

# CROSSROADS

MENNONITE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

VOL. 32 ISS. 1 | SPRING 2022



## FIVE STORY CATCH UP

MCI's Vibrant  
Community

## MCI MUSICAL FEATURE

Celebrating the Return  
of the MCI Musical

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On the cover:  
MCI students run through a field  
after filming a music video.

Managing Editor:  
Janna Wiebe

“

“The steadfast love of the Lord never  
ceases,  
God’s mercies never come to an end;  
they are new every morning.”

Lamentations 3:22-23

”

**Enjoy Today**

The sun comes out and it  
shines on me today.

The birds they sing and the  
branches conduct as they  
sway,

ohhh

What a lovely song that  
they make,

calls to me,  
to enjoy today.

The leaves they grow,  
and the branches don't look  
so bare.

The smell of Spring is  
floating in the air.

What a lovely smell,

The smell of **life**,  
Clears my mind, of all the  
strife.

By: Scott Richards

*More reflections like this can be found in MCI's recent publication, **Hope & Lament**. This 50 page book is filled with visual and written entries from MCI students and Alumni! To order your own copy, visit [www.mciblues.net](http://www.mciblues.net) or purchase at the next MCI function.*



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*A self portrait created by grade 12 student Paige Anderson.*

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

# STRENGTH RENEWED

Warmer weather, longer days and the lifting of public health restrictions are welcome harbingers of hope. But dark shadows still loom across our world and our lives. Many of us are weary, worn down, depleted.

***'Even youths will faint and be weary,  
and the young will fall exhausted  
But those who wait upon the LORD  
shall renew their strength.'***  
*(Isa. 40:30-31 NRSV)*

This simple reminder from Isaiah 40:31 was first addressed to ancient people who were worn down from years of exile in a strange and foreign land. Against their will they had been carried away from the land of promise. Many wondered if God still cared or if faith in God really made a difference at all. Into their weary and depleted longing, the prophet Isaiah spoke clear and confident words of assurance.

***'The LORD is the everlasting God,  
The Creator of the ends of the earth.'***

***He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.  
He gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.***  
*(Isa 40:28-29 NRSV)*

Two full years of public health restrictions have profoundly frustrated life for both students and staff. Struggle and disappointment have been constant companions. So much energy has been expended to find new ways to accomplish our goals. We have disagreed about choices that needed to be made.

We have needed to turn to the ONE who *'does not faint or grow weary.'* This issue of CrossRoads celebrates the way God has *'given power to the faint, and has strengthened the powerless.'* We are grateful for the joy we have known and look forward to our strength being renewed as we continue to *'wait on the LORD.'*

*Harold Schlegel,  
MCI Executive Director*



# FIVE STORY CATCH UP

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It's been a busy season at MCI with second semester in full swing! Here are a few of our highlights from the past few months:

# 1



## THE MESSIAH PROJECT

In November, MCI students had the unique opportunity to record the Hallelujah Chorus accompanied by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. They braved the frigid temperatures to record their piece outside in front of Greytna's historic elevator.

To view their performance, visit our YouTube channel:



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## BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL

The Varsity Basketball team finished up their season with a 2-3 record. The team, made up of students from grades 10-12, impressed with their tenacity and work ethic. Other schools' coaches and referees alike commented more than once that they never let up from opening whistle to final buzzer. The boys worked hard and were happy to be able to play after missing last season due to Covid-19 restrictions. This season's high scorers were Grade 12 students Raanen Fehr, Joshua Heide and Ayub Regehr, coaches were Jennifer Klippenstein and Kieran Reynolds.



# 2

# 3

## VOLLEYBALL PROVINCIALS



MCI's boys' volleyball team had a successful season that earned them a spot at provincials in Baldur, MB. The team, made up of grade 10 and grade 12 students and coached by Nolan Thiessen and Leon Friesen, finished second in league play with a 5-1 record. At provincials, they placed second in their round robin pool. A loss in the quarter finals ended their provincial run, but this team has much to be proud of, including the way they represented our school and their team spirit! Congratulations, boys!

## IN CLASS LEARNING

After a week of remote learning following Christmas break, and 9 storm days in the month that followed, staff and students alike have a renewed appreciation for in class learning.

Teacher Nolan Thiessen says, "While modern technology has made it easier to connect from a distance, nothing can replace in-person learning. With the weather improving and public health restrictions winding down, I look forward to spending more time in the next few months in the classroom teaching and getting to know students better face to face."



# 4

# 5



## STORMY WEATHER

Manitoba has had a winter for the record books, with no end of snowfall and stormy weather thanks to being in the crosshairs of a number of Alberta clippers. MCI has made the best of it, finding fun activities to do outside in the snow. The grade 11 gym class spent some time outdoors cross country skiing and even took the time to make a new friend, posing here with student Amanda Voth.

We are all looking forward to spring, and the outdoor activities it will bring!

# MCI MUSICAL RETURNS!



“My first time as a lead in a musical was very stressful, scary, exciting and lots of hard work. I didn’t know if I was going to be good enough or would remember all my lines. I’ve never been confident in my singing abilities, but as we performed, my confidence grew. I am very thankful to everyone around me for supporting me. I am proud of all the hard work I put into playing Daddy Warbucks. It felt weird to have people come up to me after shows and congratulate me. I couldn’t have done it without the support of my family, friends and everyone at MCI. This was one of the best experiences of my grade 12 year.”

- Max Wiens in *Annie* (class of ‘20)



“1968, Grade 9 music class rehearsed and performed a short operetta with Henry Engbrecht. It was such a fun, magical, inclusive experience!”

-Lily Hiebert Rempel (class of ‘71)

The Buhler Hall auditorium is buzzing with palpable energy and excitement these days. That’s because after a yearlong, Covid-19 related hiatus, musical is back at MCI. The last musical production, *Annie*, took place in March 2020, just days before the province shut down due to the pandemic.

Music Director Christina Banman understands how much the return of musical means to the students and the wider MCI community. “The musical at MCI is a core part of the overall MCI experience,” she says. “Participating in the musical helps develop student relationships, promotes mentorship across grade groups, contributes to student confidence, and is a significant source of accomplishment for the students who are involved. It’s so exciting to see students come alive with energy and purpose again.”

Musicals have been part of the MCI experience for over 50 years, and is considered a vital part of the MCI student experience that they remember fondly long after their time at MCI has come to an end.



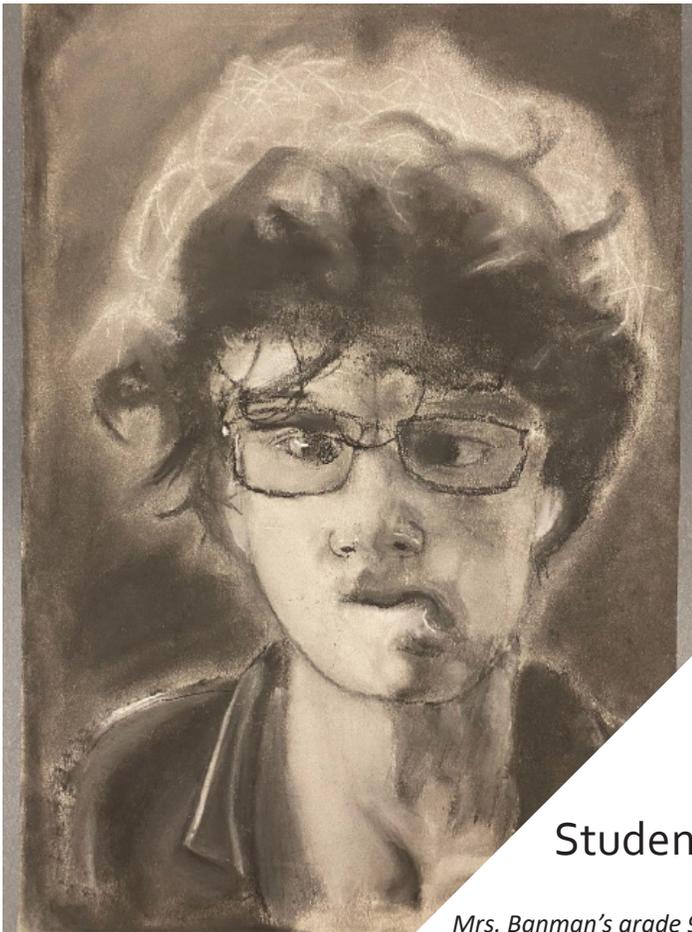
*MCI students practise choreography at a rehearsal for Matilda the Musical.*

To have musical back at the school means a lot to students and staff alike.

“It feels like the entire school is working towards something,” says grade 12 student Sidney Poettcker.

Her classmate Ayub Regehr agrees. “It feels like a bookend to COVID. Right before, we had *Annie*, and now coming out of [the pandemic], we have *Matilda*. Musical was the last thing we had before lockdown and staying home. It feels like it’s symbolizing the return to normal.”

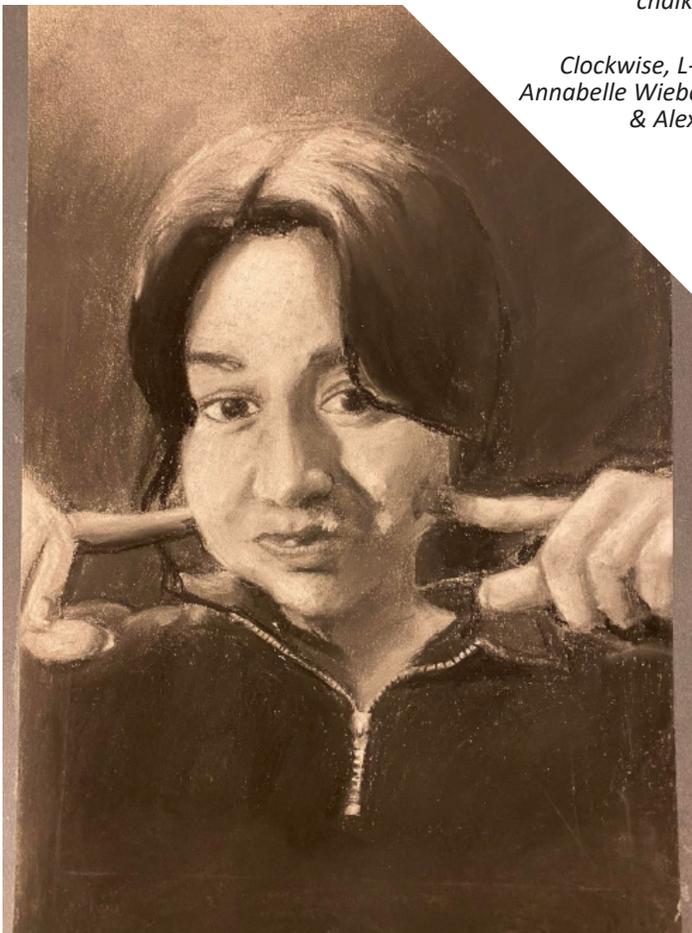
*Matilda the Musical* runs at MCI from April 28-30th. Visit [www.mciblues.net](http://www.mciblues.net) to get your tickets!



## Student Artwork

*Mrs. Banman's grade 9 & 10 art class made some impressive self portraits using charcoal and chalk on paper.*

*Clockwise, L-R: Peyton Peters, Annabelle Wiebe, Neveah Giesbrecht & Alexia Loewen*



“  
Where are  
they now?  
”

## Miss Millie's Flower Farm

Victoria (Tubrett, '12) Friesen & Jodi (Warkentin, '89) Friesen

Miss Millie's Flower Farm is a U-Pick/wholesale flower farm located 30 minutes west of Winnipeg. There are 4 of us MCI alumni that operate the flower farm together- Jodi ('89) and Gary Friesen ('83), their son Kirby ('14) and his wife Victoria ('12). Jodi & Gary's two other children Spencer ('16) & Jalacey help out when they can. MCI was a special place, where we all made lifelong friends.

In 2019 Jodi quit her job in landscape design to work from home. She had a big vegetable garden that she wanted to repurpose. She was looking at different ideas and stumbled across a U-Pick flower farm in the states. After doing some research in Manitoba she couldn't find any other farms that offered that experience. So in 2019 she filled the vegetable garden with flowers and Miss Millie's was created. We only had about 35 visitors that first summer - but the feedback was so incredible that Jodi knew there was something here. In 2020 Victoria and Jodi put together a business plan while Victoria was finishing up her Agriculture Diploma at the University of Manitoba. That summer Victoria and Kirby got married, and in 2021 Kirby quit his job in architecture to help run the flower farm.

Our faith is most definitely connected to our farm, right from when the idea was first hatched. God has given us an amazing opportunity to work together as a family. We spend hours discussing the business and where we want it to go, and our conversations often lead back to our individual journeys with God. We all feel so incredibly blessed to be living and working with this land, which has been passed down for generations. We live in a country that is far removed from war and religious persecution. We live in a family that supports each other and wants the other to succeed. It all came from God, and we want to share that feeling with all people that come here.

This winter we all sat down and shared what this flower farm meant to each of us and why we want to be a part of this business. Together we came up with our Vision statement:

“At Miss Millie's Flower Farm we have been given the opportunity and challenge to be the caretakers of God's creation through every single stem we grow. Our mission is to provide a relaxing space that can ignite creativity through the power of flowers and nature. We want everyone to leave our farm with the gift of a delightful experience and appreciation for God's creation.”



This 2022 season, we're planning on renting out the garden for private events (30-50 people max). This could be anything from baby showers to intimate weddings. We're actually planning the 10 year reunion for the class of 2012 for this August. We will have a new building on the yard, with a covered patio, washrooms, coffee bar and small area for merchandise. We're always on the lookout for anyone selling locally made things that could work with our business identity.

*Mikayla Funk ('16), Spencer Friesen ('16), Kirby Friesen ('14), Victoria, Jodi, Gary Friesen ('83) and Jalacey Friesen.*



## Tracy (Warkentin) Dyck

Class of 1993



Although I graduated from MCI 29 years ago, I've been re-immersed in the days of dorm living, Menno class, chapels, musicals, choirs and the amazing MCI community through our daughters who attended the school over the past 6 years. I'm proud to say, we are now a family of Stookies. MCI has always held a special place in my heart. At the age of 15, it wasn't even a question as to where I'd spend my high school years. It was the place where I'd experience living and learning in community. A place where my faith would grow, where I'd make life-long friends and meet my life partner.

After graduating from MCI in '93 I attended University of Manitoba for one year and then decided to put school on hold. In 1996, I married my MCI sweetheart, Kevin Dyck (also fondly known as 'Dycker'). He was completing his Physiotherapy degree and I returned to the U of M to study Interior Design. In 1998 we moved to the States where Kevin had the opportunity to work in his field and I could continue my education. We enjoyed 3 years in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, but after the birth of our first daughter,

Camille in 2000, it was time to come back home. We returned to Winnipeg, where Kevin started a Physio position with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, and I took my first Interior Design position with a small residential firm. In 2003, our second daughter, Peyton was born and 7 months later I started my company, S3 Interior Design. (What better time to embark on a business venture than with a 3-year-old and a 7-month-old in tow? LOL.)

Back in my MCI days, I didn't imagine myself as an entrepreneur. If you'd look back at the predictions I put in our time capsule, I believe I had planned to marry Kevin (check that box), have 4 kids (not sure why 4 seemed like the magic number), and possibly pursue design as a career, but building a business wasn't part of the dream. Fast forward 29 years (almost 19 years in business) and I can't imagine life differently. Growing S3 has been an amazing and challenging ride. It's allowed me to use my gifts of creativity, organization and leadership. It's allowed me to work with amazing team members and clients. The greatest challenge has come from dividing my time and energy between my family and my career. Years of 'mom guilt' are consoled as I watch our beautiful daughters grow into independent, strong young women. (MCI also played a key role in that.) Both Camille and Peyton have a love of exploration and travel. Camille is currently working in the U.K. and Peyton will be heading to northern B.C. to tree plant this summer. Kevin is journeying through a significant career change. He left Physiotherapy in 2019 and is currently pastoring in our hometown of LaSalle.

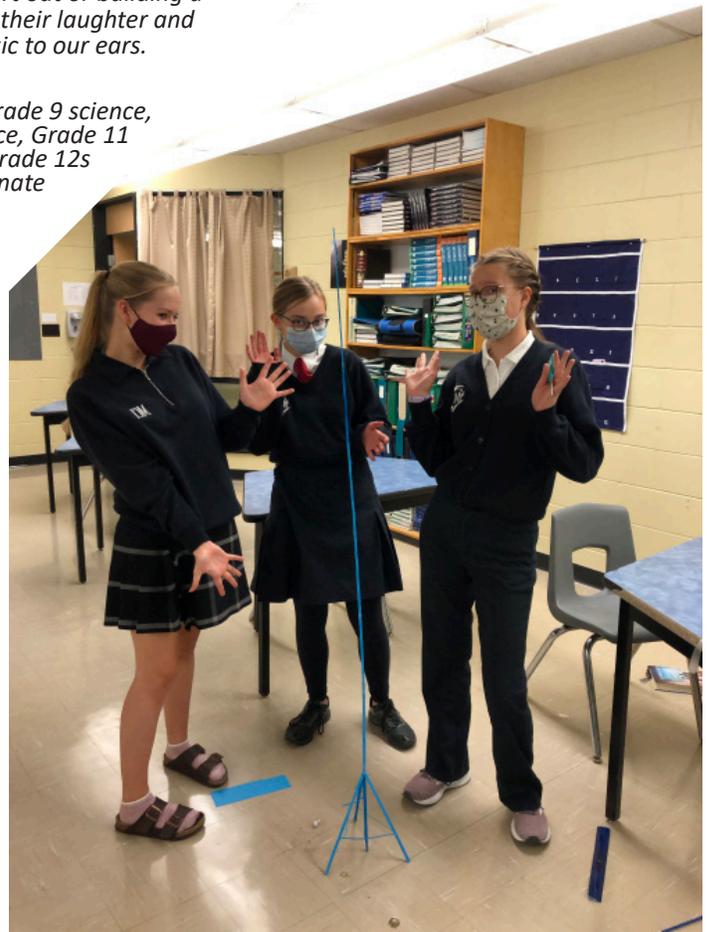
I'm so thankful for the ways that MCI has shaped our entire family. The MCI community is an extremely special one. I'm also thrilled that one of S3's current projects is the re-design of the dorm lounge. I'm honoured to be able to give a little back to a place that has given me and my family so much.



## Classroom Fun!

*At MCI we love to see students having fun while learning in the classroom. Whether it's a project on mold spores, celebrating a successful egg drop, singing your heart out or building a rocket, the sounds of their laughter and curiosity are music to our ears.*

*Clockwise, L-R: Grade 9 science, Grade 10 science, Grade 11 physics & Grade 12s in Resonate*



# REFLECTION: OPEN TO A NEW THING

A couple of weeks ago, I had the good fortune to spend part of my day at MCI. I had been invited to come and do chapel, and then I stuck around for a visit and lunch with some of the staff. It was so good to see so many lovely familiar faces and encounter a bunch of new lovely faces too! It was good to be back, a little homecoming of sorts. The school looked, and sounded, and even smelled like I remembered. It was also different. It was a delight to come and to be present in a new way, and it was a reminder that you don't ever quite go home again.

Curiously enough, this feels like one of the lessons I am learning throughout this pandemic, and a lesson I hope we as a people and a church can talk about as we begin to envision life again beyond the pandemic...whenever that may be.

We won't go back to way life was before. We can't go back to the way life was before. Our perspectives on life, the world itself, and our very selves have been changed by this pandemic. The good news is that there is a chance for these changes to be for the better. It is just going to take some hard work from us – as a people and as a church.

The hard work begins with letting go. Of what, you might ask. It begins by letting go of our need for security; letting go of our need for control and the need to be right. Letting go of the safe and the expected is a great way to be open to new possibilities and opportunities that might be even better than what was before. It makes room for creativity. Letting go of control makes room for God and the movement of the Holy Spirit. Letting go of the need to be right makes room for being wrong,

and it is amazing what we can learn on the other side of being wrong. It creates space for a new way of thinking and doing; to join God in a new way of being & doing.

Hebrews 12:1 encourages us to let go of all that hinders & bogs us down and run with perseverance the race that is ahead of us. Letting go some of the control, the rightness, the stress & anxiety, the many other things that have filled up our backpacks and weighed us down during the pandemic, just might be one way for us to lighten our load and make space for God to show us an exciting & life-giving new way of doing & being in this world. A way that is better for us, for our neighbours, for all of creation.

My prayer through this Lenten season is that we can let go a little and hold our hearts & hands open for what God has in store for us.



Cheryl Braun lives in Winnipeg with her dog, Daisy, and serves as pastor at Glenlea Mennonite Church. She was on staff at MCI from 1994-2017.



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# FINANCIAL UPDATE CORNER

*“Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.” -Hebrews 10:23*



Grade 9 students Lexi Bilodeau, Natalya Bergen, Nelia Fehr & Lorena Giesbrecht chat in the hallway.

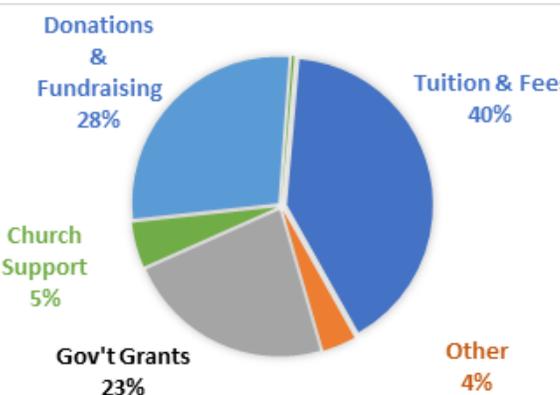
***“I like coming to MCI because of the open and welcoming environment and the creative outlets I have access to here. The people here are like a big family and actually care for my well being and are here if I need help with school, social life or any other problems. I love MCI!”***

**- Cohen (current MCI student)**

MCI makes a lasting difference in the lives of young people – from Day 1 until Graduation. Successive generations have come and gone from our campus. Here they have formed life-long friendships, discovered gifts, explored faith and received an excellent well-rounded education.

None of this can happen without the support of hundreds of donors each and every year. Tuition and Student Fees cover only 40% of the cost of operating the school. Last year government grants provided 23% and congregations 5%. Generous donors, many of them alumni, provided 28% of the cost of operating MCI.

We are grateful for the support we have received. However, with fewer fundraising events, revenue is lagging behind last year’s totals. Your support is urgently needed. We cannot afford to finish the year in a deficit. Please consider making a donation before June 30. Your gift whatever the size, will make a real difference in the lives of young people and allow MCI to continue to offer life-changing education.



**DONATIONS MAY BE MADE BY:**

**Giving Online:** [www.mciblues.net/donate-now](http://www.mciblues.net/donate-now)

**By Mail:** Cheques may be sent to MCI, Box 250 Gretna MB, R0G 0V0

**By Credit Card:** Call the office at (204) 327-5891

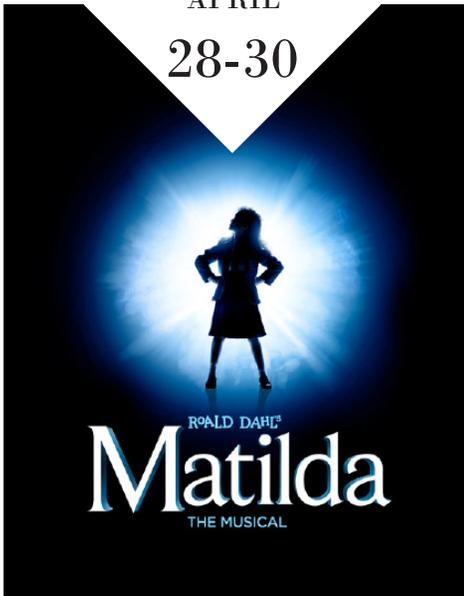
(Please indicate which project you would like to support)

*For more information on fundraising projects or other ways you might support MCI, please contact Harold Schlegel, Executive Director. [haroldschlegel@mciblues.net](mailto:haroldschlegel@mciblues.net)*

# UPCOMING EVENTS

All events are subject to change due to Public Health Guidelines.

APRIL  
28-30



## MATILDA the MUSICAL

MCI's students present their 2022 production of *Matilda the Musical*. It's a show you won't want to miss! For tickets and more information visit [www.mciblues.net](http://www.mciblues.net) or give us a call at 204.327.5891.

MAY  
29



## SAENGERFEST

Join us in celebrating MCI's rich choral history. The day will begin with a morning worship service followed by a concert featuring MCI's choirs in the afternoon. We look forward to hosting you and worshipping together once again!

JUNE  
11



## MCI GOLF CLASSIC

You are invited to MCI's 8th consecutive Golf Classic at Minnewasta Golf and Country Club in Morden, MB! Shotgun start is at 1:00 pm. Last year's event raised nearly \$24,000! Register by contacting the school or emailing [info@mciblues.net](mailto:info@mciblues.net).



# ALUMNI NEWS & UPDATES

Do you have news to share? Email [alumni@mciblues.net](mailto:alumni@mciblues.net) to be featured!



**Laura Woelk ('16) and James Loewen ('14)** were married on October 23rd, 2021.



**Cynthia Krahn ('18) and Kirby Sawatzky** were married on May 16th, 2021.



**Jude Bailey Mak** was born on December 9th, 2021 at 7 lbs 15 oz and 21 inches long to Kloe (Penner, '11) and Ben Mak.



**Luca Emry Gerbrandt** was born on February 16th, 2022 at 9 lbs 9 oz and 20.5 inches long to MCI staff Sophie (Schlegel, '13) and Zach Gerbrandt ('11).

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**Lester Schellenberg** (MCI staff '89-'19) is a proud Poppy to Malik, born to Joshua Schellenberg and Tre-Ann Leier on April 8th, 2019.



**Emily Pankratz ('13)** married Cameron Tomchuk on July 18th, 2020.



**Jack Epp Thiessen** was born on October 4th, 2021 at 10 lbs 2 oz and 23 inches long to Danika and Nolan Thiessen (MCI staff).



**Florence Hooge Driedger ('51)** and husband **Otto** have had a significant year. In fall of 2021, Canadian Mennonite University honored them with a CMU Alumni award in a ceremony led by CMU president Cheryl Pauls via Zoom. The alumni

award was given on the basis of their 60+ years of volunteer services in their collaboration with Ukraine colleagues and our refugee service in Canada. The meeting included alumni and invited guests (supporters Lucy Romanenkova, of Zaporizhzhya, Ukraine and Xiau Lou of Victoria, BC attended as guests of the Driedgers).

In March of 2022 they were each given the Paul Harris Fellow recognition by the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among peoples of the world. Eastview Regina Rotary Club initiated the process.

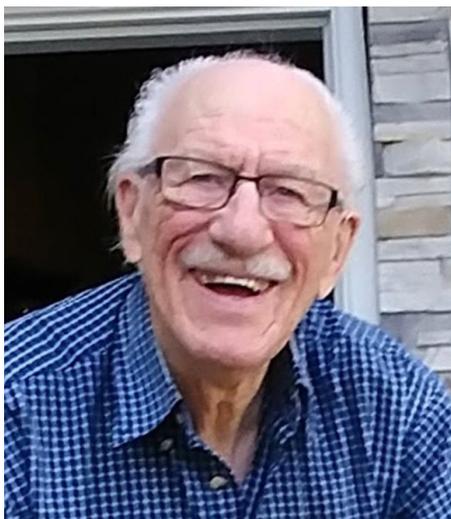
Otto turned 90 on January 11th and Florence celebrated her 89th birthday Feb. 21st.

Florence says, "We have been very richly blessed by God and many, many friends from around the world."

*Attention Classes of 2012, 2002, 1992, 1982, 1972, 1962, 1952: This is a BIG reunion year for you!*

Contact MCI to assist in planning your reunion gathering - whether it may be in person or a virtual meeting.

Give us a call at **204-327-5891** or email [alumni@mciblues.net](mailto:alumni@mciblues.net).



**Ed Stoesz**  
**July 23, 1929 - March 6, 2022**

MCI says goodbye to a longtime friend and supporter, Ed Stoesz.

Ed C. (Erdman Cornelius) Stoesz, of Altona, Manitoba, passed away at the Health Sciences Centre, Winnipeg, on Sunday, March 6, 2022, at age 92. He was born on July 23, 1929, to John H. Stoesz and Margaret (Giesbrecht Stoesz) Goertzen, on a farm south of Hordean.

Loving husband, father, grand-father, and great-grandfather, he leaves to mourn his wife of 70 years, Sara (Unger) Stoesz. He also leaves to mourn his children and spouses, Donald ('72) & Naomi Brubacher Stoesz, Bowden, Alberta; Dennis (72') & Rhoda Lehman Stoesz, Morden; Vi Stoesz (Barry Spain), Winnipeg; and Yvonne Stoesz (Brent Gouthro), Tinker Creek, Stanley.

He also leaves to mourn 12 grandchildren, and 8 great-grandchildren, and one brother in law.

Dad loved visiting with persons, and had a wonderful spirit of doing voluntary service work, together with his wife, for over 50 years, including at the Altona MCC Thrift Shop. He would recycle everything (not wanting to waste) long before it became fashionable, and rang true to how he lived.

He was grateful that he was able to provide a living through his appliance store, and by being an electrician. Later, he committed himself to being a caregiver to his wife after she began declining 10 years ago with dementia. He said that was his third job. He kept up with his grandchildren, and especially loved young children, and was glad to have great-grandchildren. His advice to them was 1) Always be open to learn new things through-out your life, 2) Maintain a peace position, 3) Live a life of service, and 4) We do the best we can with what we have.

The family would like to thank the nurses and doctors and staff at the Health Science Center, GA3 Step Down Unit, for excellent care for our Dad. We had good visits in person and by phone with him as he was talkative until the decline his last 2-3 days.

The funeral was held at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church on Saturday, March 12, at 2:00 pm.



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# GRADS OF 2020 & 2021

## ALUMNI CHOIR

WE'D LIKE YOU TO SING IN THIS  
YEAR'S SAENGERFEST!

The grads of 2020 and 2021 missed out on this fundamental MCI experience, and now that we are finally able to perform again, we'd love to have you sing in your final Saengerfest. Rehearsals of the 2020/2021 Grads Alumni Choir will take place on **Saturday, May 28** for a performance in Saengerfest on Sunday, May 29th.

**IF YOU CAN PARTICIPATE PLEASE CONTACT:**

[christinabanman@mciblues.net](mailto:christinabanman@mciblues.net)



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