

It's been awhile since there has been a Winter issue of the school board newsletter. There is always a lot going on in the winter months at Eastside, but evidently there is not enough time to stop and write about it! One thing that happens here at Eastside, winter after winter (and is worth finding the time to write about), is the hard work of the teaching staff and their love for the students. Hard work that often requires them to teach despite catching whatever sickness has been going around the school, and love that requires them to bundle up in frigid weather to "enjoy" an outdoor recess on the playground. This past year has brought some big life changes for some of the staff members- including the departure of Mrs. Amanda Klamer and the arrival of her replacement - Mr. Tyler DeVries. We wanted to take a few pages to highlight these goings-on to the Eastside community and to thank God for His sovereign care over our school and our teachers in all the changes in both personal and school life.

Junior high teacher Andy Kuiper and his wife Kim have had a very exciting year as they are in the process of adopting two children- Gerrard and Jazelle. The Kuipers agreed to share their story with us - including their background, more about their family, and also their recent adoption.

Andy was born to Jerry & Bonnie Kuiper a few decades ago. Jerry was then a teacher at Covenant CHS. Bonnie was busy raising 4 boys and 2 girls (one more to come, making Andy the baby for 2 years until David came along to ruin it). She taught piano lessons and played for choirs and then later played for the Voices of Victory. Andy grew up in the Jenison and Hudsonville area and attended Hope School for Kindergarten and Heritage for 1st-9th grade where his father was then principal.

Andy's high school years were spent at Covenant, where he enjoyed playing soccer and warmed the bench for JV basketball. He graduated in 1997 and enrolled in Grand Valley to follow in his father's footsteps of being a teacher. One year later he decided to enter the workforce full time.

Kim was born to Jim & Sandra Westing and grew up in Zeeland. She had 3 sisters and 1 brother; Kim is the oldest (you may know the middle child, Amy, who was the Kindergarten/Preschool teacher before Mrs. Hulst). Kim attended Heritage Christian K-9 where she kept the books for the girls' basketball team and played volleyball. For high school, Kim also went to Covenant (but missed meeting Andy since we were 4 school years apart) where she worked on the yearbook and was a JV cheerleader. She enjoyed the social atmosphere more than the academics! During her junior year she got a job at a local flooring store being an Interior Design Assistant. Her enlightening "Career Quiz" with Mr. Huber said she should either be an organic farmer or interior designer, making it one of the few times that the old quiz actually gave good advice! After graduating in 2000, she enrolled in GRCC in the interior design program while continued to work in the flooring store for 4 years.

In 1999 at the YP's Convention in Redlands, California, Andy's friends badgered him into asking out Kim to the banquet. A mere nine months later he got around to asking her out again and the rest, as they say, is history. We were married September 19, 2003 at the Pillar Church in Holland.

During those first few years of marriage, Kim finished college and switched jobs to a flooring store in Holland, then later for a builder where she worked in marketing and home design. Andy worked at Excel Office Interiors where he installed cubicles and other furniture.

In the fall of 2007 Kim changed careers by becoming the Junior High art teacher at Heritage Christian School. She worked part time at five different jobs that year as the economy was slowing down. This change may have sparked an interest in Andy changing careers too. Four years later Andy re-entered the class room by enrolling in GRCC to complete his degree in education. He graduated from Ferris State University in May 2015, and completed his student teaching that fall before starting at Eastside Chr. in January 2016. Kim added to her Art duties by joining the Eastside staff in the fall of 2016, where she teaches 1st-8th grades in two separate classes.



Andy and Kim officially became parents in May 2008 when they welcomed Mara Joy to their lives. Five years later in September 2013 Emmit Michael was born which made Mara a very happy big sister. Emmit has been a bundle of joy and trouble since his arrival 11 days over-due. If your children had Mr. Kuiper for a teacher, I am sure they have heard an Emmit story or two!



In January of 2017 we attended an information meeting about adopting through the foster care system at DA Blodgett. This was not a sudden decision; we had talked about adding children to our family through adoption before we were even married. By August 2017 we had filled out mountains of paperwork, had very in-depth home-study interviews and background checks, and we were approved to adopt. Adopting from Foster Care means the children have special needs, either physical or emotional, and although the thought was daunting, Andy & Kim trusted God had their children all picked out for them. In January of 2018 our case-worker called Kim with a brother and sister who needed a home. When she said the name "Gerrard," Kim's heart stopped because that was Andy's grandpa's name. When she said "Spina Bifida" and "wheelchair" Kim's heart sped up again. After reading a mountain of paperwork and meeting with their foster mom, Andy and Kim signed an intent to adopt on February 14, without meeting the kids or even seeing a picture of them! In March we met the kids and took them on a few outings along with Mara & Emmit. Mara was thrilled with the idea of having a little sister. Emmit was thrilled with the thought of having

two more partners in crime! We bought a mini-van, bunk beds, and made room for these two darling kids. For most of the summer Gerrard and Jazelle (or Zellie) lived with us 5 days a week and spent weekends with the foster family while the paperwork was finished and sent to Lansing for final approval. On October 3 we were officially their guardians and they were able to move in full time (finally)!

Mara is now in 5th Grade at Heritage where she plays the French horn in band. She also takes piano lessons from Grandma Kuiper. She enjoys art, science, reading, playing board games, swimming and riding her bike in the summer. Gerrard is almost six and is in Kindergarten at Heritage. He loves all things sports and could play with a ball for hours (especially basketball). He has born with Spina Bifida, which affects his ability to move and feel things below his waist. He can move his hips which allows him to crawl, swim and jump, and is working hard on walking with the help of leg braces and a walker. Gerrard and Emmit go to Ninja Warriors class where they practice their ninja skills

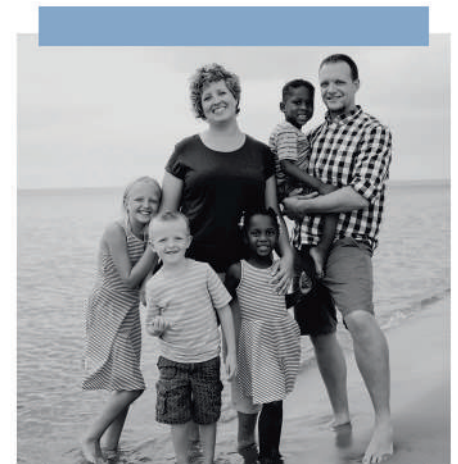
such as running up walls, hanging from ropes and jumping into foam pits. Emmit is five and he loves games; his current favorites are Mario Kart Monopoly and checkers. Zellie is almost five and is a very girly girl who loves unicorns, mermaids and has a vast supply of energy. She takes gymnastics where she is perfecting her cart wheel and working on the splits. They all love jumping on the trampoline, riding bikes and going to the park. Emmit and Zellie are both in Genesis Preschool.

So far our lives have changed dramatically and yet hardly at all. It sometimes seems like Gerrard and Jazelle have been with us their whole lives. The adoption, the Lord willing, will be finalized in April and we look forward to baptizing them at Hudsonville PRC, where we are members.

Although this year has brought many changes, our family is doing well and the school year is flying by! We are looking forward to Spring Break: we have big plans to make some big plans!

Thank you to the Eastside community for everything you've done for us in the last few years! We look forward to many more years together.

In Christ,
Andy & Kim



Andy and Kim Kuiper with
children Mara, Emmit,
Gerrard and Jazelle

A PEEK INTO FIRST GRADE

Jim Holstege

First grade is certainly a big and meaningful year in the life of a child. After getting a good taste of what school is like in the Kindergarten room, where you come every other day, now you are in school every day, and for the long haul! Regardless of what career path the Lord has in store for you later on, the classroom has become your second home for many years to come.

What a transformational year. I see several missing teeth. Their toddler years are a thing of the past, and they are starting to grow up fast. More and more they are exploring and discovering the marvelous works of their God. They are enthusiastic. They are eager. They love the friendships that are forming. They are happy!

Do you remember being in the first grade? Do you remember your first grade teacher? It has been 51 years for me, but I remember! In fact, I've seen my first grade teacher a couple times this school year show up at Eastside, isn't that right, Helen? First grade is an important year. In the learning environment of the classroom, patience and encouragement is required of the teacher. I am thankful for Mrs. Anita Haak, our first grade teacher at Eastside Christian School. It is rewarding and a joy to watch her fill this important role.

Recently I visited the first grade classroom, where we have eight students this year. When I stepped into the room, the students were busy doing accelerated reading (A/R), and using computers. Now that is quite amazing! Computers in the first grade? The A/R program involves the students selecting books from the library, reading on their own, interacting with the book at home with their parents, and taking an online test at school to gauge their comprehension.

Learning to read and write means learning which letters make this or that sound, or which combination of letters make this or that sound. Is this something we take for granted and assume we have always known? Do we remember how excited we were, when we were able to make sense of the vast arrangement of letter combinations, that form words? Some of the words Mrs. Haak taught on the day I visited were: "sunset", "velvet", and "Wisconsin". While teaching the skills necessary for reading and writing, Mrs. Haak also gives a mini lesson on what each word represents. There is so much to learn! Another word that Mrs. Haak presented to her class, was the proper noun, "Kim". One of her students, (grandson of Helen, my first grade teacher) shouted, "I know who Kim Jong Un is!" Mrs. Haak said, "Oh? Who is that?" The student said, "He's the dictator of North Korea!"

Mrs. Haak is in her third year of teaching at Eastside. She has previously taught in Iowa, Colorado, Minnesota, and at Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School here in Grand Rapids. Her teaching experience then, has been in both a larger school, and several smaller schools. She was known to most of her earlier students as Miss DeJong, as she married later in life to Mr. Don Haak, about thirteen and a half years ago. Anita is happy to be teaching the first grade at Eastside and to be a part of the Eastside family.

FIRST GRADE WITH MRS. HAAK



GOODBYE AND HELLO

Jim Holstege

Have you heard the news that our (former) teacher in the 4-6th grade classroom has recently become a mother? Zach and Amanda Klamer welcomed their precious daughter, Kayla Grace, on December 10, 2018. According to the doctor's timing, Kayla arrived a month earlier than expected. According to God's perfect schedule, however, Kayla came into this world exactly on the day He intended. Kayla was tiny (5lbs. 1 oz.) but healthy. We praise God for His never ending faithfulness, and pray for His blessing upon Zach and Amanda in this new chapter of their life.

"I would like to thank the Eastside community for all the love and support I have received the past few years, not only while teaching, but also as I started my new role as a mother. I am thankful to God for having placed me at Eastside to teach, and for all the wonderful experiences I had while teaching. Eastside is truly a wonderful community, and I am glad I had the opportunity to be a part of Eastside."

- Amanda Klamer



Well, December 10 was a Monday. Two full weeks of school remained before Christmas break, and more importantly, the arrival of our newly hired teacher to replace Amanda. Thank you, Mr. Adams, for filling in. December suddenly became exciting, and we appreciated your help!

We are very happy to introduce our new 4-6th grade teacher, Mr. Tyler DeVries. Tyler just completed his college studies and graduated from Dordt College this past December. Tyler is the son of Marty and Karen DeVries from Randolph, Wisconsin. He is one of seven siblings, and has a twin brother (Trevor). Tyler was born in California and moved with his parents to Wisconsin when he was four years old. He attended Faith Christian School (kindergarten-8th grade) and Central Wisconsin Christian High School, before moving to Sioux Center, Iowa to attend Dordt College. I asked Tyler, for the sake of this article, to express why he decided to pursue a career in teaching, and also, what attracted him to Eastside Christian School. Here is his reply: **"During this time [high school], I began to consider the possibility of becoming a teacher. I always had a love for history and knew I wanted to do something with history, but wasn't sure what. My senior year is when I finally decided that I wanted to go to school and become a teacher. My high school history teacher was very influential in that decision. I enjoyed his class because I naturally liked learning about history, but also because of the way he taught the content. He made it fun and enjoyable, and really knew how to keep students motivated and involved in their learning. I felt that Eastside would be a good fit for me because it is similar to what I grew up with in Randolph. I enjoy the multi-grade classroom because as a teacher, I get to know the students extremely well. The same is true for the students, they get to know who I am which greatly helps that teacher student relationship."**



Tyler- we heartily welcome you to Eastside! We pray for God's blessings upon you as you begin your teaching career. May you find great joy in your work.