Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I hope that you and your family had a blessed holiday. We are very excited about this new year… there is certainly much happening at Cornerstone!

In August 2016, we will celebrate our 25th Anniversary: a quarter century of providing hope and educational excellence. This past November, we were once again recertified as an ISO 9001:2008 organization, of which we are very proud. The certification underscores our culture of excellence and continuous improvement. In the coming year, we are seeking a recertification as an ISACS (Independent Schools Association of the Central States) school. This accreditation is a seven-year cycle and, among other key measurables, ISACS accreditation ensures that a school has met more than fifty standards of best practice for independent education and confirms that a school subscribes to principles of good practice in admissions and employment.

There are many other wonderful things happening at Cornerstone, such as our Pistons Scholars event on March 19th. Our students are always excited about this event, because it is their opportunity to earn a “night out” for themselves and a parent through excellent achievement in academics, conduct and attendance. In addition, this summer will bring many other community-building and fundraising events. As the details unfold, we will be providing them to you.

As always, I am grateful to you for your continued support of our Cornerstone Schools. It is because of you and your generosity that our mission continues and hundreds of children lives are transformed each year.

With much gratitude,

Ernestine Sanders
President & CEO

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**Upcoming Events**

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For more information on any of these events, please contact Andrea Perry at 313-892-1860 ext. 297

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10th Annual Pistons Scholars Night
Saturday, March 19th, 2016

The Palace of Auburn Hills
[Click Here]
Cornerstone’s 10th annual Pistons Scholars Night at the Palace is Saturday, March 19th. This event encourages and rewards students in 1st – 12th grade at Cornerstone and Cornerstone Charter Schools, who have demonstrated excellence in academics, citizenship, punctuality and attendance. This is a big night for the Cornerstone community. More than 600 Cornerstone Pistons Scholars and their parents, plus Partners and friends from the Cornerstone Community will be on hand to recognize our high-achieving students and cheer on the Pistons as they play the Brooklyn Nets at the Palace of Auburn Hills.

There are several opportunities available to support Cornerstone students at this event. You can attend the game with your family, friends and co-workers. You can sponsor one or more Pistons Scholars and their parents to attend the game. We also have exclusive sponsorships available that will allow you access to the President’s Club for a private gathering before the game with a hosted bar and hors d’oeuvres. These sponsorships also feature premier seating for the game.

For more information about this event, please call us at: 313-892-1860 ext.297, or visit our website: CornerstoneSchools.org and click on the “Events” tab.

December Partner Morning is a very special time at Cornerstone! Our theme was “Giving Back” and our students and Partners work together to give back to the community. Teaching children about the multitude of ways that they can give back to the community emphasizes Cornerstone’s commitment to character education and provides opportunities to model empathy, charity and the importance of making others feel loved and valued.

Cornerstone students and Partners engaged in a variety of projects at the December Partner Mornings. Some made ornaments for nursing home patients who don’t have family. Others made cards and wrote letters to armed services personnel serving overseas.

4th and 5th graders, with the help of Physical Education instructor Amina Guvetis, created a Tree of Warmth. They collected hats and for the Salvation Army, and they asked all of the Partners to help. In all, more than 100 pairs of gloves and 150 hats were collected.

The next Partner Mornings are March 8-11. For more information, click here, or contact Courtney Ochalek: 313-892-1860 ext. 261. We hope to see you there!
Cornerstone partners and parents enjoyed a festive celebration last December. The event, the first of several to celebrate Cornerstone’s 25th anniversary, featured Christmas music from piano, orchestra and choir students who displayed their musical talents in front of an appreciative audience.

Former music director Kathy Ferris was also honored for her many years of dedicated service. Ms. Ferris built Cornerstone’s music program to an unmatched level of excellence, from which many former and current students have benefited, both musically and academically.

Some of those students, along with key faculty members, shared stories of the meaningful role the music program has played in their lives. It gave Barry Gilmore, a senior in Cornerstone’s Leadership and Business High School, a unique form of communication. “Music is my greatest form of expression,” he said. It also inspired Barry and other students to excel at Cornerstone and beyond. Because of that, “We are very grateful to be part of such a good program,” Barry continued.

Studies have shown that music education facilitates learning and language development by exercising multiple skill sets at the same time. It also helps develop more fluid social skills, increased neural activity growth (leading to smarter kids!), improved memorization skills and better spatial and temporal skills, which can be especially helpful with math, architecture and working with computers.

With every celebration, it’s important to remember the small group of business, civic and religious leaders who heeded the advice in Archbishop Adam Maida’s 1990 Detroit Economic Club speech to “make all things new again.” Thanks to the group’s shared vision, Cornerstone opened its doors to 167 students in August 1991. Twenty-five years later, it serves 2000 students throughout the Detroit area with its independent and four charter schools.

For information about supporting the Cornerstone Music Program, please contact Andy Anuzis: 313-892-1860 ext. 235; Andy.Anuzis@CornerstoneSchools.org

Cornerstone Welcomes a New Strings Teacher

Welcome to Cornerstone, Marc Haas! Mr. Haas is our new Strings teacher who is coming to us after 17 years of experience as the orchestra director at Cass Technical High School. He believes music is important not only because, as he says, “music can give the capability to send a message of love to the world,” but because he feels that music teaches students perseverance, focus, dedication, and discipline. These are lessons that Mr. Haas believes can be applied to every other aspect of life. Success does not come easily, it requires attention and hard work. He has enjoyed watching his students develop these abilities and become better musicians.

Mr. Haas loves Cornerstone and is impressed by the proficiency of its student musicians. He says the 8th grade class is the most mature and respectful group of students he has ever taught. An accomplished bassist himself, Mr. Haas has added bass to the Cornerstone strings program. It will be exciting to see how the music program grows and flourishes under the wise direction of Mr. Haas.
Ev
tents bring awareness of our mission and help raise scholarships to provide an excellent education. Events are possible because of the generosity of event hosts and sponsors.

Please consider joining us for one or more of these events in 2016! For more information visit the Cornerstone website, call your Development Officer or Andrea Perry: 313-892-1860 ext. 297.

- **Bela Popp Golf Classic:**
The 3rd annual event will be even grander as it merges with the Cornerstone Women for Scholarship golf event. It will take place at the Pine Knob Golf Club June 13, 2016.

- **Walk For Cornerstone:**
The 5th Annual Walk will take place on Saturday, June 18, 2016 and will feature a pre-walk yoga session led by Holy Yoga.

- **Ford Purchasing Golf Outing:**
In 2016, this 12th annual outing will take place at the Dearborn Country Club on Tuesday, July 12.

- **BSP Cornerstone Golf and Tennis Classic:**
The 7th annual event is slated for Monday, July 18 at the Birmingham Country Club and features a tennis tournament along with golf.

- **Vinnie Johnson Golf Invitational:**
This event, hosted by former Piston Vinnie Johnson, celebrates its 10th year in 2016, and will take place at the Tam O’Shanter Golf Course in July.

- **Henkel Fore A Cause Golf Outing:**
This event helps fund the World in Motion STEM program at Cornerstone. The date for 2016 is forthcoming.

- **Be A Tiger For Kids:**
Held at Comerica Park, check the Cornerstone website for details on the 11th annual Be A Tiger For Kids on August 15, 2016, featuring the Detroit Tigers vs. the World Champion Kansas City Royals.

- **Turning Point Invitational:**
The 2016 Turning Point will take place on August 15, 2016 at the Country Club of Detroit. Details about this event are forthcoming.

We are grateful to the following for sponsoring one or more events in 2015:

- Ally
- Applebee’s - Team Schostak
- Barrick Enterprises, Inc.
- Brown & Brown
- BSP Law Offices
- Code 42
- Comerica
- Conway Mackenzie
- Cooper Standard
- Feldman Automotive
- Ford Chassis Purchasing
- Henkel Corporation
- Intel
- ITC Holdings
- Vinnie Johnson
- L&L Products
- Dana Locniskar
- Lupo Chiropractic Center
- McKinley
- Meijer
- Michelin
- Midwest Steel
- Frank Migliazzo
- The New Common School Foundation
- New Paradigm
- Pepsi
- PNC
- Bill Popp
- Prime Team Services
- Procerus
- pwc
- Bill Reno
- Roush
- Gerry Seizert
- Tax Trilogy
- Toyota
- Wolverine Packing
- WWT
- Yazaki

Bela Popp Golf Classic

Be A Tiger For Kids
Famous artists such as Pablo Picasso and Claude Monet are brought to life in Jade Lederman’s art classes. “The students learn about the artists’ lives, where they were born, their education, as well as their influence on society,” says Ms. Lederman, who teaches art to Cornerstone primary, middle and high school students. Lederman has taught at Cornerstone for six years and loves how art rounds out the Cornerstone education. She states, “Art is different for every student. I am just as pleased when a student tries something new as I am when another student masters a technique. Freedom of expression is key. I stress that the process is more important than being perfect. That’s where learning happens.” Through art, the students “gain an understanding and appreciation” of the broader world, and the influence of art on shape, color and style. Ms. Lederman sums it up this way: “Art gives the students a wider horizon from which to view the world, and they can apply that perspective to their everyday learning.”

Lessons are dispensed age-appropriately, often through grade-level books that help the students relate to individual artists. Picasso is a particular favorite, perhaps due to his innovative renderings of shape and color; so are Monet’s works, and Warhol’s experiments with the visual arts. “The students also really like post-modernism,” adds Ms. Lederman. “When they can see that there are many ways of expressing oneself, and that their way is equally as valid as any famous painter, they soar.”

When Sylvester Ogletree returned to Cornerstone as a volunteer with the Deloitte Cornerstone Career Pathways (DCCP) program, “It felt surreal,” particularly seeing the teachers and administrators who shaped his education as a student from kindergarten through 8th grade.

“The teachers at Cornerstone really believe in you,” he says. That thought inspires his interaction with the ten Cornerstone students who intern once a week at Deloitte in Detroit. “The interns are really inquisitive, really smart and focused.”

Ogletree has worked for Deloitte Consulting since the fall of 2014 as a senior consultant. His primary focus with DCCP is driving volunteer engagement for the program, which prepares students for highly competitive colleges, future employment and success in a variety of fields. The program was rolled out this past spring at Cornerstone, and students from 5th – 12th grade participate.

Even though Ogletree travels the world in his role as a consultant for Deloitte, he spends three hours a week on Cornerstone activities, including Partner Mornings and workshops. “One of the first workshops [of the year] prepares the students for their internships,” he said. This includes lessons on Microsoft Office and professionalism in the workplace. Ogletree’s own professionalism is influenced by his years at Cornerstone, where he, “learned the importance of being moral and approaching situations with empathy.” It was there that he also developed a genuine love for himself and for culture which helped him persevere. “If something’s tough, I don’t give up. I’m willing to be bad at something before being good.”

It’s a lesson well worth passing on.
Tamir Hill, an 8th Grader at Cornerstone’s Nevada Campus, has been enrolled in Cornerstone since the beginning of her education. She sees Cornerstone as a second family, having grown up with her classmates and teachers. From the moment she walks in the door she is surrounded by friendly faces and greetings and feels safe and welcome. She is naturally very shy but at Cornerstone she feels there is no need to ever be intimidated or embarrassed because everyone is her friend.

Tamir is a high achieving student. She loves her classes especially science, literature and history and has been playing the violin since third grade. In 6th grade she joined the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS). This year, as President, Tamir gets to facilitate a conversation amongst her fellow Junior Honors Society members as how to best improve the school and the community. Tamir wants to focus their energies on helping those less fortunate by donating hats and blankets to a homeless shelter or volunteering at a soup kitchen. Giving back to the community is important to Tamir as she believes it is “important to prove to people that there is good in the world.”

Tamir is grateful for the Partner Program that makes the Cornerstone community possible. Supporting Partners Evan and Laurie Lyall helped with her tuition so that she could remain at Cornerstone, and she is deeply thankful for that. Tamir has had the same Partner-Friend, Cindy McCann-Clissold, since she was in Kindergarten. They have become very close and she looks forward to seeing her every Partner Morning. She is thankful that “Ms. Cindy” takes time off of work to come and visit her on Partner Morning. The Partner Program inspires Tamir: “It’s just nice to know that someone other than our school really cares how we’re going to end up in the world.”

Tamir is very thankful to Cornerstone for giving her such a strong educational foundation as she prepares to begin high school. She is excited to begin this new chapter and for all the possibilities the future holds. When asked if she wanted to thank anyone Tamir said, “I’d like to thank the Partners for their time and financial support and… for being there for all of us. They’ve followed us in our journey for so many years and for that I am grateful.”

Tamir Hill

Tamir Hill – A Foundation of Excellence


Cornerstone took a huge step this year by becoming a member of the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA). MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,500 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition.

MHSAA membership will result in some welcome changes for Cornerstone athletes. They will have longer, more competitive seasons, and scholarship opportunities for high school students, according to Brandon Guisgand, Cornerstone’s Athletic Director.

The high school girls’ volleyball season ended with a 3-2 record. Currently, the high school boys’ basketball team is competing. It is expected that boys’ wrestling and co-ed track will be added to the high school sports roster in the spring.

Cornerstone Schools will be launching a new website in February. This new site will provide information about Cornerstone to both the Partner and Parent communities.

We invite you to check our website, CornerstoneSchools.org. Look for the new website in mid-February.
Will Leather Goods’ CEO, William Adler, visited Cornerstone Schools on Monday, December 14th to deliver backpacks to all students in grades K-12, commemorating the opening of Will Leather Goods’ Detroit location.

Adler, a Detroit native, believes that “every child deserves a bag to carry their dreams.” His philanthropic mission is central to his company’s culture, and he has designed a capsule collection of backpacks especially for the program. Each colorful backpack features a space for students to write both their name and their dream, to act as a reminder to keep working toward their goals. As part of Adler’s Give Will initiative, Will Leather Goods will distribute these backpacks to 500,000 children in the United States.

During his visit to Cornerstone, Mr. Adler stressed the importance of working on one’s dream every day. He encouraged students to research what those with dreams similar to theirs have done to achieve their goals. He also encouraged the students to read everything they could get their hands on about their dreams.

Cornerstone’s students were truly inspired by Mr. Adler’s visit, seizing the opportunity to write their dreams in the space provided on their backpacks for everyone to see, taking the first step in achieving their goals: telling others what they intend to do.

Our deepest gratitude goes out to Mr. Adler and his staff at Will Leather Goods for providing this fantastic opportunity to Cornerstone students. We can’t wait to see those dreams come true.

Cornerstone will host Open House events in the coming months to allow prospective families an opportunity to tour the campus, meet with the staff and learn about the unique learning opportunities available at Cornerstone.

Cornerstone serves students from Preschool (3-4 year-olds) through 12th grade.

For more information about Cornerstone and the upcoming Open House dates, or to schedule a private tour, please contact Admissions Director, Wayne Ramocan: (313) 892-1860 ext. 227.

Please share this information with anyone who may be interested in learning more about Cornerstone Schools.
“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom.”

~ George Washington Carver

In an effort to increase awareness about the mission and all the wonderful things happening at Cornerstone, we have undertaken a concerted effort to increase our social media presence. Please follow Cornerstone on both Facebook and LinkedIn to get timely updates about events at the school, student and faculty profiles, and some of the great things our classes are doing. When you encounter a post that moves you or is of particular interest to you, please take a moment to share with your social media network. In this way, we can get the word out about Cornerstone to a wider audience. Click on either of the links below to go directly to our social media pages and follow Cornerstone.

Our Mission

Our broad and beloved community of friends will make possible an excellent education for children so as to prepare them for life and leadership. On this journey we will seek to follow Jesus as a sure path to a fulfilling life and servant leadership.

Comments & Questions Welcomed!

Comments or questions about the newsletter?
Please contact: Karissa Williams, Marketing and Events Coordinator
313-892-1860 ext. 265 or Karissa.Williams@CornerstoneSchools.org

For all other questions, please call our Institutional Advancement office at:
313-892-1860 ext. 297 or visit our website: CornerstoneSchools.org

We would like to thank Pam Houghton and Cullen Callaghan for their many contributions to this edition of The Cornerstone Pillar.