

Winter 2025



# MANE EDITION

MAGAZINE

 maranatha



## Maranatha's Mission Statement

We are an influential school of collaborators, innovators, and explorers grounded in Christian faith, empowering co-creators of tomorrow.

---

### Matthew 7:24

'24-'25 Theme Verse

**“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”**



CHRISTIAN ACADEMY MARANATHA

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1.....** Building on a Firm Foundation
- 3 .....** Planting Seeds of Truth
- 5 .....** Advanced Placement (AP)
- 6.....** Early Foundations
- 7.....** Building Character, Cultivating Minds in Lower School
- 8.....** Transforming the Middle School Experience
- 9.....** Shaping and Launching Tomorrow's Leaders in High School
- 11.....** Beyond the Classroom
- 13....** National Honor Society
- 14....** You Can Get There From Here
- 15 ....** Breaking Records, Building Legacy
- 18....** Music at Maranatha
- 19 ....** The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
- 21 ....** More than a School: The Mustang Experience
- 23....** Culture in Action
- 24 ...** Upper School Value Wall
- 25....** Annual Report
- 30 ...** Fueling Excellence
- 33....** Inspire Field
- 34 ...** MN Christian Schools United
- 35....** Leaving a Spiritual Legacy
- 37....** Where Are They Now?
- 39....** God as the Foundation
- 41....** Community Partners

---

# Building on a Firm Foundation

## The Power of a Strong Education

---



**Deb Larson**  
**Head of School**

As Head of School, I often reflect on the values and principles that guide us in nurturing young minds. One such principle comes from Matthew 7:24-25, where Jesus says:

Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, yet it did not fall because it had its foundation on the rock.

**Matthew 7:24-25**

This powerful metaphor reminds us of the importance of a solid foundation in all areas of life, including education. Just as a well-built house withstands storms because it rests on a firm foundation, so too does a strong education enable students to weather life's challenges. The "rock" in education is more than just academic knowledge;

it encompasses critical thinking, moral integrity, and developing skills that endure over time.

We are witnessing a significant contrast in educational outcomes across Minnesota, where private schools consistently report higher academic achievement than public schools. This discrepancy is not simply a matter of test scores, though the difference is striking. Studies have shown that students in most private schools score significantly higher in math, reading, and science than their public-school counterparts. Recent Minnesota Department of Education data highlights that private-school students often perform well above the state average in key areas, while public schools are seeing declining proficiency rates.

What accounts for this gap? In part, it is the strength of the foundation upon which these schools build their curricula and educational approach. Private schools often benefit from smaller class sizes, individualized attention, and a values-based education that emphasizes intellectual growth and character formation. This aligns closely with the wisdom of building on the “rock” as described in Matthew 7.

At Maranatha, we strive to build such a foundation. Our commitment to academic excellence is complemented by our dedication to nurturing each student’s moral and spiritual development. We equip our students not only to excel in their studies but also to become resilient, compassionate, and thoughtful individuals who can navigate the world’s complexities.

The rains will come—life’s inevitable challenges, uncertainties, and tests. The winds will blow—peer pressure, societal expectations, and the fast-changing demands of the workforce. However, students whose education is built on the rock of a well-rounded, values-based curriculum will stand firm and ready to face whatever comes their way.

In contrast, schools where the foundation is less stable and students are not given the same level of personal attention or moral grounding may

struggle to deliver the same outcomes. Just as a house built on sand cannot withstand the storm, an education built upon the same will falter under pressure.

The disparity in test scores between private and public schools in Minnesota is not just a statistic. It reflects the importance of building wisely—of investing in quality teaching, nurturing environments, and the holistic development of our children. It is a reminder that education, like a well-built house, must be grounded in something enduring if it is to stand the test of time.

At Maranatha, we are proud to be building on the rock. We believe in providing an education that stands firm against the challenges ahead, preparing our students not just for academic success, but for life. Together, let’s continue to build wisely, ensuring that every child’s future is as secure as the house built on a firm foundation.



# Planting Seeds of Truth

## Why the Kepharts Chose Biblical Education at Maranatha



Teaching all subjects from a biblical worldview is a keystone to what happens here at Maranatha. We recently had the chance to sit down with one of our families, the Kepharts, to hear their story and perspective on partnering together in the biblical worldview development of their son, Silas.

Moving to Minnesota from Alaska for family reasons, the Kepharts initially couldn't wait to get back to Alaska. Since then, they've fallen in love with MCA and knowing that their son is growing up in an environment where he is truly loved and taught the Word of God—they couldn't see it being any other way. "It's really why we're even in this state still, to be honest."

The Kepharts fully believe that it is our duty, as parents, such as the command is given in Deuteronomy, to bring our children up in the ways of the Lord, and that a big part of that is to make sure our son's teachers align with our biblical values. "It's so important to partner with others who share the same love for God's Word and how important it is." Children spend a majority of their time at school and to have them being daily surrounded by like-minded believers is crucial.

Being a part of a school that knows its identity, and that identity being found in Christ, is extremely important to the Kepharts. "No two people are going to agree on everything, but when there's an organization or an establishment such as public schools that's trying to intrude on an identity in Christ the more important it is to really think about who is speaking into your child's identity." The key is to plant those seeds when they are young so that, as it says in Proverbs, they won't depart from it even when they're old. "What I see walking around this place," Mr. Kephart said, "is there's more people in love with God here than anywhere else I've seen."

Parents these days are well aware of what is

taught in schools and what their children are being influenced by. Kids, in many ways, are like plants in that they need the proper environment to grow healthy. Making sure kids are put in a nurturing, safe environment where they'll be loved and taught the truth of God's Word is paramount for making sure our children have the proper stability before going out into the world to be the light. "We have such a responsibility."

Raising children up on the Word of God starts at home, and our teachers are here to help support that. If our teachers aren't living out that example of what it means to follow after Christ, how will our children see the example? Biblical integration at Maranatha is more than just a chapel or two a



week and a little Bible on the side. When doing their first walkthrough at MCA, the Kepharts were taken aback by just how truly embedded the Word of God really was in everything. "That was

definitely a winning point; that was the sinker."

Building a school upon the truth of God's Word has been the goal of Maranatha since the beginning. To put it as Mr. Kephart did, "God's Word is the single source of truth." Our goal, as well as the goal of our parents, is to surround our children daily with that single source of truth. Kids these days are relentlessly bombarded with conflicting viewpoints and messages, and our plan is to partner together as a school with our parents to provide stability and security for our students through the only thing that can do that: God's Word.

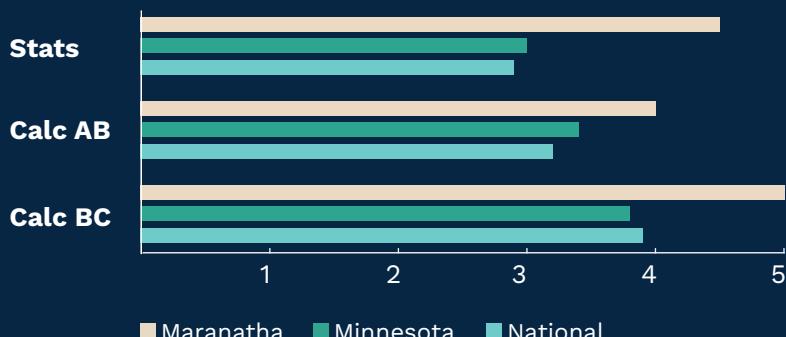


# Advanced Placement (AP)

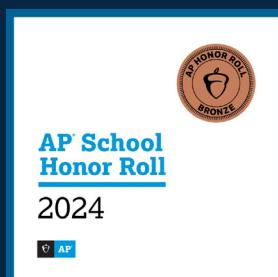
## Maranatha's 2023-24 AP score report earns MCA a place on the AP Honor Roll.

AP (Advanced Placement) courses offer high school students the opportunity to take and receive college level courses and credits. AP courses are approved through the College Board and tend to be more nationally known/accepted for students who may be looking to attend a college outside Minnesota. Unlike PSEO courses, AP courses are taught by Maranatha teachers, and college credit is determined by how well a student performs on the end-of-year exam in May (scored on a scale of 1-5). Typically, any score of 3 or greater is determined as a passing grade which, may earn students college credit.

During the 2023-2024 school year, 39 students took 47 tests in one or more of 7 on-campus course offerings, with additional AP courses having been offered through Maranatha Online. While exam scores dropped nationwide, ours did not. Maranatha students had an overall pass rate of 78% which led to 111 college credits being earned.



Additionally, Maranatha earned the AP Honor Roll Award for the 2023-2024 school year, which serves to highlight the value we place on preparing students for post-high school academics.



# Early Foundations

## The Pre-Kindergarten Experience



Early childhood education sets the stage for lifelong learning at Maranatha Christian Academy. Our Pre-Kindergarten program creates an engaging, nurturing environment where our youngest learners begin their educational journey. Through carefully designed project-based learning experiences, children develop crucial social, emotional, and academic foundations.

Our Pre-K classrooms buzz with purpose and joy as children explore God's world through hands-on activities, creative play, and structured learning times. Teachers carefully balance developmental needs with academic preparation, introducing early literacy and mathematical concepts through age-appropriate activities. Students learn to work independently and collaboratively, developing essential social skills while building their academic capabilities.

Beyond academics, our Pre-K program emphasizes character development and spiritual growth at an age-appropriate level. Through Bible stories, worship songs, and daily interactions, children begin to understand God's love for them and learn to show that love to others. This early foundation becomes the bedrock upon which all future learning builds.



# Building Character, Cultivating Minds in Lower School



**Rachel David and Dane Wellens**  
LS Principal and LS Assistant Principal

As students progress into our K-5 program, they enter an environment designed to develop the whole child—heart, mind, and spirit. Our lower school builds upon the early foundations established in Pre-K, challenging students academically while nurturing their character and faith development.

Our carefully chosen curriculum reflects our commitment to academic excellence, including our recently adopted mathematics program that develops critical-thinking skills and problem-solving abilities. Students engage in hands-on science experiments, develop strong literacy

skills through our comprehensive language arts program, and explore history through a biblical worldview.

The lower school years are crucial for developing study habits, critical thinking skills, and learning strategies to serve students throughout their academic journey. Our teachers create classroom environments that encourage questions,

celebrate effort, and foster a growth mindset. Through our Culture in Action Awards program, we recognize and celebrate students who demonstrate Christ-like character alongside academic achievement.

The powerful partnership between our teachers and families truly sets our lower school apart. This collaboration has led to remarkable results, with our students consistently performing above the 70th percentile compared to their peers nationwide. However, we measure success not through test scores alone but by developing students who find their worth in Christ and demonstrate resilience in the face of challenges.



# Transforming the Middle School Experience

Middle school represents one of life's most transformative seasons, and at Maranatha, we've crafted our program to embrace these pivotal years. Rather than viewing this phase as a bridge between elementary and high school, we recognize it as a unique opportunity for students to discover who they are in Christ and explore their distinct gifts.

This vision led to our strategic decision to establish a dedicated middle school program with dedicated administration—Allen Banks as Principal and Brian Zimmer as Assistant Principal. This structure ensures our 5th through 8th-grade students receive focused attention during these formative years.



**Allen Banks and Brian Zimmer**  
**MS Principal and MS Assistant Principal**

At Maranatha, we understand that being a Christian school doesn't mean the absence of challenges. When challenges arise, we walk alongside students as they navigate friendship dynamics, understanding their identity in Christ, purpose and personal

growth, all through biblical wisdom and understanding. Our teachers and staff maintain an intentional presence in hallways, classrooms, and activities, creating an environment where every student feels known and valued.



# Shaping and Launching Tomorrow's Leaders in High School



**Sarah Rothstein and Joshua Agrimson**  
**HS Principal and HS Assistant Principal**

High school at Maranatha represents the final four years when students begin to fully embrace their calling and develop the confidence to live it out. As we partner with families to prepare students for their future, our vision centers on creating an environment where students don't just learn—they thrive, lead, and grow into the young men and women God calls them to be.

## **NURTURING AUTHENTIC FAITH**

A well-rounded education goes beyond academics to touch the hearts and

minds of students. "We want our students to know that God created them on purpose for a purpose," shares Josh Agrimson, Assistant High School Principal. This fundamental truth evolves into tangible opportunities for students to lead, serve, and excel.

We intentionally create space for students to develop a genuine, sustainable faith that will carry them through life's challenges. Through regular opportunities for worship, prayer, Bible studies, and Daily Bread, students are encouraged to move beyond surface-level faith to develop a deep, personal relationship

with Christ that shapes their worldview and decision-making.

## **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE WITH PURPOSE**

Our commitment to academic excellence is unwavering but with a distinct purpose. We're actively creating learning experiences that connect classroom concepts to real-world applications. Our teachers design engaging lessons that challenge students to think critically, solve problems creatively, and develop skills essential for their future careers. Whether through advanced coursework, hands-on projects, or innovative teaching approaches, we're preparing students for college and life.

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT VOICE**

Every student can lead and influence others positively. We intentionally create opportunities for students to develop and exercise leadership skills through student-led initiatives, mentorship programs, and meaningful

responsibilities. We're fostering an environment where students are encouraged to own their school experience and contribute to our community's growth and development.

## BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITY

The high school years are crucial for personal development, and we've created a supportive community where

students feel safe, valued, and heard. Our teachers and staff are committed to knowing each student personally, understanding their unique gifts and challenges, and helping them navigate these critical years. This strong sense of community extends to our parent and business partnerships, creating a network for everyone to belong.

Maranatha's high school program equips students

with the spiritual foundation, academic excellence, and leadership skills needed for a lifetime of impact. Our graduates leave with a clear sense of who they are in Christ and how they can use their gifts to influence their world. As we look to the future, our commitment to innovation and excellence continues to grow, launching students into God's purpose for their lives.



## Summer at Maranatha

- Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten Summer Program
- 1st - 6th Grade Summer Program
- Athletics Summer Camps, 2nd-12th Grade
- Summer Tutoring
- Summer Reading
- Pre-ACT Prep



## Now Enrolling!

Scan the QR Code to Join the Maranatha Community:



# Beyond the Classroom

## How Maranatha's STEM Program Turns Real-World Challenges into Powerful Learning Opportunities



At Maranatha, STEM education begins in Pre-K. Our youngest learners first discover the joy of exploration and problem-solving through hands-on activities. This foundation of curiosity and critical thinking builds every year, creating confident innovators ready to tackle real-world challenges by graduation.

The STEM department enriches this journey with experiences and courses that bridge classroom learning and real-world application.

Our STEM program focuses on developing the critical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation skills that characterize Maranatha graduates.

When opportunity knocked this fall, our students were ready. After a truck damaged the Brooklyn Blvd. bridge over 169 on October 7, STEM students turned the situation into a practical learning experience. They visited the bridge site to assess the damage firsthand and researched news coverage to analyze potential solutions for restoring full access.

The “Intro to Business” course demonstrates our practical approach to learning. Students develop comprehensive business plans for food truck ventures, learn to navigate state commerce requirements, design business logos, and create marketing and organizational strategies.

“Mustang Enterprises,” our student-run business, represents hands-on learning at its finest. Students harness the STEM Center’s resources, including 3D printers and CAD software, to prototype solutions and explore innovative approaches to various challenges.





Connecting with industry leaders has become an integral part of our program. Professionals from Medtronic, Nautical Bowls, Chick-fil-A, and Device Pitstop regularly share their expertise with our students. These interactions range from SolidWorks demonstrations on

product packaging to engaging Q&A sessions about business management.

By integrating innovative teaching methods with real-world experience throughout their time at Maranatha, we prepare students to do more than succeed in their

chosen fields — we empower them to lead and innovate. From their first days in Pre-K to their final projects as seniors, Maranatha students develop the skills and confidence to shape the future.

# National Honor Society

## Valuing Student Leadership through National Honor Society (NHS) and National Junior Honor Society (NJHS)

The National Junior Honor Society (grades 6-9) and National Honor Society (10-12) are national organizations that recognize students for outstanding academic achievement. Students looking to participate in either chapter go through an application process which includes a teacher evaluation based on criteria such as leadership

and character. A 3.5+ GPA is also required for consideration.

Both programs pride themselves on being built upon the Four Pillars (Scholarship, Service, Leadership, Character). These Pillars are “transformative keys that unlock potential, enhancing every student’s educational journey, and

ultimately empowering them to make profound, enduring contributions to our world”

Here at Maranatha, we also believe that students who dedicate themselves to lifelong learning, have a passion for helping others, live to inspire those around them, and practice compassion should be highlighted.

### This year's NJHS inductees (left):

Chinyere Agbagbuo  
Jackson Clutter  
Eva Cox  
Latera Daka

Janora Dennis  
Julia Huisenga  
Ariella Johnson  
Avery Kester  
Alexander King  
Madelyn Knight  
Henrik Larson

Shylom McCray  
Grayson Mozzdin  
Rhys Nelson  
Olly Nwangwu  
Katherine Pinto  
Noah Reider  
Maya Selam

Graham Thayer  
Halsten Van Otterloo  
Elsi Weisbrod-Tran  
Layla Williams

### This year's NHS inductees (right):

Ileri Alabi  
Olivia Alm  
Kimberly Asiago  
Ashley Baley  
Marolae Berhanu

Ava Block  
McKenna Brinkley  
Leneya Brooks  
Brianna De La Pena  
Tony Ernster  
Lenaya Frigstad  
Zachary Goffin  
Aubrie Herman

Jacob Kim  
Avery Lanari  
Olivia Lynch  
Sadie Maes  
Emelia Nelson  
Yuki Okumura  
Victoria Ontonuga  
Troy Pozinski

Noelle Reider  
Isabella Singh  
Miles Van Otterloo  
Bryant Yackel  
Alina Yang



# You Can Get There From Here

## How the College & Career Center Helps Students Connect Interests to Careers

As a student, the thought of life after high school can be a bit overwhelming. With the many colleges, careers, and opportunities available, it can leave students wondering where to even begin.

The College and Career Center (CCC) assists students on this journey by providing support, guidance, and resources to help them make decisions that align with their passions and strengths, all while encouraging them to seek God's guidance.

**1. CAREER COUNSELING**  
One of the first steps in helping students choose their paths is guiding them through the process of career exploration. The CCC works with 6th–12th graders through a career readiness software called Naviance that uses personality, aptitude, and other assessment tools to help students understand their strengths, interests, and skills.

**2. INTERNSHIPS**  
While academic success is important, gaining real-world experience is often the best way for students

to determine what career is right for them. High school internships offer a unique opportunity for students to test out a career before making long-term commitments all while exploring different fields firsthand.

### 3. WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

CCC workshops and seminars help students explore their options and gain the knowledge and tools needed to make informed decisions. Examples include College Fairs, Common Application Workshop, College and Career Week, College Representatives Visits, and more.

### 4. INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

While the CCC plays a role in career exploration, home involvement, and that of the broader community, is extremely important. A powerful way to help guide students is through mentorship programs and internships. It's vital that we invest in creating these opportunities for students to engage outside the typical classroom setting.



Consider partnering with the CCC to offer our students internships, job shadowing, or mentorship.

By investing in students, together we can help shape the next generation of leaders. With God's guidance and your support, we can ensure that our students are equipped to make informed, confident decisions about their future.

**Scan the QR code for info in partnering with the CCC.**



# Breaking Records, Building Legacy

## Mustangs Fall Athletics Season Showcases Program's Strength



### VOLLEYBALL

The Maranatha Varsity Volleyball team, led by second year coach, Drew Rongere, had the most wins in school history with 20 wins. They finished the 2024 season 5-3 in the Skyline Conference and had an overall record of 20-10. In the Section 5AA Tournament, the Mustangs

defeated Spectrum at home (3-0) before heading on the road to Providence where they lost in a five-set thriller to the Lions (3-2). JV finished with a record of 14-4 and C-team finished with a record of 14-7.

Senior outside hitter, Maia Marvel, led the

team in kills (362). Senior outside hitter, Emma Haarstad, led the team in hitting percentage (.233). Freshman setter, Alexa Moscoso, led the team in assists (817) and celebrated reaching 1,000 assists with her teammates during their final home match of the season. Senior libero, Ashley Yost, led the team in aces (71) and digs (391). Senior middle hitter, Emmanuel Onyekwelu, led the team in blocks (26).

Maia Marvel and Ashley Yost were named Skyline All-Conference. Emma Haarstad and Alexa Moscoso were named Skyline All-Conference Honorable Mention.

The program will graduate six seniors including Emma Haarstad, Kenzie Henrichs, Halle Huffman, Maia Marvel, Emmanuel Onyekwelu, and Ashley Yost. They will be a fairly young team in 2025 but look to continue to build on the success the





Mustangs have had the last two seasons.

### BOYS SOCCER

The Maranatha Varsity Boys Soccer team, led by third year head coach, Adi Bilani, made it to the Section 5A Tournament final for the third consecutive year. They finished the 2024 season 3-4-1 in the Skyline Conference and had an overall record of 8-10-1. The Mustangs defeated Cristo Rey in the semifinals (4-2) to advance to the final where they lost a close game to Fridley (0-2) to end their season. JV finished with a record of 4-7-2.

Senior forward, Jaydon Dimitrov, led the team in goals (20) and assists (21).

Jojo Bartolomeos, Jaydon Dimitrov, and Jaidyn Rennie were named Skyline All-Conference. Caleb Johnson was named Skyline All-Conference Honorable Mention.

The program will graduate six seniors including Tevin Asiago, Jojo Bartolomeos, Jaydon Dimitrov, Sam Eibes, Phillip Hanchar, and Justin Perez. The Mustangs are looking forward to off-season training and getting back on the field next fall ready to make another run at a section championship.

### GIRLS SOCCER

The Maranatha Varsity Girls Soccer team, led by first year head coach, Ian Sendi, finished the 2024 season 3-3-2 in the Skyline Conference and had an overall record

of 5-6-6. The Mustangs defeated Cristo Rey (1-0) in the quarterfinals of the Section 5A Tournament before losing in the semifinals to the #1 seed Breck Mustangs (0-4). JV finished with a record of 7-0-1.

Junior forward, Olivia Lanari, led the team in goals (14). Senior midfielder, Ivy Dehler, led the team in assists (4). Sophomore goalkeeper, Kate Wahl, led the team in saves (166).

Sophia Beck, Olivia Lanari, and Kate Wahl were named Skyline All-Conference. Avery Fabienke, Victoria Taschner, and Betanya Tefera were named Skyline All-Conference Honorable Mention. Ian Sendi was named Skyline Head Coach of the Year.

The program will graduate four seniors including Sophia Beck,



Lauren Busch, Ivy Dehler, and Ava Matus. The Mustangs will return a ton of talent in 2025 and will continue to build the culture of their program as they attempt to turn some of those six tied games into wins.

### **BOYS AND GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY**

The Maranatha Varsity Cross Country team, led by twelfth year head coach, Justin Phad, had a great season. The program continues to grow under coach Phad's leadership with eleven boys and six girls competing during the season.

Nine boys had new personal records with Ryan Dane leading the way (20:21). Canon Czerlanis cut the most off his time from the beginning of the season with a difference

of (7:33). Three girls had new personal records with Greta Eaves at the top (25:09), Ava Cox close behind (25:55), and Alejandra Beta Frigola cutting the most time off from the beginning of the season (7:36).

The program will only graduate two seniors, Aubron Taylor and Gavin Jessen. They have goals for 2025 of having both Varsity and JV for boys and girls and developing a full team that can compete at the varsity level.



# Maranatha Music

Music in all its forms is an integral part of a well-rounded education—the ability for students to be creative and expressive in their intellectual growth is so important. Our music department, led by Ginger Clarke, Gracie Sheperd, Gerritt Van Otterloo, and Kiana Welsch, spans from lower to upper school and includes exceptional offerings across band, choir, music, and orchestra. We're also proud that our

music teachers aren't just experienced but are professionals in their field who have a deep passion for the art of music. The vision of the MCA Music Department is to express God's glory and creativity in everything they do.

According to research, music is an integral part of education and strengthens the brain. It can lead to stronger math achievement and oral expression. Music class

allows students to think differently about things as they tap into that creativity and imagination. Whether students are learning the basics of music for the first time in lower school or working on that improvised jazz solo in upper school jazz band, our music department ensures that our curriculum and courses cover all stages of development.



# The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

**Directed and Written By Wayne Matthews**

This fall, the MCA theatre department put on a production of The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. Over the past couple of years, we've typically only had a spring musical, due to heavy student involvement in fall sports. This year, however, we wanted to attempt a second, non-musical production, for students who might not participate in a musical.

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe was chosen and is a wonderful story that serves as a metaphor of the gospel story. A story of salvation, crucifixion and resurrection. I love



doing "theatre on purpose" that is able to tell an important story that has the potential to impact its audience!

We had over 40 students audition for the play, and we even convinced Mr. VanOtterloo to play the

role of Aslan! We were so glad, and he added so much to the production. In addition, our wonderful Assistant Director and Choreographer stepped in to play the character of Father Christmas.

Typically, auditioning is only available for 6th-12th grade. This time, however, we decided to open it up to 5th grade since we saw the potential need for a number of smaller forest creatures. As it turned out, our Lucy ended up being a 5th grade student! The cast ultimately consisted of 24 students and 2 adults.

We ended up being in a new venue this





go-around since The Plymouth Playhouse was not available. We looked into a number of options including utilizing the KIDS space here at Living Word. We were pointed in the direction of LW Northwest who graciously opened their doors to us. The staff there were so welcoming and excited to host MCA Theatre.

Platforming was put together to extend the stage as well as create side entrances and exits for the cast. Extra lights were hung by Andrew Schrader and his crew, parents loaned and donated undecorated Christmas trees, students and Mr. Craig Toquam

built a beaver dam and Tumnus cave, Kari Nelson and students painted the dam and cave as well as a backdrop for the cave. The flats of Narnia were painted by Stacie Kliber, for a former production of The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. And, of course, how can we forget, Mr. Toquam added his own special touch of a wardrobe entrance into the auditorium for the audience to experience!

Tech week was a lot, but the students really rose to the occasion. Mrs. Matthews created a cohesive costume design and Mr. Oehler, along with an army of volunteers, brought the animals to

life through makeup and hair. It was gratifying to see actors really step up and bring their characters to life on stage! Nearly all four shows were sold out and audiences had so many great things to say about the cast and the production. This couldn't have been possible without the many people who pitched in and helped out behind the scenes—whose faces and names people didn't see or hear. I am so proud of the great work everyone did to make this show a success!

# More than a School: The Mustang Experience

## How Maranatha Creates Authentic Connections from Day One



Everyone has a place at Maranatha. No matter what type of learner a student may be, how busy a parent is, or how new or old a teacher might be, everyone has a home at Maranatha. Each day we strive to build an atmosphere that is warm and welcoming. From the small things such as having staff hold doors open for students and parents as they walk in in the morning, to making sure a member of admin is around at all times for those students who just need to talk with someone, we want

to make sure Maranatha feels like a home away from home for all. Other than the things we do on a daily basis, we also make sure to have consistent events that students, parents, and staff alike can all be a part of for those that want to get the most out of their Maranatha experience.

Lower-school students are given every opportunity to be a part of a community and grow closer to God in the process. Not only do each of our teachers teach from a biblical worldview, but students are immersed in Bible classes and weekly

chapels. Students have recently been challenged in chapel to see the immensity of God and how wonderful He truly is. And even though God might be immense, He still cares about you! We want our lower-school students to not just feel comfortable here at Maranatha, but to be so connected that they don't even hesitate to turn to their teacher for help or encouragement when things get tough.

For middle school, Character Hour is a consistent time where students are taught core principles of the Word of God. This is a time where students are mentored in how to have strong character, how to affect the world with positive change, and how to be a good friend. Beyond Character Hour, middle schoolers participate in weekly chapels and are taken on various retreats/field trips such as the 6th grade retreat where an emphasis is put on teambuilding and growing closer to God together.



For high school, D-Groups (Discipleship Groups) have become a mainstay both spiritually and socially. D-Groups are in many ways like an Advisory or Homeroom, except more emphasis is placed on building and growing community—students even stick with their same group and mentor all the way from 9th grade through senior year! D-Groups give time and a place for students to really connect with each other about what matters most to them and to create that spiritual community as they study the Word of God and pray together on a weekly basis.

Bonfire worship, the senior retreat, and See-You-at-the-Pole are just a few of the other events where community is emphasized at Maranatha. We know that before a student can succeed academically, they must first feel safe.

For the parents, our parent community is strong due to the hard work of PWP (Parents With Purpose). No matter the time of year, there's always a PWP event to look forward to such as Friendsgiving in November and monthly moms coffees. We also host various alumni and grandparent events throughout the year.

Our goal is to make Maranatha a place where all students feel comfortable, parents feel supported, and all those connected to Maranatha feel emboldened to pursue their God-given dreams with passion and to become all that He created them to be.



# Culture in Action

Maranatha is not just a school, it's a community where each student and staff member contributes to what makes up the culture of the school. Together we commit to becoming:

## SPIRIT-DRIVEN LEADERS

Spirit-driven leaders lead with integrity and take the opportunity to serve others by being the hands and feet of Jesus. These are the types of leaders we develop at Maranatha. John 14:16–17, 26

## COURAGEOUS CHANGE AGENTS

Courageous change agents aren't afraid to create change and make a difference. Students are challenged to stand on the Word of God, speak truth in love, and to be bold enough to make a difference. Deuteronomy 31:6

## COMPASSIONATE

### PROBLEM SOLVERS

Compassionate problem solvers focus on others and find solutions that create wins. Empathy challenges students to see others through the eyes of Christ by being kind and compassionate in their problem-solving. 1 Peter 3:8

## IMPACTFUL INNOVATORS

Impactful innovators are keen observers of the needs in today's complex world. These students think outside the box, ask challenging questions, collaborate with others, and design innovative solutions. Genesis 1:1-31 (emphasis on 1:27)

## CRITICAL THINKERS

Critical thinkers solve big problems. Students are challenged to ask why and how to foster intellectual curiosity that leads to a sense of wonder and sparks great ideas. Proverbs 4:5, 7

## KINGDOM COMMUNITY BUILDERS

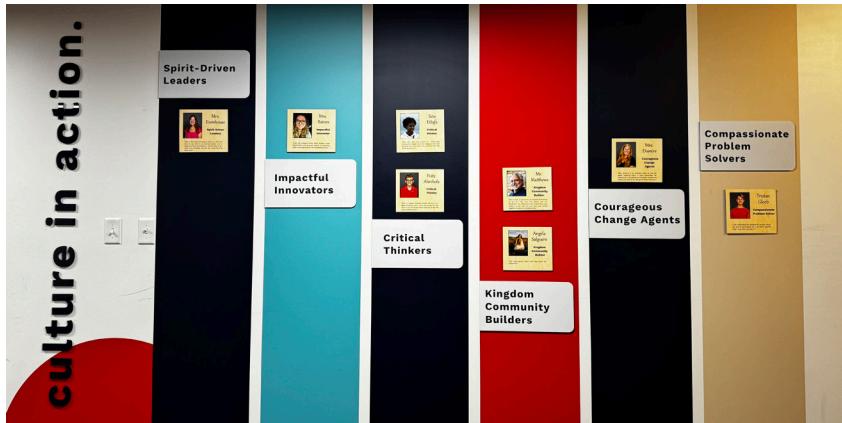
Kingdom community builders are inspired to personally know Jesus and love others based on biblical truths and mutual respect. This cultivates a distinctly Christ-centered community that reflects the Kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:10

Students nominated the previous week are announced over the intercom. All names then go into a weekly drawing where one student receives a prize. Every student, however, receives a nomination award that includes the write-up of why they were nominated. Lower School administration, teachers, support staff, and paras look for students who display being one or more of the attributes listed above.

## Congratulations to the Lower School students recognized from semester 1 of the 2024-25 school year:

Axel Nelson	Minka Sunde	Ellie Oase	Brooks McDermott
Amara Mdumuka	Josh Pinto	Ayo Isawumi	Beck McClure
Marlie Maes	Johnny Opara	Rachel Hunt	Alexis Matson
Kaiden Cainion	Raajumam Geleta	Wilko Ahrenholz	Noah Matson
Landon Miller	Rachel Abaye	Grace Musa	Levi Mueller
Paulette Genchi	Melo (Yobsan) Keno	Isaac Mueller	Henry Ford
Cheri Clausen	Elijah Sunde	Gemma Kukachka	Mason Otwori
Paisley Suste	Ella Sherry	Hailey Solberg	William Leon
Amara Mdumuka	Lattan Gemedu	Cora Kaihoi	Grayson Buckner
Raajumam Geleta	Jacob Andrukaitis	William Horejsi	Irey Adegoke
Elijah Sunde	Ivie Agbator	Reagan Leslie	Kaleb Flaaten
Evan Schiestl	Faith Laing	Eli Richardson	Roman Fossum

# Upper School Value Wall



The heart behind the Culture in Action wall is to celebrate students and staff who embody our culture in action values as champions. We saw a need for our community to truly know our values, and we want to prioritize these values over tasks.

Culture is driven by one's values. Our Value Wall is a physical representation of what we value here at Maranatha. Furthermore, the Value Wall enables us to display and showcase students and staff alike who are living a Godly example. **Congratulations to the Upper School students recognized on the Culture in Action wall from semester 1 of the 2024-25 school year:**

**Jadyn Evenhouse**  
Spirit-Driven Leader

**Julie Raines**  
Impactful Innovator

**Fritz Ahreholz**  
Critical Thinker

**Seto Ettafa**  
Critical Thinker

**Angela Salguero**  
Kingdom Community Builder

**Wayne Matthews**  
Kingdom Community Builder

**Katie Dumire**  
Courageous Change Agent

**Tristan Gloeb**  
Compassionate Problem Solver

Kyan Wright  
Hannah Beaudry  
River Lyles  
Aria Moore  
Maci Hinton  
Lucy Bunker  
Aiden Rotich  
Sophia Krueger  
Lennox Gibbs  
Ofure Agbator  
Titus Woolley  
Stella Jahnke

Natalia Mascarenhas  
Robbie Williams  
Haven Dumire  
Silas Kephart  
Maikah Fabian  
Kingsley Libengood  
Melo Keno  
Jaxon Thibodo  
Blakely Mahle  
Levi Mueller  
Charlie Bush  
Grayson Tetens

Landon Miller  
Isaiah Sayyah  
Fletcher Sahr  
Rowan Nygren  
Aaron Solberg  
Amanda Olsen  
Kennaa Ephraim  
Poppy Benjamin  
Charlotte O'Neil  
Sully Van Winkle  
Joshua McLean  
Anora Graham

Blakley Sedjo  
Jackson Kester  
Sawyer Roselle  
Kingston Gilmer  
Benjamin Mogck  
Colin Horejsi  
Izy Fernandez  
Minka Sunde  
Carter Hetland  
Connor Therrien  
Arabella Ledebuhr

# 23 Annual Report 24

---

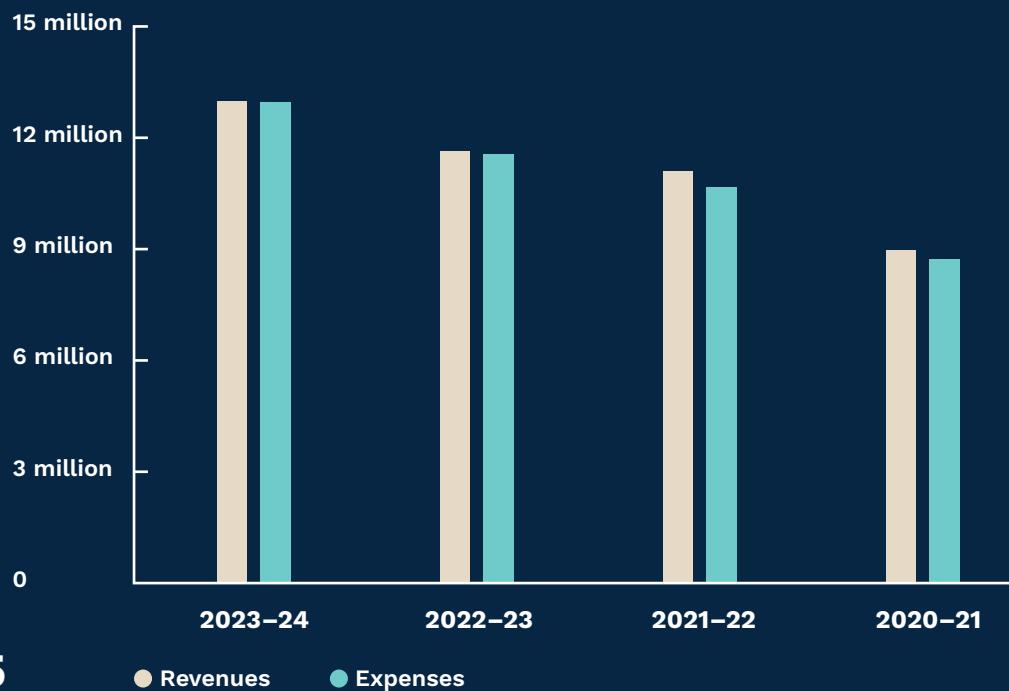
## Revenue & Expenses Report

Revenues	2023–24	2022–23	2021–22	2020–21
Tuition & Fees*	\$11,221,689	\$10,326,809	\$9,400,958	\$7,876,140
Gifts & Fundraising	\$520,663	\$426,097	\$505,774	\$430,304
Services**	\$1,264,755	\$899,492	\$1,213,458	\$673,832
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$13,007,107</b>	<b>\$11,652,398</b>	<b>\$11,120,190</b>	<b>\$8,980,276</b>
Expenses	2023–24	2022–23	2021–22	2020–21
Payroll & Benefits	\$6,593,483	\$5,079,807	\$5,229,789	\$4,515,503
Operating Expenses***	\$3,639,450	\$3,849,090	\$3,190,236	\$2,267,407
Financial Aid & Discounts	\$2,739,453	\$2,648,733	\$2,252,764	\$1,965,163
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$12,972,386</b>	<b>\$11,577,630</b>	<b>\$10,672,789</b>	<b>\$8,748,073</b>
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>\$34,721</b>	<b>\$74,768</b>	<b>\$447,401</b>	<b>\$232,203</b>

\*Including International Students

\*\*Food Service, Transportation, X-Tended Care, Athletics and Activities, Class Fees

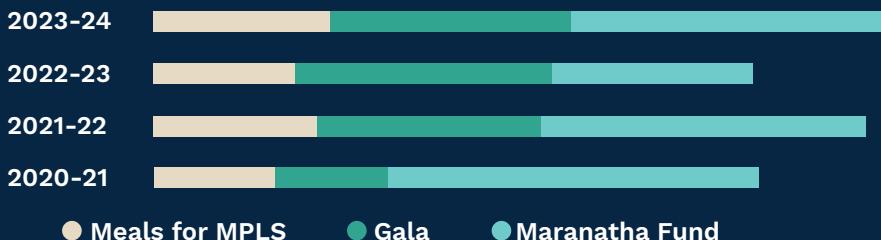
\*\*\*Curriculum, Building Upgrades, Technology, Operations



# MCA Fund & Fundraisers Report

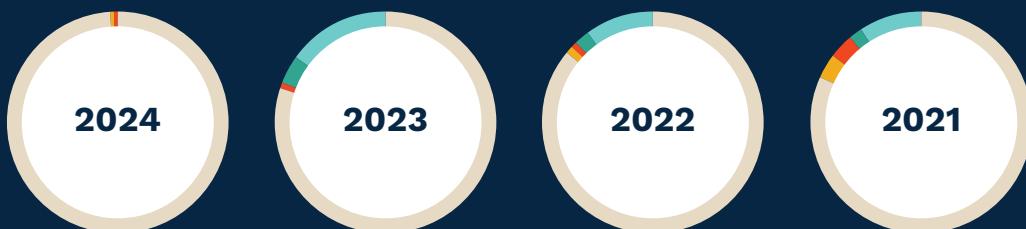
Fundraising Event	2023–24	2022–23	2021–22	2020–21
Meals for Minneapolis	\$124,445.95	\$99,881	\$115,516	\$84,441
Maranatha Gala	\$172,308	\$183,250	\$159,600	\$81,776
Maranatha Fund	\$223,909.40	\$143,181.21	\$230,658	\$264,087
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$520,663.35</b>	<b>\$426,312.21</b>	<b>\$505,774</b>	<b>\$430,304</b>

## 4 Year Look Back



## Post-Graduation Plans

Graduation Year	2024	2023	2022	2021
<b>Number of Graduates</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>College</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>90%</b>
in MN	52%	39%	46%	46%
out of State	47%	41%	40%	44%
<b>Ministry</b>	<b>.5%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Military</b>	<b>.25%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Work</b>	<b>.25%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>2%</b>



## Degrees & Scholarships

Associative Arts Degrees	23	24	29	8
Scholarships	\$10,104,892	\$10,737,907	\$7,783,334	\$4,337,367

# Thank You Donors!

Your generosity impacts every student, every day. Thank you to all the donors who gave during the 2023-24 fiscal year and to all that continually support the student experience each school year.

Cary and Anita Aasness	Nancy Buffum	Delmas Gibson
Janet Abbott	Anita Bulgrin	Sarah Gibson
Randy Abbott	Brenda Bunnell	Dylan Gilmer
Jennifer Adeleye	Jeff Burquest	Jenna Gloeb
Emily Allegra	Deb Campbell	Lisa Goffin
Tyler and Shelly Van Eps	Jennifer Campbell	Kelsey Gonsior
Alicia Anderson	Dale and RoxAnne Carlson	Theodore (Ted) F Gonsior
Kari Anderson	Elise Chianelli	Doug Graham
Kevin Anderson	Mary Christenson	Marc Grove
Landy Anderson	Jeffrey Clapp	Kyle Groves
Erica Anderson-West	Robert Clasen	Joe Gurule
Pam Andrews	David and Amy Clausen	Jim Gustafson
Joseph Anton	Joan Czerlanis	Tom Guttormson
Chukwuemeka Anyake	Jerome Dahlager	Amy Haarstad
Miranda Armstrong	Mike Danek	Steve Haarstad
Astonia LLC	Rachel David	Treena Haase
Cheri Axel	Claudia Davies	Aaron Hall
Lillian Bajari	Darlene Denmark-Brown	Evan Handrick
Allen Banks	Mandie Dewar	Ana Hanson
Chris Barber	Blane Dooner	Bob Hanson
Vern Barber	Kathleen Dudero	Gert Hanson
Adam Beaudry	Mark Ehlen	Josh Harshbarger
Pamela Beaudry	Rachel Ejimadu	Karen Harshbarger
Aaron Bedessem	Gaelin Elmore	John Hastings
Paul Bennett	MariGrace Erickson	Kurt and Jennifer Heinen
Jennifer Berge	Kim Ericson	Jeff Hendrickson
Amber Bethke	Mark Fabian	Nichol Higdon
Corey Bianchi-Rossi	Daniel Fapohunda	Rebekah Hilliard
Colin Bigalke	Fidelity Charitable	Frankie Hing
Joanne Bittner	First Class Mortgage	Molly Holmgren
Brenda Bjork	Lissa Flaaten	Mike Hoolihan
Brian Bjorklund	Liisa Flanagan	Cynthia Hubred
Yulonda Blackmon	Isaac Flores	Kurt Huether
Rachel Block	Juanita Fournier	Martha Hultgren
Rachel Bothum	Gladys Frigstad	Althea Jenkins
Sharon Bourne	Jason Fung Fook	Jeff Jensen
Karl Brown	LaTesha Garrett	Dorie Jessen
Lois Brown	Nicole Garske	Faith Johnson
Liat Browne	Betti Geis	Kim Johnson
	Dave Geis	Tracey Kayoum
	Nathaniel Gibbs	Roxanne Keller
	Stan Gibbs	Kathryn Kelly

Heather Kephart  
Renee Kerr  
Anne Kester  
Ginger Kirschbaum  
Susan Klein  
Jon Koebele  
Mark Kolb  
Shannon Kolb  
Jake Krings  
Jason Kukachka  
Evelyn Lagunas Sibri  
John Laing  
Katie Laing  
Isabelle Lanari  
Barry Larson  
Deb Larson  
Janine Larson  
Marlene Larson  
Jeremy LaVelle  
Phong Lee  
Greg Lennox  
Jamie Leopold  
Living Word Christian Center  
Bruce Locklear  
Chris Lohn  
Perry Long  
Mainhia Lor  
Olivia Louden  
M2 Financial  
Arlene Mandler  
Edward Marvel  
Heather Mascarenas  
Prince Massaquoi  
Mike Matheson  
Shawna Matheson  
Jessica Mathewson  
Wayne Matthews  
Steve McCann  
Kavwimba Mdumuka  
Rachael Meissner  
Lucy Melena  
Mary L Meyer  
Mike Griffore Inc  
Justin Miller  
Spencer Mistelske  
Kristin Mortenson  
Anthony Moscoso  
Bobby Mozdin  
Mary Mueller

Aaron Nelson  
Carl Nelson  
Jillene R Nelson  
Linette Nelson  
Thomas Ngovo  
Erik Norgren  
Melanie North  
Tanya Oetken  
Kirsten Okimosh  
Allie Oliver  
David Olson  
Dorothea Olson  
Isaac Olson  
Joy Olson  
Ken Olson  
Mark Olson  
Annette Parker  
Zane Petersen  
Lee and Mary Peyerl  
Katherine Picard  
Carrie Plack  
Randall Poulson  
Stephanie Poulson  
Desmond Pyne-Bailey  
Jillian Reiman  
Brenda Rhodes  
Lindsay Richardson  
Elyse Richmann  
James R Ricks  
River Oaks of Minnesota  
Drew Rongere  
Mark Rossing  
Mike Rumpca  
Elizabeth Ryan  
Guva Sahn  
Austin Schmitt  
Jessica Scholler  
Michael Sedjo  
Craig Selander  
Danny Serafin  
Eric Sherman  
Dustin Sherry  
Mark Shirley  
Marty Shrake  
Joy Sibinski  
Jacquelyn Simmons  
Anzhela Simonovich  
La-Tonya Slack  
Olga Smith  
Penny Sobczak

Steve Sobczak  
Aaron Solberg  
Donna Marie Solberg  
Melissa Solberg  
Adam St Marie  
Christopher A Stimmmer  
Cristy Strelow  
Brian Sullivan  
Debby Sullivan  
Brandon Suste  
Carrie Szwaja  
John Szwaja  
Lisa Taschner  
Samantha Tetens  
Tim Tetens  
Mary Thayer  
The Weekley Group of Companies  
Shelly Theim  
Joe Thell  
Kelly Thell  
Jon Theodorakakos  
Matt Therrien  
Valerie Therrien  
Kinna Thomas  
Nate Thomas  
Karen Thompson  
Glenn Toby  
Mimi Tran  
Keith Truax  
Caitlin Van Winkle  
James Wagle  
Julie Wagle  
Pamela Walentiny  
Curtis Wellumson  
Wildfire Lifts  
Mara Williams  
Toney Williams  
Arthur Wilson  
Beverly Wohlenhaus  
Danila Woolley  
Brian Yackel  
Michelle Yackel  
Annette Zuech

---

\* We also want to thank the donors who wish to remain anonymous.

# Thank You Community Partners and Business Sponsors!

Community Partners are businesses who desire to invest in the next generation. We are grateful to the following community partners and businesses who sponsored our events. Your support ensures that we can offer excellent academics now and into the future.

## Platinum

- MMD
- Michael Matheson (M2 Financial)
- St. Francis Dental
- Alpha & Omega Wealth Strategies
- Substance Church

## Gold

- David Weekley
- First Class Mortgage
- Pro Electric
- Living Word
- Wildfire Lifts

## Silver

- Aaron Hall/ Attorney
- American Family Insurance
- Loeffler Construction & Consulting
- Legacy Toys
- Town & Country

## Bronze

- Dane Tax Solutions
- Morrie's Brooklyn Park Subaru
- Branding Warehouse
- Chick-Fil-A
- Kingdom Coffee
- Nautical Bowls

**Interested in becoming a community business partner or having a listing in our business directory?**

**Contact Chris Barber or scan QR code.**



# Fueling Excellence

## The Impact of Giving on Our Mission

**"As I reflect on the past few years, I am filled with gratitude and excitement for our progress together. Each contribution has helped shape our mission to provide exceptional education and foster the next generation of leaders grounded in Christian faith. While tuition provides the foundational support for our student's educational journey, your generous gifts fuel our ambition and excellence."** – Chris Barber

Thanks to your contributions, we are meaningfully elevating our learning environment. This school year, we set an ambitious goal of \$550,000. I am thrilled to share some of the incredible projects your support has made possible over the past few years:

### ENHANCEMENTS TO OUR CAMPUS

**Playground Upgrades:** New equipment has ensured our playground is a vibrant space for creativity and activity, allowing our students to explore and develop their physical skills.

**Inspire Field:** The addition of Inspire Field, our

dedicated green space for sports, physical education, events, and more. This long-awaited area provides our students with a safe and versatile environment to engage in various activities and promote their physical and social development.

**Classroom Upgrades:** We have remodeled lower school classrooms and added eight new upper school classrooms, along with four new lower school classrooms, creating engaging spaces that foster collaboration and creativity.

**Weight Room:** This facility supports our athletic programs, enabling our students to develop strength, endurance, and teamwork.

**New Lower School Music Room:** This dedicated space has enhanced our music program, providing students with the resources they need to explore their musical talents.



**Fabrication Lab:** Our new lab is equipped with 3D printers and drones, allowing students to engage in hands-on learning and explore technology in innovative ways.

**College and Career Center:** This facility supports our students in preparing for their futures, offering resources for college and career readiness.

**Smartboards and Technology Upgrades:** New Smartboards and other technology improvements across classrooms have enriched the learning experience and support interactive education.

**Teacher Workstations and Furniture:** Upgraded workstations and furniture have created a more efficient and comfortable environment for our educators.

**Mini-Grant Program:** This initiative empowers teachers to bring innovative ideas into the classroom, enhancing the educational experience for our students.

**Gym Sound System:** New speakers and sound systems have elevated the atmosphere during athletic events and school gatherings.



**Pre-K Center Phase II:** With custom cabinets, a color light radius, and ample windows, our youngest learners have an inspiring and nurturing space to thrive in.

**Art Display Spaces:** The addition of birch wall displays in the first-floor hallways celebrates our students' artistic endeavors, showcasing their creativity for all to see.

**New Athletic Equipment and Uniforms:** Updated equipment and uniforms have enhanced our sports programs, ensuring our teams are well-prepared for competition.

**CELEBRATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS**  
Our fundraising efforts also support the annual Mini-Grant program, which

empowers teachers to enhance their classrooms. Last year's grants include:

**Upper School Choir/Music:** The Choir Chimes grant has allowed students to engage with music in a hands-on way, fostering skills that are invaluable for those interested in the arts.

**Lower School Learning Commons:** New professional signage has created a welcoming atmosphere, encouraging students to explore the library and develop a love for reading.

**Student Activities:** Event supplies have elevated our school presentation and ensured our athletic events are memorable experiences for students and guests alike.



## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

We are not just expanding our facilities; we are cultivating an environment where our students can flourish academically and spiritually. The success of projects like the new Inspire Field, a symbol of our commitment to growth, is a testament to our community's dedication. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our campaign cabinet, our generous donors, and the teams that helped bring our vision to life.

As we celebrate these achievements, let's remember that our

mission extends beyond bricks and mortar. Each dollar raised is an investment in our students' futures, ensuring they are equipped with the tools, experiences, and faith necessary to lead in a rapidly changing world.

Together, we are building not just a campus, but a vibrant community committed to excellence and growth. As we reflect on our successes and look toward the future, I encourage each of you to continue supporting our mission. Your contributions are vital to nurturing the next generation of leaders

and ensuring our school remains a beacon of hope and learning.

Thank you for being an integral part of this journey. Let's continue working together to inspire and elevate our students in the coming years.

**Chris Barber**  
Development Director

Scan the QR Code  
to invest in the  
next generation



# Inspire Field



For the first time in Maranatha's 45-year history, we celebrated the ribbon cutting on our new green space, Inspire Field. Inspire Field is the first step towards a larger vision and something definitely worth celebrating. "We are so excited to have this milestone happening here in front of you with everyone who has given time and energy," Ms. Larson told the group gathered for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Inspire Field is not just an answer to prayer, but a monument to what we

can accomplish when we work together. From our many generous donors, campaign chairs Michael and Shawna Matheson, to Pastor Mac and Living Word's generous donation of the plot of land, this achievement could not have been done alone.

"Inspire Field is the beginning of a beautiful thing," says Michael Matheson. "The need for faith-based education has never been greater. Inspire Field is the first step to aid in the expansion of giving greater access to Christian education." With a strategic plan

that encompasses a capital expansion, Inspire Field truly is that first step in a vision to provide Christian education to as many Christian families as possible.

If you would like to continue to invest in the future vision of Maranatha, please contact Chris Barber at the [email](mailto:email) ([MCAFund@mcamustangs.org](mailto:MCAFund@mcamustangs.org)) or [scan the QR code below:](#)



# MN Christian Schools United



On October 17, Maranatha hosted its second annual MN Christian Schools United conference. Over fifteen Christian schools from around Minnesota and Wisconsin, as well as one church, attended with 400 attendees in total. Keynote speaker Dr. Kathy Koch from Celebrate Kids shared practical, relevant, and scripture-centered insight with educators to increase their hope in God, celebrate kids as Jesus did, and help guide students to develop biblical character. In addition to hearing from Dr. Koch, attendees selected two breakout

sessions from 30 available sessions on various topics. Our Maranatha Executive Leadership team and Academic Chairs also facilitated network roundtable discussions where they provided the opportunity to collaborate and exchange ideas on key aspects of their roles.

The MN Christian Schools United conference is a strategic priority for Maranatha. This conference gives us the opportunity to intentionally provide collaboration with other Christian schools by assisting and transferring knowledge

and skills to improve learner performance and operational effectiveness. This professional development day was a highlight for teachers and staff alike.

Maranatha leadership is already hard at work planning for MN Christian Schools United 2025.

**MN Christian Schools United**

Education Professionals United in Christ

# Leaving a Spiritual Legacy

## Grandparents' Unique Position of Influence in Their Grandchildren's Lives

Throughout Scripture, God's design for spiritual legacy is straightforward: each generation is called to pass on its faith to the next. This divine mandate extends beyond parents to grandparents, who play a vital role in teaching future generations about God's faithfulness, power, and love. With wisdom gained through years of walking with the Lord, grandparents are uniquely equipped to share the transformative truths of God's Word and demonstrate what a life of faith looks like.

This biblical calling for grandparents has never been more crucial in today's increasingly secular culture. While society may view retirement as a time to step back, Scripture presents a different vision — where grandparents actively invest in their grandchildren's spiritual development. With approximately 30 million grandparents in the United States, their potential to impact young lives for Christ is immense. Rather

than embracing a leisure culture, grandparents are called to be spiritual warriors, mentors, and living testimonies of God's faithfulness for the next generation.

**ONE GENERATION  
SHALL COMMEND YOUR  
WORKS TO ANOTHER,  
AND SHALL DECLARE  
YOUR MIGHTY ACTS.  
PSALM 145:4**

These verses are an excellent generational reminder of the importance of passing on the faith to the next generation. The Bible makes it clear that parents and grandparents are primarily responsible for teaching children about

God and His great love for them. The role of godly parents and grandparents is to communicate their faith in Jesus Christ and pray diligently.

Linda Schlueter, a beloved grandparent, is doing just that. She taught at Maranatha for several years and now spends three days a week volunteering to assist kids one-on-one. "I love teaching. I love the kids. I love it here." Although Linda has a long drive to Maranatha, she does it because it feels like home.

Linda believes wholeheartedly in Christian education. "I taught in the public



schools for several years, and I was so thankful that my daughter decided to send her children here to a Christian school." Linda didn't plan on teaching at Maranatha, as she had just recently semi-retired, but with her grandchildren attending, she started teaching music for three years before volunteering. We are so grateful to the many grandparents, like Linda, who partner with Maranatha in prayer, volunteering, and financial support as they aim to pass on a godly legacy to the next generation. We invite you to join our

grandparent community and pray for the next generation's faith.

A true legacy is not what we leave behind but what we instill in others. God calls parents and grandparents to pass on their faith to future generations. The most significant and lasting gift grandparents can give is to be their grandchildren's prayer warriors, affecting and imprinting their generation with God's faithfulness. These prayers can make a significant impact for a lifetime.

## Join our Maranatha Grandparent Community

Visit [mcamustangs.org/grandparents](http://mcamustangs.org/grandparents) or scan the QR code for grandparenting resources and ways to invest in the next generation through prayer, volunteering and giving.



# Where Are They Now?

Mustangs that graduate from Maranatha have a unique place in our history and shared memories that are special to their class. We pray we will always hold a special place in your heart as you make your way through the life God has in store for you.

Many who graduate high school and go off to college or the next steps

remember their school years as they take those memories with them into the future. For others, however, God calls them back to where it all began. From the business office to student services, to the lower school to the College and Career Center, many of our beloved Maranatha staff are former alums!

## So, where are you now?

Scan the QR code to let us know and be included in the #WhereAreTheyNow feature series.



## ALUMNI THAT HAVE RETURNED HOME AND ARE WORKING AT MARANATHA

**Pictured:** Jeff Thomas '05, Mikayla Huether '17, Ginger Kirschbaum '94, Jordon Harrison '08, Josh Kolb '14, Aleesha Levin '09, John Szwaja '98, Alexa Sanchez '18, Rachel Block '00, Anissa Clutter '89, Holly Zappia '01, Michelle Yackel '04

**Not Pictured:** Alyssa Vanderpool '23, Elizabeth Brandstrom '06, Rachael Kaiser '08, Owen Marvel '22, Jillene Nelson '08, Keshia Shepherd '10, Kennedy Ewfefada '06

# Once a Mustang, Always a Mustang



Maranatha hosts several events throughout the year that bring our alumni family back home to campus. From the annual Alumni Basketball Game to the Homecoming Mustang Meetup and our summer BBQ celebration, these gatherings are perfect opportunities to reconnect with fellow alumni, share memories, and see how MCA continues to grow and thrive. Your Maranatha story doesn't end at graduation—we're always excited to welcome you back home.

## A New Chapter, Aaron Benny '23



Aaron Benny, class of 2023, currently lives in Hong Kong as a part of a study-abroad program with his college, the University of Minnesota, where he majors in finance. Aaron credits his current academic readiness to the Associate of Arts program at MCA, which allowed him to complete his generous courses while in high school.

Reflecting on his time at Maranatha, Aaron felt a close connection to

the school, the teachers, and the community. "The teachers were great—how much they cared and wanted to pour into you." Being a part of the National Honor Society, Student Council, and Daily Bread, Aaron feels like MCA prepared him to be a leader outside these four walls. Aaron is still involved in leadership in "The Salt Company" through Redemption Church, Minneapolis, where he helps lead his peers in growing their faith and building each other up.

Aaron sees Maranatha as a great launching point for him, not just for his college and career path but, most importantly, for his faith. When speaking about what he appreciates the most about MCA, Aaron said it was "a great place to be able to grow my faith, have questions, and get them answered." Now, looking

back, Aaron even spoke highly about the dress code! "I can understand why dress code is a thing," Aaron laughed.

Aaron went on to talk about how presenting yourself appropriately each day does help to set yourself up for success. Taking the time and effort to present yourself well each day to your peers and teachers helps cement that mindset of doing everything with excellence. And no matter what you do and where you go throughout your day, Aaron emphasized "the importance of putting your best effort and giving whatever you're doing your all unto the glory of God."



# God as the Foundation

Elli Horvath '21

Elli Horvath, class of 2021, is a recent graduate of Wheaton College. Starting off her college career thinking she'd go into pre-med, Elli has since pivoted to dental school following her time at Wheaton. She feels that getting into the dental field will allow her more space and time to have a career she's fulfilled in while also having room to raise a family with her soon-to-be-husband, Ryan.

Reflecting on her transition from high school to college, Elli

expressed how important Maranatha's community was to her looking back. "I went to Maranatha from kindergarten through senior year. You knew everybody, but you were also known, and I think I took that for granted." Wheaton College has also been great for Elli, and she expressed how supportive they've been when she's asked the tough questions. It's through that support and by relying on her firm foundation that she pushed forward and grew closer to God in the process. "As time



went on, I just really grew as a person, and I think going out of state and doing something completely on my own was so good for me."

In terms of the academic foundation that Maranatha laid, Elli couldn't say enough of how well Maranatha prepared her for life after high school. "I benefited hugely from PSEO and taking college classes in high school. It ended up being huge for me and part of the reason I can graduate early." On the faith side of things, Elli expressed how hugely important Christian education has been for her and still is today. Growing up in a single-parent home, Elli couldn't speak more highly of her mom and the sacrifices she made to make sure she and her brother grew up in a Christian environment. When high school was over, both Elli and her brother decided to continue down the path of Christian education because they





saw its fruit. “Clearly we thought that was valuable and that we wanted to continue because of the foundation that our mom laid to make sure that we got that private Christian education.”

Elli’s fondest memory at Maranatha was being a part of the co-op hockey team. The other Maranatha girl on the team quickly became one of Elli’s closest friends, and they are both soon-to-be bridesmaids in each other’s weddings. Mrs. Raines and Mr. I also played a big role in Elli’s time here at Maranatha. “I got to spend a lot of one-on-one time with her [Mrs. Raines], and she’s just the best. I enjoyed the class (AP Lang), but more than that, I enjoyed having her

to talk to.” Elli expressed how although she was bad at math, Mr. I never gave up on her and constantly encouraged her through the difficulty.

Looking to the future, Elli will soon be graduating Wheaton College where she’ll then pursue dental school. And with a wedding set for June, Elli can’t wait to start her own family and shine the light of Christ around her with her soon-to-be husband. “I think the most important thing to us is doing everything that we do for the glory of God. In our marriage we will have opportunities to be lights for the gospel. When we are loving the Lord well, we can love each other well.” Elli is extremely grateful for all

the connections formed at Maranatha and to still be a part of the community now as an alum. “They’re relationships from Maranatha that I will carry with me through the rest of my life, and I’m so thankful. To have people who I know I can count on and have been through that experience with me, I think that’s just been so, so beautiful.”

To be featured in a #WhereAreTheyNow article, please scan the QR code and tell us your story.



# Community Partners

Maranatha Christian Academy is a school that not only prepares students for college, but also to live out a life of Christian service. This vision God has challenged us to pursue can only be achieved with the partnership of businesses, families, and friends. We are grateful for the partnership with the following businesses.

**Aaron Hall**  
ATTORNEY  
FOR  
BUSINESS  
OWNERS

SHOP ONLINE  
LEGACYTOYS.COM  
PICK UP IN STORE

3 Twin Cities Locations  
Ridgedale . Southdale . Rosedale

LEGACY TOYS  
EXPLORE IMAGINE CREATE

[AaronHall.com](http://AaronHall.com)

The advertisement features a portrait of Aaron Hall, an attorney, on the right. On the left, there is a photograph of two young children playing with wooden toys. A circular logo for Legacy Toys is overlaid on the image. Text on the right side provides information about Aaron Hall's services and Legacy Toys' locations and online presence.



**THE BRANDING WEARHOUSE**

Brag about your brand™

The advertisement features a dark blue background with the text "THE BRANDING WEARHOUSE" in large, white, sans-serif letters. Below it, the tagline "Brag about your brand™" is written in a smaller, red, sans-serif font.

# Your money can grow to do great things, too.

Connect with us at M2 Financial Group today!! Our seasoned, local, and reliable financial coaches will be your valued go-to. Guiding you through your journey towards success every step of the way. Just like graduating, it takes planning and consistency to reach the goal and be at the top of the class.



**OUR MISSION**  
is to be our client's first call for financial  
**ADVICE, GUIDANCE and DIRECTION.**

Michael A. Matheson  
CFP®CFS, CRPC®, CDFA™  
Founder and President

Each of these are defined by us as:

**Advice**

A path, developed together as a team, tailored to your specific goals and financial situation.

**Guidance**

We serve as your reliable guide throughout your financial voyage, utilizing life simplifying and straightforward tools to assist you in making well-informed financial decisions in all areas of your financial life.

**Direction**

We look forward to the future with optimism, motivation, and inspiration while maintaining a vigilant focus on the present. Our client connections are built for the long haul, and our direction evolves alongside your journey through life.

Reach out today for a commitment-free, 30 minute 'Ask Anything' session to discover how we can be a game changer for you and your family!



the Michael Matheson Group  
[www.M2financialgroup.com](http://www.M2financialgroup.com)  
e: [michaelm@M2financialgroup.com](mailto:michaelm@M2financialgroup.com)  
p: 763.416.8206  
11272 86th Avenue N. Suite B  
Maple Grove, MN 55369



CHRISTIAN MARANATHA ACADEMY  
Proud Sponsor

Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a registered investment advisor. Member FINRA/SIPC.



# Alpha & Omega WEALTH STRATEGIES

*Empowering Generations to Live Confidently*



Mike Sedjo CFP®  
(952) 698-7016  
[mike.sedjo@nm.com](mailto:mike.sedjo@nm.com)



Forbes Top Next-Gen Wealth Advisors list (August 2024). Based upon data as of 3/31/2024. Forbes Best-in-State Top Financial Security Professionals list (July 2024), based upon data as 12/31/2023. Research and rankings provided by SHOOK Research, LLC. Northwestern Mutual & its advisors do not pay for placement on 3rd party rating lists, but do pay marketing fees to these organizations to promote the rating(s). Rankings and recognitions are no guarantee of future investment success. Michael Glenn Sedjo uses Alpha & Omega Wealth Strategies as a marketing name for doing business as representatives of Northwestern Mutual. Alpha & Omega Wealth Strategies is not a registered investment adviser, broker-dealer, insurance agency or federal savings bank. Northwestern Mutual is the marketing name for The Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company, Milwaukee, WI (NM) and its subsidiaries. Michael Glenn Sedjo provides investment brokerage services as a Registered Representative of Northwestern Mutual Investment Services, LLC (NMIS), a subsidiary of NM, registered investment adviser, broker-dealer and member FINRA and SIPC. Michael Glenn Sedjo, is an Insurance Agent of NM.

Purchase - Refinance - Home Equity Loans - VA - FHA - Jumbo - 2nd Homes - Investment Property

*We are proud to be a  
Mustang Family!*



Caitlin Van Winkle  
Maranatha Parent  
& Volunteer

**Casey Van Winkle**  
Maranatha Parent  
& Mortgage Expert  
NMLS 323964  
Casey@firstclasscorp.com



[www.MNmortgage.com](http://www.MNmortgage.com) | 763.416.6789 | Maple Grove, MN

# Safe. Stable. Built to Last.



"I put my lifts together today. These are amazing! The build quality is outstanding and everything went together perfect! I've owned car lifts in the past and they don't even compare to yours. Thank you guys for going above and beyond to make this a great experience! I will strongly recommend your lifts to anyone!" Danny M. – Yorktown, VA

Add a Bridge Jack for your maintenance needs. Safer & Easier than a 2 post lift.



[www.WildfireLifts.com](http://www.WildfireLifts.com) | 763.445.9143

9201 75th Ave N  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

**maranatha**

Nonprofit Org

US Postage

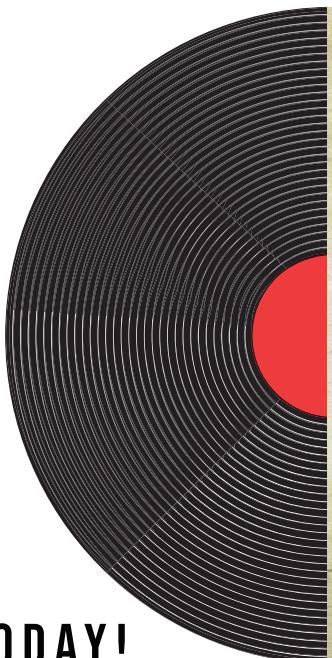
**PAID**

Twin Cities, MN  
Permit No. 28662

A Ministry of Living Word Christian Center



**BUY YOUR  
TICKETS TODAY!**



**VENUE: LEOPOLD'S  
MISSISSIPPI GARDENS**

**DOORS OPEN: 5:30 PM**

**EVENT DATE:**

**4.26.25**

**ROCK THE  
GALA**

**MARANATHA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**