical. It is a delight to be able to help those in need.

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6 SPEAKING OF HELPING THOSE IN NEED, the school maintains a modest fund for assisting families who are unable to pay all of their tuition and cannot get sufficient assistance from their church either. Many of our Illiana families give up their own Foundation Grant so that it can be used to assist other families in need. Illiana has many families that struggle mightily to keep up with the cost for sending one or two or even three children to Illiana. Often times this sacrifice is on top of commitments to Christian grade schools. It is very challenging for these families to keep up. Every month we have to hope a little harder that all our families will be able to make it. Meanwhile, the school also has a special committee that has been appointed to review the challenges of rising tuition and perhaps develop strategies to ensure that those who sincerely desire it will be able to secure a Christian education.

7 SPEAKING OF EDUCATION, we are always working to improve the quality of instruction here at Illiana. This morning I met with one of several teachers who are undergoing a review of their teaching practice. In addition to requiring certification, specialization, master's degrees, and ongoing professional coursework, Illiana uses an extensive student survey to provide input on teacher evaluations. All of this input is carefully reviewed with each teacher being evaluated for a pretty rigorous accountability for daily effectiveness. These teachers then also meet with a committee of fellow teachers and board members for an overall review of their performance before being granted assurance of due process in the renewal of employment contracts.

8 SPEAKING OF EMPLOYMENT, we recently completed a focused study of best and appropriate practices for vocational education. Illiana has a long history of preparing students for the world of work. The faculty and the school board all recently reviewed the recommendations for the Vocational Education Committee which ranged for small name changes to sweeping new programs that will affect all our students. Good vocational education is not just for those not pursuing college; all our students should prepare for a vocation in the broadest sense of that term and the school must assist them in discovering and developing gifts that will contribute to the full spectrum of vocations locally and around the world.

9 SPEAKING OF AROUND THE WORLD, I recently participated in a mutually supportive meeting of those who are hosting an international student who attends Illiana. Presently, there are six international students that all are from China. These students contribute to the diversity of our student body and connect us as a community to other communities around the globe. As they live in our homes and attend our churches they give us all a little more practice in showing hospitality.

10 SPEAKING OF HOSPITALITY, Illiana welcomed several new students at the semester. We have a blossoming reputation for being a welcoming school where students who may not have been embraced elsewhere often find a home here. It is truly a delight to see students accepted by their peers here as they also usually respond well to higher expectations and a culture of respect.

AS YOU CAN SEE, one thing leads to another as we at Illiana strive to do all things in the challenge of His service. My view from the bottom involves broken pipes and some broken hearts, but it is a delight to serve among those who serve the Lord with their heads and their hearts—teachers, parents, students, and other partners of Illiana's. *May God be praised by the service of us all.*

Peter Boonstra
Principal



GOLF OUTING

On September 22, 92 golfers spent the day hitting a white ball around Idlewild Country Club to support Illiana Christian's athletic programs.

Every year, I get asked what I like about our Golf Outing, so I will give you my top 10 favorite things--in no particular order.

- 1** All the money raised goes to support the Athletic Department. With the rising cost of athletics and a vast majority of our budget coming from fundraisers like this, the Golf Outing is a very important day in the year.
- 2** Our Golf Outing is always towards the end of September. Fall is a great time of year, and usually offers perfect golf weather. In fact, we have been blessed the last few years with phenomenal weather!
- 3** The last several years, we have used Idlewild Country Club in Flossmoor, IL. It is a private golf course with which we have been able to work out a really good deal.
- 4** No one leaves the day hungry. We have a huge lunch and dinner, and not only is the food great, but there is plenty of it.
- 5** We get a number of our athletes to help run the outing and say "thank you." We want the people golfing to see who they are really supporting--our student athletes.
- 6** We have countless businesses that support the outing. This is huge for us because we know our businesses get asked by many different organizations for money, but every year they give and give and give. We can't thank them enough for their continued support.
- 7** We had 92 golfers take days off work, pay \$150 to golf, spend money on game holes, and all of them had smiles on their faces. Thank you!!!
- 8** Every golfer walks away with a prize. Some prizes are better than others, but everyone walks away with something.
- 9** We have a lot of fun. It is still another example of the Christian community coming together to support Christian education.
- 10** We are blessed. God has blessed our school and our community with the great task of teaching young men and women about God through athletics. I love my job and I love seeing teenagers understanding God in a deeper way through all that we do at Illiana.

Thank you for all your love, support, and prayers for this school.

Lance Davids, Athletic Director



ALUMNI WASHINGTON D.C. TRIP

Once again, the Illiana Christian High School Foundation is planning a seven-day, six-night trip to Washington, D.C. for alumni and friends of Illiana. The trip will take place June 15-21, 2015. Highlights of last year's trip include: Washington Cathedral, Mount Vernon, and Arlington Cemetery, where four servicemen had the honor of laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. We still have plenty of space for more participants! The cost is \$1,200 per person for double occupancy or \$1,600 for single occupancy and includes all transportation, lodging and 12 meals. Participants will be walking 3-5 (non-continuous) miles per day.

**PLEASE CONTACT STEVE HOLWERDA FOR MORE INFORMATION
(steve.holwerda@illianachristian.org or (708) 474-0515 x. 41).**



DANDELION WINE

*This fall Illiana Christian's drama department presented the play *Dandelion Wine* by Ray Bradbury. THE PLAY TAKES PLACE in a rural Illinois town during the summer of 1928. Douglas Spaulding, the main character played by Senior Frank Russell, is determined to make this summer the best summer ever. He plans to eat lime vanilla ice cream, catch fireflies in the tall grass, and build a happiness machine. With the help of his best friend, his family, and various townspeople, Douglas bottles up his memories in his grandfather's dandelion wine.*

HOWEVER, should memories be bottled forever? Senior Greg Strange played Bill Forrester, a mysterious character who seems to know everything about Douglas Spaulding's special summer of 1928. At the end of the play, the audience discovers that Bill Forrester is, in fact, the young Douglas Spaulding twenty-six years later. Greg Strange commented that playing the role "made me think about how I need to appreciate the time I have now. However, I also appreciate Forrester's ability to hold on to his youth and enjoy the small things in life."

Director Jeff DeVries also discovered a connection with the play. He wrote:

I enjoyed Dandelion Wine because it affirms the gift of life. Yes, we experience loss, sometimes searing loss,

"Life is a miraculous gift, and the play reminds us to embrace that gift."

but we would have nothing to lose if we didn't already have so much to begin with. Life is a miraculous gift, and the play reminds us to embrace that gift. The losses hurt, but life is so precious and wonderful that we must be willing to pay the price of those losses. It reminds me

of the words of Jesus: "Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it." (Luke 17:33)

Once again many students contributed to the success of this play. Students representing all different grades made up the cast as well as seventy-six students on the crew. Mr. Jeff De Vries, Mr. Jim Kamphuis, and Miss Emily Van Stee guided these students through what Mr. Kamphuis described as "the most technically-advanced production Illiana has put on in my nineteen years of involvement with the Drama department." The technical side of Dandelion Wine included multiple sound effects cues, thirty of thirty-two light channels, and video projection.

Students on both the cast and crew were thankful to have had an opportunity to work on this production. Sophomore Avery Riemersma said, "We all become one big family. I was able to meet people that I didn't know before." She was not the only one who had positive things to say about participating on a crew. Junior Deanna Wiltjer explained that she liked "being in the play without being in the limelight." Freshman Ryan Disselkoen agreed, adding that it was "fun and nice to meet new people."

After many months of practice and preparation, students and teachers were proud of the results. According to Mr. Kamphuis, "Watching a show like this come together was a great reminder that Drama at Illiana uses a wide variety of gifts and talents, from the performers on the stage, to the techies in the booth, to the builders and painters who construct the set, and when everyone involved gives their best effort, wonderful things are possible."





SENIOR PROJECTS

For third year in a row, the seniors in Miss Van Stee and Miss Johnson’s classes will be engaged in a project which involves researching, writing, and presenting information on community issues.

AS CHRISTIANS, we are called to be caretakers of our community. This is something that believers have been taught their entire lives. In fact, the school mission statement of Illiana states that we want to “graduate academically capable people with a comprehensive Christian view of life committed to the challenge of serving God and others.” The teachers at Illiana want to encourage their students to think about how they can do just that in their use of their God-given gifts and passions.

For this assignment the students will research a community closely connected to the student body of Illiana and then draft a paper that addresses a specific issue in that community. Past presentations have ranged from starting a boys’ choir in Lansing, IL, to implementing a community kitchen that instructs students on healthy eating habits in Englewood, IL, to opening a salon that caters specifically to cancer survivors in Chicago. After the

students complete papers based on their research, they turn their ideas into presentations complete with detailed business plans.

In the future, Miss Johnson and Miss Van Stee hope to grow this project into something that more actively involves the leaders of the surrounding communities. They would love to host panel discussions with community leaders and provide students with opportunities to see how a small group of people can actually impact their community in a positive way. This whole project centers on the hope that students will become more aware of the communities surrounding them and the need for them to be active participants not only in their school community but also their civic communities.

The students’ presentations are given to their classmates, but we also welcome outside community leaders who want to provide real world insight and experience to the seniors as they prepare to leave Illiana and embark on their future endeavors.

If you are interested in participating or helping to critique these projects, please contact either:
MISS SARA JOHNSON (sara.johnson@illianachristian.org)
MISS EMILY VAN STEE (emily.vanstee@illianachristian.org)

ILLIANA FUND DRIVE

This year’s annual Illiana Fund Drive was very successful. During the weeks of October 27 and November 3, more of you were contacted by telephone than ever before by an Illiana volunteer; in fact, we dialed over 5,000 unique phone numbers over the six evenings. Each night of calling we had sixteen volunteers in our phone room at Illiana. These volunteers were a mix of students, parents, teachers and board members.

This year we were able to schedule two calling teams comprised primarily of students. These students did a wonderful, enthusiastic job of representing Illiana. After each student got used to making a solicitation phone call, he or she settled into the role and even enjoyed doing it. It was great to see these students excited about raising money and representing their school in this way. Their school pride was evident in their hard work and effort.

We want to thank all of you who responded to the school’s needs and gave a gift to Illiana. This year’s gift total was \$156,260, just short of our goal of \$160,000. Thank you for making this a great drive! Your commitment to Christian education and Illiana Christian High School is very much appreciated. A special thanks to the donors who stepped forward and provided a few “one day only” dollar-for-dollar matches to help make this drive a success.

All gifts given to the school for the Illiana Drive are used for immediate needs of the school including general operating expenses and building costs. These gifts help us keep our facilities operating and in excellent condition for our staff and students.

The Illiana Board would like to thank the volunteers who helped make this drive possible. The willing commitment of these volunteers was crucial to the success of this drive. And thank you to all of you who support Illiana in any way, whether through your prayers or financial support.



FALL SPORTS

Wrap Up



BOYS CROSS COUNTRY:

Went undefeated in the Metro conference and finished in 3rd place at the State competition. All-Conference, All-Regional and All-Sectional honors were awarded to Nick Fiene, Colin DeYoung, Nick Wondaal, and Thomas McGuire. Nick Wondaal and Colin DeYoung were also chosen for the All-State team.



VARSITY GIRLS TENNIS:

Went undefeated this past fall. Hilary Van Drunen qualified for the state competition in singles, and Amanda Eberly and Parker Roeda qualified in doubles. The team took 2nd place in sectionals overall.

GOLF:

Both the varsity and JV golf teams finished 1st in the Metro Suburban Conference. The varsity team had a final record of 11-3. Matthew Zandstra and Steven Massey were both named MVPs and All-Conference. State Finalists were John Hayes and Steven Massey.



GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY:

Finished with a conference record of 6-1. Four girls made the All-Conference team this year: Elyssa Patricks, Maddie DeYoung, Holly Schoon, and Gabby Kreykes. They finished their season 2nd place in the conference, 1st place in regionals and 8th in Sectionals.

VARSITY BOYS SOCCER:

Had a challenging season, with a record of 9 wins, 12 losses and 3 ties, but finished in 2nd place in the Metro Suburban Conference. All-conference honors were awarded to four senior boys: Lito Wagenveld, Chad Ketelaar, Chad VanderZee and Zack Pruim.

VARSITY GIRLS VOLLEYBALL:

Reached the sectional semi-finals match, ending their season with a record of 24-13. Rachel Herrera, a libero, and Jamie Petarca, an outside hitter, both received All-Conference honors.





Spiritual DEVELOPMENT

As the director of Spiritual Development for Illiana, I am asked a lot about what I do. Overall, I would say my responsibility is to focus on spirituality and how students can grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ in all areas of the school.

Now I must be clear, this is a complete team effort. We have a phenomenal staff of teachers who are daily teaching about God in their subject areas, creating gospel environments in their classrooms, and walking alongside the students they have in their classes. From top to bottom, we have a passion to teach our students about God, and we take that very seriously. However, I get the opportunity to put a little more emphasis on it in certain areas. For example, over the last few months we have been doing a lot of different things including early morning prayer groups, curriculum development, counseling students, devotions, chapel both in and outside of Illiana, pastors' breakfasts and Praise Crowd breakfasts. I will highlight two other activities in this article: Praise Crowd and Dory's.

1 PRAISE CROWD INVOLVES students gathering after basketball games to worship. It began four years ago when three students and I had an idea for a place for students to worship and learn about God. In the last four years, it has grown into more than we could have ever imagined. Praise Crowd today has a committee of 12 students and another adult sponsor, Mrs. Rachel Drost. We have grown from a handful of kids to almost half the student body coming to worship on Friday night at 10:00 pm. We sing, we pray, we learn about God and we unpack what it means to live for Jesus. I am a pastor who preaches regularly, but



these gatherings are always some of the most enjoyable worship settings I am ever a part of. I have mentioned this before, but I love being with 250 kids on a Friday night, all singing their hearts out and all having their hearts open to hear from God's Word. On those nights, what matters is Jesus, and that is awesome.

“On those nights, what matters is Jesus, and that is awesome.”

2 A NEW SERVICE CONCEPT grew out of one of my Bible classes. We were doing a project and used the movie “Finding Nemo” as an example. There are some strong Biblical themes in this movie, including the fact that the father never gives up on his son and the importance of perseverance--“Just keep swimming.” However, as we were discussing this movie, I was struck by the character of Dory, the blue fish. In the beginning of the movie, Marlin, the main character, is surrounded by many friends. The whole community is there and everyone is happy, so life is grand. But when Nemo is taken and trouble shows up, everyone disappears. No one

is there to help Marlin when he needs it most, except one crazy, blue fish named Dory. At first, Marlin didn't want Dory's help, but she wouldn't let him take no for an answer. Dory helped Marlin when he needed it. Dory didn't leave his side and was a companion through a very hard time. I liked that idea so much that we started our own Dory's group here at Illiana. Dory's members wear blue shirts and their task is simply to help people. We currently have over 30 volunteer Dory's. They write encouraging notes to fellow students, buy coffee for them, invite them out to breakfast, pray for them, and overall, just make sure that everyone at Illiana feels the love of Jesus. Although this system is far from perfect, we are using it to push students to live their faith and focus on others every day.

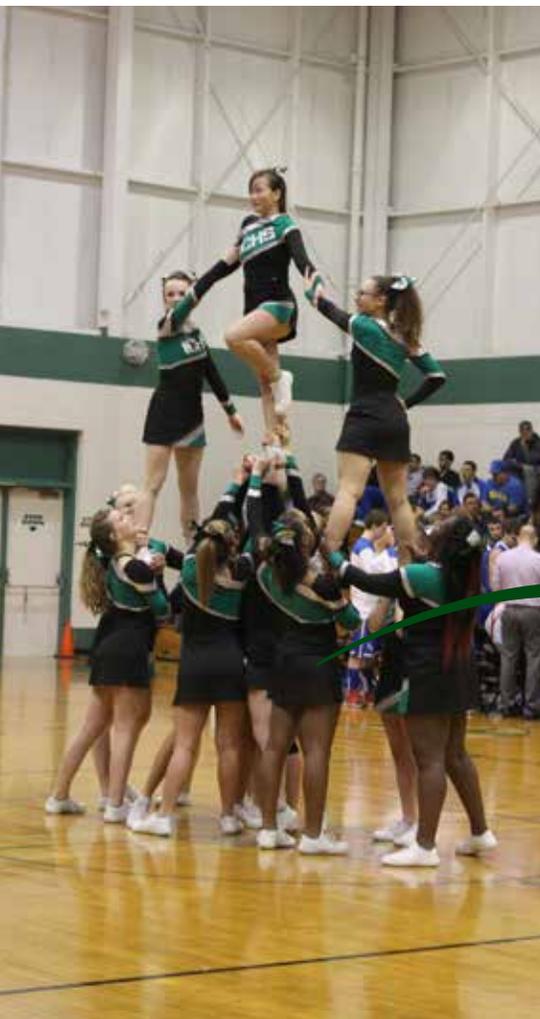
I have learned a lot from both Praise Crowd and our Dory's. I always get excited when we can put aside the things that separate us and worship God as a community. I also get excited when we take the focus off ourselves and help others. We are blessed to have great students at Illiana. We are even more blessed to have a great Savior.

Thanks for all your support and prayers.
Lance Davids



WINTER SPORTS

Update



The winter sports' season has been met with a lot of success by all of our teams.

BOYS' BASKETBALL

The Varsity boys have had a strong year from beginning to end, including being named champions at the Seneca and Kankakee Tournaments, and are on track to have one of the better records in school history. As of the writing of this newsletter, they have a good chance of winning the Metro Suburban Conference. The Sophomore boys' team has had a strong season, having lost only three games and also taking a couple tournament championships. The Freshmen boys' team too has had a good season.



GIRLS' BASKETBALL

The Varsity girls have steadily improved throughout the year and are playing their best basketball of the year at the end of their season. They also have a chance to win the Metro Suburban Conference this year. The JV and Freshmen girls' teams have had good seasons as well, including winning records and a couple of tournament championships.

WRESTLING

The Wrestling team has continued a strong tradition again this year. Having no seniors, they have improved dramatically as the year has progressed and hope to send as many as four wrestlers down state.

CHEERLEADING

The Cheerleaders have placed high in a number of competitions and have been faithful supporters at every home game.

Thank you as always for your faithful support of your athletes and Illiana Christian.

HOMECOMING 2015



Illiana's annual Homecoming festivities continued as usual for the 2015 year. The student-elected 2015 Homecoming Court consisted of seniors Derek Hillegonds, Chad VanderZee, Nick Fiene, Frank Russell, Chad Ketelaar, Maddy Prince, Jannae Allen, Marissa Pratscher, Rachel Herrera, and Rachel Smits.

ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2015, the court performed a student-choreographed dance before the student body at a pep assembly. The cheerleaders and pep band also performed crowd pleasing numbers.

Students, parents, and alumni crowded the bleachers Friday night at the Homecoming game to watch the evening's festivities. The JV boys outlasted Timothy Christian in a close game, while the Varsity team lost the second nail biter of the evening. Despite encouragement from the Loud Crowd and the players' best efforts, Illiana fell to Timothy 57-62.

Mr. and Miss Illiana 2014, graduates Andrew Clark and Tiffany Groen, passed their crowns on to the 2015 winners, Frank Russell and Rachel Smits.

Both excellent students, Frank is very familiar with the limelight as he has performed on stage in every play and musical since his freshman year. Musically gifted and a member of Illiana's Wind Ensemble, jazz, and pep bands, he plays guitar and sings at his church and for praise crowds and chapels at Illiana, both of which he helps to organize as he is also involved in both the praise crowd and the chapel committees.

Rachel Smits works to organize blood drives, cookouts, doughnut sales, and various other programs around Illiana as the president of the student council. She is also athletically gifted and loves to run. She uses her talents to glorify God in cross country in the fall and track and field in the spring.

In fitting with the homecoming goal of honoring alumni, the crowning was followed by refreshments in the dining hall for Illiana graduates and the homecoming court.

The homecoming committee and student council prepared and decorated for the dance, which was held at Illiana on Saturday February 1, with a Chicago theme, "My Kind of City." Students filed in to the lower gym to find a photo booth, strobe lights, a smoke machine, and a deejay. They danced the night away to end this homecoming weekend.

- Marissa Pratscher



1 TO 1 INITIATIVE

Part of Illiana's mission statement reads:

"We graduate academically capable young people with a comprehensive Christian view of life committed to the challenge of serving God and others."

Technology has become an important tool to succeed in preparing our students to be "academically capable young people" in our current world. Our world is filled with cell phones, tablets, laptops, desktops and all sorts of technology, giving students instant access to the world and instant communication. Technology skills are not only desirable but required in the workplace.

Nancy Blair in her article entitled Technology Integration for the New 21st Century Learner writes: "The new 21st century learners must master more than the core curriculum to succeed in secondary and postsecondary institutions, as well as in the workplace. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, a national organization advocating for 21st century readiness for every student, explains the outcomes of this transformation as fusing the traditional three R's with four C's: critical

thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. As students develop the four C's, we have discovered that effective application of these vital skills in a technology-infused life and workplace requires acquiring them in a technology-infused learning environment. This environment calls for two elements: We must increasingly put technology into the hands of students and must trust them with more progressive technology use." This quote from a well-known educational technology specialist highlights the importance of digital tools in student preparation.

Putting together the power of technology with the power of Illiana's skillful Christian teachers creates a flourishing environment for learning. Driven by our mission statement to prepare our students for the challenge of serving God and others in our contemporary society, Illiana is pursuing ways to put these technology tools in the hands of our teachers and students. We are currently developing a 1:1 initiative (one device for each student to use) to reach the goal of providing teachers and students with a powerful technology tool for learning. To experience how this will work, Illiana is

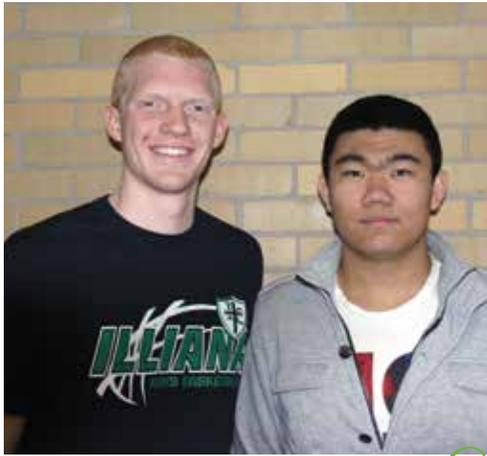
piloting a classroom experience with Dell Chromebooks. (A Chromebook is designed to access the internet quickly and all work is saved in the "cloud," not on a network drive or local machine.) Mrs. Rachel Drost has 30 Chromebooks stored and charged in a cart in her social studies classroom. These are available for her students to use every day. Each student has a school Google email account that allows him/her to use Google's apps for education. The purpose of this pilot program is to learn how to use technology to engage our students in the learning process. Our current plan is to distribute a Chromebook to every freshman student next fall. We will phase in distribution to the other classes over time.

The goals for the pilot program and the Chromebook 1:1 initiative include:

- supporting Illiana's mission
- developing skills necessary for the 21st century: critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration.
- enhancing the ways teachers and students interact with each other
- teaching students discernment and the ethical use of technology
- enriching and motivating student learning and achievement
- building on the learning styles of today's student
- providing opportunities for "anywhere, anytime learning"
- providing each student access to tools and resources for learning at Illiana

Technology has become an integral part of our society, both in skills needed in daily living as well as in the future workplace. Illiana is committed to providing an education that graduates "academically capable young people with a comprehensive Christian view of life committed to the challenge of serving God and others."

Link to Nancy Blair article: <http://www.naesp.org/principal-januaryfebruary-2012-technology/technology-integration-new-21st-century-learner>



International STUDENTS

SUN WEITIAN, OR ROBERT SUN as he goes by in America, is a junior at Illiana Christian High School and lives with the Ketelaar family in Dyer, Indiana. He came to the United States “to have a different kind of education.” He found it at Illiana, which he calls a more hands-on, holistic education than he had in China. This has allowed him to participate in American culture and compare it to the culture of his home country. “As time goes by, you truly feel the culture. You learn the best of American culture.” For

Robert, that includes trips to Lake Michigan, Friday nights in the Loud Crowd, and delivering speeches in English class, all things he never did or couldn’t do in China.

The school handbook states that Illiana Christian High School aims “to give students a comprehensive Christian view of life.” This requires a commitment to graduating students who not only excel academically, but also “know, serve, and love God and their neighbor.”

As our students know, “neighbor” has a broader definition for Christians than it does for Merriam Webster. A neighbor isn’t just the person who lives on the other side of the fence, on the same street, or in the same subdivision.

For the past eight years, thanks to students like Robert, Illiana has learned just how broad the Christian definition of “neighbor” is. In 2007, Illiana started admitting international students on a regular basis. Since then, the school has enrolled international students from China, South Korea, and Germany.

These students play a unique role in academic, social, and spiritual life at Illiana. Currently, six international students are in attendance. These students live with covenant families within the Illiana community and participate in the life of the school and the lives of their host families.

Wibke Sandrock, from Marburg, Germany, studied at Illiana during the winter and spring of 2011. She appreciated teachers who were fun and engaging as well as the opportunity to “worship and get closer to God during school.” She still cherishes her memories of playing on the junior varsity soccer team and going to Washington D.C. for the Right to Life March.

Both Robert and Wibke testify to serious language improvements. “I really improved my English,” said Wibke. “I got more open and self-confident and it was easy for me to switch between German and English.” “When people are talking English to you every day, you learn a lot,” said Robert.

But international students aren’t the only ones who benefit from their time at Illiana. Chad Ketelaar, a senior at Illiana and Robert’s host brother, wasn’t sure what to expect when Robert moved in with his family. Chad says he and Robert have found some shared interests, like music and he’s even learned a few Mandarin phrases.

“We asked him about where he was from and tried to get his story,” said Chad. Like any other Illiana student, Robert and Wibke have stories. Their stories make up Illiana’s story, which strives each day to live up to the Christian story. It’s a story about loving God and loving your neighbor.

-Andrew Knot, Admissions Counselor



MARCH FOR LIFE

Forty-one Illiana students, two Illiana teachers and 40 adults from the greater Illiana community participated in the annual March for Life rally in Washington D.C. on Thursday, January 29, 2015. The participants had to endure a 14-hour bus ride in order to get to the March, but, according to senior Alex Vroom, it was worth it. “I wish I did it my freshman and sophomore years,” Vroom said.

The Illiana students weren’t alone in their endeavor. The group joined 250,000-500,000 people in giving a “voice to the voiceless.” Junior Colin DeYoung said, “It was powerful seeing all

kinds of different people come together to protest for a cause they believe in. It was a lot of fun and a very eye-opening experience. I have never been to a rally that promotes a social cause. It was very cool.”

The Illiana students interviewed also talked about other powerful experiences they saw when participating in the March. Senior Marissa Pratscher said that seeing a group of people holding signs that said, “I was conceived by rape,” and “I love my mother for keeping me” were especially moving. After the March, the students went to a convention hall where they could buy t-shirts, get pamphlets, or just talk to others about the Pro-Life Movement. Later that night, the Illiana group held a small, candlelight vigil in Lafayette Square outside the White House for all of the babies and mothers who had suffered because of the repercussions of abortion. The group then spent some time in prayer for our country.

To close off the day the Illiana group returned to their hotel and shared pizza. There the students were able to get to know each other better and socialize. The

next day was a day for sightseeing, allowing the students an opportunity to visit the Washington Monument, Capitol Hill and the Newseum.

The trip was not only a way to speak for the voices of the unborn, but also a way for the students to get to know their fellow classmates. Junior Lorna DeWindt said, “It was nice walking and hanging out with people I don’t normally hang out with or becoming friends with people I wasn’t friends with before at all.”

Despite the fun, the students knew they were there for a much more serious purpose. “When we were marching and chanting, the mood was light,” said sophomore Jacob Thompson. “We were having fun, and then I looked over and saw a big screen showing actual abortions. Why we were there became real because those were innocent lives being destroyed.”

Though tired, the group felt they met their objective of peaceful demonstration, spiritual nourishment, education and fun. Sophomore Juliana Knot summed things up by saying, “It was astounding to see how many people are dedicated to the cause.”



Illiana Christian High School

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Quick LOOK

- View From the Bottom..... 1 - 2
- Golf Outing..... 3
- Dandelion Wine 4
- Senior Projects.....5
- Illiana Fund Drive.....5
- Fall Sports.....6
- Spiritual Development..... 7
- Winter Sports..... 8
- Homecoming 9
- 1 to 1 Initiative 10
- International Students 11
- March for Life 11

OUR MISSION:

Illiana Christian High School is founded on the Bible as interpreted in the Reformed creeds. We graduate academically capable young people with a comprehensive Christian view of life committed to the challenge of serving God and others.

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