

OUR BEST INVESTMENT My Family's MCS Story

By Stacey Lindale

I guess you could say our MCS story began years ago when I coached volleyball for a year at WMC - and the players could pray better than I could! At that time I said to my husband, 'Paul - we need to send our kids here some day!' Years later, we got to know some of the MCS families through sports and thought, 'What great kids these are!' This is a very genuine school and that's what we wanted for our kids. So we toured and then enrolled our kids at MCS.



It felt like a *huge* decision for us when we did it. For some other families who go here, Christian school is probably the norm - but for us, coming from public schools - it was something that we'd never done! We just really felt that God was prompting us. We kept running into people all summer from WMC and MCS.

We did have reservations at first. Should our kids be in a public school? Our kids are Christians and you're not supposed to hide from the world. But they aren't exactly 'salt and light' right now - they are growing, and it's hard to keep them in the faith. We do only have so long to pour into them in a meaningful way, and the school helps so much! They don't just have a religion class, the whole day revolves around our faith - and I'm surprised at how deep they go. I trust the teachers so much. I trust that the teachers are coming at issues from a Christian perspective. They go deep with the Bible, and my kids have a much better understanding of the Bible than what I had growing up - which is amazing! From an education standpoint, it's nice having smaller class sizes and having the teachers be such a meaningful part of my kid's lives. I'm so comfortable releasing my kids to them.

We love the Spanish Immersion program. We have a Blueberry farm, and having a language barrier with the staff means you can't connect with them very well. From being in this program, our son Carter can go and speak with the women in the packing shed. He connects them with our whole family. By having our son learn their language, they know that we respect their culture, and they light up being able to connect in this way. Carter can ask them how they are doing, if there are any problems, etc. This will be a gift to us going forward.

My kids have both really blossomed here, and we see them grow more and more all the time. *Really, what better thing can you invest in?*

UNCONVENTIONAL MEASUREMENTS

Sure, we use rulers and other traditional measurement tools in our classrooms. But learning can be much more engaging - and fun - when our teachers explore subjects with a more unconventional approach.



In Maestra DeEsteva's Kindergarten class, students learn how we can use different units such as book lengths, straws, etc. to approximate the length of a larger object. They discovered that the walrus they painted was approximately 17 straws in length, which is also about three Kindergarteners long!



In Mr. Bonnema's 5th Grade class, measurement becomes a little more complicated and sophisticated. Students were asked to determine how many possible outfits Mr. DeKam could have with 4 different shirts and pants. As you can see, it can be fun to turn Mr. DeKam into a math problem. *Which is your favorite?*



Thank you for your part in making MCS a wonderful community of faith and helping us to fulfill our mission to provide academic excellence with a Christian worldview to engage each student in a lifetime of Christian discipleship

WE'RE HONORED TO SHARE THIS JOURNEY WITH YOU.

SAVE THE DATE!
**The 2019 MCS
Auction**
Friday, May 3rd

Plan to join us at
**Muskegon Innovation
Hub from 5-9pm for
an inventive and
unforgettable night.**

Consider blessing our
students with a year-end
gift to MCS!

All donations postmarked
before December 31st will
be eligible for a 2018 tax
receipt. THANK YOU!

A NOTE FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

When most of us consider our career path, we focus on making a living for our families, what we enjoy doing, and where we feel God is calling us to make a difference in the world. Working at MCS has been all of those things for me. What has been surprising is what a blessing MCS has been to me. I have been blessed to partner with:

- Wonderful, caring teachers who sincerely love the children in their classrooms. I have been blessed to witness the way they support each other and give every effort to serve the families who have entrusted them with their children. I have met with them regularly to pray for the school, the children and each other as we carry out the work God has blessed us with.
- Board members and others who volunteer their time and expertise for almost no recognition.
- Parents who are dedicated to raising children to know and love the Lord and who sacrifice deeply to send their children to MCS.

And I have witnessed the tremendous support we receive from the great cloud of supporters who give to the school to support those families who cannot afford the full cost of tuition (like mine). Most of the time, these givers don't even know the families or the children. But they know that the work done at MCS is making this world a little more like what God would want it to be.

Over 18 years, I've had the pleasure of witnessing children growing and learning about God's creation, themselves and their place in the world - and lots of birthday treats and 'high-fives' along the way too.



This Thanksgiving, I am thankful for the blessing MCS has been to me.

In Christ,
Dan DeKam, *Administrator*

M-C-S! M-C-S!

By Loistine Johnson, *MCS Board Member*

I can't help but cheer for Muskegon Christian School! When asked, "Why did I choose to serve on the MCS board?" I respond that I felt the call to leadership and to service. Having been an Early Education educator for over 20 years, I'm willing to apply my wisdom and knowledge to help the school. I'm also pleased to report that MCS is thriving! We have a strong emphasis on the intentional incorporation of our Christian belief and a desire to truly reflect the body of Christ.



GOD IS AT THE VERY CENTER OF THIS EDUCATION AND HIS PRESENCE IS ALIVE AND WELL IN THE HEART OF EACH STUDENT, TEACHER AND STAFF.

My love for MCS runs deep. My husband, Pastor Robert Johnson, was a part of the first African American family that attended MCS (and then WMC). My daughter Olivia attended from Pre-K through WMC and my oldest daughter Rachel graduated from WMC as well. Now, my grandchildren follow in this tradition of Christian education and academic excellence. I even did a portion of my teaching clinical service hours under the tutelage of the legendary "Mrs. Ritsema"!

God's presence is evident throughout the school - even at an ice cream social! Last year, I had the privilege of taking my granddaughter to this 'back-to-school' event. The children's excitement was in the air. They were so excited! They were showing

NOW, MY GRANDCHILDREN FOLLOW IN THIS TRADITION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE.

their name cards and desks and even their lockers to everyone! I could sense the school was filled with wonder and the anticipation and expectation of what was to come in the new year. It was wonderful and contagious. It perfectly summed up how God is in the fabric of this institution. God is at the very center of this school and His presence is alive and well in the heart of the teachers, students, and staff.

So, why do I serve on the MCS Board? I'm helping to sustain and support the mission: To provide academic excellence with a Christian worldview that engages each student in a lifetime of Christian discipleship. So join me now and shout: "M-C-S! Who Ya Rootin' For? M-C-S!"

MCS BOARD MEMBERS

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Bob Botting | Loistine Johnson |
| Rebecca Sytsema | Brian Schuitema |
| Mike Teeter | Jeremy Lenertz |
| Jonathan Hoogstra | |



MCS AT A GLANCE

Enrollment (PS-6th)	.270
Average class size (K-6)	.16
Minority students	32%
Churches represented	58

THANK YOU

Thank you, Jane Thomasma, for volunteering to organize and teach the week long "Big Lesson" to our 3rd graders at The Lakeshore Museum Center. (She's done this every year since retiring in 2008).



MCS HIGHLIGHTS



Want to see more highlights and photos from MCS?

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER!
And follow our blog on our MCS website - www.mchristianschool.com - for more stories.

BY THE NUMBERS

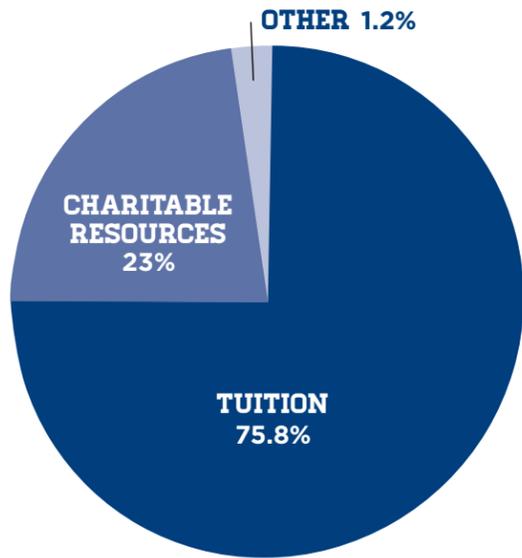
We have some great numbers that add up to a report of good things happening in our school. Numbers like 270 students being enrolled, of which 52 are preschool students representing 58 churches. Here are some other numbers that we are happy to share:

Revenue and Expenses for 2017-2018

REVENUE

Tuition (including Preschool)	\$864,538.	(75.8%)
Charitable Resources		(23%)
Foundations	\$81,000	
Annual Fund	\$181,467	
Other	\$21,237	(1.2%)

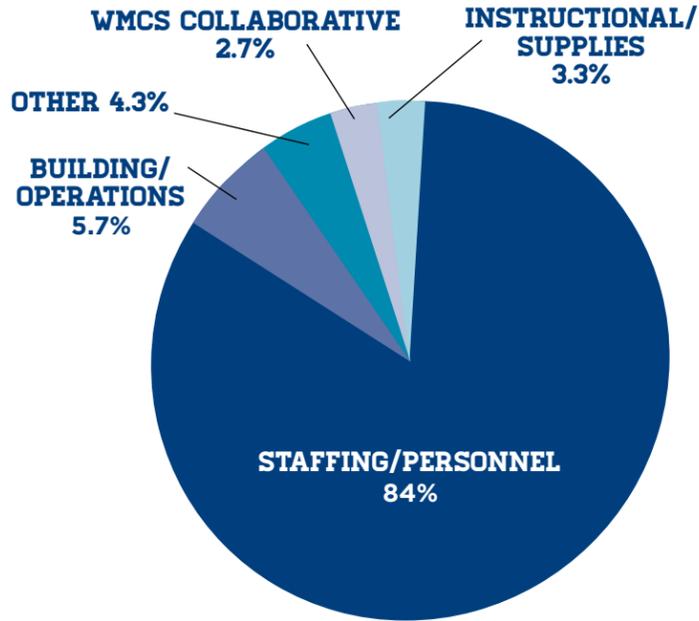
Total \$1,139,242
Year Ended 8/31/2018



EXPENSES

Staffing/Personnel	\$970,413	(84%)
Building/Operations	\$66,702	(5.7%)
Instructional/Supplies	\$38,476	(3.3%)
WMCS Collaborative	\$31,964	(2.7%)
Other	\$50,853	(4.3%)

Total \$1,158,408
Year Ended 8/31/2018



These numbers reflect how reliant we are on God's provision through our community. Your support through your annual gifts as well as planned giving is crucial.

Thank you!

You are encouraging and inspiring us with your continued prayers and financial support.

Endowments

Our Endowments not only bless us long term but help us meet immediate financial obligations as well. For example, we received a total of \$66,360 from the MCS Education Foundation in 2017-2018 (from interest earned) that we were able to apply toward tuition assistance. Over the past 8 years, the MCSEF has blessed us with over \$440,000 from earnings off the principle! We're hoping that our endowments will continue to grow through both donations and returns, thereby ensuring the future of Christian education in Muskegon for centuries to come!

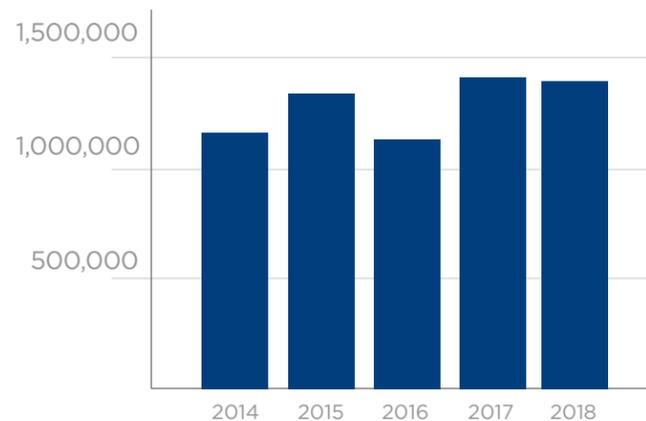
Our endowments have done fairly well this past year. Our endowment balances as of 9/2018:

Muskegon Christian School Education Foundation	\$1,383,403
Bytwerk-Medendorp Fund	\$100,000
MCS Technology Endowment	\$113,615*

*Reflects \$12,000 grant withdrawn in July 2018

Balances (past 5 years) of MCS Education Foundation

2018:	\$1,383,403
2017:	\$1,392,348
2016:	\$1,260,001
2015:	\$1,348,640
2014:	\$1,280,544



*These figures reflect the principal value after annual 5% distributions are paid out each year.

EXTEND YOUR INFLUENCE BY ENSURING OUR FUTURE

Recently a longtime supporter blessed us by remembering our school in her will. Her gift will help us build God's kingdom and impact generations to come. Naming MCS in your will or trust is a wonderful way to ensure the future of MCS. And by gifting appreciated non-cash assets - such as stock, real estate, commodities or distributions from your IRA - you can support Muskegon Christian School and likely experience tax benefits today, too! We partner with Barnabas Foundation to make the process easier for you.

Want to learn more? Contact us at 231.773.3221.

Every gift to MCS is deeply appreciated by all our students: present and future!

MCS WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE FOR DONATIONS MADE IN MEMORY OF:

- Millie Baker
- Donna Bishop
- Wilma DeLeeuw
- Phil DeWall
- Marvin DeWall
- Elaine DuBois
- Harold 'Bud' Fisher
- Donna Fongers
- Kathy Niemeyer
- Doris Rop
- Harry Sikkenga
- Arnold Vanderlaan
- Ken Witt



OUR VOLUNTEERS AREN'T PAID - BECAUSE THEY ARE PRICELESS!

It's a fact: the hours of service donated to our school translates into thousands and thousands of dollars saved, making their value to us priceless. Because we have a librarian who volunteers, we don't have to pay for staff to cover that role. Because a photographer donates her talents, we have pictures that help us better connect to our community. Our SCRIP volunteers averaged 20 hours a week in service - and helped our families reduce tuition costs by approximately \$40,000 last year! And we definitely couldn't afford to pay for what our "Friday guys" volunteer to tackle every week. Our staff and students would like to express our deepest gratitude to our amazing volunteers at MCS. **THANK YOU!**



SI TEACHER'S TRANSLATION WINS AWARD

When Pilar first heard author Mary Morgan read her book "The Runaway Lawnmower" to our students in March of 2017, she

had no idea of the journey that would follow. "As I was listening, I thought "This is a beautiful story. I think it should be translated into Spanish", shares 1st grade Spanish Immersion teacher Pilar Vanderstelt. Pilar approached Mary afterward and shared this idea with her. A couple of months later, Mary called up Pilar and asked her if she would be willing to translate the book. "I loved the idea! I started to work on translating this story about a lawnmower that escapes a garage to make happy faces in neighbor's lawns. The story teaches that happiness comes from doing nice things for others". Translating the children's book was not as



Pilar sharing her translation with her Spanish Immersion 1st grade students. TOP: Pilar and author Mary Morgan were thrilled to run into each other at the annual CEA convention.

simple as it might sound. "There were unique challenges. In Spanish, every object is either female or male - but what gender is a lawnmower? And you can't just translate word for word - you have to capture the meaning of each page." The Spanish version was printed in the summer of 2017, and the publisher liked it enough to submit Pilar's translation for a Moonbeam Children's Book Award. Pilar's translation *La Desenfrenada Podadora de Césped* won the Gold award for a Spanish Language Book!

"This has inspired me to do more translation work in the future and eventually write my own books", Pilar confides. We're thrilled to have teachers like Pilar at MCS sharing their unique gifts with us and others.



SNOW CAN'T STOP THE TOTAL TREK QUEST TEAM

It's snowing out early on a Saturday morning in November. Most people wouldn't be excited to be getting ready to run with a group of preteen boys in the cold and snow - but then, Lis Potts and Mary LePage aren't 'most people'. Soon they were running with a group of 3rd to 5th grade MCS boys who they had been mentoring through the *Total Trek Quest (TTQ)* program since September. "We agreed to help out because we know how impactful this program can be", Lis and Mary shared.

Total Trek Quest is an after school program that combines the physical activity of training for a 5K run with a curriculum that focuses on building strong social bonds, setting and reaching goals, and making healthy choices.

The MCS *TTQ* team of nine boys worked hard this season and finished strong. And their coaches (both MCS teachers) inspire us with their servant hearts. "Our teachers give more of themselves than people probably realize," Principal Dan DeKam shares. "They model the attitude that we are called to as Christians to serve others in love." Great job, team!

PLEASE SHARE! We treasure the stories we hear from our alumni, we really do! Please consider sharing your MCS memories with us at mcsoffice@mchristianschool.com or write us a quick note and send it in the envelope provided. **THANK YOU FOR SHARING!**

A TRADITION OF GIVING

We have some wonderful Christmas traditions at MCS. We enjoy decorating the halls, hosting Christmas parties in the classrooms, and of course the 5th/6th Christmas concert. But our favorite traditions are focused on giving to others.

The MCS Christmas Shop may only be set up for 3 days every year, but it's a long MCS tradition. Preparation actually starts almost a year before (at after Christmas sales) as we need to purchase over 1000 items for the shop. It's always a thrill for our students K-6 to be able to shop for direct family members at the annual MCS Christmas Shop. All gifts are only \$1 and parent volunteers wrap and tag them ready to go under the tree.



Every year we offer an opportunity for our students to give to others in our community as well. This year we are running the MCS "Cans for our Community" Food Drive and will be collecting non-perishable food items for a local charity in our lobby. Students will help distribute all the food collected the week before Christmas.

We are thankful that we are able to openly rejoice in the true reason for Christmas with our students and families at Muskegon Christian School.



BUILDING AND GROUNDS UPDATE

Over the past fiscal year, we were able to complete renovations such as carpeting 5 classrooms and finishing roof replacement. We were also able to upgrade our server, add firewall protection, install security cameras around the building and provide Chromebooks for each grade level 1-6.

With the help of our Friday morning crew, we try very hard to keep up with the minor repairs that regularly arise. This past year, our Friday crew (all volunteers) put in hundreds of hours mending lockers, painting, fixing playground equipment, addressing minor plumbing issues, and so much more! Over the summer, SERVE teams were able to weed and mulch the playground areas, scrape and clean the hallway tile walls and prep the floors for carpeting. We are blessed by the hard work of all these volunteers.

SO WHAT'S NEXT?

We're committed to completing future projects without incurring debt. We would love to double our endowment in the next 10 years. We'd love to see every classroom filled to capacity so that more young lives can be impacted. Our building could use updates: redoing the bathrooms, replacing the original windows, upgrading the classrooms and repaving the parking lot