



The Think Art Project Committee: Will Walker (from left), Angela Turney, Matt Brown, Charlene Brewster, Mat Faulkner, Jason White, Nancy Hatfield, Faren Hearyman, Betty Mote, Joanna Layrock, Todd McLeod and Casey McLeod. Not pictured: Marka Bennett and Amber Walker.

# Think Art Project

## Searcy's Art Alley among creative spaces



The red arrow points the way to Art Alley.

The Quattlebaum Music Center mural in Downtown Searcy.



Story and photos  
by Megan Stroud

Turning the corner from the Quattlebaum Music Center mural and walking past the White County Courthouse in Downtown Searcy, a small glimpse of a red arrow peaks out of a public alley. Strums from a guitar become audible. Arch Avenue in downtown is blocked for pedestrian traffic only. Booths are set up in the street and live artists are painting on the brick walls along the alley, sectioned off all the way to Race Street like individual canvases.

Art Alley, the venue for the First Friday Art Walk, an event with live music and painting, has become a creative outlet for about 80 artists in the Searcy and White County community, but this is only one of the successes of the Think Art Project.

The Think Art Project began when Mat Faulkner, owner of Think Idea Studio, visited Philadelphia, a city with mandated funding for art installations and creative spaces. With existing relationships through the studio and his involvement in the community with organizations like the Searcy Regional Economic Development Corporation (SREDC), Faulkner created a process to accelerate the creation of art installations and creative spaces in Searcy under an existing non-profit, the Searcy Arts Council.

"My thinking behind it was, that if we already had all the right partnerships in place with city organizations, Parks and Recreation, code enforcement, Main Street Searcy, all the players that would have to put their thumbprint on it as far as approval goes, then it would help the projects go



The Small Business Revolution mural in Art Alley in Downtown Searcy.

There are four painted pianos in Searcy, including one in ACT II, an extension of Sowell's furniture on Arch Avenue. This piano was designed and painted by Raeanne Kihni, a current Harding art student.

quicker," Faulkner said.

Artists, art educators, property owners and community members got involved, and the goals of the organizations were centered on increasing the quality of life and tourism through rehabbing eye sores while educating and inspiring young artists through interactions with other amateurs and professionals.

Although the first project was a mural, spurring on the creation of many other murals in Searcy, murals are not the only goal of the Think Art Project.

"Even though murals have taken off and are easier to install, the whole goal is not just to do paintings, but to do sculptures and lighting features and water features and landscaping," Faulkner said. "Just those cost more and take a little bit more time."

Artists, both amateur and professional, are able to compete by submitting designs for any given project through a blind review process. Project designs are selected carefully on the basis of historical significance, inspiration, diversity, positivity and interactivity.

"There are things that can be done that can enhance the community and raise quality of life that is not your traditional economic development," Faulkner said.

The first undertaking by the Think Art Project was a mural on the wall of Quantlebaum Music Center in Downtown Searcy. After 17 submissions, artist Tara Peacock's design, "Natural Notes," was chosen. Named for the Natural State, the piece features lyrics and song titles by musicians native to Arkansas.

In June 2018, the Think Art Project officially nestled one of its most popular, tourism-drawing projects into the growing arts district on Arch Street. The committee decided to take a public alley between Arch Avenue and Race Street to create Art Alley. The community helped clean the space, artists began to paint and the city stepped in by paving the walkway.

Casey McLeod, Think Art Committee member and manager of Art Alley, owns a pharmacy with her husband and describes herself as an amateur artist. As one of the first artists to paint in the

alley, McLeod has a passion for maintaining and promoting Art Alley and its events, including the First Friday Art Walk each month. She also believes strongly in the ties between economic development and creative place making to the overall morale of a community.

"The concept of creative place making is really new, but they're finding there is a connection and a value to having spaces that people can go and be together within a community, especially related to the arts," McLeod said.

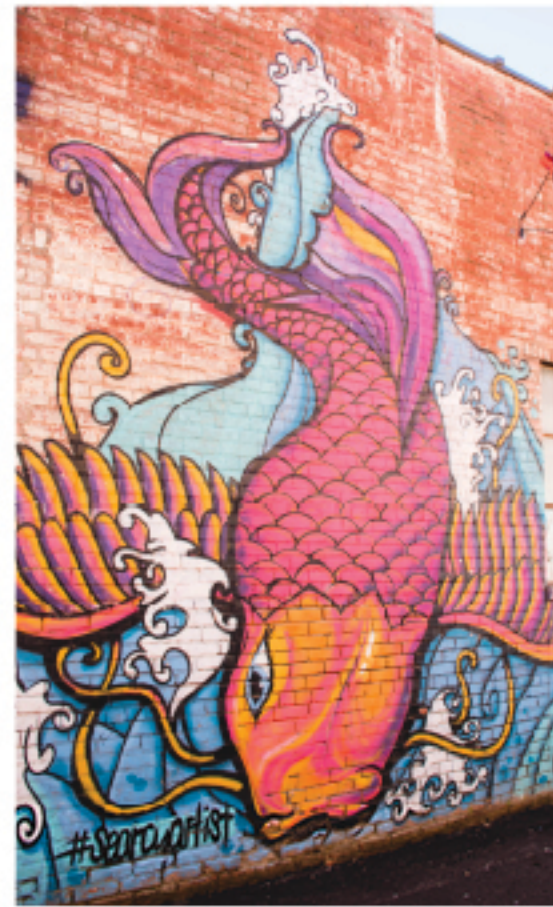
With 80 artists involved in Art Alley, the paintings are always changing. An artist is required to change their display every three months or offer their spot to another artist. The only original mural remaining belongs to local artist and Think Art Project committee member Jason White, who has painted murals nationally and across Arkansas and continues to be involved in the arts movement happening in his hometown. Apart from the Think Art Project, Jason has also been commissioned to design and create several murals in Searcy for businesses, including Wild Sweet Williams, The Natural Food Store and Savor + Sip.

"Art is an amazing way to communicate," White said. "We have seen it turn around the overall view of our community from negative to positive. People are excited about Searcy and what it has to offer and art helped get that conversation started."

As Art Alley has quickly become a popular spot for locals and visitors, future plans for the alley include cleaning up the nook in the middle of the alley while also featuring other temporary art installations.

"It has been really exciting for me because I have felt like, historically, Searcy has been a little bit of a divided community, and so just bringing the arts and creativity into the downtown space into something that used to be just a dingy old alley has brought all kinds of people together," McLeod said. "It's created for me a sense of community that I haven't felt, and I have lived here since 1994 when I came here as a freshman at Harding."

In addition to Art Alley, other projects the group has completed include four painted public



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basketball courts and four painted pianos. The health-centered basketball courts were designed and created by professional artists in partnership with local elementary schools, with the health theme determined by sponsor Unity Health.

After seeing painted pianos on social media, Faulkner posted the idea on social media and, before he knew it, had been offered nearly 20 free pianos. After picking up four, they were placed around town for artists to paint and people in the community to play. One piano is at The Artistry, one is at Harding Academy and two, including one that has not yet been painted, are at ACT II.

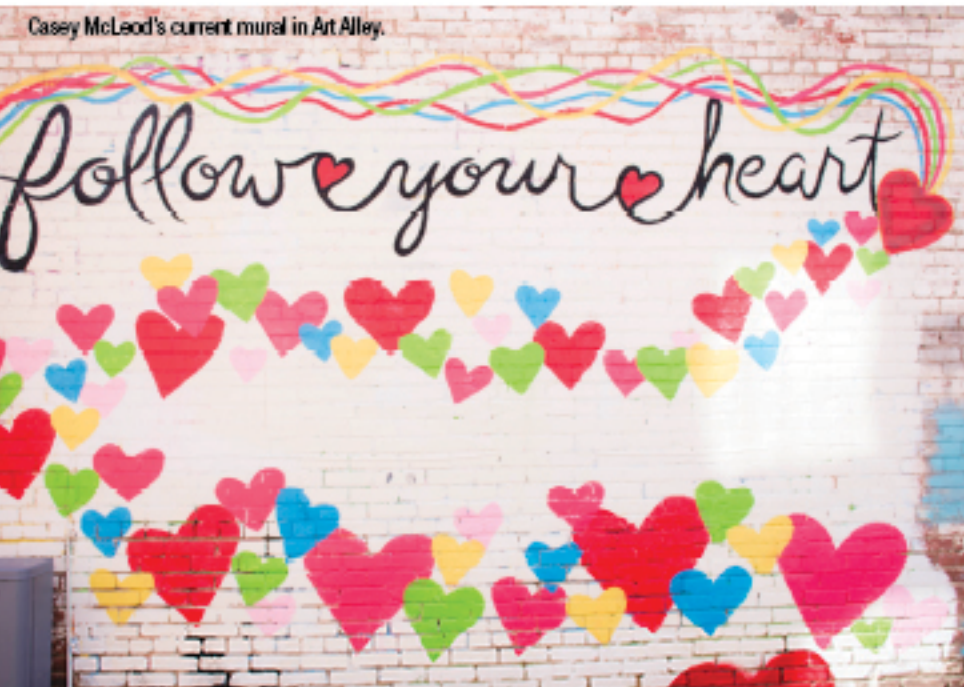
Fundraising is currently under way for a multi-purpose stage in Daily Citizens Park, the original site of the Daily Citizen newspaper and a Living Alley mimicking the concept of Art Alley with artistic creations using living plants. Living Alley will feature native plants as well as pollinator plants and a water feature to keep the entire installment maintained.

The Think Art Project has impacted the community by giving artists a way to creatively express themselves while creating momentum in the community.

"One of the things about small towns, not just in Searcy, but all across America, is they don't really necessarily have a lot of ingrained culture into their small town, and incorporating artwork is an easy way to express yourself, tell your story as a community and involve other people," Faulkner said. "So it has definitely heightened the culture of Searcy as well as given artists a way to express themselves in a creative way. As far as quality of life goes, it has created a momentum and excitement. You can see things changing and when you see things changing, you feel like there is progress being made and then people get really excited about that which usually inspires, spurs more progress."

Searcy recently competed and won a contest to be featured on season four of the Small Business Revolution Main Street on Hulu sponsored by Deluxe Corporation. Faulkner and other members of the Think Art Project committee feel the community was more prepared to rally together because of recent growth in the downtown area.

"Leading up to this whole revolution TV show, between the art projects and then the community events like Beats and Eats, I think that has just been a perfect segue to this opportunity," Faulkner said. "A lot of the destinations that the production crew went to [in Searcy] were Think Art Project destinations. Having events like Beats and Eats has gotten the community used to coming together so whenever we threw the big events for the production crew, it was just like another Beats and Eats. Everybody kind of knew what to do. So yeah, I think it just primed us for this opportunity."



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CONWAY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

# Getting her Mojo back

Story and photos  
by Megan Stroud

Mojo, a 7-year-old English Springer Spaniel, has one goal in life: getting the squeaker out of all toys. Mojo is always panting, loves water more than food and is the perfect, constant companion to Hannah Robison, a native of Newport who calls Searcy her second home. Hannah now lives in North Little Rock, where she manages communication for Central Church of Christ.

Hannah and Mojo have been inseparable since they first met.

When Hannah graduated from Harding University, her parents gave her Sampson, a golden retriever puppy. Fourteen months later she had to put him down, but they ended up taking Mojo home that same day.

"I was literally sobbing on the steps of the vet clinic. My dad sits down, and he says, 'You're going to think I'm crazy, but they have a dog in here who needs a home,'" Hannah said.

In addition to immediately adapting to her family's land where Hannah grew up riding the four-wheeler through her grandfather's cattle farm, Mojo was immediately intuitive to Hannah's every need.

"She was perfectly trained when we got her, and I guess she was trying not to lick. But when I first met her, she started licking the tears off my face. She looked at me, she looked at Dad and I was like, 'Yes, she's coming home with us.' And she is just the best dog I have ever had."

Although they instantly fell in love with Mojo, Hannah and her parents struggled to name her. During the first three weeks, they tried different names, but nothing fit until her dad said, "Mojo."

The name has a triple meaning. Primarily, she helped them get their mojo back after Sampson died. But the name also took on the implication of their favorite coffee house, Midnight Oil, commonly



Mojo's name has several meanings, including the comfort she provided after the loss of another pet.

known as MO, as well as the name of the vet from whom they got her, Joe David Smith.

It's been three years since they brought Mojo home to their family land in Searcy where Hannah's parents have lived since 2012.

Hannah and Mojo spend every day together, whether they are in Searcy or Little Rock. Letters are signed "Hannah and Mojo" with a pawprint, and evening walks are accompanied by discussions often including the repetitions of the phrases, "I love you," and "Watchu see?" From chasing birds out of their home to eating an entire carton of expired ice cream out of the trash on Mother's Day, they have made

memories that will outlast a lifetime.

For Hannah, who has always loved all things dog from dog breed books to American Kennel Club (AKC) Dog Shows and from every Animal Planet show to her school mascot — the greyhounds — Mojo is a best friend and constant confidant.

"I really feel like a mother to Mojo because I don't have kids of my own, and I don't have a spouse, so she has been such a comfort. She's always my constant. It's always so nice to come home, and they're so happy to see you every time. She's never disappointed in me. I can never say the wrong things to her. She always loves me anyway."

Hannah Robison and her best friend and constant confidant, Mojo.

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# 'I still believe in him'



White County's Wanda Emde has an extensive collection of Santa Claus figures that she is happy to share with others.

Story and photos  
by Megan Ledbetter

During the holidays, the walk down one of the long Harding Place hallways passes doors decorated for Christmas in every way imaginable. From traditional Christmas décor to a snowman in a beach chair, this hallway had it all. There was no shortage of Christmas spirit. But, when you reached the last room at the end of the hall, a glass case filled and topped with Santa figurines and crafts welcomed you to Wanda Emde's apartment, where she lives with her sister.

Walking into Emde's apartment was like entering a holiday store's Santa Claus section. There were throw pillows on the couch, large glass cases of Santas with mirrors in the back flanking the living room window and ornaments on each door knob in the kitchen and living room. Emde, who has lost nearly all her eyesight, had on her Santa Clause socks and brooch and was sitting in an arm chair in the living room right in front of the biggest glass case of some



of her prized possessions.

"I don't know when I quit thinking there was a Santa, but I guess never," Emde said.

"You haven't quit," her sister shouted from the next room.

"I still believe in him," Emde agreed, laughing.

When Emde's eldest daughter was in the first grade, she made a Santa Clause figurine out of construction paper and cotton balls. When she brought it home to her mother, Emde could not part with it

and still has it in perfect condition to this day. This is where her Santa Claus collection began.

"Back when I started I didn't have any money to go to the store and buy them, so after Christmas, the dollar store would have some left that they would put on real cheap," Emde said. "I started buying them a little at a time. Then, later on, I had a little bit of money, and I bought them before Christmas and you could pick out some real pretty ones."

She started buying them at dollar stores in Bald Knob and later began buying them at places like Hobby Lobby. As she accumulated more and more Santa Clauses for her home, people began to take notice. It would take her a couple weeks every October to unpack them all, and when it was time to put them away again, she would sit down, meticulously wrap each one back up and tell them goodbye. She had children over during the holidays just to see her collection, and that is when she began numbering each one.

"I would invite the kids to come to the house to see the Santas, and they had to guess how many

I had, so I thought if they had to guess I was going to have to keep a better count," Emde said. "So, I started numbering them and writing the number on the bottom of them. I was not particularly interested in getting a certain number. It was just that I needed to know when the kids guessed who was closest; then I would give a prize to the one that got closest."

When she stopped actively collecting, she had 1,658 Santas, but she still, out of all the choices, could not pick a favorite.

"I love them all. I would have a favorite, then I would get another favorite, then I would get another favorite," Emde said.

To those that know her though, Emde is much more than a collector of everything Santa Claus. She is a Sunday school teacher, a Girl Scout troop leader and even a host for an international student and an international teacher. Her love for children was exemplified in everything she did, but, after being diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa about 20 years ago, her eyesight has gradually gotten worse, especially over the past six to eight years. After living in the same home in Bald Knob for 60 years, Emde recently moved to Harding Place where her eyesight has become limited to shadows. Even after moving to Harding Place, she still spends her time influencing the lives of others. She sews the arm holes of pillow case dresses and rolls the strips of plastic for the mats the women in Harding Place make and send to Haiti.

"We knew two years ago that we were on the list for Harding Place. We knew then that we had to do something. We just had to split them up and do something with them," Emde said. "It was kind of sad giving them up. Some of them I have had for 50



Wanda Emde and her daughters have given Santa Claus collections to Main Street Searcy, the Searcy Public Library, different rest homes and the Sunshine School, and more than 650 went to the Carmichael Center, the largest display outside her own home.

years, so they are like your children, but I knew I had to find a place for them."

Emde and her daughters gave Santa Claus collections to Main Street Searcy, the Searcy Public Library, different rest homes and the Sunshine School, and over 650 went to the Carmichael Center, the largest display outside her own home.

"(But) I just couldn't get rid of everything when I

moved over here," Emde said.

Despite giving so many away, her Harding Place apartment is still full of Santas of all shapes, sizes and forms. The ones she kept for her Harding Place apartment are ones that her friends and family have given her, and their names are on the bottom of them so that they can get them back when she is done with them.

## THE TRADITION OF Caring Continues



Back: David L. Staggs, M.D. Daniel S. Davidson, M.D.

Middle: Michael North, M.D. Brenda Frisbie, M.D. J.R. Davidson, M.D.

Front: Michelle Creameans, APRN, Abby Rice, PA-C Vivian McElyea, APRN

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# A unique find

## Harding creates Museum of Biblical Archeology

Story and photos by Megan Ledbetter

Few universities have a resident archeologist who has been equated to Indiana Jones, and, according to Dr. Dale Manor, even fewer have the resources to display archeological findings on rotation as a resource on campus for students, faculty and the community.

Two years after a donation was made and after seven months of renovation, the Linda Byrd Smith Museum of Biblical Archeology opened at Harding University on April 13 in the McInteer Bible building to display Manor's artifacts.

### From display case to museum

Since Manor, resident archeologist and professor of Bible and archeology, came to Harding in 1996, the idea of displaying his artifacts has been an ongoing process.

"I recognized the value of archeology, not as an apologetic, but an illustration clarifying what is going on in the biblical text, making things more real to people," Manor said. "We have a tendency to read something as if it is fictional until we actually encounter it."

The process started with a display case in the lobby of McInteer that was on display for several months before it was broken into. The idea of a more secure case was at the top of the wish list, but Manor never dreamed of having the capability to renovate a classroom into a museum, which is exactly what became reality when alumna Linda Byrd Smith became the donor. She is a Bible class teacher in Arkansas jails and prisons, her home congregation and other religious organizations.

Manor had formed a relationship with Smith after she expressed her interest in visual teaching using artifacts like Manor's. He let her borrow a few things, and it inspired her to fund a way for many students to see the artifacts up close.

"One day, I was with Dr. Manor in his tiny office and saw so many artifacts virtually hidden to so many people who are interested in Bible history," Smith said. "I mentioned to Harding's 'Indiana Jones' that I thought there should be a place to display them to benefit others."

Although Manor did not know she was considering funding the project, Smith's interest led to conversations with Harding President Dr. Bruce McLarty, architect Mike Steelman and Dr. Monte Cox, dean of Harding's College of Bible, but, according to Smith, Manor is the one that made it a reality.

David and Linda Smith have been generous donors in many projects within the College of Bible, including the Center for World Missions and Harding University at Tahkodah (HUT), a missions training



Dr. Dale Manor, a resident archeologist and professor of Bible and archeology, came to Harding in 1996. The idea of displaying his artifacts has been an ongoing process.

ing village) in Independence County, and pioneered the Center for Bioethics.

### Renovating a classroom

Manor now serves as the museum coordinator and curator. He helped to design and build the museum, with expert advice from Mike Steelman and Megan Valentine, Harding alumnus and museum curator for Egyptology Museum in Alexandria, La.

Valentine, who was in the Archeology Club at Harding, focused on the hypothetical creation of a museum at Harding as a project in her graduate program. She created a proposal, budget, grant application and more for the hypothetical museum, and these plans were put to use when the idea became a reality financially. She provided lighting and display advice for ideal conservation, and the design developed from there as Valentine, Steelman and Manor worked together on the project.

"I was imagining that it would still look like a classroom," Cox said. "But as you can tell, it looks really nice. For a small little museum, it looks really nice."

According to Cox, Manor made every place card and artifact stand, and Harding carpenters hand-made all the display cases found in the museum.

"The colorful timeline and signage were professionally done, but, otherwise, he did everything else. This is his baby, and it's been very impressive," Cox said.

The museum, which is open to the public from 9

a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and by appointment, is organized thematically. Manor plans to rotate different artifacts in and out of the museum annually, unveiling the new exhibit every year at Harding's annual Lectureship. New rotations will still consist of the big items like the carved ossuary crucifixion display, but will rotate new displays of Manor's artifacts or displays on loan from other archeologists as well as feature his artificial excavation class for which he built his own replica of a biblical dig site. The current exhibit features displays on the patriarchal period, religion, storage jars, writing, daily life, the new testament Hellenistic period, coins, the excavation process and dating of artifacts. More information on most of the artifacts on display can be found online as well.

### Manor's legacy

Manor was asked in 2000 by the directors to serve as the field director at the Tel Beth Shemesh dig site in Israel. He has been the field director for the past 17 years, spending each summer there with excavators from Israel and students from universities like the University of Tel Aviv and Lethbridge University in Canada, overseeing the excavation and synthesizing data for the directors, which will ultimately be published. Two artifacts that he was allowed to take from Tel Beth Shemesh for educational purposes are on display in the museum.

"He is a treasure to Harding University; having

**MUSEUM** continued on Page 36



### Carmen Cusack, star of Broadway's "Bright Star"

Friday, Feb. 2, 2018, 7 p.m., Administration Auditorium, \$3 online, \$5 at door

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Package and concert-only tickets available at [artsandlife.eventbrite.com](http://artsandlife.eventbrite.com).



# LINDA BYRD SMITH MUSEUM OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY



## MUSEUM from Page 34

been trained by some of the world's greatest archaeologists," Smith said. "Now that Harding has a free museum for anyone to visit, so many people can understand Bible stories in their historical and cultural context, which makes it even more real to us."

For years to come this will be Manor's legacy where he is able to display his love for archaeology and biblical history, and it will be there long after he retires.

"[Manor has] dreamed for a long time about having a place to display [his artifacts], but this is beyond our wildest dreams," Cox said. "[I'm] just proud of him, and proud that we get to claim him as one of our own."

## Value of a Biblical Museum

Manor strongly believes in the value of a museum that focuses on biblical history, especially for a Christian university.

"This would not have much significance at all if this was a state university; it's the fact that we are a Christian university and we require a Bible class every semester by every student. I'm hoping it will be a tool that the Bible teachers will use," Manor said.

Valentine's experiences as a student help her see the value of the museum for students across all departments on campus.

"As a history major, I spent a fair amount of time explaining that I wasn't pursuing teaching but instead wanted to work in a museum," Valentine said. "The

Linda Byrd Smith Museum of Biblical Archaeology can provide much more exposure and opportunity to students in the history, art history and Bible departments to actually study artifacts and learn about museum work and those opportunities."

Overall, the museum holds value as a unique biblical archeology museum, one of the few of its kind, that represents the work of Harding's resident archeologist.

"The fact that Harding University in Searcy, Ark., has an archaeologist of this kind of standing who is publishing for the University of Tel Aviv is a more prestigious thing than our students will ever know," Cox said. "They pass by that place all the time, and they, for the most, part probably don't realize this is the legacy of a well-regarded biblical scholar."

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# Hounds Hideaway

## They 'love them like you do'

by Megan Ledbetter

After Lacey Vance boarded her three beagles while traveling for work and returned home to a broken tail, she decided it was time to fill a missing need in the city of Conway.

Hounds Hideaway is a pet-centered facility, owned and operated by pet lovers. It opened in December 2015. The seven-acre property is located on McNutt Road in West Conway and is organized to cater to each pet's safety and health.

"Dogs are social pack animals, so we have a way they can fulfill that need," said Lacey Vance, owner and founder of Hounds Hideaway. "My big thing is them not being left home all day while people go to work. Conway is a commuter town, so many dogs are left home alone all day. That was the original intent, just having a place that people could leave their dogs to be social and have some fun."

The business grew twice as fast as they expected, and, to their surprise, the day care service became popular much quicker than the boarding services.

Hounds Hideaway's services include boarding, day care and a day spa, which consists of two full-time groomers and a self-serve, do-it-yourself wash room. They even sell their favorite products because so many people have inquired about the items they use and sought their recommendations. The facilities consist of indoor and outdoor play yards for small and large dogs; a Zen Den for older, anxious dogs; and even a cat lounge.

Rhonda Thompson's Chihuahua, Coco, was always anxious upon her return home from other boarding services, but it was a different story with Hounds Hideaway and the Zen Den. "We returned to find a happy dog showing no signs of anxiety being away from us for over a week," Thompson said. "Her calm, happy state reassured us that she had been well cared for, and we were able to enjoy a joyous reunion."

In addition to the services and facilities, Vance strives to constantly improve the pet experience, the expertise of the 13 employees and the knowledge of the pet parents.

"They really put 110 percent into the business," said pet parent Debra Stansel. "They have a passion for what they are doing, and it's not just Lacey, it's her staff. They know every dog's name and personality. It is amazing to me, utterly amazing. It's like Disney World for our dogs."

"We love this place," said Kendra Griffin. "Lacey and all of the staff are top notch and second to none. Everyone is very personal and genuinely cares for their furry clients. They take taking care of their furry clients very seriously."



Owner Lacey Vance, her husband Chad and their beagles June, Daria and Gunner in the Hounds Hideaway lobby. (Megan Ledbetter photo)



Dogs play in one of the small dogs' outdoor yard. (Megan Ledbetter photo)

Not only is there a strict daily routine including a nap, meals and lots of play, Hounds Hideaway also continually strives to rise above the standards with extra activities like paw-print crafts and photo

shoots.

Once a month, Hounds Hideaway provides a themed photo booth for each dog at day care. They have done themes such as New Year's, Valentine's

Day, Easter, prom, luau, July 4th and back-to-school. Upcoming themes include football, fall, Halloween, superhero and pictures with Santa. They also treat the dogs to a picture and doggie frozen yogurt when they attend day care on their birthday.

Vance hosts free monthly workshops purely to increase the knowledge of the pet parents; past workshops have taught them more about leash walking and picking the right dog food.

Another thing that makes Hounds Hideaway unique is the hours of operation and attention. While they are open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., with two hours in the middle of the day for undisturbed naptime, someone remains on property until 9:30 p.m., allowing an evening break from the kennels, which is not often found at other boarding services.

"The company as a whole is amazing," said Hounds Hideaway Pack Leader Rachel Everett. "It's extremely impressive all that Lacey deals with on a daily basis. When the company first opened, Lacey was so worried about everything being OK, and she cared so much about the dogs, that she slept in her office overnight. That, to me, is the definition of dedication and caring."

Despite all the wonderful things constantly happening at Hounds Hideaway, Vance knew this business needed to grow slowly. They market only to existing customers, on whom they rely for word-of-mouth marketing to the rest of the community. They keep in contact with their pet parents through a closed Facebook group, which has turned into a community all its own. The pet parents began a trend of posting pictures of their pets after their time at Hounds Hideaway, which has been termed the Hounds Hideaway Hangover (#HHHangover).

In addition to her services and duties at Hounds Hideaway, Vance is also involved in the Humane Society of Faulkner County and has a separate set of kennels to board rescue dogs, who are treated and cared for along with the clients' pets until they are adopted.

Lacey Vance and her staff love every animal that comes through Hounds Hideaway as if it were their own. They "love them like you do," and it shows in every aspect of their facilities, services and business.



Photographer Brandy Howard assisted by Pack Supervisor Becca Wells during the back-to-school photo booth. (Megan Ledbetter photo)

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# A New York state of mind

Story and photos by Megan Ledbetter

There is something empowering about walking down the streets of a big city with an unlimited MetroCard and the world ahead of you that builds confidence like nothing else can. Nearly 70 Harding University students had the chance to do exactly that during January in the political and population capitals of the U.S.

For the past 10 years, the Harding University Communications Department has taken students to explore and experience Washington, D.C., and New York City while earning college credit during Christmas break. As the trip has grown and evolved, different departments have joined; this year, students and faculty from the business, fashion merchandising and English departments walked alongside communication students in their exploration of metropolitan career opportunities.

"One of the reasons for the trip is to expose students to living and working in a large metropolitan area," said Glen Metheny, associate professor and chairman of the graduate school of business. "It allows the students to see that they can go to a private, faith-based liberal arts school in Searcy, Ark., and go anywhere they want to begin their professional careers."

The trip began in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 1, and the stage was set with a nighttime tour of the National Mall. While different departments participated in activities tailored to their areas of study, prominent experiences for the students included a day at the Newseum, the National Archives, a discussion of the floor plan and life inside the White House, an alumnus-led tour of National Public Radio (NPR) and a tour of the United States Capitol on the day new members of Congress were sworn into office.

"Even though it had its disadvantages for us, I think it was neat that we were at the capitol building on the day that the 115th Congress was being sworn in," said Jim Miller, chairman of the department of communication. "Because of that, there was a lot more security, and we were not able to do everything that we wanted to do, but we were there on a historic day with lots of energy and a lot of people. It was kind of fun to be in the middle of all that."

Students also had the opportunity to explore the city on their own outside of structured tours and activities, which allowed them a more intimate view of the personality of the city and its people.

While other departments began the trip in Washington, D.C., eight fashion merchandising students, accompanied by family and consumer sciences instructor Rebecca Boaz, spent the entire week in New York City. They toured Fifth Avenue's holiday windows, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Sara Seven (a bridal designer showroom in SoHo) and Mood Fabrics (a store in the Garment District featured on Project Runway). They joined the theatre students to see The Rockettes holiday show and tour the New Amsterdam Theatre, owned by Disney in which the students were allowed to try on costumes from some past productions including Mary Poppins, Lion King, The Little Mermaid and Newsies.



The Christmas tree at Rockefeller Plaza in New York City.

"I feel that it is important for the students to experience it in person, rather than just reading it in a book or from a PowerPoint," Boaz said. "This trip is the ultimate in experiential teaching and learning. I learn something new every time I go. Hopefully, this trip broadens the students' perspectives about what is out there after graduation."

On Jan. 4, the students that began in Washington loaded onto charter buses for New York City. Upon

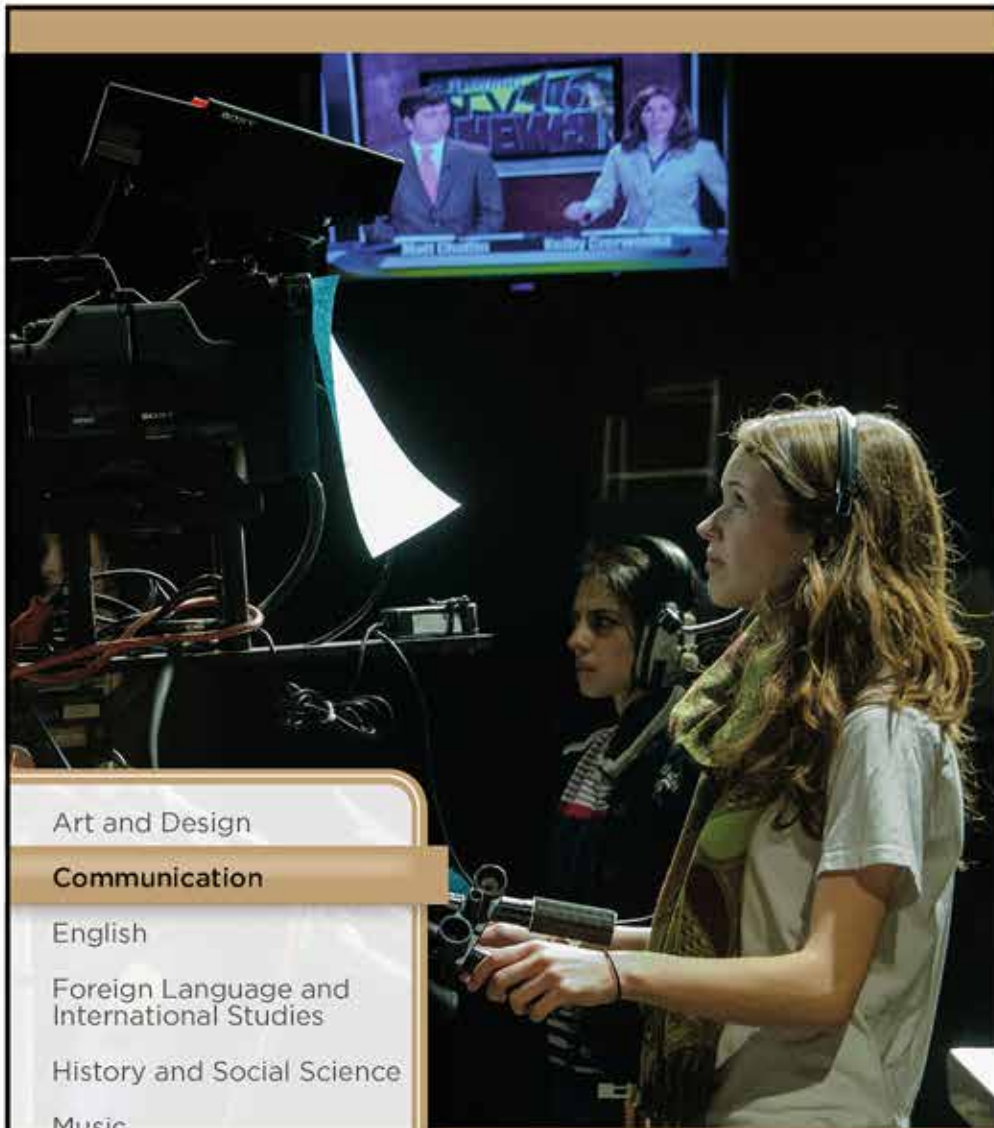
entering the outskirts of the city, Miller and Dr. Jack Shock, associate professor of the department of communication, spread their infectious passion for the city while performing Taylor Swift's "Welcome to New York," karaoke style.

"I've taken dozens of students to New York and watched them enjoy their first big city experience,"

**NEW YORK** continued on Page 70







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## Well-rounded education

While pursuing an education in Harding's College of Arts and Humanities, students find themselves inspired and challenged, seeking to better understand the human experience. Seven departments within the college explore media and oral communication, history, languages, and visual expression — all taught within the Christian mission of Harding. Students are prepared to continue their studies in graduate schools or enter into any one of the hundreds of professions in today's workforce. Within the liberal arts, anything is possible.



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Shock said. "I've decided that there is an immediate reaction. Students either love it or hate it. It's easy to get lost in the madness and feel alienated and small. On the other hand, it's easy to get swept up in the energy and creativity that is around every big city corner. I felt that in 1977, when I went to New York City for the first time. I love seeing the look in the eyes of a first-timer when we get a first glimpse of the midtown skyscrapers."

The first night in "the city that never sleeps" was kicked off with a walking tour of Times Square and Rockefeller Center as well as a lesson in how to navigate the city. "Whether it's getting an Uber or navigating through the subway, [the students] gain the confidence that they can live and work in the city," Metheny said.

While in New York, students were able to experience and interact with many different communication specialists. Randomly selected students were able to take a private tour inside the Google offices. Because this is not a public tour, students had a unique opportunity to make connections, meet professionals within the corporation and experience the personality of the company.

Students took a walking tour of Wall Street and toured NBC Studios and the Tenement Museum. While touring NBC Studios, students were not only able to see the studios and control rooms, but were also able to realize that the technology used there is only a higher-end version of the technology used in producing HU16, Harding's student-produced television station, in Searcy.

On Jan. 7, New York City received seven inches of snowfall, but it did not delay business; the entire group spent the day at the 9/11 Museum and Memorial site. The museum was a moving experience for many who had memories of 9/11, and the snowfall on the foundation markers created a unique experience.

On Jan. 8, the trip was concluded with a panel of professionals from Manhattan Church of Christ, arranged by alumnus Amy Sewell, who shared personal stories about what it is like to live and work in a big city, making it a realistic, attainable goal.

"We want to provide students the opportunity to connect with professionals and see media and communication professionals in action, but ultimately I think what a trip like this does is give students confidence; I think that is the most important thing we can do," Miller said. "We take students to New York City and Washington, D.C., and we stay there for a week. We travel around, and we give them time off; and at the end of that week, they come back a little more confident than they were when they left, and you can't replace that."

Although it was never encouraged aloud, many students gained this empowering confidence as they explored these cities for themselves, attending Broadway plays, shopping on Fifth Avenue, standing in Times Square, exploring Grand Central Station and traveling every corner of the city.

"There is a huge blend of different ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds congested in one area, and somehow it just works," said Clayton Whitfield, a senior communication sciences and disorders major who traveled with the English department. "I wasn't even able to experience all of it. It's so easy to get consumed by everything around you, which I can't say I have ever felt that sensation before."

"The trip gave me a new sense of confidence to leave my comfort zone in order to experience more of the world," said Emily Rowsey, a junior business student.

# Welcome home

## A journey to Greece and Israel



A view of the Acropolis in Athens from atop Mars Hill, where the group stopped to sing and read aloud the speech recorded in Acts 17 that Paul gave in that very spot.

Story and photos by Megan Ledbetter

"One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things." Henry Miller, the coiner of this phrase, must have taken a trip similar in impact to the one on which I was fortunate enough to embark this past summer as I floated between the gap of high school graduation and beginning college in the fall.

Through opportunities at Harding University, I was able to travel to Greece and Israel with 39 other incoming college freshmen and four university chaperones. As an aspiring journalist, photographer and Bible student, I was looking forward to the opportunities to see places that I have studied my entire

life. Many who knew about the upcoming trip told me that this would have an impact on my outlook on life and Scripture, but I had no idea just how right they were until I experienced it for myself.

Our trip began with what seemed like an endless amount of flying and staying awake, but while recovering from jet lag, we were thrown immediately into Greek culture in Porto Rafti, Greece. Porto Rafti is not only right outside the historical city of Athens, but is home to one of Harding University's seven international campuses, Harding University in Greece (HUG) and some of the most beautiful beaches in the world.

During this portion of our trip, with HUG as a home base, we alternated days in class learning the biblical Greek language, biblical history and text

and mythology while touring places like Athens, Corinth, Delphi and exploring Porto Rafti itself. While being fortunate enough to have traveled a lot around the United States, Greece was unlike any other place I had ever seen. Partly due to the economy and partly due simply to the culture differences, the atmosphere of Greece was not like anything I had imagined, but I immediately grew fond of it and found myself enjoying the change of pace and atmosphere from what I have known all my life.

When asked my favorite place and part of my trip, I'm sure I have given every person a different answer because there is simply no way to put into words the entirety of the life-changing impact and

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The Acropolis in Athens is a place that was strictly used for worshipping Greek gods, creating a physical location associated with a few mythological stories as well as a home to many Greek temples. Two of the main temples on the very top of the Acropolis, the Parthenon, a temple to Athena, and the Erechtheum, a temple to both Athena and Poseidon, can be seen from this view.



A street view of Arachova, a town just below the mountain from Delphi, Greece, that is home to cobblestone streets and breath-taking views.



The Wailing Wall in Jerusalem was a magnet to emotions, prayers and self-reflection. This image captures a Hebrew Torah that was available for public use on the women's side of the wall with Israeli citizens and students from the trip both captured in the backdrop as they surrender to the emotions of their surroundings.

For more information on Harding University's International Programs, contact the International Programs Office at 501.279.4529 or [international@harding.edu](mailto:international@harding.edu)

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**Wes Moore** is a decorated Army combat veteran; youth advocate; and CEO of BridgeEdU, a national initiative focusing on addressing the college completion and career placement crisis by reinventing the freshman year of college. He is also the author of two New York Times best-selling books — *The Other Wes Moore* and *The Work*. He completed a Master of Letters degree in international relations from Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar in 2004. Upon graduation, he served as a paratrooper and captain in the United States Army, participating in a combat tour of duty in Afghanistan with the 82nd Airborne Division. He is the host of "Beyond Belief" on the Oprah Winfrey Network and executive producer and host of "Coming Back with Wes Moore" on PBS. Open seating — no tickets necessary.

Follow Wes on Twitter @wesmoore1 and Facebook at [www.facebook.com/IAMWesMoore](http://www.facebook.com/IAMWesMoore). See more at [theotherwesmoore.com](http://theotherwesmoore.com).



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Megan Ledbetter poses with the Greek flag that proudly stands on the ruins of Acrocorinth.



The Dome of the Rock that is located in the center of the highly secured Temple Mount. Although in modern-day Jerusalem the Temple Mount is under strict Muslim authority, it was also the location of the temple and the place on which Abraham, as tradition teaches, was tested through the commandment to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.



The Scholars Abroad group of 40 students and four University chaperones stand in front of the Parthenon, one of the first major sights that the group visited as the journey began in Greece.



Dr. Scott Adair, Harding University's director of the Center for Family Ministries and one of the chaperone professors for the Scholars Abroad trip, stands on Mars Hill, pointing at the Acropolis of Athens as he quotes Paul's speech saying, "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And He is not served by human hands as if He needed anything..."



On the morning of the final day of traveling and touring before heading home to the states, the group boarded a modern-day replica of a boat that might have been found on the Sea of Galilee and sailed from Tiberias to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is actually more similar to a lake.

## HOME from Page 34

meaning of this 16-day journey. The difficulty in keeping myself from re-writing my travel journal is ever-present; I could share the small things that are no longer small things to me anymore, or I could share the big things that people would expect to hear from a reflection on a trip to the other side of the world. I have concluded that there is simply no right or wrong piece to share, but simply that there is too much to possibly share. From seeing the Acropolis of Athens that houses both Mars Hill and the Parthenon, to touring the ancient city of Corinth, to walking the cobblestone streets of Archova just below Delphi — and that is before we even consider the four-day excursion to Israel.

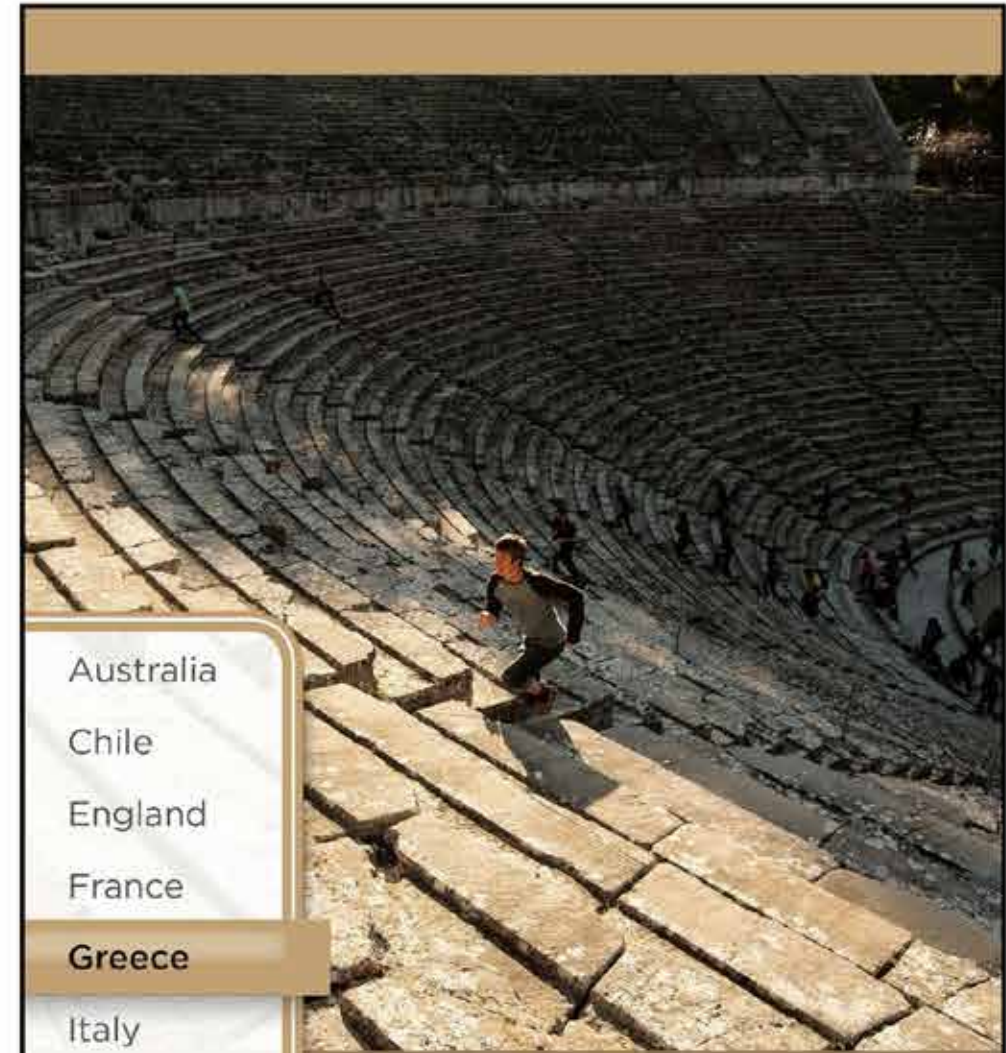
When we arrived in Israel, the first thing that our tour guide told us was, "Welcome home." Before you get confused, yes, I wondered as well if we were on the right tour bus, but let me explain. As I arrived in Israel, we were in the home of history that is known all over the world, the origin of everything in which I believe and for which I live. I was in the home of my faith and reasons for being who I am. After he explained himself and as I contemplated the HUG family we had just left in Porto Rafi, the concept of being at home so far away from home got less and less foreign to me. A part of me was home for the first time.

As we embarked on the Israel journey for four long, hard and life-changing days, we saw the Garden of Gethsemane, the Wailing Wall, the Western Walls of the temple built by Herod, the Holy Sepulchre, many different first-century tombs, the Muslim Temple Mount, the healing pool at Bethesda, Hezekiah's tunnel, Beth-Shemesh, the desert roads of the first century, the Dead Sea and Dead Sea Scrolls, the Jordan River, Jericho, the Sea of Galilee, the Mount of Beatitudes, Capernaum, the Mediterranean Sea, Caesarea and so much more.

We saw so many things in so little time that it was hard to take in so many things all at once, causing the smallest of things to have the biggest immediate impact. There was a repeated presence of still, quiet, whispering wind. I reflected on Elisha in 1 Kings 19 as I felt the presence of God hovering over the waters (Genesis 1:2) and crying out through the rocks (Luke 19:40).

Whether it was sitting under a fig tree in the Garden of Gethsemane, standing at the base of Wailing Wall or in a boat on the Sea of Galilee, the whispering, quiet wind always caused the same overcoming, immediate response. I don't know if I believe in the common belief of other Eastern religions that the Holy Lands are closer to God or that one's prayers are more heard there, but now I understand why someone could so easily feel such a power when you are physically surrounded by places that God himself as Christ inhabited while on the earth as one of us. Paul addresses this issue from the top of Mars Hill in Athens, and it was recorded in Acts 17:24-27: "the God who made the world and everything in it does not live in temples built by human hands," and He did what He did so that we would search Him out and find him, "though He is not far from any one of us."

Now, as a college freshman, I have realized how much I have changed in just the last few months and how much I will continue to change as I travel on my own journey in my new "home" away from home at Harding University.



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Conway Christian Principal Billy Crow (front) with high school counselor Lesley Lea (front, left) and members of the senior class: Leanna Sartain (front, from left), McKinley Wallace, Whitley Wooten, Autumn Jones, Jenna Wilson, Wesley Oliver, Katie Jo Henley, Megan Ledbetter, Carly Powell, Lindsey Clay, Ancil Lea (back), Tyler Pelley, Ross Minner, Casey Roark, Josiah Smith, Lance Holden, Chase Kehler, Luke Beckman, John Clay, Noah Bowman and Elizabeth Kennedy. (Mike Kemp photo)

# CCS students honor principal with special gift

by Megan Ledbetter

The relationships formed between students and faculty at Conway Christian School are unique.

Billy Crow has been serving as the CCS High School principal since 2011 when he took on the role mid-year after the tragic death of former high school principal, Fred Ramsey. Crow was able to provide the healing that CCS needed after such a loss. Not only did he have a passion for the school, but the students grew to have a unique compassion and love for him as well.

The current CCS Senior Class has an especially strong bond with Crow, which began when he served as the speaker for their eighth grade promotional luncheon in 2010, although he wasn't employed at CCS at the time. In addition to serving as principal, Crow dedicates one period each day to teaching Bible to

the senior Bible class. This is a special experience for students because Crow tailors the course specifically to the needs of that class.

The past four years, Crow has also been investing his time into earning his doctorate through Luther Rice Seminary in Atlanta. Crow recently realized that his doctorate graduation and the 2015 CCS High School graduation would fall on the same weekend, but despite trying to move the CCS graduation to another weekend, no other date would suffice. "I really wanted to go," he said of his doctorate graduation. "It's kind of a big deal to me."

According to Crow, the dilemma between which graduation to attend was not a difficult choice. "It was an easy decision," he said. "I would graduate anyway, and our graduation is my favorite thing that we do here at CCS." As the speaker for the graduation each year, Crow plays a vital role in creating a

personal, unforgettable experience for the graduates, and that was not something he was willing to give up in order to attend his own graduation.

In keeping with the personality of Conway Christian's graduation, it is typical for the senior class to present their principal with a gift. These gifts over the years have varied greatly, often depicting the relationship between that class and their principal. This year was no exception.

As the dilemma of the conflicting graduations continued, it became apparent that the only possible solution would require a private flight as no commercial flights were available. "There aren't any flights," he said. "There was no way I was going to be able to go."

Provisionally, one of the parents of the Class of 2015, David Jones, who flies private aircraft for a living, offered to take Crow by private flight to his graduation

in Atlanta. Within a week, the idea had emerged into a fully funded plan to privately fly Crow and his wife, Meggin, to his graduation with full expenses paid for by the Class of 2015. All of the pieces fell together perfectly.

On the morning of senior cap and gown pictures in early March, the class successfully gave him what he called the biggest surprise he has ever received. When he came to the room, the students began a skit that consisted of the students getting into a plane and stepping out of the plane to receive a diploma. Even after the skit, Crow had no idea what was unfolding. "I just thought they were staging my graduation and were going to hand me a fake diploma," said Crow. He was astonished when he opened the "diploma," which read:

*To Dr. & Mrs. Billy Crow,*

*Description: Expense paid trip for two including private flight, transportation in Atlanta and meals. Paid for with love. Go graduate and get back for our graduation!*

*Much Love,*

*Conway Christian Class of 2015*

"I cried in front of them," Crow said. "It was overwhelming they would care so much. It was amazing what they did for me."

Crow expressed his feelings of overwhelming gratitude throughout the following days by posting some of the following tweets:

"I will remember this week with fondness for the rest of my life. Thank you seniors. Graduation is coming soon & thanks to you, I am going."

"An educator hopes to impact his students. Tonight I ponder the phenomenal impact that students have had



The seniors with Crow on the day they announced their special gift to him.

on me."

"I am sure the day I receive my doctorate will be special, but it will have a tough time being better than today."

Crow said the senior class represents a special group of Godly men and women. Many were in preschool together at Conway Christian and have grown up together. "I wish they were my kids," he said. "They are a special group to me."

Crow describes the gift as a selfless act. "It was a neat thing they did for somebody else," he said. "I love them,

too. We have a good relationship."

The gift perfectly expressed to Crow what he means to this graduating class while his willing sacrifice displays what this class means to him. Crow's first action as Dr. Crow will be shaking the hands of all 22 graduates as they walk across the stage to receive their high school diplomas.

*Megan Ledbetter, a member of the 2015 Conway Christian Senior Class, is planning to attend Harding University and major in journalism.*