CROSSROADS

MENNONITE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE



EIGHT STORY
CATCH UP

What's up at MCI this school year

WORKSHOP WEDNESDAYS

MCI embraces learning outside of the classroom

BE A STOOKIE SUSTAINER

Staying connected to MCI as an alumni







CROSSROADS // WINTER 2024



MCI Alumni join the MCI Choirs in singing the final two songs at the Christmas Concert. Read more about it on page 6!



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Be a Stookie Sustainer!

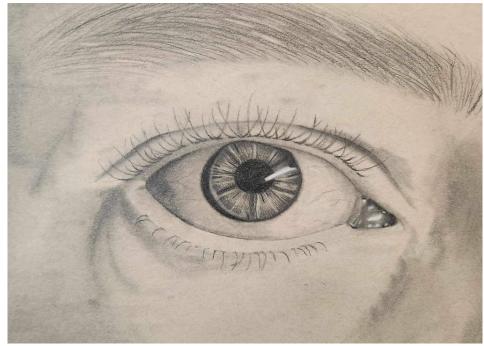
On the Cover: MCI students build a set in Buhler Hall for a local drama production.

> Managing Editor: Janna Wiebe

"The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does."

Psalm 145:13

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Pencil on paper art by gr. 12 student Neveah Giesbrecht.





FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."
-Isaiah 40:31

This verse is a reminder of where our hope lies. It is not in humans, our own power or strength, or even ourselves. Our hope lies in God, our creator and maker of heaven and earth. Despite the worldly issues or concerns that are out there, we can be convinced that someone bigger is at work. What might look like a disappointment or a setback may be the very workings of Hope in my life, your life, and the life of MCI. Hoping in the Lord is expecting that his promise of strength will help us to rise above life's distractions and difficulties. In every moment of every day, no matter what is going on around us, remember that God is still in control. He was in control 2000 years ago when Mary and Joseph were forced to go to Bethlehem, and Jesus was born with the animals, and shepherds came to visit. No matter the circumstances, His HOPE lives inside us. The earthly things we face are preparing us for the eternal glory that will far outweigh them all. I pray that you will join me on this journey with the only ONE who is able to provide Hope to a broken world through His saving grace.

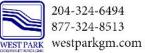


Jennifer Klippenstein Interim Teaching Principal

God bless you and thank you for supporting MCI.











EIGHT-STORY CATCH UP

Here are a few highlights from the first 6 months of the 2023-24 school year!



CHRISTIAN LIFE RETREAT

At the end of September, MCI students and staff enjoyed a three day retreat at Red Rock Bible Camp for the annual Christian Life Retreat. This is an important event for community building, faith exploration and fun at the beginning of the school year. This year's speaker was Kellin Friesen from Winkler Bible Camp, who spoke to the group on how God is with us in all circumstances, focusing on 4 examples from the Bible; Daniel and the lions den, David and Goliath, Job, and the disciples and Jesus in the boat on a stormy sea. When they weren't in student-led worship sessions, MCI students were playing board games, ping pong, kayaking on the lake, playing beach volleyball and exploring the beautiful whiteshell.

BLUES ATHLETICS

This fall, MCI athletes were on the pitch and volleyball court. For the 3rd year, MCI entered a co-ed soccer team in the Boys division. Wes Hamm coached the team, who had a wide range of skill and experience. The team gave their all on the pitch and kept a positive attitude throughout the season. Varsity Boys and Girls Volleyball both had good seasons, with a highlight for the girls being a thrilling down two-sets-to-zero comeback win against Elm Creek. Coached by Toby Wiens, the team had fun both on and off the court – including pranking their coach, who took it all in stride.

The Varsity Boys played hard every game and ended up in 2nd place heading into playoffs, falling just short to Elm Creek in the zone final. Coach Leon Friesen noted how the entire team worked together all year, selflessly taking turns on the bench so everyone had game time opportunities. The JV Girls Volleyball team had a great season, putting in a lot of hard work in both practice and during games and improving each time they played. Coaches Jaime Falk and Meghan Funk said the support the girls were able to show each other on the court and from the bench was really encouraging.





SOUP & PIE & FALL CONCERT

On November 3rd, the gym was full of people and the wonderful scent of hot soup and fresh pie for MCl's annual Soup & Pie! After serving around 300 people for supper, we moved into Buhler Hall to enjoy a concert of MCl's choirs and vocal jazz ensembles. The Winkler Senior Choir joined our Concert Choir for three pieces, which was a moving display of the intergenerational connection of song. A big thank you to the Winkler Senior Choir for their time and voices, Mr. Wes Hamm and Mrs. Erin Klassen for their musical direction, and the many volunteers and staff that made the meal possible. Through the event, over \$50,000 was raised in donations!

ORANGE BENCH PROJECT

In November, MCI was host to an orange bench as part of the *The Orange Bench Project* from Steps Toward Reconciliation Altona. The bench came with stories from local Indigenous people, and is meant to be an invitation to simply sit, read the stories, and learn, as listening and learning are small steps toward reconciliation. A committee member from Steps Towards Reconciliation came and did a chapel at the beginning of the month to explain the project and share their personal connection to one of the stories on the bench.

One of MCI's core values is peace building - promoting authentic relationships through forgiveness and reconciliation. We pray that in taking small steps like listening, learning and having the orange bench on our campus, we can be a small part of the difficult and holy work of reconciliation.





SPIRIT WEEK

Students looking for loopholes in MCl's dress code policy need look no further than Spirit Week! This fall the week was organized by the Campus Life Committee, who challenged each grade to compete against each other to see which grade could have the most participants over the course of the week. Each day, staff recorded how many students from each grade participated and at the end of the week the grade 11s were victorious. Their prize? A regular school day out of uniform. We look forward to the next Spirit Week in second semester.

CHRISTMAS BANQUET

Our students - and the Buhler Hall foyer - were dressed to the nines for the annual Christmas Banquet! The theme was "A New York Christmas," with decor and music to match the setting. Students and staff were served a delicious meal made by our kitchen staff and served by dorm deans and volunteering parents. A talent show followed in Buhler Hall, where the acts on stage ranged from impressive to hilarious and were always met with uproarious applause! The evening capped off in an energetic dance party in Buhler Hall foyer. It was a great way to celebrate together as a community and most of all, have a lot of fun! Thank you to the Campus Life Committee, kitchen staff & dorm staff and parent volunteers for a wonderful evening!



CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR SENIORS

For the second year in a row, MCI students spent some chapel time creating Christmas cards for the residents at the Gardens on Tenth, a senior living facility in Altona. A group of students then spread some Christmas cheer, delivering the cards to the 130+ residents. We are thankful for these opportunities to partner with local organizations and provide our students with opportunities to serve their neighbours and local community in a hands-on way!

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

To close out the calendar year we gathered in Buhler Hall for MCl's annual Christmas Concert. Our choirs put on an impressive display, including a carol medley featuring a string quartet of alumni and alumni family members. The highlight of the evening, was, as always, the choir of students, alumni, parents and friends of MCl singing *Der Friedensfürst* and *The Hallelujah Chorus*. It is a wonderful tradition to keep year after year, and to see so many recent grads come out to listen, sing, and stay late afterwards to visit with each other.



MCI CLASS REUNIONS

CLASS OF 1980

33 souls (and many significant other) from the class of 1980 met in Altona park to celebrate 43 years since graduating!

Highlights included folks coming from as far as British Columbia (Ken Driedger and Dave Baerg) and Denver (Steve Falk). A 43-year-old 'bag' uniform was fashioned (thanks Loretta Sawatsky), a high school jacket (Val Rempel) and 3 sports uniform t-shirts still intact (Ken).

We enjoyed brunch in Altona and pizza in the park later. A tour of MCI in the afternoon had us all reminiscing. Can you recognize us?



Margaret Redekop gathered material stash from recently deceased Liz Hiebert (nee Loewen) and made 5 blankets for her MCI friends. Gorgeous! What a beautiful way to remember Liz.









MCI CLASS REUNIONS



CLASS OF 1973

On October 14, 2023, a group of 23 grads, plus 17 partners, met at the Fort Garry Canadians in Winnipeg to celebrate fifty years since our graduation from Mennonite Collegiate Institute. Our graduating class of '73 numbered 56; of these, four have died: Florence Klassen, Dane Friesen, Bob Sawatzky and George Harms.

Our evening included a sharing circle, a memorabilia table, dinner music from the 70s, and reminiscences and stories offered during dinner. Highlights included funny stories about favourite teachers and Jeanette (Enns) Neufeld showing up in her daughter's MCI "bag" (uniform). In talking about MCI's impact on our lives, people mentioned life-long friendships, a love of music and the arts, leadership skills and faith formation.

Thanks to Gerry Loewen for tracking down grads from '73 (a challenging task) and for taking the lead in organizing this reunion. Thanks to Alice (Dyck) Driedger for emceeing the event and Erika (Wiens) Hildebrand, class of '74, for the group photo.

- Esther Epp-Tiessen, MCI Graduate 1973

Attention Classes of 2014, 2004, 1994, 1984, 1974, 1964, 1954: This year is a BIG reunion year for you!

Contact MCI to assist in planning your reunion gathering.

Give us a call at 204-327-5891 or email alumni@mciblues.net





Photo from MCI's 1974 yearbook.

YOUTH ORBIT CONFERENCE

A WEEKEND OF FAITH, FUN, & COMMUNITY BUILDING

"Be strong. Take courage. Don't be intimidated. Don't give them a second thought because God, your God, is striding ahead of you. He's right there with you. He won't let you down; he won't leave you."

- Deuteronomy 31:6

Youth Orbit '24 marked another smashing success for MCI. conversations, laughter, and genuine friendships, This annual event, held in January, was enjoyed by over 120 youth from across Southern MB. YO is a 2-day conference for teens in Grade 8 through 12 and we were thrilled to reach dorm capacity once again! This cherished tradition at MCI demonstrated its purpose of providing a space where youth can deepen their faith, make new friendships, create moments of learning and growth, all while having wild fun on our campus.

A highlight for many was the powerful worship services led by Jenny Franz and the Bread We Break band. The impact of these sessions was evident and deeply moving. Students took time for prayer with those around them, sat in guiet spaces to pour out their hearts independently or simply watched and experienced the moment. The event served as a turning point for many beautiful God-moments. Main speaker Connor Gerbrandt, from Anchor Point Church in Winnipeg, delivered powerful messages that sparked beautiful reflection and a call for deeper faith. The chosen theme of "God Calling" created an environment of self reflection and bold teaching. Many of the youth shared that they felt a stirring of faith in new ways or were introduced to God's calling on their lives personally. I heard it whispered, "Can you believe this is part of our school?" It was a beautiful experience.

The halls were not only physically full but also buzzing with a sense of community, joy, and fun for all participants. Various activities, including the wildly successful Mod Olympics and late-night volleyball in the gym, fostered a sense of unity among the youth. The environment encouraged open

leaving a lasting impact on the lives of those involved.

It goes without saying that we couldn't have done this event without the best volunteers and support of our MCI families. Many hours of prayer, work and preparation go into these events and we as a YO team know that we have an army of support behind us. Thank you! The energy from Youth Orbit may fade but the spiritual seeds planted will have a lasting effect. God will use it for powerful things, and we celebrate the opportunity to serve in this way.

The aftermath of Youth Orbit may have settled, with the balloons popped (or hidden throughout the school!) dorms cleaned and the games all put away. However, a common question lingers: "When can we do that again?" Stay tuned...we can't wait to get started.

- Megan Hildebrand (MCI Staff and Parent) & Jaime Falk ('04 and MCI Parent) Youth Orbit Coordinators









WORKSHOP WEDNESDAYS

Opportunities for Co-Curricular Learning at MCI

Wednesdays looked a little different at Mennonite Collegiate Institute this fall when the school had the opportunity to offer students co-curricular activity options. Each Wednesday afternoon for six weeks students waived traditional classes and attended the workshop they signed up for based on their interests.

Students were presented with a variety of workshop options, led by MCI staff and volunteers, alumni, parents, and guest instructors, including:

- Photography (Bernie Loeppky, staff '13-'19)
- Agriculture (Cody Falk, '03 & MCI parent)
- Outdoor Education (Matt Peters, '02)
- Board Game Creation (Simon Yam, MCI Staff)
- Set Design and Building (Charles Klippenstein)
- Bible Art (Jolene Friesen-Stoesz, MCI Staff)
- Bouldering (Dominic & Theo Enns, MCI Students)
- Volunteering at Gretna Elementary School
- Worship Band (Char Klassen, '83 and Jaime Falk, '04
 MCI parent)

"We know that not all learning takes place in the classroom," says interim principal Jennifer Klippenstein. "These workshops provide opportunities for students to learn new skills, give back to the community, and dive deeper into interests that they already have a passion for."

Workshop Wednesdays was a great way for MCI students to connect with the wider community while learning new skills. Students in the set design workshop designed, built and took down sets for a local theatre company's production in Buhler Hall. Students in the agriculture workshop visited local farms to learn from their different areas of expertise. The outdoor education group put their learning into practice, and after five weeks of trip planning, risk management, and skill development embarked on a student-planned hike in the Pembina Valley with a local adventure tour agency, *Wilderland Adverture Company*, owned and operated by MCI alumn Matt Peters.

After the success of the fall term, MCI will offer another block of co-curricular workshops in the second semester with new subjects and instructors. Know local alumni with skill sets to share? Encourage them to contact the school and lead a workshop!



The Set Building & Design group diplaying their digital set designs. The group learned how to use set design software to create mockups of a set for The Pirates of Penzance (above).

The Agriculture group learning from instructor Cody Falk during a visit to his farm (R).





Bouldering instructor Dominic Enns showing off his impressive grip strength on the climbing wall.







The Outdoor Ed group on their hike in the Pembina Valley.



The Agriculture group visiting Kroeker Farms.





Ernest Voth working on grip strength in bouldering (L); students playing the games they designed in the Board Game Creation workshop (R).







ALUMNI NEWS & UPDATES

Do you have news to share? Email alumni@mciblues.net to be featured!



Caspian Frank Doerksen was born on November 16th, 2023, weighing 6lbs 2oz, and measuring 18 inches long to Kimberly (Ginter, '15) and Mark Derksen. He is the younger brother to Ira Derksen.



Brianna "Bri" Epp Thiessen was born on January 2nd, 2024, weighing 9lbs 1oz, and measuring 21 inches long to Danika (MCI staff '22-23) and Nolan (MCI staff '19-'23) Thiessen. She is the younger sister to Jack Thiessen.



PembinaValley





Mikayla Funk ('16) and Spencer Friesen ('16) were married on August 5th, 2023.



Meagan Schlorff ('15, MCI staff '21-'23) and Matt Wall were married on September 24th, 2023.





WINKLER 204.325.4331

ALTONA 204.324.9898

NEVER TIRE OF DOING WHAT IS GOOD.
2 THESS. 3:13

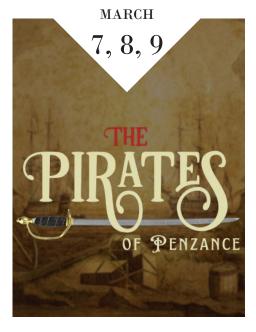


Edina-lil Preteau ('12) and Austin Wilkie welcomed Adrik Travis Normand Wilkie on July 30th, 2022.



Britania Heide ('17) and Javier González were married on October 21st, 2023.

UPCOMING EVENTS







MCI MUSICAL THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

SAENGERFEST

MCI GOLF CLASSIC

Join us in Buhler Hall for MCI's 2024 musical, The Pirates of Penzance! Shows are at 7:30 pm nightly, with a matinee at 2:00 pm on March 9th. Tickets are available at www.mciblues.net or by calling (204) 327-5891.

history. The morning worship service at Minnewasta Golf and Country Club is at 10:30 am follwed by an afternoon in Morden, MB! Stay tuned for details concert featuring MCI's choirs at 2:00 about registration! pm. We look forward to hosting you and worshiping together again!

Join us in celebrating MCI's rich choral You are invited to MCI's 10th Golf Classic



A finished piece in the Bible Art workshop.







Building a set in Buhler Hall. Safety first for the set building crew!



FINANCIAL UPDATE CORNER

"And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

– Colossians 3:14

The MCI Board of Directors continues to work toward the goals expressed in MCI's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan: Renewed Hope for the Future (available on MCI's website). We shared our progress at the Annual General Meeting in November and in our annual report to our Society churches. Here are a few recent highlights:

- **Finances:** The Donor Development Committee, which helped raise \$600,000 in donations and pledges over a four-month period in 2023, continues its work as we enter 2024. We are now halfway through our current fiscal year, and we are pleased to report that our expenses are lower compared to last year, currently tracking close to budgeted amounts. Our lower enrollment means reduced income from tuition and government grants, so we will again rely on our donor base for a significant portion of our revenue. Our current projection is that we will need approximately an additional \$300,000 from donors to meet expected expenses this fiscal year (ending June 30). Most people were eager to continue their support of the school with donations and/or pledges for future donations. This spirit of generosity was astonishing and humbling!
- Enrollment: With the help of many dedicated volunteers, MCI revived Youth Orbit in March 2023 and held a second Youth Orbit in January 2024. Both events attracted over 100 students. It is good to see renewed interest in the school generated from those events.
- Educational excellence: The Board convened a new volunteer Educational Advancement Committee to examine and enhance MCI's education program. Check out their report in this issue of CrossRoads.
- Stakeholder engagement: With the help of the Parent Advisory Committee, MCI has held several community-oriented events that have successfully brought people onto campus. We have also heard calls to find new ways to re-engage with our churches.

Reaching out to stakeholders has led to many meaningful conversations. We have heard heartfelt concerns about MCI's sustainability. We have also heard many stories about the school's positive impacts. One donor shared how a current student was benefiting from the school's Biblical teaching and caring community as follows: "If that is what is happening at the school now, I want to be a part of it and support the school!" A donation cheque soon followed.

Another conversation with someone who had not been in recent contact with the school resulted in a generous

years-long financial commitment. In another conversation, a grandmother and MCI alum, after observing her grandchild's renewed involvement and growing leadership in the local church, expressed hope that the school would be there for many other children and grandchildren who need to be nurtured in a Christian school community.

Indeed, the church depends on the leadership from younger generations! Throughout its 135-year history, MCI has faced numerous financial, social, and theological challenges. MCI has consistently met those challenges and, in doing so, given leadership by helping to set positive new directions. As we pass through this current time of challenge, we ask for continued support from churches, alumni, and friends of the school. And let us "put on love" (Colossians 3:14) as we support MCI's mission together.

Before closing, I want to announce that Jennifer Klippenstein, Interim Teaching Principal, and the MCI Board have decided that the time has come to search for a permanent full-time leader for MCI. On behalf of the Board, we express our deep gratitude to Jennifer for stepping into this interim role at a very difficult time. Since taking on the role in January 2023, she has demonstrated courage, a passion for the school and its students, and a prayerful and steadfast reliance on God's faithfulness as she navigated many challenges. We are very pleased that Jennifer plans to stay at MCI, returning to the classroom where she can more fully utilize her teaching skills and connect directly with students. The Board has initiated the search process; we invite your prayers for wisdom and discernment.

-Jonathan Regehr, Board Chair



Jonathan Regehr (1998), Rachel Regehr (n. Hamm, 1998), Emily Birta (2022), Ayub Regehr (2022), Sam Regehr (current student, 2024 alum), Whitney Peters (current student, 2024 alum)

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

New Educational Advancement Committee (EAC): Read all about it!

The 2023-2025 Renewed Hope for the Future Strategic Plan highlights the importance of educational excellence, building on MCl's performing arts strengths, and leveraging well-rounded educational experiences to equip students for the future.

With recent lower enrolment and staff turnover, challenges with sustaining a high-quality educational program have arisen. For example, during the 2023-2024 school year, some elective options were eliminated, and some courses were delivered through InformNet. Alongside these challenges, there is recognition that a smaller student body offers opportunities for building new programs tailored to specific learning needs.

On October 30th, 2023, the MCI Board approved terms of reference for the Education Advancement Committee (EAC), and the first meeting of the committee was called to order on November 27th, 2023. Since then, the committee has met on a monthly basis.

Members of the EAC include:

- Four volunteers, selected with input from the leadership team and/or the Board, with a demonstrated educational background and strong connections to MCI and its constituency (Barb Kehler, Karla Fehr, Jolene Friesen-Stoesz, and Chris Enns)
- At least one representative from MCI's leadership team (Kieran Reynolds, Jennifer Klippenstein)
- One Board liaison (vacant)

• The Board Chair (as ex officio) (Jonathan Regehr)

The EAC mandate includes reviewing MCI's existing educational program, and identifying new credit options, educational offerings, performing arts program enhancements, and unique learning opportunities for students.

The committee supports the mission and core values of MCI, which operates as a provincially accredited independent Anabaptist Christian high school. Informed by knowledge, experience, research, and provincial policies, the committee and MCI's Leadership Team work collaboratively, and report findings to the MCI Board.

Stay tuned for updates in the future. The Education Advancement Committee welcomes your prayers as it works to meet its objectives in support of MCI.

-submitted by Chris Enns, committee member











DONOR DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

On April 18, 2023, the MCI Board of Directors formed a volunteer Donor Development Committee to support a fundraising drive launched alongside the Renewed Hope for the Future Strategic Plan.

The initial mandate of the Committee was to help raise \$500,000 to cover expenses in the 2022-23 fiscal year. By June 2023, the Committee had raised over \$600,000 in cash and future pledges. This accomplishment was critical in the Board's decision to keep MCI open.

In the summer of 2023, the Committee expressed a willingness to continue with its work, and on August 31, 2023, the MCI Board approved the Terms of Reference for the Donor Development Committee. The Committee provides reports to the Board through a liaison and interacts with the Director of Operations and Advancement.

The Committee connects with alumni, friends, supporters, and donors past and present in order to broaden MCI's donor base.

Currently, the Donor Development Committee is made up of six volunteers representing alumni, former staff, parents of former and current students, and a member of the board.

Members include; Sandra Wiebe (1996), David Dyck (1996), Dave Regehr (1966), Hildie Regehr (1967), Conley Kehler, Barb Kehler, and board member Wil Epp.

-submitted by Barb Kehler, committee member

WAYS TO GIVE TO MCI:



Giving Online: www.mciblues.net/donate-now



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



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

BE A STOOKIE SUSTAINER



In 2024, the Donor Development Committee is launching its Stookie Sustainer campaign.

What is a Stookie Sustainer?



SUSTAINER

A Stookie Sustainer is a Stookie (MCI Alum) who commits to monthly financial giving to MCI. By becoming a Stookie Sustainer you are committing to monthly giving and providing ongoing support to MCI.

Grads of 2020-2024 are encouraged to become Stookie Sustainers for *as little as \$5/month.*

Alumni and friends of all ages are welcome to become a Stookie Sustainer for the monthly amount that best suits their personal budget.

Become a Stookie Sustainer or increase your monthly giving and receive an MCI t-shirt as a thank-you!

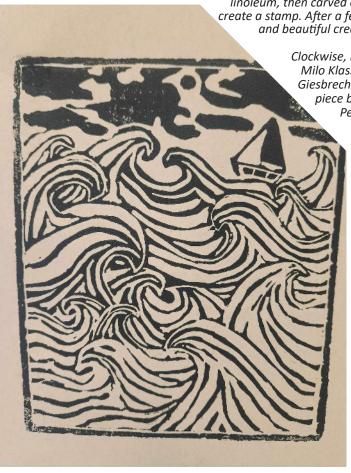
Set up monthly giving through automatic bank withdrawals - call Marnë Mierau Friesen at the school or email accounting@mciblues.net for assistance.

Official tax receipts for cumulative donations will be issued each year. Still have questions? We're happy to help! Contact the school by calling (204) 327-5891 or email alumni@mciblues.net.











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