

Hickory Christian Academy

THE SHIELD

“Celebrating 14 years of excellence in Classical Christian Education”

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Dear HCA Family,

I hope each of you had a wonderful Christmas holiday, and that the new year has already delivered blessings to you. While most of us do not celebrate New Year's Day as a “Christian” holiday per se, scripture abounds in the celebration of the gift of new beginnings. As a matter of fact, the primary central theme of the Bible is the “transformation” or “rebirth” (new beginning) of people from hopelessness to eternal salvation as a result of the gift of the unconditional love of Jesus Christ.

Many of us made “New Year's Resolutions” on January 1st. There is certainly nothing wrong with this (although if you are like me, you broke it within a few days), other than the fact that we should examine our lives all year instead of just at the beginning of a new year. As Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 13:5, “*Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you – unless indeed you fail the test?*”

For all the great things that I could list in this article about Hickory Christian Academy, there are an abundance of ways in which we could (and should) change and improve. There are ways in which we could be more sensitive to God's lead. There are ways in which we could be more committed to the ministry toward individual students or families. There are ways in which we could be better instructors, money managers, or community influences.

As I think along these lines, I have the following list of ways in which HCA could improve by doing things differently. Or to say it another way, here are the New Year's Resolutions for the school in 2009, along with some details of how we may meet these goals:

Loving the family. We have always promoted the school as an extension of the family. If we truly are to live up to that promise, then we must understand the other members of our school family. We have to know the struggles, fears, expectations, and dreams that we all encounter daily, and then react accordingly. One thing that we commit to doing more of in 2009 is lifting each of you in prayer. Our faculty, administration, and staff meet at least weekly (not to mention the monthly board meetings), and we consistently pray for the needs of the school. But I know that there are many facets of our school community that are missed during those times. I encourage each of you to let us know how we can be a prayer support for you this year. We want the opportunity to request blessings from the Father for each of your families.

Our prayers have led us to see that one obvious need that most families have this calendar year is financial grace. For legitimate reasons, HCA has raised tuition every year since I have been Headmaster. This year, as much as ever, the school has financial concerns with our current economy and future debt reduction. However, prior to Christmas, God clearly spoke to me, the Finance Committee, and the School Board about this issue. As a result, the board has obeyed God's lead and has decided not to raise tuition for the next school

year. Hopefully, this is a blessing to everyone, and reassurance that HCA truly does wish to partner with your family in more ways than classroom instruction. Even with that said, there will be some reading this who still need financial help. As we enter re-enrollment time in February, please make a point to let your need be known, and we will commit to pray for God's provision for your family.

Serving Others. In 2008, HCA financially supported and/or partnered with the local ministries of the Pregnancy Care Center, Safe Harbor, CCOM, and The Hickory Soup Kitchen. We also gave thousands of dollars (through private gifts) to New Vision Ministry to minister to the people of Haiti following the devastating flooding that occurred there last fall. In addition, we collected hundreds of shoes for Soles for Souls (to go to third world countries) in the fall. This does not include several individual classes who have had their own ministry efforts with other organizations. For years, HCA was a fledgling ministry in need of support from the community in order to operate. Now that we are larger, it is time that we choose to give back and to support the cause of Jesus Christ in other ways besides educating children in the classroom. After all, what is the main characteristic of the Christian life anyway, but to be servants? (James 1:27)

Classical Education. It took us 11 years to develop from a 19 student school with two preschool grades into the full K-12 academic program you see today. It has taken the next three years to refine the program to the point where we feel the original vision of Classical education is beginning to produce fruit. We have been members of the Association of Classical Christian Schools for many years, and have been very active participants in their programs, ideals, and conferences. Now we feel it is time to take the next step, which is to seek accreditation by the ACCS. This will be a valuable process in which we can use a trusted organization to hold us accountable on key components of the school. Please pray for us as we begin this journey. There will be lots of work, research, and accountability along the way, with the goal being the best Classical Christian education possible for your children.

Community Outreach. So many people tell me that HCA is a special place. It is a place where God moves and where people are loved. Unfortunately, the only people who know this completely are the ones inside the walls every day. There is a whole

community of thousands whom we are called to love, encourage, and share Christ with besides the ones who place their children in the school. So, in the upcoming year we hope to begin a more concerted effort to share the love that Jesus has shown each of us. In February, we will host a Pastor Appreciation Brunch. The purpose of this brunch is to be an encouragement to the men of God who mentor us spiritually each week. We want to thank them, pray for them, and bless them with a meal and fellowship. The first time through, we are inviting every pastor who represents a family at HCA. This will be around 55 total pastors. I am so excited about this event!

Another upcoming event is a free concert by Shaun Groves. Shaun recently joined Travis Cottrell and Cindy Morgan in the national Gloria Christmas Concert, and is well known in Christian music circles. HCA will provide free tickets to all of our families who wish to attend, and then extend the invitation to anyone in the area who wants to be a part of this worship experience. The purpose is two-fold. We want to take advantage of an opportunity to worship collectively as a body and we want to give the community an opportunity to join us in fellowship to create a better sense of unity between the school and Hickory in general.

Hopefully, we are all in agreement that the Lord would love to use us as a body to reach out to the world, as well as to minister within the school. He wants to use every one of us as vital parts of that ministry. So, whether you are a student, parent, teacher, administrator, or board member, you have role in this ministry of "*equipping children today to become God's leaders tomorrow.*" Likewise, we all have a role in the Great Commission, to tell the world about the love of Jesus Christ (Matt 28:18-20). Thanks be to God that He has blessed us with the opportunity and ability to blend these two callings into one!

By placing these "resolutions" on paper, I understand that there will be a higher level of accountability to see them accomplished. But, I also hope that you understand that accomplishing these things will require a group effort, with all hands on deck. You do not have to be a certified educator to be a part of the ministry at HCA. All you need is a willing heart, submitted to God, and a passion to serve others, essentially becoming the hands and feet of Jesus. If you feel that God has specifically laid one of these things on your heart,

and that you would like to be a part of the mission in a much more tangible way, please give me a call. There are changed lives on the horizon, and I look forward to our journey together, beginning in 2009. May God bless each of you with a very Happy New Year.

Tracy Robinson
Headmaster

CALENDAR REMINDERS

- Jan.**
24 Knights in Training Cheerleading Fundraiser Camp 9-12:00
- Feb.**
2-Mar. 2 Re-Enrollment for current HCA families
2 Homecoming at HCA
HOMECOMING GAME
 5:00 (boys)
12 ChuckE Cheese-Fundraiser
13 **Make-up Snow Day until 12:00**
16 President’s Day Holiday -no school
19 Pastor Appreciation Brunch
20 Math Superstars store
- March 5** OPEN HOUSE
16-19 5th grade to Williamsburg
20 Teacher Workday
23-27 Teacher Appreciation Week

Staff/Faculty Birthdays

- January**
19 **Katie Taylor**
28 **Libby Harren**
- February**
6 **Connie Hall**
21 **Charissa Loftin**

Box Tops for Education and Tyson Project A+ News

“Trash into Cash” Fundraising News:

We had a strong showing in December for Box Top submissions, even though it was a short month due to Christmas Break. Our total was **2,101**, or another **\$210.10** for HCA. Way to go!

Our prize winners for December are: Mackenzie Sigmon, Nicki Steelman, and Bailey Cannon. The traveling trophy goes up to Mrs. Harren’s 6th grade

classroom for this month for their impressive efforts. Congratulations! We also collected **1** lonely Tyson Project A+ label and **53** milk caps. Let’s get off to a good start in the New Year, supporting HCA through these programs as well as the programs at **Food Lion, Harris Teeter, Target, Box Tops Marketplace, Office Depot, and Valley Hills Mall.** We truly appreciate your efforts!

NOTE: Harris Teeter is offering a special sign-up for their VIC Cards. If we have 100 HCA people link their Harris Teeter Cards we will be able to participate in some of their latest contests that offer more cash back prizes.

Math Superstars Update

Math Superstars Update
 We have had great participation from the first through eighth grade students in our Math Superstars program so far. Our volunteer parents are doing an excellent job encouraging and teaching the challenging math to the students. We ask that you as parents encourage your students to try these math problems at least some of the time at home. It will help in developing important problem solving skills that can be used in all subjects, not just math. Our kindergarteners will be joining in the fun within the next week or two.

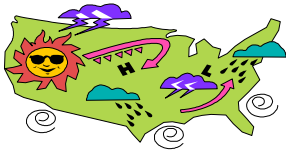
Julie Rhodes and her helpers provided an excellent variety of items for the students to “purchase” with their points at our first Math Superstars store prior to Christmas break. Thank you, Julie, and all who helped with the store. If you happen to have any unused plastic totes around your home you would be willing to donate, Julie would appreciate them very much as it would help organize the store items when the store is not “open”. Also, anytime you clean out knick-knacks from your home or come across great deals at the dollars stores, the “store” can always use more items for the children to choose from. You can leave any donations for Julie Rhodes in the office or if they are small enough there is a box in the teacher workroom alongside the teacher boxes (far upper right) labeled Math Superstars. Our next Math Superstars store will be February 20th and the last store will be May 1st, both Fridays. Students keep up the great work, and parents keep up the encouragement. If every there are questions about the program please feel free to contact me. Thank you!

Serving for Christ and HCA,
 Karen Tysinger, 493-0574

Make-up Snow Day

Make-up Snow Day will be Friday, February 13 until 12:00 noon. This was originally a Teacher Workday on the Calendar. All students 1st-12th grade will report to school until 12:00 noon on this day. TK and Kindergarten will not report to school.

Inclement Weather Procedure



In the case of bad weather this winter, please check the HCA **website first** for information at www.hickorychristianacademy.com

HCA administration will make the decision to cancel or delay school generally by 6:45 am. We will also run the announcements on the local TV stations 3-WBTV, 6-WCNC, or 9-WSOC.



We as an Administrative Staff would like to take this opportunity to thank PTF, the Board, all the parents, and students for their kind and thoughtful gifts at Christmas this year. Your generosity, as always, is so overwhelming to us. The Christmas Staff/Teacher luncheon was delicious and the atmosphere absolutely fantastic! Thank you again from all of us and may God richly bless you and HCA in this New Year.

**Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Peeler, Mr. Maier,
Mrs. Keller, Mrs. Featherstone, Mrs. Parsons,
Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Lambert, Mrs. Swink,
HCA Teachers, and Maintenance Crew**

HCA Christmas Chapel DVD's are ready!!!

Attention Parents: Christmas Chapel DVD's are ready. Please stop by the school office, drop off your payment and pick up your copy. The cost per DVD is \$10. Please make checks payable to HCA and note on the memo line that it is for the Christmas Chapel DVD. The HCA music department will receive \$5 for every DVD sold to invest in much needed equipment (e.g., microphone stands, boom microphones, risers, etc.).

*We would like to extend a great big
THANK YOU
to HCA parents Bill and Amy Rahn
for their hard work and generosity with
their time and talents
in videoing this special event for us.*

Abundant Blessings

What a mighty God we serve! For those of you who were unable to attend the State of the School Address given by the Board on Tuesday, January 13th, you missed a blessing. The Board reported that our Operating Budget is in the black again this year as a result of God's continued blessings and frugal spending. In addition, as a result of your commitment to HCA and your faithfulness in honoring your pledges, we were able to pay down over \$1,295,000 to the principal debt on our building bringing our principal loan down to \$1,998,324 million in 2008. *Praise the LORD!!*

But God did not stop there. Just before the holidays, we refinanced our loan with a new variable interest rate of 2.25%. As a result of reducing our debt and interest payment, we are paying down the principal balance more each month. In January 2008, our monthly interest payment alone was over \$18,000. This January 2009, it will be a little more than \$4000. Something good always comes out of difficult times.

If you have not yet made a pledge or donation to the HCA building fund, there is no better time than the present. Please see Jennifer Jones to make a pledge or a donation. Also, if you know someone who might want to partner with us financially to

raise strong leaders for Christ, pass their name along to Jennifer, as well.

Thank you for your faithfulness and commitment to HCA.

The next step after HCA...

Congratulations to the Class of 2009 on the large number of college **acceptances so far!** With only about half of the responses in at this time, our Seniors have already been accepted to the following colleges and universities:

Auburn University
Converse College
East Carolina University
Elon University
Furman University
Gardner Webb University
Guilford College
High Point University
Lenoir Rhyne University
Mars Hill College
Montreat College
North Carolina **State** University
University of **Mississippi**
University of North Carolina at **Chapel Hill**
University of North Carolina at **Greensboro**
University of South **Carolina**
Warren Wilson College
Wheaton College

And this is only a partial list. We will keep you updated as more acceptances come in. **Way to go Seniors!!!!**

Spelling Bee Champ

Congratulations to Emily Perry for winning the 2009 Hickory Christian Academy Spelling Bee on January 7th. Emily competed against eleven other classroom winners to become the overall school champion. Emily represented HCA at the district Spelling Bee on January 12th. Great Job Emily!

Morning Drop-off/Afternoon Pick-up

Just a few reminders...

Please do not drop off students earlier than 7:40 in the morning. Teachers are usually busy making preparations for the day and may not be in their class rooms until that time to supervise students.

Please pick up all students by 3:05. Any students remaining after that time will be subject to a tardy fee of \$10.00

RE-ENROLLMENT Begins Feb. 2- March 2

Each Family will receive a re-enrollment packet on Monday, February 2. Data forms on each current student at HCA are inside along with annual medical, tuition and enrollment forms. Please double-check all data, and correct errors (where necessary) on each child. When all information is correct, sign the bottom of the sheet to verify completion. Then return all the completed forms for your family in one envelope to the HCA office.

If you would like to enroll a child who did not attend HCA during the 2008-2009 school year, please fill out a complete application (i.e. new student, homeschool, etc.). If you need additional new-student applications, please contact the office. Keep in mind that older siblings who were pulled out of HCA for any reason (including home-schooling) are not guaranteed a spot in next year's enrollment, and should be re-enrolled as a new student, filling out a complete application. Younger siblings (of current families) who are entering Preschool, TK, or Kindergarten for the first time are included in the re-enrollment process, and will get first priority in those classes.



Homecoming Game

**Monday,
February 2nd 5:00 pm**

Come out and support
the Varsity Basketball
Team and Cheerleaders

GO KNIGHTS!!!!