

FEBRUARY / 2024

Character.
Community.
Leadership.

SANTIAM CHRISTIAN EAGLE EYE

2024 | WINTER ISSUE



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2024 Winter Issue

The 2024 Winter Issue of the Eagle Eye provides a fun and engaging overview of the happenings at Santiam Christian Schools.

Check out the Events and Ongoing Projects from the Development Office for updates on our Capital Campaign Project, view some student highlights in the “Student Spotlight” feature, and get to know more about our new High School Principal, Mike Bittner, in our interview with Mike and his uncle, Steve.

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Annual Benefit Auction

May 11, 2024

Save the date for the annual Santiam Christian Schools Benefit Auction! We are excited to be hosting both an online and in-person event again this year.

Friday, May 3 - Thursday, May 9:

Online Auction

Saturday, May 11: Live Auction Gala.

This year our theme is Candyland! Come join us for a fantastic evening full of entertainment, good food, fellowship and a lineup of live auction items only available that night.

We are so excited for this event as we come together as a community to support Santiam Christian Schools.



Eagles Golf Classic

June 14, 2024

Location: Diamond Woods Golf Course

We are thrilled to extend an invitation to the Eagles Golf Classic. Whether you're a seasoned pro or a novice golfer, join us for a day of friendly competition, camaraderie, and support for our school.

Registration will be open starting in March, and we encourage you to secure your spot early to guarantee your place in this fantastic event.

www.santiamchristian.org/news-events



SCS Website & App

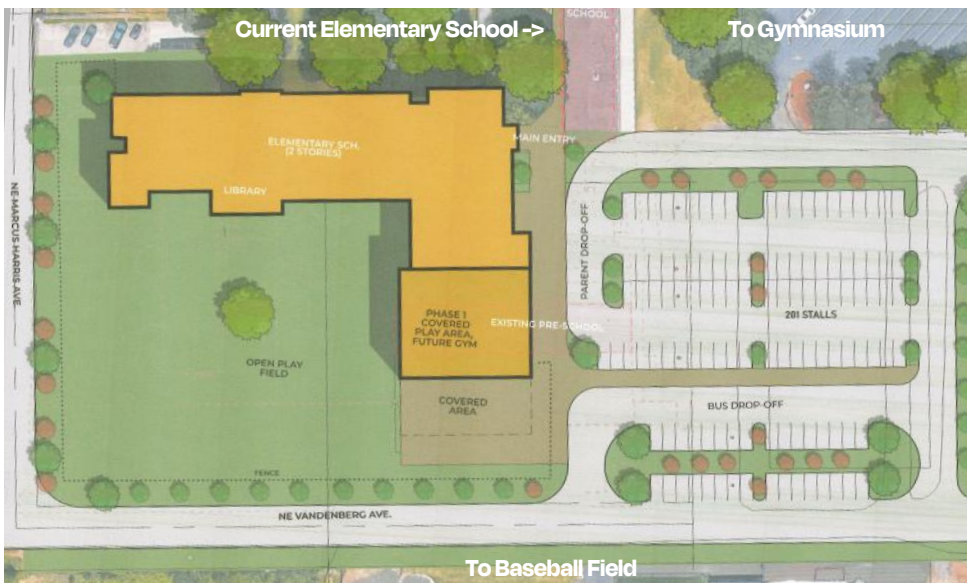


www.santiamchristian.org

Check out the new SC website and SCS App. As we continue to navigate solutions for improving communication between the school and parents, we have recently made updates to the school website and introduced a brand new school app for current families. Both of these platforms provide an array of new tools that will update communication methods for families as well as provide opportunities to connect with prospective families as we continue to grow.

If you are a current family you can download the app from your preferred app store. You will need a Facts account to use the app. If you are an alumni family and want to know more about what's going on at SC, you can visit our new website by scanning the QR code, or typing in the web address above. As we continue to add to our new website, we are excited to provide you with content and information that will keep you connected with us. If you are an alumnus, check out the Alumni page to sign up for our newsletter and be sure we have your current contact information for updates and invitations.

Ongoing Projects



* This rendering subject to change

Over the past several months, the board and administration at SC have been working through the initial phases of a capital campaign for a new elementary building at SC. If you have been in and around our current elementary buildings you know the teachers, staff, and administration, have done an incredible job utilizing these spaces. However, it is time for a

new building that supports the mission and vision of Santiam Christian Schools, to provide a Christ-centered, academic environment that encourages the development of a Christian worldview emphasizing academic excellence, Christian character, responsible citizenship, and service to others. After completing a launch assessment for this campaign of our school, community and supporters, we are pleased to share that the board has approved moving forward with the project for a new elementary building.



- gather here!” really excites me. Relationships are formed when we have opportunities to see each other and connect. We are excited to give teachers and students a great location to build our SC culture of community through a new building.”

- Anne Marie Gosser, Elementary Principal

“ I call our elementary campus the ‘Islands of 8’- When I want to see kids on our campus I have to run all over to connect with them. The thought of standing at one door and welcoming them to a building that says “We are SC community



“Relationships are formed when we have opportunities to see each other and connect.”

- Anna Marie Gosser

In the coming months we will continue to share updates and we ask that you continue to pray over the leadership of the school and the team involved in overseeing this project. We are so grateful for your faithful support of our school and we

look forward to partnering with you in this exciting stage of growth for Santiam Christian Schools.

Highlights of the New Elementary Building:

- Dedicated Elementary gym (able to accommodate high school sporting events)
- Dedicated Elementary cafeteria and kitchen
- 3 classes for each grade level
- Upgraded library and STEM labs
- Added parking and improved traffic flow for pick up and drop off
- Dedicated outdoor playfield and playground with covered area

Stay tuned for more updates on this exciting project!

Budget Overview

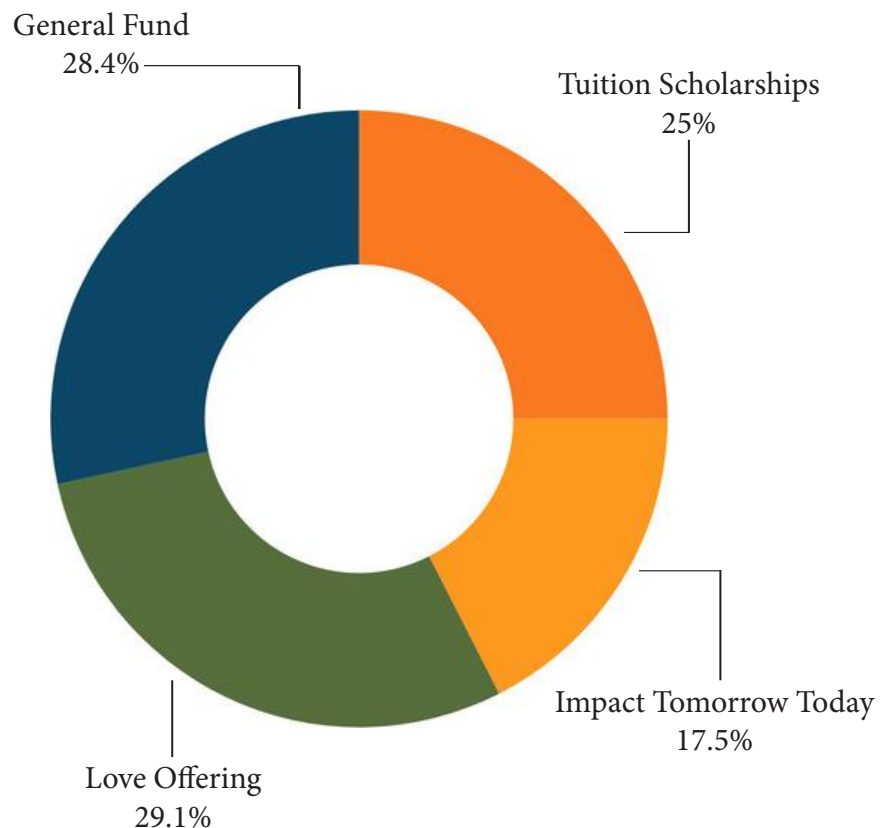
The information included here encapsulates an analysis of our financial landscape, serving as a guiding compass for informed decision-making and fiscal prudence at Santiam Christian Schools.

In this report, we delve into the intricacies of our budgetary framework, offering a high level view of giving, budget expenditures, and budgeted revenue streams. As you look through the following information, I encourage each of you to engage with the contents of this report actively. We are incredibly grateful for the families that are a part of the Santiam Christian community and for the generous support you provide both financially and prayerfully.

- Steve Jagich, Director of Development

Giving 2023/2024

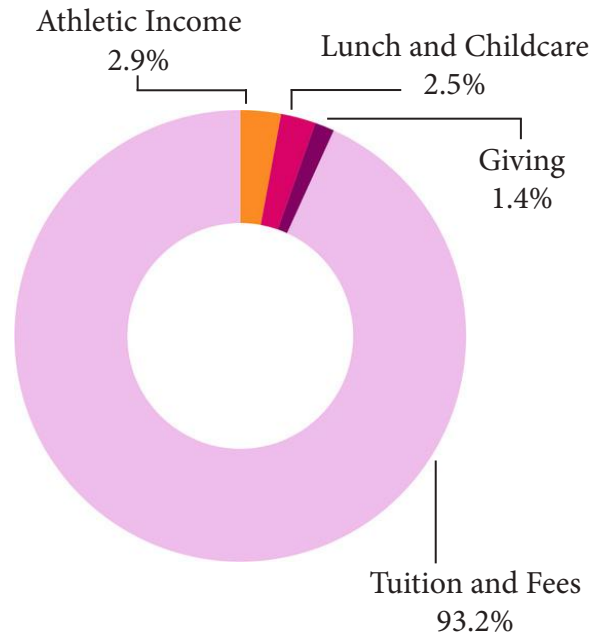
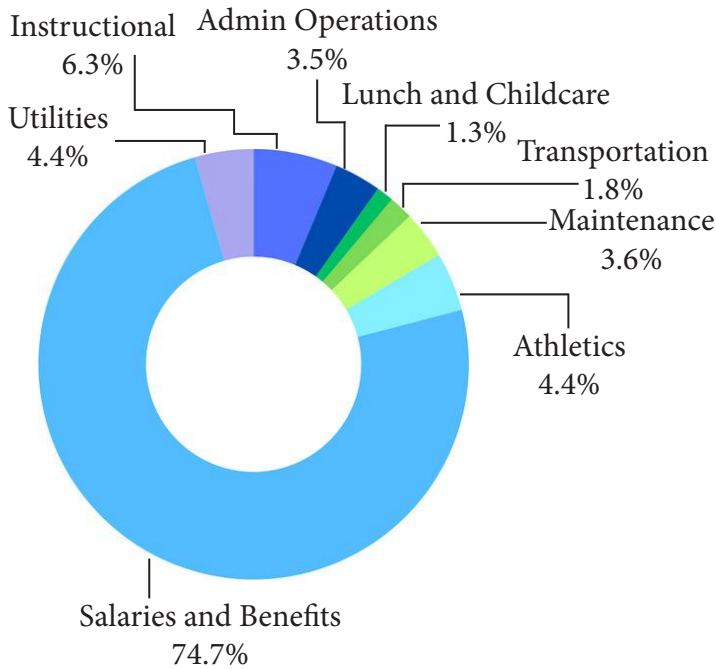
The families, friends, and alumni of Santiam Christian continually show their generosity each year. Through our fundraising efforts, we can support students who meet every admission requirement but cannot afford a private education. Our annual Love Offering provides a gift to our teachers and staff during Christmas time. It is our way of saying thank you for their service and sacrifice. We also have donors who know the importance of making a difference with current budgets and future plans. Each of our donors believes in the mission and vision of Santiam Christian! Their faithfulness has provided the opportunity to disciple generations of students for over 40 years.



The budget at Santiam Christian is based on enrollment and giving, primarily through tuition and fees. Our administration and board create a conservative budget based on enrollment trends each year. As you can see, our budget relies heavily on tuition and fees and our most significant expenditures are salary and benefits. What might seem an overwhelming percentage, is a very typical number in private and charter schools, especially in schools as big as Santiam Christian, where employer requirements kick in because our staffing has reached a certain level. The challenge is to keep tuition affordable, yet still pay our teachers and staff a livable wage. Our board of directors and administration are both committed to maintaining the right balance as we grow as an organization.

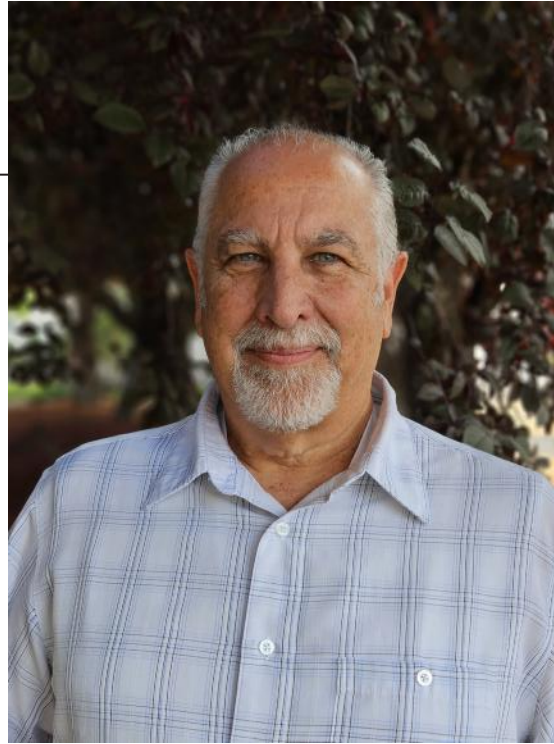
Budget Expenditures

Budgeted Revenue Streams 2024/2025



Letter from Superintendent

Choosing the right environment for your child's education is something many parents wrestle with. Parents have many education options today, such as public, homeschooling, online, boarding, private, and Christian private education. So what is a parent to do? Besides the public option, each option requires a financial investment. However, many parents are at odds with the current direction of our public school system, which they feel does not support their faith or values. As a result, many are reevaluating their financial priorities and choosing something besides the public option.



As a Christian school educator for over two decades, I have an opinion, but it doesn't just come from the educator side of me; it comes from my position as a parent who chose a private Christian education for his kids. Here are some of the benefits I have seen and experienced as a parent and an educator in Christian education:

The integration of faith and learning: the impact that a faith community has on its children cannot be underestimated. In the Christian school, the staff, administration, and teachers not only share but live out a common faith. In this environment, children hear and observe faith in action. They see it modeled, hear it communicated, and are free to express that faith themselves in a caring and supportive environment. The Christian teacher supports the lessons at home by infusing a Biblical worldview throughout the curriculum. These practical connections between God's design for humanity and how that influences a child's development regarding character, morality, relationships, and wisdom are central to the mission of Christian schools like Santiam Christian.

Academic excellence and individual attention: the effective Christian school has very high academic standards. This is done for two reasons: first, we are challenged by scripture to give God our best. Second, our parents and students are motivated to reach this scriptural admonition. As a result, you will find that the rigor to excel is challenging. Expecting more requires work and diligence, but the fruit of such

labor is knowledge, wisdom, and the development of grit (the ability to press on through difficulty.) However, excelling isn't done in a vacuum, the amount of individual attention to each child in the Christian school is one of its most cherished hallmarks. Each child is seen as a "child of God," unique, special, and worthy of great care and attention. Here, you will find the Christian teacher and the child's parents working as a team to meet the needs of each child, for each child is different and has strengths and challenges. Christian schools like Santiam Christian have support centers for children who need that extra help to find success, for the mission is to grow each child and develop lifelong learners.

Community of believers: the early church experienced what was known as "koinonia," a term used in our New Testament 19 times to explain the connection believers shared. The word conveys not just community, but communion, partnering, sharing, and social intimacy. The Christian school, while not taking the place of the church, does share a similar "koinonia." The relationships, not only between students but also between families, that are experienced in a school like Santiam Christian are sustained throughout a lifetime. I look back on how our children and family were impacted by relationships such as these; the lifelong friendships we developed in the Christian school our family attended were incredible. Learning and growing together in a community that shares the same faith and values is something you cannot put a price tag on.

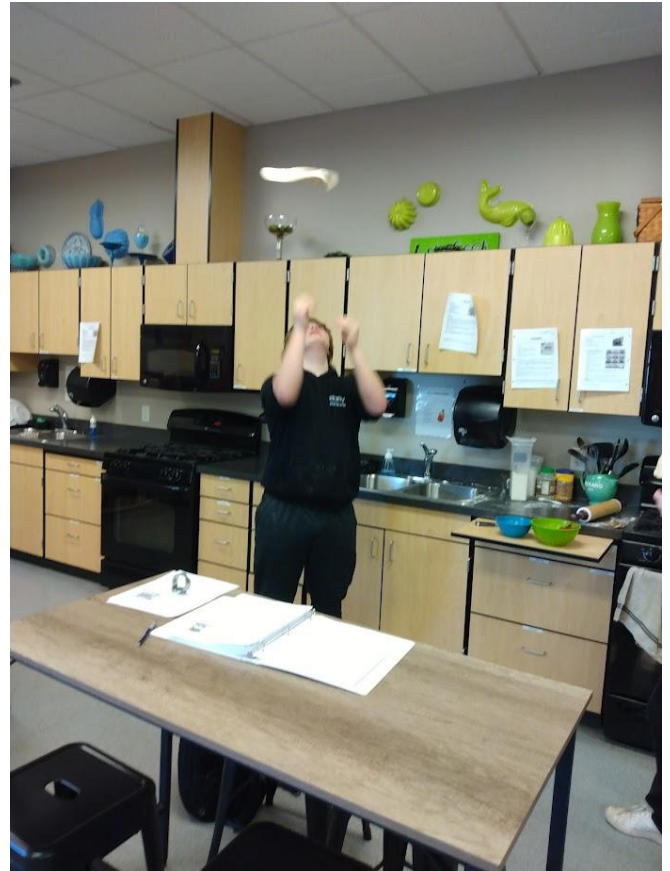
Those are just a few reasons in a very long list of why a Christian school like Santiam Christian is a special place to educate your child. Are Christian schools perfect? No, but no place this side of heaven is. Will you still have to navigate personal conflicts, differences in opinions, and challenging circumstances? Yes, but here is the difference: in the Christian school, you are committed to finding peaceful and Biblical ways to handle these issues. Parents and educators can come together with open hearts, gentleness of speech, and honest love to find solutions that work for all involved. As I now have three adult children, I often ask myself if I would do it all over again. The answer is a resounding YES! From this parent to you, it is worth changing financial priorities, the inconvenience of traveling outside your neighborhood, and the longer homework assignments to see what a Christian education developed in my children, and what it did for my family.

For Christian Education,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Al Stefan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Al Stefan

Student Spotlight



Above Left: Preschooler Elaina Kidd (5) with her doctor bag project where they practiced coloring, cutting and counting items.

Above Right: Senior Conner Ulrich stretching pizza dough as part of his Culinary Arts class.



Left: Keely Kutsch, Brin Liedkie, Sophie Heisinger decorating sugar cookies in their Intro to Culinary Arts Class.

In your spring house cleaning, if you find unused appliances or cooking items, why not make a tax deductible donation to the Culinary Arts program instead of Goodwill? Of course, we can use any food donations as well. Thank-you!

The Cast and Crew of Anne of Green Gables, the drama department's first semester production.



Below Left: Students Landon Oxenrider and Weston Thomas with their tasty masterpiece. The Culinary Arts II class has been exploring Italian Cuisine. In essence, Italian cuisine is a celebration of simplicity, quality ingredients, and the joy of sharing delicious food with loved ones.

Below Right: Students Keenan Hill, Denae Jolly, Ari Boutilier, and Maddy Roth doing a "Chicken Bone" Lab in Anatomy and Physiology where they tested what substances affected bone strength and compared that to the effects of osteoporosis.



Alumni Spotlight:

SC Alum Helps to Perform Breakthrough “SEATTLE” Procedure



December 11, 2023 HCA Florida Largo Hospital is the first hospital in Florida to successfully remove a tumor from inside a patient’s heart without the need for open heart surgery. Dr. Saurabh Sanon led the cardiovascular cath lab team at HCA Florida Largo Hospital in performing what is called the SEATTLE procedure, which is an acronym for The Simplified Extraction of Atrial Tumor with Targeted Loop Electricity. Patient Esther Whitley had a tumor inside her heart, later diagnosed to be a Papillary Fibroelastoma. Traditionally, removal of the tumor would require open heart surgery. Instead, Dr. Sanon and team inserted a unique retrieval device via a blood vessel in the patient’s groin to successfully remove the tumor. “Our ability to safely excise a cardiac tumor without the need for cardiopulmonary bypass or open-heart surgery represents a breakthrough in the field of structural heart interventions. Procedures such as this allow us to offer innovative treatment options to patients who may not be suitable for traditional

surgery. At HCA Florida Largo Hospital, we are proud of our ability to offer our patients the full spectrum of leading-edge structural heart technology,” Dr. Saurabh Sanon, Structural Interventional Cardiologist, Regional Medical Director of Structural Heart Therapies for West Florida Division of HCA Florida Healthcare. “As a regional referral center for advanced cardiovascular procedures, we are excited to offer our patients the newest and most sophisticated procedures. In this case, we were able to successfully treat the patient while avoiding open heart surgery. This resulted in a much quicker recovery for the patient”, shared Dr. Sebastian Strom, CEO of HCA Florida Largo Hospital. “I am incredibly proud of our team and the great patient care that they provide.”

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Article and Photo By:
HCA Florida Largo Hospital

Brendon Hart graduated from Santiam Christian High School in the year 2004, and went on to get his Bachelors degree from George Fox University, and his Doctorate from Western University of Health Sciences.

He currently works as a Cardiac Anesthesiologist and Critical Care Physician, and is the Chief of Anesthesiology at Florida Largo Hospital.

Dr. Hart is pictured above, centered in the dark jacket with the medical team who performed the SEATTLE Procedure.

The Legacy Continues: A Conversation with Steve and Mike Bittner



Mike Bittner

Bittner is a name long recognized on the Santiam Christian Campus. Steve Bittner has served the SC community first as a board member, teacher, and then as principal over the last two decades. And Mike, his nephew, was a student here in the 1990s, before returning this year to serve as the High School Principal. As Mike and Steve shared their stories, conversation centered around three themes: Community, Character, and Calling.



Steve Bittner with former SC international student

Community is a core pillar of Santiam Christian's mission statement, and one that Mike and Steve referenced often throughout our discussion. The SC community continues to leave its mark on the Bittner family. Steve especially has experienced high highs and low lows in the last two decades. He has met life long friends and made lasting memories, and has faced numerous times of distress. Steve reflected on a harrowing time of his

“God has got plans, and we’re just happy to be a part of it, because this place has impacted our families, our whole lives.”

life saying,

“December 7, 2016, I suffered a ruptured cerebral aneurysm in the junior high boys’ bathroom. And most of the time, you’re just dead. The outpouring of love from the SC community blew me away. People rallied around us, helped with meals, contributed to the (astronomical) uninsured medical bills...I remember walking into a follow-up appointment at OHSU, and I got an email saying ‘we have a check here for you, it’s for xx amount of money.’ And I couldn’t even go into the appointment, I was so overwhelmed with emotion at the outpouring of support for me, and my family.”

We talked a bit about how the concept of community has shaped Santiam Christian’s path, and how that calling will continue to be nurtured and prioritized as SC grows and moves forward. Mike talked about his experience being a student here, and coming back over two decades later to be a principal.

“My teachers at SC had a really big impact on me. They were always curious about what I was doing, what the Lord was having me do, what He was leading me into, and they continued to pour into me even after I left, and just never stopped. It’s pretty incredible, and it’s been consistent. And now, to come back and see them continuing to do the same for my kids is just really special.”

The camaraderie and friendship between Mike and Steve is evident as they play off each other, adding small tidbits to each other’s stories. Mike says with a laugh about Steve being his principal at one point in elementary school,

“My dad couldn’t come to discipline me at school, so he would just call my uncle (Steve) and tell him to do it.”

They jump into talking about their family dynamic, reflecting on how the Lord has led many members of their family to be educators, and how grateful they are for the experiences and communities they’ve found through this career path, including many years spent teaching overseas. Mike worked in accounting and finance before switching to education, and reflects on a conversation with his granddad that spurred the switch:

“He said to me, ‘I don’t understand why you never became a teacher. You’re not happy doing business and stuff.’ And that got me thinking, my mom is a teacher, my granddad was a superintendent and principal, my uncle is a principal, my aunt is a teacher, my cousins are teachers...and I just thought ‘yeah, I should do this.’ So I made a career change in my 30s and never looked back.”

From here, we shift to the idea of a “Calling”, both as individuals, and as a community. Steve takes a moment to reflect on SC’s history and how that history, he feels, informs pieces of the work that Santiam Christian continues to do for students on this campus.

“This property was used as an Air Force base, used to train people to go out and fight for things. God knew when He established the Air Force Base, that eventually Santiam Christian would be on this property, discipling and training up young people. It’s a very cool continuation of what this

property originally was: for service. And that's what this property still is. That legacy informs what we're still doing here."

Here, Mike chips in adding

"God has got plans, and we're just happy to be a part of it, because this place has impacted our families, our whole lives."

The themes of "Calling" and "Character" go hand in hand, one informing the other. Calling spurs the discipleship and action towards building character, and we discuss at length SC's history, where we've been, and where Mike and Steve hope to see us go. They talk openly about how the Christian nature of Santiam Christian is not always easy, and the calling on our school is met with opposition from time to time. It's easy to get stuck in ruts, they say, and it can be difficult to pull ourselves out of them. Steve says,

"It's hard work dealing with discipline issues, and changes of the heart, and more difficult still to grow the spiritual atmosphere... God's graciousness and kindness towards us is evident in leading us in the mission we've set out on, and I hope we never get caught up in our own hubris so much as to forget that grace."

Mike adds to this saying, "Trying to foster this atmosphere, discipling kids and helping them be what Jesus called them to be, can be met with opposition when our process isn't outcome-oriented, it's process-oriented... The mission is so important: to disciple and help kids realize who God is calling them to be. As a community, we can't put our heads in the sand, we must ultimately continue to hold on to Jesus adapting to the ways he's calling us to his purpose."

Steve will be leaving SC this year, and he shared about his many fond memories, as well as how he is excited to watch and

encourage Mike as he fills his role as Principal, available as a resource to him, when and should he need it. He says,

"I've been here for 28 years. Being here that length of time has been because I love this place, I've always loved this place. These people are my people. "

Mike adds,

"I feel very fortunate to have watched Steve interact with families and the school. His example has shaped me. It will be good to have him to bounce ideas off of, and get advice from, even after he's left."

As we wrap up our conversation, I'm struck with the Bittners' care for the school and community, and their heart to see Jesus' mission and vision lived out on this campus. How may we continue to exhort and live together as a community, challenging each other and building one another up, especially our youth, in Christ?



We'll miss you Steve!

Special Thanks To:

Contributors: Steve Jagich, Al Stefan, Abi Janssen, Steve Bittner, Mike Bittner, and Anna Marie Gosser.

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Did you know many of our founders and alumni families still donate to our school? They lived the history and know that staff and parents continue to make financial sacrifices today. We know this has always been and will continue to be God's school. Please prayerfully consider giving to our general or scholarship fund at:

SANTIAMCHRISTIAN.ORG/DEVELOPMENT