



TYPE 1 DIABETES - MAYA'S STORY



FEBRUARY 23, 2014. A day that will always be etched into my memory. This was the day our daughter Maya was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. I knew what the diagnosis was going to be. I knew we would be told our seemingly perfect, healthy two-year-old had Type 1. Having a family history of diabetes, I thought I knew so much about Type 1 already. I figured we would go to the hospital for the diagnosis and be home in a few hours. I assumed CCAC (Community Care Access Centre) would be at our house in the next few days to tell us what we were supposed to do, and we would make it work.

I was wrong. I was wrong about it all. I wasn't prepared for the ripple effects on our family of such a diagnosis. I didn't know how much it would change our lives, including our decision for schooling. I didn't know how much it would change our family and our community.

One Saturday morning in February of 2014, Maya was so incredibly thirsty that no amount of water seemed to quench her thirst and my internal radar kicked in. I checked Maya's blood with a glucometer that I had in the house from when I had gestational diabetes. It read 23; the average blood sugar reading should be between four and seven. I made excuses in my head of why it could be so high (she had just eaten; I'm sure it's fine), and we moved on with our day.

We went out for my husband's 40th birthday and she seemed fine. When we got home that evening, I checked her blood sugar again, and it read 25. I again made an excuse for her high number, maybe not wanting to initiate any panic, put Maya to bed, and when she woke up the next morning, she was 5.6. She had yogurt for breakfast and went to church. However, by the time we got home, her blood sugar level read 13. This is when I knew something was wrong, and Maya needed immediate medical attention. We spent the following seven days in the hospital. It was a week of very low blood sugars and very high blood sugars. We were trained on how to give needles five times a day, how to count carbs, treat lows, treat highs. In short, we trained for our new normal.

The following year, it was time for Maya to register for JK. We were unsuccessful in securing a safe school plan with our school community at that time. We wanted Maya to learn and grow, but we also needed a school that could accommodate Maya's Type 1 diabetes. We worried and wondered about where Maya would go to school, but God had a plan!

Beacon Christian School welcomed us with open arms. The school was eager to learn about Maya, how to care for her, and what she needed to be safe. Staff were trained on her care and a safe action plan was created. I am not an emotional person, but when I think of how Maya has been embraced by her "village" at Beacon, I am moved. The love, care and concern blows me away daily, and the communication throughout each day to ensure Maya is safe shows me how much they care. Involving the entire school for Blue Day this past November to educate the student body about Type 1 diabetes made me proud to say Beacon is part of our family and our community.

by Christi Webster, Maya's Mom





Celebrating Blue Day!

by Ella, Grade 7 student

On Thursday, November 17, Beacon Christian School participated in Blue Day, which helped raise money for diabetes research. It was a "dress-down" day, a day when wearing the school uniform is optional. (Many students look forward to dress-down days.) If students wanted to dress down, which meant wearing non-uniform clothes, they needed to bring in a small donation of \$2 or more to support diabetes research. Our students raised around \$470 for diabetes research! In chapel that week, we had a guest speaker come in and tell us about

Type 1 Diabetes. Maya, one of our students, has Type 1 diabetes, and she also told us her story. She has had diabetes for three years now; she is five years old and was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes when she was two. She came up and told us about her pod that attaches to her body, and all the supplies that she needs. So Diabetes Day 2016 at Beacon Christian School was dedicated to Maya.



#LetYOUR
Light
SHINE!

Soli Deo Gloria!

by Ralph Pot, Principal

I may be a little biased, but the following statement is true: Beacon is a fantastic school with well-educated, intelligent, loving and prepared staff, fabulous facilities, and an incredible volunteer/donor base committed to the mission of the school. This is a first-rate institution equipping students to impact communities by serving Christ.

I have the privilege of teaching Bible to our grade seven class. At the beginning of this school year, we spent some time discussing the grand story of the Bible. We described the story of the Bible using three ideas that have been passed around classrooms in this school for decades: Creation, Fall, and Redemption.

Students are reminded they belong to the redemption part of the story. Starting in the primary grades, students learn to tell the story as they recite Luke 2 in their classrooms and in chapel. Let us not forget, the story to those shepherds and to us today is, *"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."*

At Beacon, students are immersed in this redemptive story, and the story continues to be told. Jesus has come, and His Spirit is present and powerful. But there is also an equal and true sense that His kingdom has yet to come. Although the victory is already won, the final, glorious crowning still awaits.

An analogy often used to describe this paradox can be found at the end of World War II. For all intents and purposes, the victory for the Allies was won on D-day as thousands of allied troops landed on the beaches of Normandy. On that day, historians believe, the victory was won, but battles continued in Europe for another eleven months, until VE Day (Victory in Europe Day). Even though victory was more or less secured on D-Day, there was still much work to do before a lasting peace could be attained (VE Day).

Similarly, our D-day is past. Christ has won. He is King, but we find ourselves between D-Day and VE Day, with much work to do. Sometimes it is difficult and hard work, but we do it knowing that victory is assured and a lasting peace awaits. More than anything, that describes our work here at Beacon Christian School.

I have no doubt that we are an excellent school, and that there are many ways that we are glorifying God in our work and play right now, but we are far from a finished product. We are always learning, always growing, always planning, always striving.

It is my hope that these pages give you a glimpse of our work and play. In recent years, we have been intentional about being more inclusive of a wide range of students. I am not sure that we will ever be absolutely and fully inclusive, but it is something for which we are striving. We have made great strides as a school, using the term Student Support Services to reflect the wide range of needs that are required for any school population. As you read some of the stories

from parents of children who receive support at Beacon, know that their stories provide a richness to our own student body, and these stories are inspiring other Christian schools to replicate this type of inclusivity in their own schools.

Our teaching staff continue to improve their craft, always striving for ways to more fully equip the students of Beacon. You can read about some of our recent professional development excursions on these pages as well. Proverbs 27:17 states, *"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."* The Beacon staff takes this idea to heart.

Thank you for taking the time to read about our fine school. We have much for which to be thankful. All of our work is done in the assurance that victory in Christ is assured. May His kingdom come.

Soli deo gloria!

#LetYOURLightSHINE!
beaconchristian.org MATT 5:16





At **BEACON**
we desire
our students
to be:

- Community Builders
- God Worshippers
- Justice Seekers
- Servant Workers
- Beauty Creators
- Creation Enjoyers
- Earth Keepers
- Idol Discerners
- Image Reflectors
- Order Discoverers



Science @ Beacon

by Albert Kok, Vice-Principal

How do we make sure that science is taught well in Christian schools? This question spurred on the heads of CSI (Christian Schools International) and ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) to organize a science academy in Grand Rapids this past November. As a member of CSI, Beacon staff were invited to apply for the academy. I applied and was accepted to join the selected group of 50 teachers from across Canada and the United States. We gathered at the Van Andel Education Institute – a non-profit educational institution dedicated to advancing and promoting science education and increasing the number of students who choose to pursue careers in science or science-related fields.

During our time at the academy, we were immersed in the QPOE2 method, a cyclical scientific method that involves questioning, evaluating, explaining, observing and predicting during an experiment. This method also intentionally incorporates habits of the scientific mind such as curiosity, creative and critical thinking, persistence, integrity and self-direction. We practiced these skills and concepts by doing various labs and hosting discussion with academy leaders about their methods.

Throughout the entire experience, we recognized how a Christian perspective ought to be integrated with the content and also with the process and pedagogy of how we teach science. Science not only reveals to us God's hand in creation, but it also provides the opportunity to use critical thinking skills as we examine our faith walk and the world around us.

Along with all of the participants, my experience with the science academy challenged me to teach science in a way that blesses our students with good scientific skills and encourages them to be deliberate in thinking of God's world and their place in His world.



Trip to Genesee

by Heather Wiersma, Grade 7 teacher

My child came home from school this week and mentioned words like “ago” and “ame” and also showed me a hand signal for quiet. Now I’m curious! Tell me more.

As teachers of Christian education at Beacon, we continue to seek ways to improve our craft. Recently, several of our staff shared a unique learning off-site experience with staff from other Christian schools. In early December, five staff members – Heather Wiersma, Grace Ritzema, Annette Dykstra, Wilma Harris and Ralph Pot – participated in a professional seminar about expeditionary learning organized by the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) at Genesee Charter School in Rochester, NY. Genesee Charter School is a recognized mentor school in the expeditionary learning system of schools.

Expeditionary Learning is an approach to curriculum that connects learning to real-world issues and needs. Content and skills are explored and practiced using learning expeditions, case studies, projects and field work. In light of our work with project-based learning over the last couple of years, this seminar offered an opportunity for staff to grow and learn as educators.

Over the course of two full days, we had the opportunity to visit classrooms both formally and informally, attend a teacher-led seminar, view a beautiful student-led performance and participate in a full-school community circle.

There were a number of things that stood out over the course of our visit. First, the school is housed in the Rochester Museum and Science Centre, making for an immediate unique impression. Walking through the hallways and interacting with the students, we sensed a calm atmosphere. There were often hand gestures (instead of voice) used to communicate, and the gestures were evident in each classroom we visited. Music and songs were used for transitions between activities, and there was a high level of student involvement and engagement. Framed student artwork was displayed throughout the school, and the students did an excellent job working in groups as our tour guides.

Second, each classroom has two full-time teachers, as well as a teacher’s assistant. We noticed this contributed to an environment where there is a high level of support for the students. The staff work as a team and a lot of hard work is put into fostering strong team relationships. The culture of teamwork that was evident among the students was also evident among the teachers as we observed.

Third, the school year is built around 12-week expeditions that focus on the natural, political and economic history of Rochester. All subjects are integrated into the expeditions, including physical education (movement) and the arts. At the end of each 12-week session, there is an expedition event to celebrate the work of that term.

For example, during our visit, we learned the Grade 6 class was studying play. This involved writing childhood memories of play, researching the history of play, researching parks in Rochester and more. The project will culminate in a four-cities trip where they will explore play in each city and then create their own nature park in Rochester.

We were so thankful for this opportunity to explore a new and interesting way to do school. Though Genesee Charter School is not a Christian school, their vision of tangible learning experiences was inspiring for our own work at Beacon. We know that there are a lot of great things happening at Beacon, but we look forward to continuing to work on the culture of our Christian school here in St. Catharines. Similar to Genesee Charter School, we seek to empower students to be active members of their community, but more than that, we know that we want them to be active community members who are servant-workers, beauty-creators, image-reflectors, and justice-seekers for His kingdom here on earth.



FAIR GLEN

by Alex, Grade 8 student

In September, our Grade 8 class spent a few days at Fair Glen, a youth camp and campground in Beaverton, Ontario. Fair Glen was so much fun! We all had a great time, and we made so many amazing memories. We left on a Wednesday morning and came back two days later on the Friday afternoon. During those three days, we did many fun group activities. On Wednesday, we went canoeing, and we did orienteering around the property, so we would know our way around later. On Thursday, we did many more fun activities like high ropes, where some of the people in our class competed to see who could climb the highest. On Friday, our last day, we had chapel and played one more game – instincts for survival – before leaving for home. We were sad to go, but we were thankful to have such a good time together.





INCLUDING RACHEL

By Sara Pot

"If a man loses pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured, or far away."

Henry David Thoreau

Several weeks ago, I was invited to attend the weekly chapel at Beacon, as my daughter Rachel would be performing a drum solo. Though it is not uncommon for a parent to be excited when the achievements of their child are celebrated, Rachel's drum solo was a profound moment for me as her mom. Rachel is medically fragile, nonverbal, and requires a feeding tube and wheelchair. Given her extreme limitations, it was wonderful to witness the small, but incredible milestone of Rachel's hands, with the support of Marlene Teeuwesen, moving over her drum.

When our daughter Rachel was born in May 2006, our family was forever changed. With her birth, we were thrown into a new world of special needs and medical teams, and we wondered if any of it would ever feel ordinary. As we sorted through the ups and downs of

Rachel's first years, we began to carve out a new normal. Unfortunately, all of this needed to be re-sorted when our fourth daughter Janneke was born in March 2009. She too was born medically fragile, with complex needs. Both Rachel and Janneke require tube-feeding 24 hours a day, and they are completely dependent on us for their movement and care.

As Rachel aged, she was followed closely by Niagara Children's Centre, the local children's rehabilitative service provider. Not only could the Centre give advice and support with various therapies, they also could help us adjust as parents of children with complex needs. Conscious of other little ones born at the same time as Rachel, we knew the gap between her and her peers would widen as time passed. Though we felt closely connected with Niagara Children's Centre, we also wanted Rachel to be known by our Beacon community. Our older two daughters, Emily and Sophia were a part of Beacon, but Rachel was simply known as a prayer request, as her big sisters would ask that Rachel's name be included in the class prayer time. We often wondered if there was room at Beacon for Rachel as a student. Given Ralph's role in administration with the school, it was important that we be transparent as we planned for and wondered about the future for Rachel with school.

I started taking Rachel to visit her peers in JK, scheduling class visits when time and health permitted. The children immediately loved her, asking questions adults only thought about, and they quickly accepted Rachel as she was. We continued with our class visits, and her peers frequently asked when Rachel would be a part of their class. After much discussion and work, Rachel was wheeled through the doors of Beacon in the fall of 2015 to start Grade 4. Her classmates were thrilled, and she was warmly welcomed by the student body.

Rachel is now in Grade 5 at Beacon, and her peers continue to ask to sit next to her, read to her or help her with projects. Recently, Rachel showed interest in playing a single drum. Sometimes on her own and other times with Marlene's help, she contributes to band class by playing the drum on her lap. Her beat is of her own inclination, and her timing is unique. With the help of staff, the opportunity was created for Rachel to initiate a praise song at chapel by hitting her drum. As I observed Rachel watching Len Turnevicius for the timing – and as I saw the student body give attention to Rachel – I couldn't help but feel a sense of awe for that sacred moment. It was a moment that conveyed that Rachel was known by and belonged to her school community. *Soli Deo Gloria.*

Thankful

By Beth VanStaalduinen

Our son Jacob is seven years old, and he is in Mrs. Harris' grade one class at Beacon. He is a happy, clever and energetic little boy. He also has autism.

When deciding to which school to send Jacob, we simply wanted the best school for him. We wanted a place where his special needs would be met, and he would have the opportunity to learn and socialize with peers. To be honest, we did not think that a Christian school would be able to do all that. We looked at both the public and Catholic school boards before considering Beacon.

Jacob, Matt and I were warmly welcomed to the school by Ralph Pot and Brenda Boks. And after that initial meeting, we sensed that there could be – and would be – a place for Jacob at Beacon.

Jacob has an amazing support staff at Beacon. Mrs. Boks heads up his team and develops his individual learning plans. Miss Sandy is his EA; she offers Jacob the one-on-one support he needs. With a little extra help from Sandy, Jacob is able to spend a lot of time with his classmates, and Mrs. Harris is open and accommodating to Jacob's needs in the classroom.

We are grateful to have a Christian school community that genuinely seems to love and care for Jacob. It has been encouraging to speak with other parents who say, "My son is so excited to see Jacob" – or similar anecdotes. We love that Jacob is accepted and included in his class.

We want to thank all the staff and volunteers that make it possible for Jacob to attend Beacon. We are thankful for a staff that values and encourages a community of inclusion. We are thankful for parents and students who have welcomed Jacob and our family to this school.



GRADE 2 MURAL PROJECT



BEACON SPORTS REPORT





GRADE 6 MARBLE CHALLENGE

STEM CHALLENGE:

(Science/Technology/Engineering/Mathematics)

Using only toilet paper rolls
and tape – be the **FIRST** –
to create a path to get
a marble downstairs!



**WHICH TEAM WON?
ASK THEM!**



EYE ON **ALUMNI**

Kristen Postma



I can't believe it's been over ten years since I walked through the renovated hallways of Beacon Christian Secondary School as a high school graduate and even longer since being in the first graduating class of Beacon Elementary, after the name change from Calvin Memorial. How times have changed!

I was able to reflect on my Beacon years at our ten-year anniversary party in October 2016. We reminisced about our classes and classmates in elementary school and about science class mishaps in high school. We laughed about the stories of exploding aquariums dripping water to the floor below while trying to demonstrate "ocean currents" in biology class and burning magnesium in chemistry class in the Maranatha Christian Reformed Church basement (during the school renovations of 2006) which ended with smoke alarms, the fire department, and getting to see Doug Langendoen in his firefighting suit. We missed others who weren't able to attend the reunion, but we were thankful that 13 alumni were able to make it. We even got a call from Sam Kim in Korea who couldn't attend but wanted to connect with everyone together as well.

My experience with Christian education didn't end at Beacon. From high school, I went on to Calvin College in Grand Rapids to study nursing within a Christian liberal arts setting. There were four others from our graduating class of 22 – Kristin Graham (Westerhof), Andrew Hoogendam, Tim Swinkels and Rachelle Wunderink. I didn't feel so alone after all! The opportunities of an interim semester drew me to Calvin College over other schools. Because of the unique interim semester design, I was able to explore God's world mid-school year, touring the Amazon and Galapagos Islands during one interim semester and exploring Europe during another interim semester. Strangers quickly become friends when traveling and living in community for a three week college credit.

Graduating with a Bachelor of Nursing degree with a minor in psychology in 2010, I stayed in Grand Rapids for three additional years. I worked as a registered nurse in neurosciences and on the surgical intensive care unit at Spectrum Health Butterworth. Canada, especially family, continued to pull at my heartstrings, and when I got accepted to the nurse practitioner program at the University of Toronto for fall of 2013, I moved back home. Another two years of school flew by! After graduating, I taught nursing clinicals with Brock University and worked a couple different roles in neurosciences at Hamilton Health Sciences. I also enjoyed a short-term medical missions trip to Zambia last September. This past summer, I bought a house with a friend, and I am now working locally with the Niagara Health System as the nurse practitioner for the Regional Palliative Care Program. I currently attend my childhood church, Covenant Christian Reformed, where I serve as Elder of Youth and Young Adults. I look forward to the day I can send my own kids to Beacon Christian. I recently got engaged to a wonderful man named Nick Postma (no relation :)), and we are excitedly planning a wedding for next year!

BEACON NEWS



FINANCIAL UPDATE

Since September 2016, the Beacon community has fundraised or received generous donations totaling over \$225,000 towards the cause of Christian education at Beacon. We have so much to be thankful for!

This money is being put to good use in three ways:

1. Giving us the freedom and challenge to offer an uncompromising, distinctively Christian, culturally relevant, and increasingly inclusive education to a wide range of families.
2. Allowing us to be a school that can offer generous bursaries to make Christian education affordable for families.
3. Continuing to significantly pay down the school's mortgage.

AppleFest	\$26,400	Debt Reduction	\$55,000
Beacon Rewards	\$7,300	Church Support	\$2,300
Christmas Urns	\$1,400	General Donations	\$25,500
Golf Tournament	\$25,300		
Phone Drive	\$82,300	TOTAL:	\$225,900

UPCOMING EVENTS:

BACK-TO-SCHOOL 2017

Monday, January 9th @ 8:30 am

OPEN HOUSE & REGISTRATION 2017

Tuesday, January 31st

10 am - 2 pm

6 pm - 8 pm

BEACON GALA

Saturday, February 4th, 2017

at Club Roma

Call the office to book your table.

Details to follow.

SPRING AUCTION

Saturday, April 8th, 2017

Doors open @ 6:30 pm

GRANDPARENTS/ GRANDFRIENDS' DAY

Friday, May 5th, 2017

THE JUNGLE BOOK MUSICAL

First week of May 2017

Details to follow



Beacon Christian PRESCHOOL

New openings in our
2 day program for January or
register NOW for Fall 2017.

Programs run from
8:30-11:30 am and
include a nutritious snack!

To register contact: Darlene Teeuwesen
advancement@beaconchristian.org



To request a confidential appointment:
Henry Koornneef, CFP, CPCA -
email hkoornneef@christianschoolfoundation.ca



For more information about
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For a confidential appointment with
Marinus Koole - marinusk@CSservices.ca

#LetYOUR Light SHINE!

beaconchristian.org MAT 5:16

What a joy it is to know the incredible community of support that surrounds and upholds Beacon Christian School! Every prayer, gift and sacrifice, whether small or large, is vitally important. Thank you for your commitment as you invest in the exciting vision of Christian education here at Beacon.



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 beaconchristian.org **MATT 5:16**



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