



# PATHWAYS NEWSLETTER

**Honoring God through creative learning & strong academics in a caring, fun-filled school.**



### Picture of the Month

Our Preschool students exhibit pure joy when they are learning experientially in our certified Nature Explore play space each day!



A message from our Principal

## Mrs. Cleveland's Corner:

One of the things that makes Holden Christian Academy so special is the sense of *family* we share. Throughout the year, we see parents, teachers, and students working together to create a joyful, Christ-centered environment where children are known, loved for who they are, and encouraged to grow. As you begin hearing more about our current fundraising

opportunity, Feed the Need, you might wonder: *Why does our school need fundraisers when families already pay tuition?* That's a great question, and one that's worth answering. The truth is, tuition covers a lot, but not everything. Fundraising helps bridge the gap between what tuition provides and what it actually takes to offer the kind of experiential, faith-filled education

### Upcoming Events

- \* **Feed the Need Kickoff**  
TONIGHT, Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>  
Be our guests for dinner and hear more about our service-based fundraiser
- \* **Trike-A-Thon**  
Oct. 21, 2025
- \* **Lifetouch Re-take Day**  
Oct. 23, 2025
- \* **Development Day - NO SCHOOL**  
Oct. 24, 2025
- \* **Team A China Golden Day**  
Oct. 31, 2025
- \* **Term 1 ends**  
Nov. 7, 2025
- \* **Veteran's Day - NO SCHOOL**  
Nov. 11, 2025
- \* **Feed the Need Packing Party**  
Nov. 14, 2025

**"SHOW ME YOUR WAYS, LORD, TEACH ME YOUR PATHS. GUIDE ME IN YOUR TRUTH AND TEACH ME, FOR YOU ARE GOD MY SAVIOR, AND MY HOPE IS IN YOUR ALL DAY LONG.**

**PSALM 25:4-5**

## "Mrs. Cleveland's Corner" continued...

that makes HCA the place we all love. Each year, we must budget a fundraising amount that will sustain our school and help it to remain a flourishing educational environment. When we exceed our fundraising goals, we can do even more. We can refresh classrooms, upgrade technology, support enrichment programs, and make improvements to our campus that directly benefit our students.

Our fundraisers are about much more than dollars, however; they're about connection. Whether it's a simple giving campaign or a service project, these moments bring our community together around a shared purpose. They remind us that HCA isn't just a school — **it's a partnership between families, teachers, and staff who believe in the same mission: helping children grow in both faith and knowledge.**

Our current fundraiser, Feed the Need, is one that does just that. It is a service fundraiser with a mission. We are raising money to bridge the gap between tuition and the cost of education at HCA, but we are giving the firstfruits from this effort to provide 10,000 meals to refugees in Bangladesh. It's an amazing opportunity to provide an example

to our students of **love in action**. In Isaiah 58:10, we are told, *"Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon."*

Our goal of \$65,000 for this fundraiser represents the funds needed for the 10,000 meals, plus HCA's fundraising budget of \$37,000, plus a little extra for playground improvements. It sounds like an insurmountable goal for our small school, but nothing is impossible with God. Last year was our first year with Feed the Need and we had no idea if our goal was even remotely possible, yet our school community raised \$67,000 ... we were able to ship 10,000 meals, meet our budget, *and* refresh our main hallway with the excess funds! Thank you for your continued partnership, prayers, and support. Every gift, every volunteer hour, and every bit of encouragement matters. **Together we're building something wonderful — a school where Christ is honored, and every child is encouraged to shine.**

With gratitude,

Mrs. Nikki Cleveland  
Principal

*"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus". Philippians 4:19*

**HONORING GOD THROUGH CREATIVE LEARNING &  
STRONG ACADEMICS IN A CARING, FUN-FILLED SCHOOL**

From the office...

## Important School News:

This page will be dedicated to important, school-wide announcements and news each time we publish Pathways. Please continue reading to see classroom happenings! There is a section dedicated for each

PK-5 homeroom, as well as each of our Middle School subjects. We encourage you to make reading Pathways part of your rhythm so you don't miss any of the amazing things at HCA!

## Spiritual Emphasis Week in Pictures



Service-based fundraiser

## Feed the Need!

Our Feed the Need campaign begins tonight at our Kickoff event. Please join us for dinner and a short presentation. Dinner is on us! If you have not RSVPed, please come anyway! We can't wait to share about this mission-aligned service-based fundraising event starting at 5:00pm.

We will worship with Revival Worship Co., and we will eat a delicious spaghetti & meatball dinner professionally prepared by MCL Custom caterers.

We are also currently looking for CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP for our Feed the Need Event. If you are a business owner, or know someone who owns a business, becoming a Corporate Sponsor is an excellent way to support Christian education and this service project!

### REFERRAL BONUS RECIPIENTS

*Current HCA families Ameyaw, Borchelt, and Johnson received referral checks after being named as the referral source on accepted student applications. Our faithful substitute Janna Jewett was also named and received a check. CONGRATULATIONS and THANK YOU to all who referred new families to HCA this year!*

## Get Involved!

Interested in starting a new elective? Would you like to get some Family Service Hours in by volunteering or working on a project? Check out our [website](#) for Volunteer Opportunities or email the HCA office!

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# Parent Teacher Conferences are coming!

*Please use the links below to sign up for a slot with your child's homeroom teacher.*



[Preschool](#)  
[Kindergarten](#)



[Grade 1](#)

[Grade 2](#)

[Grade 3](#)

[Grade 4](#)

[Grade 5](#)



[Grade 6](#)

[Grade 7](#)

[Grade 8](#)



From the classroom

## What's Happening in Preschool with Ms. Michelle

It has been such a wonderful start to the school year. I couldn't ask for a better class to welcome me back to teaching! I've enjoyed getting to know each and every one of your children. They all bring so much joy and blessings to our class.

We have already accomplished so much in just a few weeks. From welcoming our class stuffy, Chester the Raccoon, who has earned a permanent spot in HCA preschool; to Mrs. Bleau who blessed our class with butterfly chrysalises. We got to enjoy God's beautiful creations as we watched them form into butterflies and fly off into the warmth of the sun.

The County Fair came to town! We got to play in our popcorn sensory bin, have tractor pulls through the paint, potato sack races, and we even had our very own clowns put on a show. Apples have been the talk for the last two weeks. We have tasted them, painted with them, and even stacked them on our heads! We enjoyed learning about the lifecycle and how God put everything in place to do a job. A class favorite was making our own applesauce. The kids chopped their own apples, followed a recipe and WAITED, probably the most challenging part of it all. But it was all worth it when seconds were going around. They also conducted their own Science experiments. A favorite was "sink or float" Surprise: apples float!!

We have our class apple stand that has now turned into a Fall Farm Stand. You can find all your fall necessities from pumpkins, gourds, flowers, cider, pumpkin pies, donuts and pumpkin lattes. Prices vary depending on who's working, and please use exact change. We're still learning!

We've been enjoying Nature Explore so much with this beautiful weather we have had. You can find the kids, looking for bugs, climbing a tree, hanging upside down on our new bars.

A huge thank you to Mr. Cammuso for building us an amazing area to hang our silks and our bodies! The students are also creating beautiful artwork on our new easel. Thank you so much Erica for putting it all together! We are so blessed to have you both, and your families, be a part of HCA. Our mud kitchen is up and running. They are always open and have the best chefs ready to create any dish you could think of. We would love for you to join us, Nature Explore volunteer hours are always available.

These next two weeks might be some of the most exciting times for your Preschoolers.



Trike-A-Thon Week brings so much excitement and energy to the classroom. We are discussing the importance of eating healthy, exercising, and resting to keep our bodies working the way God intended. We also focus on being a part of God's Team and what that looks and feels like. In the upcoming weeks we will focus on Fall, Family and all the fun things that come with Thanksgiving!

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From the classroom

## Kindergarten News

### *With love from Mrs. Coombs*

What a wonderful start we've had to our school year! It has been such a joy getting to know each of our Kindergarteners and watching them begin to settle into our classroom routines. The children are doing a great job adjusting from Preschool to Kindergarten — learning how to be responsible for their materials, follow directions, and work and play kindly with others. Each day brings more confidence, independence, and excitement for learning! Our classroom is a wonderful place where we see God's love in action every day — through smiles, helping hands, and joyful learning.

We have started learning our letters and sounds and are practicing how to form each letter correctly. The children are beginning to identify letters in their names and in the world around them. We have been practicing proper letter formation in shaving cream and sand, which makes learning both fun and experiential! You can continue this learning at home by pointing out letters on signs, in books, and on packages.

In Math, we've been busy sorting and classifying objects by color, shape, and size. The children love using hands-on materials to group items and explain their thinking. We are also exploring patterns, creating patterns with colors, shapes, and even sounds! These activities build early number sense and prepare us for more exciting math adventures ahead.

We had such a wonderful time on our trip to the apple orchard! The children enjoyed exploring the orchard, picking apples, and learning about how God designed the seasons and the way apples grow. It was a beautiful day to experience God's creation firsthand and see His blessings all around us. A special thank-you to the parents who volunteered to drive and chaperone — your help made the day extra special!

After our trip, we used the apples we picked to make homemade applesauce for all of Team A to enjoy. The classroom smelled amazing, and the children loved helping to peel, mix, and taste the delicious results of God's wonderful creation!

Our trip also tied in perfectly with what we are learning about the deciduous forest. We observed how apple trees lose their leaves in the fall and talked about how God designed the trees to rest and prepare for new growth in spring. It was a wonderful way to see our Science lessons come to life!

## Attention Preschool and Kindergarten Parents!

### TRIKE-A-THON Tuesday 10/21

HCA Preschoolers and Kindergartners will participate in our annual Trike-A-Thon fundraiser from 9:30-10:30am. Come cheer us on! Friends and family members sponsor our students to reach their goal of riding their bikes, trikes and scooters for 30 min. It is part of our Food for Life program!

If you are reading this as a relative, alumni or friend of HCA, you are welcome to support HCA's Trike-A-Thon too! It is easy to [make a donation online](#) through our HCA website. We look forward to sharing lots of pictures with you of this fun day! We thank God for our school and for all who support HCA!



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From the classroom

## First Grade News: *Mrs. Plourde's Perspective*

First Grade has been working so hard this past month! It has been a delight getting to know all of your students. First Grade is full of thoughtful, kind, and special kids! Last week we had Spiritual Emphasis Week and everyone enjoyed having Miss Renee, Mr. Jason, and Mr. Huffman join for class work, lunch, and recess. The last month of school has been filled with a lot of review but we have gotten into new concepts including digraphs, parts of a story, trick words, word of the day, tapping out our words, and marking up sentences. In Math we've learned the names for the parts of addition and subtraction equations. We've also started to do more reading in Math, so I've been working with the students on finding all the clues for a math problem.



In Science we've been looking at biomes; First Grade learned that we live in a deciduous forest. We took a nature walk to discover some of the things found in a deciduous forest. We've started to learn more about China's biomes, and are looking at its plants and animals. In Social Studies we first talked about our culture, and started to look at China's culture. First Grade also went on our first field trip of the year with Kindergarten and Second Grade! We went to George Hill Orchards. Students had a blast picking apples, participating in a scavenger hunt, and learning more about how apples are grown. We had a special guest, Mrs. Cleveland, come into our class last week and read a story about mooncakes and the holiday behind it. We also got to try a treat based on the story. Finally we're looking forward to Feed the Need kickoff; the students learned about the incentives they can get both individually and as a school.



From the classroom

## Second Grade News: Miss Theodoss' Tales

I can not believe a month of school has already passed. Your students have done a wonderful job acclimating to Second Grade. We had a wonderful time last week with the Spiritual Emphasis team. The kids really enjoyed having them join us for lunch and recess.

**Week 1- October 20-24**

\$2,000 class goal-  
Stuffy Day

**Week 2- October 27-31**

\$3,500 class goal-  
Toy Day

**Week 3- November 3-7**

\$5,000 class goal-  
Pajama Day

**Week 4- November 10-14**

\$6,500 class goal- Help in  
Kindergarten for an afternoon

Check out the class incentives  
Miss Theodoss is offering for FTN!

We have many fun Also, coming later this upcoming events. The month, is Team A's first is Feed the Need, China Golden Day which starts TONIGHT! Celebration. Please be Please join us for the looking for an upcoming Family Kickoff starting at email from either myself, 5pm tonight, to learn Mrs. Coombs, or Mrs. more about Feed the Plourde with more Need. We hope you will details. join us for dinner and a time of worship.

To help incentivise the Second Graders I will be offering several weekly classroom rewards for all of the Second Graders to enjoy if we meet that week's goal.

Blessings,  
Miss Theodoss



## ATTENTION "TEAM A" PARENTS!

You are invited to attend...  
**China Golden Day!**

Friday Oct 31st,  
12:30—2:30 pm (rain or shine)

Parents, look for upcoming emails with more information and a sign-up genius link from Team A teachers.



From the classroom

## Third Grade News: *from the Desk of Ms. Rennie*

I am SO proud and impressed with how well the students have acclimated into 3rd grade!! If you wonder why they come home a bit tired, it could be that they are learning so many new skills! Distributive properties in Math, identifying parts of speech in Shurley Grammar, new phonetic rules in FUNdations, how to be a better writer, Cursive, biomes - Russia has eleven of them! We have learned about the culture of Russia.

facts. It will make Math more fun and less stressful. Practice on the way to school, help them see it when you are grocery shopping, etc. We are excited about some upcoming events in our study of Russia. On Tuesday, October 28th, a dear friend and former HCA colleague, Martha Kohl, is coming in to make borscht with us. Her parents were both born in Russia and she happens to be the mom of Mrs. Gordon.

**"Don't forget: book reports are due October 31<sup>st</sup>"**

—Ms. Rennie

Please make sure to read the Weekly Peek that is in the front of their binders. Their Book Review book report is due October 31 st. Our binders are important to keep track of all work. We clean them out at the end of each term, so please keep everything in them. The Take Home/ Bring Back section is a combination of active classwork and work that they are behind on. They are welcome to work on it at home. The best way to help your child feel more confident in math is to help them master their multiplication

On Thursday November 6th, we are going to the Russian Icon Museum in Clinton. They are very excited to host us and have a special Russian Art activity planned for us as well as our guided tour. Please make sure to sign your child up through FACTS. The email was sent the first week in October. Thank you for your partnership in helping your child succeed. It's going to be a fantastic year!

Blessings,  
Ms. Rennie



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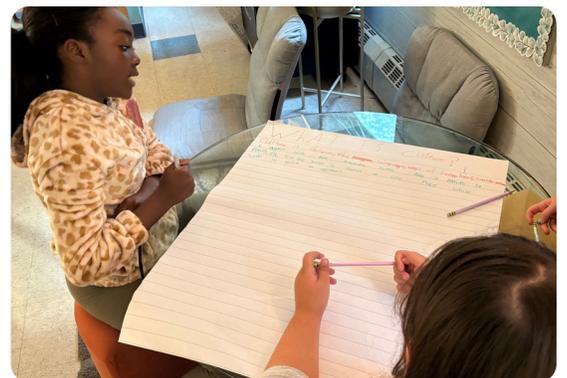
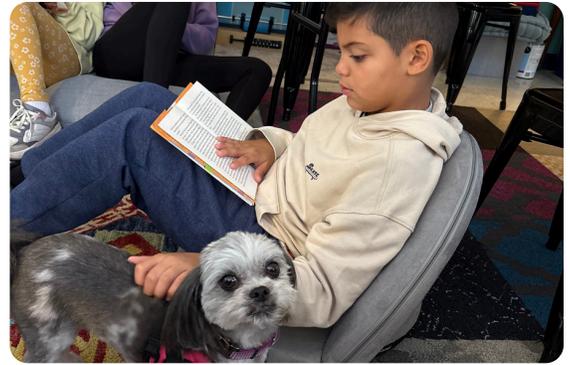
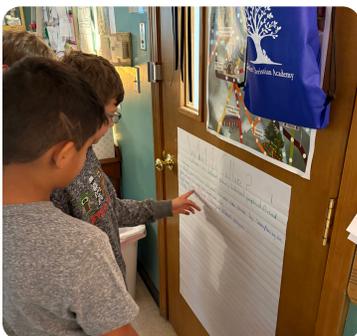
From the classroom

## Fourth & Fifth Grade News: *A few notes from Mrs. Velarde*

Whenever I meet someone and they ask me what I do for work, their response never fails to surprise me. When I tell them that I teach 4th and 5th graders, they always respond with a look of sympathy and something like “how do you do that?”; “I could never”; or a rather sarcastic “God bless you”. I always respond by telling them that this age group is my favorite for so many reasons.

These students are not afraid to ask challenging questions, and I love watching them learn to think deeper. This year has been an especially joyful one for me because I have the privilege of continuing to grow relationships with students I had last year while also getting to know some wonderful new students. Our multi-age, blended 4th and 5th grade class has given many opportunities for students to challenge each other, spur one another on and learn to be a good mentor. We have a class culture that is full of inquiry and excitement which has made learning so fun for all of us!

In Science, we have been learning about the deciduous forest and the very intentional ways God designed His creation. In Social Studies, we are studying Korea and learning about their culture. Be on the lookout for an email about a special field trip in the coming weeks! In Bible, we have begun to discuss the Bible as one big story. In Math, fourth grade is learning to multiply multi-digit by one-digit numbers. Fifth grade is currently tackling decimals. In Language Arts, we have finished one book, Project Mulberry, and have moved onto our next, A Single Shard. The story is set in 12th century Korea and has given us many opportunities to ask questions and dig deeper into Korean culture. We have also begun to work on our NaNoWriMo characters and plot diagrams. I am so looking forward to another year of doing this project which provides so many unique learning experiences and opportunities to grow as writers. This year is full of so many exciting opportunities, but I am truly most excited to see the ways that God is working in the lives of each student and how He is drawing all of us to himself more each day.



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From the classroom

## Mr. Shea's Shenanigans: Middle School Language Arts 6th Grade Homeroom

Hello Middle School Families!

Students have been getting into the swing of things this term! In Language Arts, we have studied the elements of narrative, haiku, and are currently working on incorporating quotes and paraphrases into paragraphs and essays. As we finish the term, students will be using these skills to write their first book reports of the school year: a compare and contrast essay based on the books we're reading in class. They will be generating answers to short essay questions over the next couple of weeks.

In Grade 6 Cultures, we have been studying Japan. We have looked into its geography, values, and its cultural worldview. As we head into the second half of the term we will be creating a collaborative training presentation for missionaries hoping to share the Gospel with people in Japan. We will be creating displays, decor, and slideshow presentations to accomplish this. Please feel free to explore arts like origami, paper lanterns, and calligraphy with your students at home! We are also hoping to make California Roll sushi and Avocado nigiri next week!

Thank you so much for your partnership!

Jeremiah Shea



*"I don't care if a video of me doing the Flying Squirrel ends up on social media. I don't embarrass easily."*  
—Mr. Shea



From the classroom

## Mr. Curtis' Corner: Middle School Bible & History 7th Grade Homeroom

Welcome back, readers. We have been on a hiatus for quite some time, but I am happy to report that the 2025-2026 school year is off to a splendid start. Somehow, we find ourselves smack dab in the middle of October. Term I has seen the Middle School delve deeply into Asian culture and geography. They have discovered the small island nation of Brunei, which is known for its beautiful beaches and biodiverse rainforests. For Cultures class, 6th grade has been studying the peoples and cultures of Japan, while 7th grade has been trying to understand the diversity of India and its Caste System. Over the course of this academic year, your students will not only understand other non-Western cultures better, but will hopefully also have a greater appreciation for their own unique family cultures and backgrounds.



Just last week, we had the pleasure of hosting Matt Huffman of 'Purposeful Connections' and a slew of local alumni and volunteers for our annual Spiritual Emphasis Week. Our Middle School students were challenged to unpack the theme of *Biblical Rest*. I will tell you that this was a theme that our community really struggled with because we don't seem to practice it, or at least consistently. I encourage you to continue to discuss and study this concept of *Biblical Rest*, and look for ways to practice it that are a blessing for your family. I recommend taking a look at John Mark-Comer's 'Practicing the Way' study, more specifically the section on Sabbath. It can be found on 'RightNowMedia'.

Looking forward, there is so much more learning and experience we have to share together over the course of this school year. Stay tuned for ways that you can participate in and enrich our school community. Until next time, my readers.

Maranatha,

-Mr. Curtis



Good News! The Spiritual Emphasis Week team will be back Feb. 23-27!



From the classroom

## Mrs. Jorritsma's Jam: Middle School Math

### Welcome to a New School Year!

I am so excited to begin this new school year with your children! We've had a great start together.

This year, we are using a framework called **Building a Thinking Classroom**, which focuses on developing students' mathematical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Students work in **random groups**, collaborating to solve **real-world word problems** that connect directly to the skills taught in class. Much of this learning takes place as students work together at **whiteboards**, encouraging discussion, critical thinking, and perseverance.

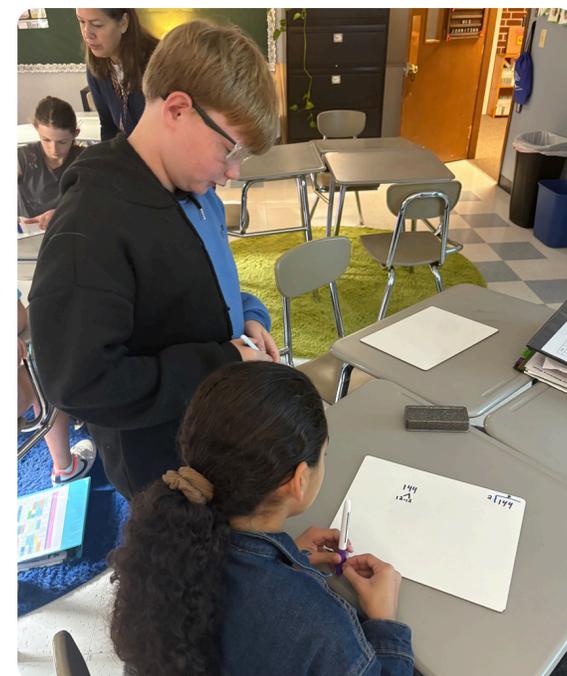
Through this approach, students are learning to **take risks, explain their reasoning, and build confidence** as mathematical thinkers.

Grade 6 just finished a chapter on **Numerical Expressions and Factors**, and Grade 7 just completed **Adding and Subtracting Rational Numbers**.

I look forward to getting to know your children and partnering with you throughout this school year.

**God bless!**

— Mrs. Jorritsma



From the classroom

## Mrs. Gordon's Musings: Middle School Health, Science, and Outdoor Ed

**Hello Families! What a joy it has been to rejoin the HCA staff this fall in my part-time role. Here's a peek into my classroom:**

- 6th grade Science — we are diving into weather and climate before exploring biomes around the world. We'll start close to home with our own temperate deciduous forest, then journey to other regions—perfectly timed to integrate with our studies on cultures.
- 7th grade Science — we just completed a thoughtful unit on evolution and creation. If you'd like to explore the materials we used, or engage more deeply with your student about these topics, I encourage you to visit this resource:  
<https://sites.ualberta.ca/~dlamoure/wlhs.html>. We're now beginning our introduction to biology—studying the characteristics of life, cells as life's building blocks, and soon, the fascinating world of genetics.
- 7th grade Health — My heart for this class is simple: I want my students to grow in awareness and responsibility for their wellbeing, making choices that matter today and tomorrow. One profound way we worship our marvelous Maker is by respecting and caring for our bodies—our whole selves—according to His beautiful design. That's the heart of Food for Life, and I'm grateful for the freedom to explore this regularly with students here at HCA. This term, we're focused on movement and functional fitness. Students have set personal fitness goals and are nearly finished with their first project. Ask the 7th graders in your life about their "Move to Improve" projects and what they're learning about the benefits of exercise!



***"You will know you've rested well if, after you've rested, you're ready to work."***

—Mrs. Gordon  
during SEW

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