

GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Home of the Patriots

OCTOBER 2025

IMPACT



Inspiring students to **IMPACT** the world for Jesus Christ through an excellent educational experience from a Biblical worldview



THIS EDITION:

- "Fundraisers: What For and Why"
- "Importance of Arriving on Time"
- Athletics
- Parent Reminders
- GCEA
- GCS Alumni
- Upcoming Events
- Prayer & Praise
- Ways to Support our School

FUNDRAISERS: WHAT FOR AND WHY?

Every year there is a healthy discussion at the school board level about fundraising. Universally, the desire is to make fundraisers a thing of the past or simply for small class projects. However, if you pay tuition at Grace Christian School, you likely choose the subsidized rate. There has been much contemplation to make our tuition rate based on what it cost to run the school divided by the number of kids. That maths out to be a little more than \$10,000 per student. We charge between \$2,500 - 4,000 less per student than our average actual cost. We have over a hundred students and the multiplication says we need to raise more than \$300,000 through means other than tuition. There's no way around the fact that life and Christian education are expensive.

Patriots-In-Action is our first significant fundraiser of the year. It combines our students serving the community with family and friends sponsoring their efforts to help the school subsidize tuition across the board. Our elementary students visit nursing homes and clean local parks and churches while our secondary students break into groups to help different homes or organizations in the community. I look forward to the day when it is simply a service day. Patriots-In-Action is an outgrowth of our old Walk-athons in the 80s and 90s when we were raising money to build the gym. It's a huge improvement from walking in circles to getting out into the community to serve.

In November, we have two simple fundraisers that take advantage of our desire to eat good things. Our **Apple Pie Fundraiser** is built on a quality product that is easy to enjoy and justify purchasing. At \$15 a pie, we work hard to keep expenses low so that \$10 will benefit the school directly. The **Shemmy's Fish Fry** on **November 1st** will bring a 100% profit for the school: a truly generous gift from those who value the school and the work we are doing here. Please come and invite as many people as you can to make this evening a true success.

As we close out the calendar year we will remind people and businesses to consider Grace Christian School in their **Year End Giving**. The federal legislation passed this year called the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, included new tax credits that begin in 2027 that will benefit private education. Since it is federal in nature, it is something that Michigan schools can receive. **A tax credit of \$1700** per person can be donated to a Scholarship Granting Organization to help students at Christian/private schools. See an article later in this IMPACT for details.

Finally, the most important part of our school financing comes by humbling ourselves before our heavenly Father. We do not put our trust in schemes and our plans are deficient. We are not idle, but we will first do what God has called His people to do: Isaiah 30:15

For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel,

"In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength."

At Grace Christian School we are willing to trust Him,

Benjamin Williamson



THE IMPORTANCE OF ARRIVING ON TIME



We want to take a moment to remind our families of the importance of getting students to school on time each morning. Over the past several weeks, we've noticed that a number of students are arriving late on a daily basis. While we understand that occasional circumstances may arise, consistent tardiness places an extra burden on our office staff and creates disruption for both teachers and classmates.

In addition, arriving late means students are missing out on valuable morning routines. These opening moments of the school day set the tone for learning, provide important announcements, and give students the opportunity to connect with their teachers and peers. Missing this time can make it harder for students to transition smoothly into the day.

We're asking for your help in creating a smooth and positive start for all of our students. Please make punctual arrival a priority so your child and their classmates can benefit fully from each school day.

ATHLETICS



Varsity Volleyball continues to have success. We invite you to enjoy competitive play. Varsity football with the Twin City Sharks is also very exciting! We have 3 young men contributing to the 4-school co-op. Check the [Athletic Calendar](#) for the game schedule.

PARENTS

Patriots-In-Action

STUDENTS WHO TURN IN \$50 IN NEW PLEDGES ON MONDAY, 10/13 WILL EARN A HAT WEEK!



Patriots-In-Action is going on NOW! Packets were sent home with students with all the info you need to raise money for your school!

Our Patriots of all grade levels will be heading out into the community to serve in the Name of Jesus! Ask friends and family to sponsor your child for the work that they will accomplish on

Wednesday, October 29th.

Drivers are needed for this special day of community service. If you're available for the day and would be willing to take a small group of students in your vehicle, please email lcolford@gcspatriots.com.

NOVEMBER LUNCHES

It's time to order student lunches for OCTOBER. Please submit your order by **Wednesday, October 15** through FACTS Family Portal!



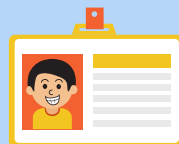
GET READY FOR

PICTURE DAY

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

PICTURE RETAKES

Inter-State Studios will return to GCS on Monday, November 3rd for picture retakes. Secondary winter sports teams will also be photographed.



2025-26 GCEA BOARD MEMBERS

Whitney Tinker - President
wtinker@gcspatriots.com

Nathan Hutchins - Vice President
nhutchins@gcspatriots.com

Holly Crouch - Treasurer
hcrouch@gcspatriots.com

Ruth Malaka - Secretary
rmalaka@gcspatriots.com

Shirl Bontrager
sbontrager@gcspatriots.com



Marshall Downs
mddowns@gcspatriots.com

Laraine Fox
lfox@gcspatriots.com

Joel Layman
jlayman@gcspatriots.com

Trever Meachum
tmeachum@gcspatriots.com

Brian Montgomery
bmontgomery@gcspatriots.com

THE NEXT GCEA BOARD MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE ON
MONDAY, OCTOBER 27 @ 6:30 PM.

JOIN THE GCEA!

You're invited to be part of the GCEA (Grace Christian Educational Association), the governing body of our school. The fiscal year for the GCEA runs July 1 to June 30. Membership requires agreement with our organization's doctrinal statement and \$10 membership fee. The membership fee is waived for parents of students at GCS. Each year we have an annual meeting where the School Board is elected and an annual report is presented to the membership. There have been special/extra meetings announced to discuss pressing issues within the organization. Join TODAY by completing the [GCEA Membership Application Form](#) on our website and emailing it to info@gcspatriots.com.

Our School Board is accessible to you through their email as well as open board meetings generally at the last Monday of the month. September's meeting is the 22nd at 6:30pm.



ALUMNI NEWS

We would like to dedicate a page of our monthly newsletter to what's happening in the lives of our Alumni. Please share Births, Graduations, Marriages, Moves, and other announcements with us at info@gcspatriots.com. Please include photos as well, if you can!

We are looking forward to hearing what God is doing in the lives of our Alumni!



UPCOMING EVENTS



GRANDPARENTS DAY

Grandparents Day will take place on Friday, October 17. Breakfast will be provided for our guests and after the meal is served, the students will perform Bible verses, songs and poetry. Once the performances have concluded, grandparents will have the opportunity to take pictures with their grandchildren before they leave.

Reminder: October 17 is scheduled to be a HALF DAY of school (11:30 dismissal) for all students, and there will be NO AFTERCARE available on this day.

If grandparents will be taking students home afterward, parents must call or email the Main Office to give permission prior to Grandparents Day:

269-463-5545 or info@gcspatriots.com

GCS STUDENTS PREPARING FOR MISSION TRIP TO GUATEMALA MARCH 2026

In March 2026, our juniors and seniors, along with several staff and parents, will be traveling to San Raymundo, Guatemala for our biannual mission trip. This trip is a treasured part of our school's ministry, ensuring that every GCS student has the opportunity to participate in an international mission experience before graduation.

Once again, we are partnering with Casas por Cristo, a Christ-centered organization committed to serving families in need through home-building projects. Our team will have the privilege of working alongside a local family, their pastor, and Casas staff to build a new home. In addition to providing a safe and secure place to live, this project is a powerful opportunity to share God's love in a tangible way.

Each team member is currently raising financial support for their participation. If you would like to contribute toward an individual student, staff member, or the team as a whole, please reach out to lcolford@gcspatriots.com for more information. Your prayers and financial support are a vital part of this ministry, and we are deeply grateful for your partnership.

A full team list is included below. Watch for updates and prayer requests in future Impact editions as the team prepares for this exciting opportunity.

11th Grade

Dill, Jaxon
Green, Mason
Rutgers, Sara
Williamson, Matthew

Staff

Ben Williamson
Mike Dill
Jessica Flagel

12th Grade

Strickland, Dailee
Williamson, Anna
Wilson, Jenna

Parents

Green, Jimmy
Strickland, Tasha
Ryan Teeters
Wilson, Apryll
Williamson, Keri



SHEMMY'S FISH FRY FUNDRAISER

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1 • 4-8PM

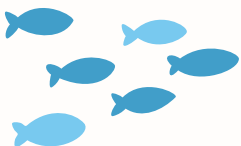


All proceeds
support
Grace Christian
School!

GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL IS HOSTING A FISH FRY

Saturday, November 1st from 4:00 - 8:00 PM

Save the date and tell your friends, neighbors, family members. It will be a great opportunity to show off all the work that's been done on the softball field and meet up with other Patriots, both past and present! There may even be a chance to play ball! This fundraiser will bring in a 100% profit.

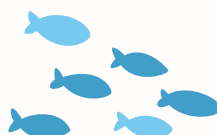
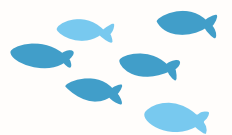


Adults: \$15

Cost per person:

Seniors (62+): \$12

Children: \$5



PRAYER AND PRAISE

GRAHAM

"Graham was diagnosed with a VSD, Congenital Heart Defect, when I was pregnant. However; upon birth he became ill and was diagnosed with an IAA, another Congenital Heart Defect, but your life line. His was closing, bringing him to near death. We got sent to U of M on 12/24 and Graham had his 1st open heart surgery at 8 days old. This entailed a hybrid procedure, where he had open heart but then had a catheter portion as well so they could place a stent and pulmonary artery bands on to help his heart function to go home and be a normal baby. We have to weigh, check oxygen daily, and he has multiple meds he gets. On 8/19 he actually had a cardiac catheterization done and they replaced his stent and at that time they told us it is time to fully repair Graham's heart. So on 10/17, he will undergo open heart surgery that'll be 8 hours long to fully repair his heart to be normal like ours. There are many risks we are asking people to pray for: Graham's survival, pain management after the surgery, that his VSD is repaired without any leaks or interruption in the electrical system of the heart that could cause him to have a pacemaker for life, and meaning another open heart, and that his left vocal cord does not get injured causing further procedures needed if so. We also pray for Finley during this time as she will be away from her home and family and friends at school! We pray for the hands of Dr. Lancaster, who will be doing the operation. I have attached a picture also because he is just too cute not to share! And if you look at him you would have no idea he has multiple heart defects! He is our heart warrior!" - Lexi Kuntzman (GCS parent)



TEACHER NEED

GCS has a teacher that is on dialysis and is in great need of a kidney transplant. Please join us in praying for God's provision in His perfect time.

THANKSGIVING

- Consistent volunteer for gate at home games
- Mrs. Leach repaired and recovered our basketball panels. They look great!
- Workers from the Chapel, EFC volunteered on Saturday, October 4.
 - 23 light units were updated and bleachers secured
- Stairs to the ball field finished
- Water to the ball field/well house plumbing updated
- \$30,000 pledged donation to sponsor a teacher
- \$31,950 came in to meet our student sponsorship needs
- New volleyball cart donated
- Waxing our floors and carpet cleaning donated in August by Mr. Clean's Cleaning & Restoration
- We received over \$20,000 in electrical supplies from a vendor with All-Phase electrical in Benton Harbor. We will be able to completely update our building to LED from fluorescent.
- We were able to secure a shared time partnership with Southgate Community Schools
- Softball field's Summer/Fall refreshing work (looking great)
- New and consistent volunteer keeping the grounds beautiful
- Gym and Locker Room refurbishment
- 1949 Cadillac (open to ideas of what to do with it)
- A lot of furniture & professional displays donated in July/August



POSITION OPENING: PART-TIME BAND TEACHER



Grace Christian School is seeking a Christ-centered, musically gifted educator to teach Junior High and High School Band. The ideal candidate loves both music and students, models a strong Christian faith, and desires to inspire excellence through music.

This part-time, school-year position includes sick leave, personal time, and tuition benefits for qualifying dependents. A degree in music or related field and classroom experience are preferred. Will consider applicants who have a BA (or equivalent) in another field with a strong personal background in music.

If you feel called to use your musical gifts to invest in students and glorify Christ, we'd love to hear from you!

Applications accepted until the position is filled.

HOW YOU CAN HELP!

Work related Help:

- Help complete our project of replacing 4ft fluorescent lights with LEDs (made possible by our All-Phase donation)
- Staining Preschool Ramp
- Improving the woodshop (painting to start)



Service related Help:

- Looking for a Grace Christian Historian: We have shoe boxes of photos and such that need the attention of someone who loves compiling history.



POP CAN DRIVE

Student Council wants your empty pop cans! Is taking back your family's pop cans and bottles a burden? Bag them up and bring them to the school and let Student Council take care of them! This is a great way to support student activities at GCS.

LOOKING FOR A WAY TO BLESS GCS STAFF?

Check out the links below:

[Mrs. Colford, Principal](#) [Mrs. Corwin, High School](#)
[Mrs. Compton, PE/Music](#) [Mrs. Tavernier, 2nd](#)
[Mrs. Vogel, P4](#) [Miss Newell, Kindergarten](#)
[Mrs. Litten, 1st](#) [Mrs. Wilkerson, 3rd](#) [Mrs. Grey, 4th](#)
[Mr. Dill, 5th](#) [Miss Erickson, Jr. High](#)
[Mr. Bradshaw, Strength](#) [Miss Hemingway, TK](#)



SHARE THE IMPACT

Would you like to share what is going on at GCS with others in your church? Please request these postcards as bulletin inserts for your church where individuals can receive our monthly IMPACT newsletter. We will be happy to get them in your hands to share with your church. Let us know at info@gcspatriots.com.

2025-26 SUPPORTING CHURCHES

Below is a list of churches that are attended by GCS families. We are very grateful to the churches that support GCS through both prayer and financial gifts (*indicated in bold*).

- Apostolic Lighthouse Church
- Berrien Center Bible
- Blue Roof Church
- **Bright Star Tabernacle**
- Calvary Bible Church
- Calvary Missionary Baptist Church
- Coloma United Methodist Church
- **Decatur Bible Church**
- Deeper Life Bible Church
- First Baptist Church
- First Church of God
- Freshwater Church
- Full Gospel Assembly
- **Hartford Bible Church**
- Hartford Church of God
- Lakeshore Christian Church
- Latter Day Worship
- LifeBridge Church
- Midway Baptist Church
- New Covenant Church
- New Day Church
- New Freedom Church
- New Hope Community Church
- New Jerusalem COGIC
- **New Life Baptist Church**
- **New Life Christian Center**
- **North Wayne Mennonite Church**
- Overflow Church
- Pioneer Memorial Church
- **Sister Lakes Community Church**
- **South Haven Church of Christ**
- St. Mary Catholic Church
- St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church - Niles
- **The Chapel, EFC**
- The River
- The Well Ministries
- Victory Life Church
- Volinia Baptist Church
- Watervliet Free Methodist Church
- Woodside
- Yore Community Church



BUSINESS BOOSTERS

When you buy from or use the services of one of these businesses, they give a portion of your purchase as a gift to GCS (but only if the receipt is turned into the GCS office).

FEATURED BOOSTERS OF THE MONTH:



Town & Country Electric Service (10/5%)

(10% for residential services, 5% for commercial services)
2179 Plaza Dr.
Benton Harbor
(269) 934-8155



Roseland Organic Farms & Market (10%)

Organic beef, chicken, pork, dairy and other organic items
60200 Daily Rd., Dowagiac
(269) 445-8769



Oxi-Fresh Carpet Cleaning (10%)

Bryan Bailey
bryan@oxifreshswmi.com
Commercial Sales: (269)206-2149 Cell: (269)277-0357

\$1700 TAX CREDIT STARTING 2027

This is not hopeful legislation; it has already been passed. There are a lot of details to work out, but there are some very encouraging big picture truths that we can begin building a ground game for. This is something that can make fundraising optional. We (more than a few people) need to be excited and do the work to make this a realization for Grace. Here are some basic truths as I understand them:

- First, this requires our Governor to opt in to this federal program. Governor Whitmer will be termed out and this needs to be a campaign issue, so that whether red or blue we need to pressure the incoming Governor to promise to help in the education of all students. Scholarships can be issued for public school needs as well.
- This is a tax credit, not a deduction. What this means is that every dollar you give to the Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) will come back to you against your tax liability as a full dollar. It is \$1700 per tax paying person and \$3400 as a married couple. The logic is that you are going to pay the federal government that money anyway, so why not give it to the SGO for them to issue a scholarship to Grace students? This is federal and crosses state lines.
- The Scholarship Granting Organization is a 501(c)(3) set up to distribute scholarships to students who apply. I will be working with Heritage Christian, Howardsville Christian, and River of Life schools to set up our own Scholarship Granting Organization so that we are not dependent on an out-of-touch 3rd party. SGOs have to distribute 90% to student scholarships, serve at least 10 students and at least 2 schools. Our SGO will do better than giving back 90%.
- This program is scheduled to start January 1, 2027, which means individuals may begin to give to SGOs at the beginning of the 2027 year. SGOs will be able to disburse scholarships for the 2027-2028 school year. Individuals will receive their tax credit in the spring of 2028 when they file for the 2027 tax return. This will be made available year after year.
- To qualify for the scholarship from the SGO, the financials of the family applying must be under 300% of the median income. The federal median income for 2024 was \$83,730. If that number is accurate, families that make under \$251,190 would qualify. Generally, this number increases every year.
- There are no limits to scholarship dollars. Grace Christian could raise tuition to \$20,000 and the SGO could award \$18,000 scholarships per student regardless of how many students per family.

There are 155,000 people in Berrien County. How many of them would like to see their tax dollars directly help local education? We need to begin to share this information with people who pay taxes to prepare them to give (money they are already paying to federal government) starting in 2027. Are there not 5,000 people in our Christian sphere of influence who could help make this real for our school?

For more information check out [this article by Fisher Phillips](#).

Looking to build a team to make this a huge success! Let me know if this is you.



Benjamin Williamson
Administrator



FALL FIELD TRIPS



BUMBLEBERRY ACRES



SARETT NATURE CENTER

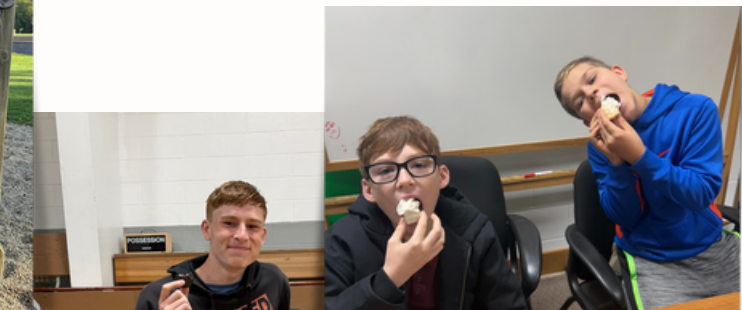


DEPUTY VISIT



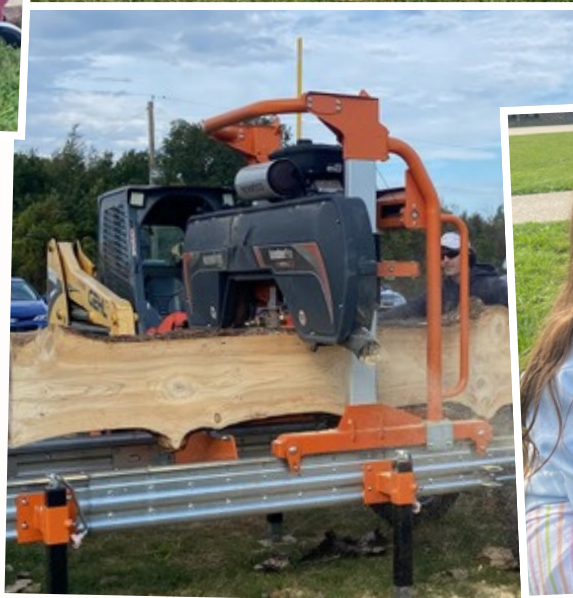
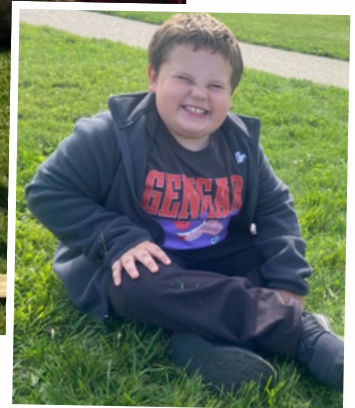
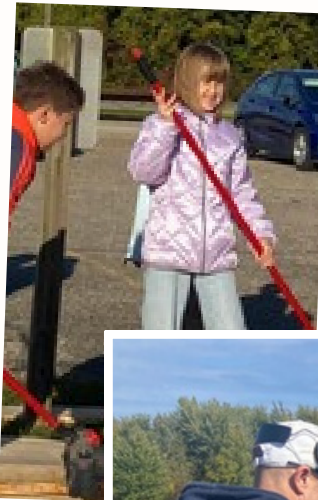
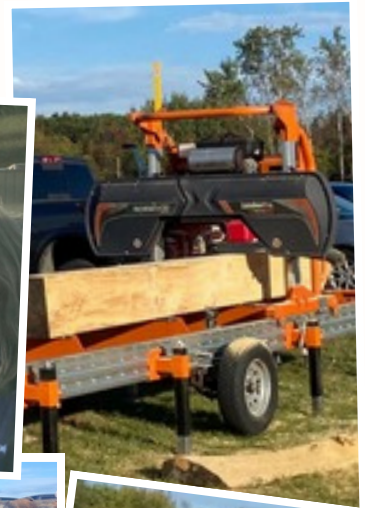
PATRIOTS-IN-ACTION REWARDS

Friday, October 10



SAWMILL DEMONSTRATION

Friday, October 10



GRACE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

2025-2026 School Year*



AUGUST

- 21 Back to School Night, 5-7:00 PM
- 25 First Day of School
Quarter 1 Begins
- 29 NO SCHOOL - Labor Day Wknd.

SEPTEMBER

- 1 NO SCHOOL - Labor Day Wknd.
- 3-5 SEW Retreat (Grades 9-12)
- 26 Picture Day

OCTOBER

- 2-3 NO SCHOOL - Inservice
- 17 Grandparents Day, Half Day,
No Aftercare
End of Quarter 1
- 20 NO SCHOOL - Inservice
- 21 Quarter 2 Begins

NOVEMBER

- 3 Picture Retakes
- 4 NO SCHOOL—Parent/Teacher
Conferences, 11:00 - 6:00pm
- 24-25 NO SCHOOL - Fall Break
- 26-28 NO SCHOOL - Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

- 10 Pastor Appreciation
- 18 HALF DAY
End of Quarter 2
- 19-1/5 NO SCHOOL - Christmas Break

JANUARY

- 5 Inservice
- 6 Quarter 3 Begins
- 19 NO SCHOOL- MLK Jr. Day

FEBRUARY

- 13-17 NO SCHOOL - Mid-Winter Break
- 17 InService
- 20 Homecoming

MARCH

- 2-6 Science Fair
- 6 Kindergarten Program/Round Up
- 7 Open House, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm
- 13 End of Quarter 3
- 16 NO SCHOOL - Inservice
- 17 Quarter 4 Begins
- 22-28 Mission Trip - Guatemala
- 30-4/6 NO SCHOOL - Spring Break

APRIL

- 6 NO SCHOOL - Spring Break
- 14 GCEA Meeting

MAY

- 21 Graduation
- 22-25 NO SCHOOL, Memorial Day
- 29 Moving Up Ceremony
(TK-5th), HALF DAY,
NO AFTERCARE
End of Quarter 4
Cruise-In, 5:00-8:00 pm
- 30 Golf Outing, tee-off 8:30 am

SCHOOL HOURS

EARLY CARE	7:00 - 7:30 am
PLEDGES/PRAYER	7:50 am
SCHOOL DAY	8:00 - 3:00 pm
AFTER CARE	3:15 - 5:30 pm
HALF DAYS	Dismissal: 11:30 am
OFFICE HOURS	7:30-3:30 pm

**This calendar is subject to change.*

Please visit GCSPatriots.org for current calendar.