

the spectator

A Publication of Illiana Christian High School

FALL 2024



New Opportunities

**NEW
TRADITIONS**
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ILLIANA CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL

Challenged to Serve

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

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NEW TRADITIONS

BRENT VERMEULEN, *Principal*



EVERY CHRISTMAS BREAK, I visit my wife's family in Florida, and we have many Christmas traditions that we follow no matter what. We always take a walk to the beach on Christmas Day. We keep our Christmas pajamas on while the kids open their presents. We also eat authentic Dutch cheese and play hockey on Christmas Eve. One of our ongoing jokes is that when we do something different, someone usually says, "new traditions". It's funny to me because a tradition is usually something that's been around for a while, so saying "new traditions" is a bit of a contradiction.

This got me thinking about the wonderful traditions we have here at Illiana. Homecoming feels like an event that has always been part of Illiana, but new traditions seem to pop up around homecoming time, always trying to make it better. When I was at Illiana, we dressed up for the game, and the dance and dinner were all on the same night. At some point, someone started a "new tradition" of spreading it over two nights, and it stuck. Not too many years ago, the idea of a "new tradition," the dodgeball tournament began, and it's become one of the best and most fun traditions of the year.

Most people don't like change in their lives because they get comfortable with their traditions. While many of these traditions are wonderful, traditions and new ideas have to start somewhere. Over the past few years, there have been many changes here at Illiana, including a new campus, an addition this past year, a new auditorium being constructed as I write this, and even a new athletic conference coming in a few years. Tons of "new traditions" have been happening, and many have already turned into really wonderful traditions here at Illiana.

When I was a freshman at Illiana, a "new tradition" started: we got a new principal named Peter Boonstra. He has become a steady, humble, and great tradition for Illiana over the past quarter century. Who knows, there may be a current freshman this year who could someday fill the role of principal. One thing I do know is that every tradition we cherish begins as a new tradition, and at some point, they will all fade away. God's love and His faithfulness, however, never started as "new traditions"; they always were, always are, and always will be. I pray and need your prayers that the new principal will become a lasting tradition (maybe not for 25 years!) with the help of God's love and faithfulness.

LETTER FROM THE ADMINISTRATION

The Spectator is a quarterly publication of Illiana Christian's School Board. The purpose of this publication is to share the story of Illiana Christian High School and to strengthen the bonds among our extended school community in support of Christian education. **The Spectator is mailed free of charge to alumni, families and friends of the school.**

Our address database is always being updated. If you would like to update your contact information or if you know of someone who would like to receive *The Spectator*, please contact Cassie Siersema and we will be very happy to update our database accordingly.

SPECTATOR MAILING DATABASE CONTACT ☐ Phone: 219.558.7066 x122 E-mail: csiersema@illianachristian.org

MARKETING MINUTE

DAN BLOM, Marketing Director

THE OFFICIAL ILLIANA FACEBOOK account reached 5,000 followers last month. This is a very big deal for us and we are so very thankful for everyone who follows us on Facebook and Instagram (and the Sports accounts). For a school with 610 students, if all the students, parents, and grandparents followed ICHS that would add up to about 3,600 people. So that means we have alumni, supporters, and community members following Illiana on Facebook as well. Every “like”, comment, and share helps Illiana spread its message of “Developing students with a passion for God, people, and the world.” We love sharing all the good news at Illiana and shining a light on as many students as possible. So, again, thanks for your continued support... now, let’s try to get to 10,000!



UPCOMING EVENTS

ILLIANA AUCTION
NOVEMBER 16

THANSIVING BREAK
NOVEMBER 28 - 29

CHOIR CHRISTMAS CONCERT
DECEMBER 5

BAND/ ORCHESTRA CHRISTMAS CONCERT
DECEMBER 10

CHAMBER SINGERS CHRISTMAS CONCERT

DECEMBER 12

REINDEER WALK/ RUN
DECEMBER 14

CHRISTMAS BREAK
DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 3

HOMECOMING GAME
JANUARY 10

HOMECOMING DANCE
JANUARY 11

Blessings

A B O U N D

Expansion Opens... New Classes Offered... Enrollment On the Rise!

STUDENTS RETURNED TO SCHOOL this fall to a campus almost twice the size of its original footprint. There are 15 new learning spaces, including a Vocational wing, new Band and Choir rooms, and a classroom outfitted with cooking stations for our Family and Consumer Science classes. For the first time since moving to the Dyer campus, we are offering expanded woodshop classes in addition to metals and welding courses.

“In addition to our STEM and engineering classes, we will have woods and metal classes along with other vocation opportunities to prepare students who want a different career path than college,” said Mr. Lance Davids, Head of School. “We want to make sure every student who comes through these halls not only gets a great Christian Education but is prepared for whatever career path they choose.”

The new addition allows us to increase our maximum capacity from 500 to 750 students. For the 2024-2025 school year, we have 610 students enrolled. That’s about a 30% increase in enrollment since moving to the Dyer location six years ago.

“With the best staff and teachers that genuinely care for each individual student and a contagious culture of the community showing love to all students I see this school continually growing in years to come,” said Principal, Brent Vermeulen.

The Phase 2 expansion plan costs \$ 15 million, which has been completely paid for with private donations. All this is to say we are extremely blessed. God has been so, so good to Illiana, its students, and the broader ICHS community. We are so thankful for God’s enduring providence and we are thankful to everyone who donated to, prayed for, and volunteered for the expansion campaign. We also want to thank all the workers and tradespeople who built the addition. They met every deadline and coexisted beautifully with our student body during construction.

On Saturday, September 28 we dedicated the new space with prayer, music, dinner, and a tour of all the new spaces. More than 300 people attended the joyful evening. Head of School, Mr. Lance Davids, thanked everyone responsible for helping to build the addition; and the Principal, Mr. Brent Vermeulen, delivered a prayer of dedication.

DAN BLOM, Marketing Director



LANCE DAVIDS, Head of School



FIGURING OUT what to write is always a struggle. It is not that I don't have anything to say. In fact it is the opposite problem. There is so much going on at Illiana that it is hard to focus on one thing. So I was debating between three topics. The first was the "Let's Finish This... Again" capital campaign and how we are on the final legs of finishing up the auditorium. At the time of this writing, we have raised about half of the \$8.5 million to finish the entire project. I know we are doing a fun activity during November, but I will let Cassie Siersema tell that story later in the publication. However, I do want to thank you for all you have done to build Illiana and the hearts and minds of these kids.

Yet, I felt like I always write about the capital campaign so I didn't want that to be my focus. So then I thought about writing about the new vocational wing. I was down there the other day and the kids were welding. Then I walked to the STEM room where they were designing new projects and making plaques for the Lake County Sheriff's Department. Finally, I went to the wood shop and they were tiling and grouting walls. It was so cool to see kids using real-world skills and for some of them, preparing for their careers. While we are thrilled to be able to offer vocational training, you are also going to hear more about that in another article.

So I was going back and forth between writing about an idea called the "last inch" which basically means you need to follow through to the end. It was between that and the focus on growing healthy relationships here at Illiana. As I was deciding what to write about, I was observing a science class and the first thing the teacher mentioned was going over the "Every Square Inch Project". So with that, my decision was made.

That classic quote from Reformer Abraham Kuyper basically says that every inch of this world belongs to God. All of it. It is one of those ideas that drives Christian Education and all we do at Illiana. One of my favorite comments of all time came from one of my Bible students a few years ago. After class, the student stopped me and said, "Mr. Davids, I feel like I have five Bible classes this semester." To be fair, they had two "official" Bible classes, but the rest of the classes were English, Psychology, and History. However, their teachers weren't just teaching those classes and fitting God into them once in a while, they were teaching about our awesome God and fitting English and History into Him because all of what we do belongs to God. Every class, every team, every extracurricular activity is all God's and we are here to steward all of them.

Yet, as we talk about this, it's one thing for our classes to focus on God, but we want our students to be a witness to the world and reflect the love of Jesus in everything they do – not just in school. That means the big and the little things that bring my "last inch" idea into the picture. In a book called "Unreasonable Hospitality", Will Guidara talks about how the last inch is the most important. That last inch in anything is sometimes the hardest. The last inch can be the difference between an A and a B. It can be the difference between first and fourth place. The last inch can be the difference between integrity and hypocrisy. That last inch is tough because sometimes it is where you need to put the most intentional effort to get across that finish line. We talk about the last inch at school because sometimes the last inch is the difference-making inch. It is where you take all of what you have learned and put it into practice. The last inch is when you show the stretched-out love of Jesus Christ in real and authentic ways. But whether it is the first inch, the middle mile, or the last inch, it all belongs to God. That is our hope at Illiana; that we are teaching our kids that every inch matters and it all belongs to God. Thank you for your help in teaching these kids about our awesome God.



THE LAST

INCH

Farewell CLASS OF 2024



IT WAS ANOTHER GLORIOUS evening for commencement exercises as the 98 members of the Class of 2024 graduated back on May 31st. Senior Alex Tambrini delivered the welcome. "I am quite confident that we will all one day grow up to be bold, caring, and intelligent leaders just like the staff here at Illiana," said Tambrini. Senior Abbey Helmus followed up with the farewell message. "Live in the present where God has placed you, seize the youth, the health, the love that he has given you, and watch for the doors that he may have opened for you," Helmus said. The Senior class chose English teacher, Jeff DeVries to give the "charge to the graduates." Mr. DeVries gave a moving speech, encouraging the students to avoid the earthly kingdom of coercion and conquest and rather seek the heavenly kingdom of God. "You are a sinner saved by grace; you aren't better than other people, and you don't have to pretend that you are," DeVries said. "God doesn't love you for what you have or haven't done, God loves you because of who he is." The evening ended with a rousing fireworks display, a few tears, many smiles, and much laughter. Congrats to the Class of 2024!



The Illiana Drama Department returned to that old, familiar town of Grover's Corners for their Fall Play: "Our Town". The classic American play written by Thornton Wilder portrays life in a small town where nothing much happens all the while revealing profound truths. The cast, crew, and directors spent many long hours after school preparing for the performances on November 7 - 9. No doubt this production will be long remembered.

Take a...

IT'S NOVEMBER, and we are halfway to filling that Auditorium! We are so excited about all the possibilities that will come with the realization of this space; and to help us get there, we are doing a seat campaign! Intrigued? Read on!

In November, we launched the Illiana Christian High School Auditorium Seat Campaign to raise funds for the inside of the Illiana Auditorium. Our plan is to "sell" the 1,094 seats in the Auditorium to raise a slice of the rest of what we need to be fully funded.

The hope is that many can be involved in this part of the campaign just as we hope the whole community can use the Auditorium when it's completed. Would you please consider being part of this campaign and making your mark on a piece of Illiana history? I am thankful for the incredible generosity that has already impacted Illiana so much with support and many gifts. I am blown away; not only by the sheer amount that has been given, but also by the fact that each donor and supporter are CHEERFUL givers. It is an honor to be on the front lines of what God is doing here at Illiana. Every gift and every donor has joy exuding from them, and it is so awe-inspiring to watch. Thank you for your love and support of Illiana and Christian education. Below are some FAQs of this campaign; but if you have additional questions, please don't hesitate to reach out!

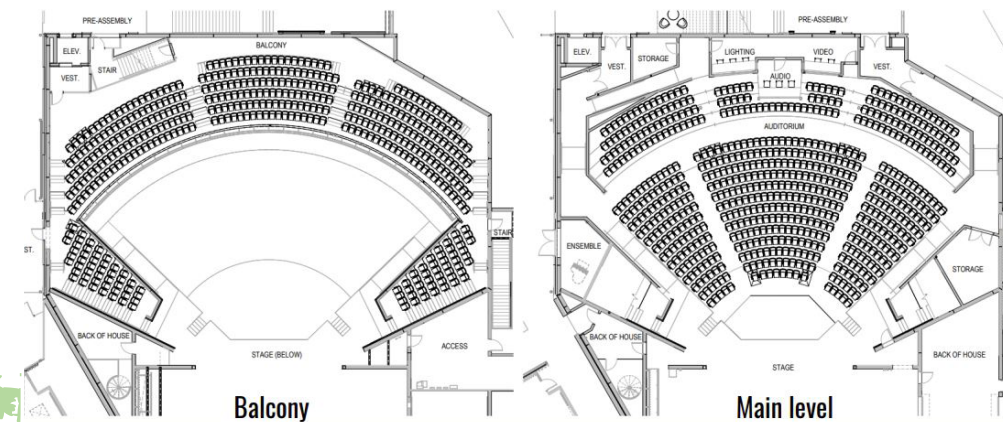
FAQ's of the Illiana Christian High School Auditorium Seat Campaign:

1. *How many seats are in the proposed auditorium?* In the plans that we have now, there are 1,094 event seats. Some of these seats are wheelchair spaces.
2. *How much will a seat cost?* \$500.00
3. *Will I get to pick my actual seat, and will that seat then be mine when I attend events at Illiana?* Our hope is that in "selling" seats for the Auditorium, we will be able to involve the community even more so with the realization of the Auditorium. While you won't get to pick your seat, nor will it be perpetually reserved for you when you attend events; we hope that you'll feel included and involved in history-making at Illiana Christian.
4. *Will my name be put on the seat that I buy?* For starters, we never publish the names of donors unless we have permission to do so. When you walk into the front of Illiana now, you'll see those donors (who gave permission) who were part of the Building Illiana campaign. Our plan is to have a similar donor area in the lobby of the auditorium to thank those who have been part of Phase 2, which includes the inside of the Auditorium.
5. *How long will this seat campaign go on?* This will go on until November 30, 2024
6. *If I cannot be involved in the seat campaign, what can I do?* Anything you can do toward the broader Illiana Christian Auditorium Campaign would be a wonderful addition and blessing to the school. Please also keep Illiana in your intentional prayers as we look to finish the auditorium and strive to instill the love of Jesus in the hearts and minds of these students.



ILLIANA CHRISTIAN
HIGH SCHOOL

Illiana Christian High School Auditorium Seat Campaign



Balcony

Main level

IN MEMORY OF

- Anita Slager**
Mr. and Mrs. John M. Norman
- Audrey I. Huizenga**
Mr. Edward Gabrielse
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald K. Huizenga
Mrs. Kathryn J. VanDerMolen
Mr. and Mrs. George J. VandeWerken
Mrs. Anna M. VanDrunen
Mrs. Joan Vredeveld
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Mrs. Janet M. Terpstra
Mrs. Arlene A. VanderWerff

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Ms. René L. Fennema

John Kraai
Mrs. Janet M. Terpstra
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Mrs. Melissa Roeda

Mille DeBoer
Mr. and Mrs. M. Richard DeVries
Mr. and Mrs. Michael J. DeVries

Randy Roeda
Mrs. Melissa Roeda

Sharlotte Smits
Mrs. Kathleen Berdan

Tammy DeYoung
Mrs. Melissa Roeda

IN HONOR OF

Arnold DeJong's 90th Birthday
Mr. and Mrs. George VanRyn

Howard and Kim Rispens
50th Wedding Anniversary
Mr. and Mrs. Steven D. Boender

Joann Slifko's 85th Birthday
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Moes

The Class of 1974
The Class of 1974

Oliver Dorn's Birthday
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Brinkmann

Peter Boonstra
Mrs. Brenda Boonstra
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas W. Post

Ryland and Jan Brummel's
65th Anniversary
Mr. Richard A. Terpstra

5 FUN ADMISSIONS FACTS

JENNA DUTTON, Admissions Director

5 The 2024-2025 school year started with 610 students, which is 63 more students than we finished the 2023-2024 school year with.

4 I am going into my 4th year as Admissions Director

3 Check out these numbers:

School Year	Freshman Class Size
2021	147
2022	128
2023	155
2024	170

2 This past year, we had our first "freshmen scheduling night" where parents and incoming freshmen came in and planned out their 4-year academic roadmap.

1 The Application for the 2025-2026 school year opened on October 14 and we already have 100+ applications!

FALL SPORTS UPDATE

GIRLS FLAG FOOTBALL

Illiana's first season for girls' flag football saw a lot of growth and a major turnout of players. Coaches Heidi Teach and Taylor Benes led the team through their inaugural season with 20 girls rostered! The highlight of the season was the first home game on September 7 where we saw a huge amount of support from our community for the program.



GIRLS VOLLEYBALL FRESHMEN

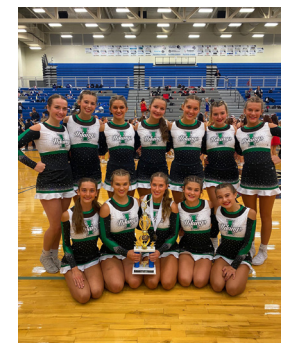
The girls' freshmen program saw huge improvements throughout the season. First-year head coach, Austin Clark, led the team to an 11-14 record. The annual challenge of bringing together a group of girls from different programs to play together is always difficult, but they did a great job coming together as a team.

JV

The girls' JV team was coached by Adam Clark and finished the season with a sparkling 25-5 record. "My favorite part of the season was seeing how well they played together," said Coach Clark, "The more they played, the better they were together. They rallied in games that they started down and fought back as a team."

VARSITY

The varsity program finished with a 23-8 record this season under head coach Richelle VanderZee. "One of the team's goals was to grow in faith and team relationships by working together and having team accountability," said Coach VanderZee, "We have some good senior leaders this year that have made that goal possible. The success of this team has been accomplished by teamwork and glorifying God through the sport of volleyball." The girls started their postseason tournament the week of October 14.



SOCCER BOYS JV

The huge turnout for boys' soccer allowed them to field two JV teams. They finished with a combined 11-3-6 record under the leadership of head coach Jake Felton. "My two captains, Seth Strigow and Olyver Housman did an excellent job communicating," said Coach Felton, "This team laughed a lot and really enjoyed being around each other daily."

BOYS VARSITY

The varsity boys program finished their regular season with an overall record of 12-2-2 under Coach Todd Bevan. The team lost to Bishop Noll in the last week to tie for the conference championship. Then, a week later, faced Bishop Noll again in the Sectional finals where they scored a goal in overtime for a 1-0 victory and their second IHSAA Sectional Championship. The boys then advanced to the Regional tournament.

GIRLS

The girls finished their season with a 12-4 record. Led by seniors Sam Bultema, Jaden Poortinga, and Hannah Hammer, the team was able to secure their GSSC Conference championship. Coach Vanessa Huizenga's girls' team made it to the Sectional Finals this year, falling just short of their first IHSAA Sectional Championship. With 23 rostered players, the girls have 20 returning players and look to build on what was a very successful season.



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CROSS COUNTRY BOYS

The Viking XC team had another successful season under head coach Jorge Ramos. The boys repeated their GSSC Conference Championship and saw another season of growth from both their leaders as well as newcomers to the program. Cody Aardsma was the GSSC individual champion. The boys ran at Highland High School on October 19 for the Sectional.

GIRLS

The girls also had a great year as they repeated their GSSC Championship title again. The girls were led by senior Ella Olthof who was also the individual conference champion. “We have a strong group of girls,” said Coach Luke Fennema, “They have worked hard this season to be more committed to God, their team, and their training.” Their postseason began October 19 where they ran at Highland High School.

CHEER

The competitive cheer squad is led by head coach Carissa Beezhold and seniors Nolee VanDrunen and Jenna Koontz. The girls are having a great season, which has been highlighted by their 1st place in the Central Indiana Cheer Championship on October 5. The girls began their postseason on October 19.

GIRLS GOLF

The girls team ended a season where they saw immense growth and even a conference championship captured on September 10. The girls were led by first year head coach Megan VanderZee. In Sectionals, the girls performed well but were unable to advance as a team. However, they were able to see Freshman Regan Kats advance to the Regional tournament as an individual!

BOYS TENNIS

The boys’ tennis program was GSSC Co-Champions this year. Under head coach, Karen Blaauw the boys grew in both skill and knowledge of the game. The team sported a whopping 20 players and was led by singles Chase Lindemulder and Silas Olthof and 1st doubles team Brandon DeYoung and Tyler Groenewold. The team advanced to the Sectional finals where they came up a little short. However, it was a great season.

