

Hickory Christian Academy

THE SHIELD

“Celebrating 14 years of excellence in Classical Christian Education”

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People who give always have something in their pocket.” - Haitian Proverb

Dear HCA Family,

Don't you just love the Christmas season? I mean, even if you take away the fact that Christmas celebrates the birth of our Savior (you did remember that right?), it is just a fun time of the year. Why is that? Is it the combination of crisp winter air, hot chocolate, fireplaces, fir trees, candy canes, and mistletoe? Maybe to some small degree those things are significant, but I believe Christmas is special because it is the one time during the year where everyone becomes a giver.

Jesus Himself said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” That seems contrary to our normal human existence. We all love to be recognized and appreciated. When we receive gifts, it fills a need that we have to be noticed by someone else. It makes us feel special. So, how is it that we are blessed even more when we give, than when we receive? The answer is really simple. When you give, you become more like God. Try comparing the amount you have given God to the amount you have received from Him. The ratio is more than 1 to 1 trillion.

God has given you eyes, ears, breath, and a heartbeat. He has given you intellect and physical ability. Every thought, task, and word you use is due to the gifts he has given. He has given you

family and friends, and surrounded you with people who can help you walk through this life. He has given you food, clothing, money, and other resources. He has given you His Word, which is perfect truth. He did not leave us out on our own to cope with the world in confusion. He has given us direction through scripture. He has given you the privilege of prayer- direct communication with the Creator of the Universe. And, after we had received all those gifts and shunned Him anyway, He gave us His own Son to be the perfect sacrifice for our sin debt.

What have we given Him in return (besides heartache)? At our best, we give him tithes and offerings (oh, but scripture says that it all belongs to Him anyway). We give Him praise, adoration, and glory (of course, according to Jesus, if we didn't, the rocks would praise Him. So I am not capable of giving Him anything that a rock cannot give). You see, God already has it all. The only thing I am capable of giving Him that he doesn't already have is my personal obedience. Obedience to God is adherence to His Word, and imitation of His character. Since we have established the fact that God is the supreme giver, then in order for me to be like God, I have to give also.

Giving is a paradox. Scripture tells us that we receive blessings by giving. The more we give, the more blessed we are. This is why Christmas is such a special time of the year. The gift of God's only Son is celebrated by giving to one another. The more we give, the more like God we become. And, the more like God we become, the more joy and fulfillment we have in our hearts. We all struggle with giving to some extent because we

don't see a logical path in God's Word. It just doesn't make sense that I can be better off if I give away all that I have. But that is exactly what God requires of us (Mark 10:21), and remember, the only thing you have to give to God that He doesn't already have is yourself. When I read God's Word, and act in opposition to it, I am a taker. But when I openly obey His commandments, I become a giver, by presenting my body as a living and holy sacrifice to my Lord (Rom. 12:1).

So, for the next few weeks, enjoy the season of giving. Simultaneously, remember that we give gifts at Christmas as an imitation of the God Who gave us the ultimate gift over 2000 years ago – His only Son. Centuries of people, through scores of generations, have attempted to give back to Him and to repay His goodness. You can't out-give God. But, you can give Him the one thing that He may not already have – Obedience. And it shouldn't be in December only!

About 25 years ago, Christian singer Keith Green penned these words from God in a song: "To obey is better than sacrifice. I don't need your money, I want your life." This being Christmas, let's not forget the most important person on our gift list: Jesus. Merry Christmas!

In Christ,

Tracy Robinson
Headmaster

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. – John 3:16

For those of you who are looking for ways to give to HCA, here are a few holiday gift ideas:

1. *We need many more parents to volunteer to substitute teach. It is really a low-pressure job, and provides a huge service for the school. With over 50 employees, we have people out due to sickness every week. We need your help!*
2. *We need more lunchroom helpers. Every day, there is a meal to distribute to the students, and we are often short-handed. This takes about 1 - 1 ½ hours, and makes lots of children very happy.*

3. *We need classroom helpers in each room. Let your teacher know that you are available to cover a class, read to the kids, take the students to recess, do Math Superstars, etc.*
4. *One major area of expense for the school is copy paper. Something that every family could afford to do is to supply a pack of copy paper to HCA to help offset this cost item. **If every student gave one pack of paper (just a few dollars), the school would save over \$1500!***
5. *We need help in athletics. There is a need for team moms, concession stand help, admissions table, and even coaches.*
6. *We need a computer projector to install in the gym so that we can do video/PowerPoint for large gatherings. The total cost of this is \$5000-\$10,000.*
7. *If you are unable to help in any of the above ways, we need \$2 Million to finish paying off the building debt. One lump sum check would be fine.*



I love to celebrate the birth of the Christ child! How blessed we are to know the true meaning of this wonderful time of year. It seems that the world continues to muddy the waters when it comes to Christmas. It's not enough for the enemy to cover up the truth with lots of distractions. Now, we have the economy to throw us off track. Please know the focus of Christmas is the same this year as it has been every year since the birth of the Christ child! "For unto us a **Savior** was born..." We don't need to worry. If we truly believe what the Lord tells us, worrying is off limits. Our children are prone to pick-up on all those worries. I'm wondering if the poor economy is a gift. It has definitely caused us all to simplify and down grade

our spending habits. Could it be that the Lord is allowing us to spend more time with Him? Should we be thankful for the simple things He provides. Of course we should always keep our priorities in order this time of year; but, does it happen? I watch the children that the Lord has lead to HCA. (That's my job and I love it!) I see the excitement when we worship the Christ child. I hear the joy in the voices as hymns and praise songs are lifted to our heavenly Father. That's a true gift to me. Our next generation is being "trained up in the way they should go so they will not depart from it." Your children are rich. Whether you have a job, a penny in your pocket, or lots of presents to hand out; you and your children are rich! You, my friends, are children of the King...the King of Kings, the Lord of All, the Great I Am. I'm proud to be part of the Royal Family with you. Also, I'm thankful that the Lord came as a lowly baby...not rich, not regal, not of great worldly value (just like me). But, He was and is our Savior!

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" – Luke 2:14
I wish you the Merriest of Christmases,

Connie W. Peeler
Grammar School Principal

EXAM DATE POLICY CHANGE

Students 8th-12th grade will be taking Mid-Year exams beginning Friday, Jan. 9th –Tuesday, Jan. 13th Students taking exams will be dismissed at 12:00 noon. Students will not be taking exams for 7th period elective classes. Exams will count 15% of the semester grade.

Only Seniors may exempt final exams. To be eligible, seniors must have an A with 3(or less absences), a B with 2 (or less absences) or a C with 0 absences. Also, students should not have a major disciplinary infraction. Mr. Maier will contact teachers with the list of students who have lost exemption status for the latter reason.

Calendar Reminders

DECEMBER

16 NO CHAPEL FOR GRAMMAR

**20 Combined Chapel – HCA
Gym 9:00 am**

******ALL STUDENTS WILL WEAR THEIR
FORMAL CHAPEL UNIFORMS
ON THIS DAY (THURSDAY)**

**19 Early Dismissal 12:00 noon 1st-
12th – TK-K do not attend**

Dec. 22-Jan 1 Christmas Holidays – No School

January 2 Teacher Workday- No School for students

January 3 STUDENTS RETURN

Staff Birthdays

Dec. 3	Gail Owensby
14	Carolyn Parsons
19	Sharon Sturgess
26	Jessica Robinson
31	Kristi Stephenson

Cheerleading Camp Fundraiser

"Knights in training" cheerleading camp is here!
For Preschool thru 5th grade
January 24, 2009 from
9:00-12:00 in the HCA Gym.

Students will need to bring a snack and a water bottle. The HCA Cheerleaders will be hosting this camp. The cost is \$25 per child which includes a tee shirt. Look for more information and a registration form in your child's backpack

Box Tops for Education and Tyson Project A+ News

"Trash into Cash" Fundraising News:

November was another good month for Box Top submissions! Our total was **2,279**, or another

\$227.90 for HCA. We particularly appreciated a stronger showing from some of the upper grades. Remember, the funds raised through these programs are a line item in our school budget—we actually depend on this money to support school programs! Our prize winners for November are: Katie DeVries, Evan Rhodes, and Katherine Wakin. The traveling trophy returns to Mrs. Fox's Kindergarten classroom for this month. Congratulations! We also collected **6** more Tyson Project A+ labels and **89** milk caps.

Please continue to use your **Food Lion** MVP cards that have been linked to HCA (done online or through the school office), your **Harris Teeter** VIC cards (linked to HCA--school #3230), and your **Target** RedCard or Target Visa's linked to HCA (done online). And as you do your Christmas shopping don't forget to do some online shopping through the **Box Tops Marketplace**, and to mention HCA at checkout at **Office Depot**, and to turn in those mall receipts in our locker at **Valley Hills Mall** or at the school office. Whew! Oh, and please, please, please don't forget to have a **VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS!!** Jill DeVries

My School is Cool News

200 Point Pet Pics on 12/15

400 Point Carousel Weekend from 12/19 - 12/21

200 Points for Adopting a Pet on 12/20

The last day to turn in December receipts is 01/02/09. We are currently in 4th place in the contest for the fall semester, which ends 12/26.

Thanks,
Amy Swink

Christmas Gift Show & Silent Auction

THANK YOU to all the parents, students and teachers who helped make the 3rd Annual Christmas Gift Show & Silent Auction a great success! A special thanks to Carol Johncock, Jackie Perry, Kim Stout and Selina Shue for heading this fund raising event again this year. We still have tie-dyed T-shirt orders being

filled. All leftover shirts will be sold in the HCA Store. Students may wear these shirts on dress down Fridays.

At last count, this event raised approx. \$11,000 toward the Capital Campaign.

Praise the Lord once again for His faithfulness!



Christmas is in the air at HCA. Mrs. Case is practicing in the Gym for the Christmas Chapel this Thursday with her music class, (beginning at 9:00). Students and Teachers are excited about the Holiday break coming up this Friday with early dismissal at 12:00 noon. Administration will have a chance to get sweet tooth fulfillment this week from the variety of class parties in the grammar and logic grades to the 8th-12th grade brunch. When you enter HCA, the halls are filled with the aroma of Jesus, not only at Christmas but everyday of the year. The one thing that never changes at HCA each year is the overwhelming love for one another. I see parents reaching out to staff in such sacrificial ways. I see unexpected hugs and gifts of kindness that can only be straight from our heavenly Father.

I hear testimonies of healing and stories of hope. I see bowed heads in the corners with tears streaming down faces as an Administrator prays to the Father on behalf of a student or parent. Jesus keeps reminding me daily of how small my faith is and how great His faithfulness is. He is the one who gave the ultimate sacrifice and offers us His free gift of salvation. (John 3:16)

During these uncertain times; HCA has daily prayer requests (i.e.) families that need healing for cancer, a father has lost his job, a loved one has died suddenly, the bank is foreclosing on someone's

home, parents are struggling and marriages failing, etc. This Christmas my prayer is that each HCA family will be able to experience God's divine love and grace. I am reminded of the truth of His word. 1 Peter 5: 7- *cast your cares on Him for He cares for you.* Phil. 4:19 -*But my God will supply all your needs...* Hebrew 13:15-,... *I will never leave you nor forsake you* and in Isaiah 43 He says, *I am going to do a new thing...* Are you ready for God to do a new thing for you?? Are you ready for Him to take you from the desert and walk you by His stream that overflows with His mercy and love? Let go and let God this Christmas. We are so blessed! I am so thankful that in Psalms, *He knows every hair on my head ...* (have you seen my hair?) that He is mindful of us and in every detail of our lives. Why? Because He loves us!!! *With an everlasting love (greek-Aionios, which means "since the world began-eternal".)* Can you grasp that thought? What an awesome God! Please know that as I am writing this article, tears are flowing, and I am humbled as God is reminding me of His promises. Thank you for allowing me to serve your family at HCA. I love you all! God bless and Merry Christmas!!

Mrs. Tina Keller
Administrative Assistant



But the angel said "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you: He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Luke 2:10

Senior Erin Sturgess is a Morehead-Cain Semifinalist!

HCA is proud to announce that Erin Sturgess has been selected as a semifinalist for the Morehead-Cain Scholarship. The Morehead-Cain Scholars Program is a unique, life-changing educational opportunity that combines a full four-year merit scholarship to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a lifelong challenge to make a difference in the world. The Program provides four summers of global travel and experiential learning and personal mentoring by experienced staff advisors and accomplished Morehead Alumni.

As a semifinalist, Erin has been invited to interview with a Morehead-Cain Regional Selection Committee. With nearly 1,700 applicants and only 260 North Carolina semifinalists, she is certainly among a select group. Congratulations Erin!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for the New Year

The HCA School Board will host the annual "State of the School" meeting for all HCA families on Tuesday, January 13 at 7:00 pm. in the HCA cafeteria. The purpose of this meeting is to keep all members of Hickory Christian Academy updated on the current status of the school financially, academically, and spiritually. In addition, we will present the vision for the upcoming school year and beyond, including information about next year's tuition rates, budget, re-enrollment information, and other pertinent information. Each family is strongly encouraged to send at least one parent representative to this important meeting.