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# THE BEAR FACTS

VOLUME 3 NO. 1 BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL DECEMBER 2020



## Christmas different, but the same

By Zoe Cooper

Brentwood Christian students have enjoyed a mix of old and new traditions as they celebrate the holiday season both at home and in person.

The “Christmas chapel” returned this year, although a bit modified. It took place in the parking lot near the CSA, as students sang Christmas songs such as “Jingle Bells” and “The 12 Days of Christmas.”

The familiar sounds of the elementary Christmas music program were still present, only moved online. High school’s Encore made a virtual Christmas card featuring them singing “Carol of the Bells.”

Many students shared the spirit of giving by participating in the annual Angel Tree fundraiser from Nov. 30 through Dec. 9, which raised over \$3,800 for children with a parent in prison.

“I am ecstatic to report that this was our highest collection year ever for Angel Tree,” coordinator Cristal Lange said.

Elementary students also had the opportunity to raise money for the school by competing to sell poinsettias. Cookies were delivered to winning classes on Dec. 3. Students also made cards and crafts to be sent to nursing homes.

Elementary principal Jeremy Thornton read Christmas books to the elementary classes beginning on Dec. 8. On Dec. 18, while many secondary students will be finishing their final midterms, elementary students will celebrate the last day of school with a variety of parties.

“In elementary we make simple and appropriate adjustments and stay on course with the joy and celebration of the birth of Christ,” Thornton said.

## BCS neighbor fights for sales in tough year

By Laynie Ruiz

Located at 11800 N. Lamar Blvd., Luisa’s Patio sits right next door to Brentwood with a vibrant portrait of Texas superstar Selena to greet your eyes when passing by. Luisa’s Patio is a small, family-owned restaurant that serves Mexican-American food as well as barbecue dishes. Unfortunately the year 2020 has been extremely difficult for Luisa’s, as it has for thousands of other businesses in Texas, and millions throughout the world that have had to find ways to survive the pandemic. Which sparks the question: How are small businesses surviving through all of this?

Formerly known as Ross’ Old Austin Cafe and frequented by BCS students and their families since the 1990s, the business was purchased by Luisa, who gained her ownership during August of 2019.

Before quarantine, Luisa’s Patio was very busy, especially during lunch hours. Many people would flock in from work to come on in to eat Luisa’s home-cooked meals and catch up. On weeknights, Luisa’s Patio was a live music hall that featured many local artists. People would enjoy the beats and dance through the night.

Over the lockdown, sales have been dipping low, and Luisa admits things were not looking great for her small eatery. However, Luisa remained positive and kept a hopeful outlook on the future of the former cafe.

She had to make some adjustments, though, including removing nearly all the waiters and two of the meal preppers. During this time, she changed Ross’ Old Austin Cafe into Luisa’s Patio and added some favorite Mexican dishes in hopes of attracting new crowds and cultures. Sales went down around 50%, and Luisa knew it was going to be rough.

Now she does it all, cooking, serving,

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photo: BCS yearbook

**Jingle Bears** Janaye Barker’s second graders pose for a silly photo after filming the elementary Christmas music program with other classes last week.

## BCS gets inflatable mascot

By Lucy Belcik

Brentwood Christian has welcomed a brand-new inflatable mascot into its ranks – Bubba Bear. The 10-foot green bear has already begun performing and entertaining fans at BCS games and sporting events.

Named by junior Brandon Tindel during a “Name the Mascot” contest held on Nov. 19, Bubba is courtesy of Signs and Shapes International. A mascot manufacturing company based in Omaha, Neb., Signs and Shapes has manufactured many well-known mascots, such as Smokey Bear and the Coyote of the San Antonio Spurs. The company is co-owned by the cousin of high-school English teacher Jeri Birdwell.

Birdwell has wanted BCS to have an inflatable mascot since she began working here.

“The opportunity presented itself this fall, I called my cousin, and ‘VOILA!’ We have a

bear,” Birdwell said.

The high school students working as the mascot have had a very exciting opportunity as well – the Spurs’ inflatable Coyote mascot has traveled up from San Antonio to work with them. In addition to teaching them how to walk and strut, he also taught them a few advanced tricks that they will show off after they’ve had more practice.

“Working as the mascot is something very unique. It’s not every day you get to walk around in a 10-foot ‘Bear balloon’ jumping around and having fun,” said a student who will remain anonymous to protect the authenticity of Bubba.

Birdwell met the Coyote through her cousin, DeeAnn Bowen.

“He was practically raised in the mascot program,” Birdwell says.

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photo: Kevin McKinnerney

**Big and bloated** Bubba Bear hypes up the crowd at last month’s football playoff.



From the Editor: Aurora Tyson

# Shine the light of Jesus through love, joy, humility

During the month of December, all over the world, Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. It is also an opportunity for those who don't know the story to hear the Good News that our Savior has been born. This is a wonderful thing, but it makes me think: What can I do to bring people's attention to Christ beyond the Christmas season? How can I show my faith to others so that they may see Christ living in me?

I Timothy 4:12 says, "Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe." This verse describes our Christian duty to exemplify God's love through ourselves.

Faith doesn't automatically come up in every casual conversation that you have, especially in places where not everyone is religious. At Brentwood, it may be easy to talk about religion and discuss your faith with those around you. However, in daily life we meet new people who aren't followers of God, and it will be up to us to show that we believe in the Savior of this world. It isn't exactly natural to come out and say, "Hello, my name is ... and I'm a Christian," so we instead show our Christianity through our actions and our words.

The first and most important way to show that you are a Christian is to love. In John 15:12, Jesus says, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." You may be thinking, "Sure, that's easy, I already love others." And while that may be true, the catch is to love them as Jesus loves us. We can visualize how Jesus loves us by looking at Romans 5:8: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for

us." Jesus loved us so much that he was willing to not only die, but endure an unimaginably painful suffering and crucifixion, for you and for me. This is not a worldly love. This is not a selfish love. This is not a conditional love. This is a generous love. This is a powerful love. This is an eternal love. This is Christ's love. Since it is impossible for us to demonstrate this love on our own, we must rely on God and allow Him to show His love through us. We need to un-

*When you are on the court or field, shopping at the store, or just walking in public, be mindful of how you present yourself as a member of the Christian community.*

conditionally accept and freely love everyone – no matter what.

The next way to demonstrate our faith is to forgive others freely. We must forgive those who wrong us or offend us, letting go of any anger, bitterness, resentment, or harsh feelings toward them. Christ forgave us despite all of the sins we commit and the number of times we disobey His commandments. As difficult as it may be, to show that we are Christians we should strive to forgive as freely as Jesus

forgave us, without seeking revenge or holding grudges.

The third way to shine the light of Jesus is to display joy. God created this world and everything in it so that we can be happy. In John 15:10-11, Jesus says, "If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." When we accept Jesus as our Lord and personal Savior and acknowledge His love, we receive His joy inside of us. Despite the circumstances you face and the obstacles that life throws at you, with God's joy in you, you can still be joyful. Displaying this type of joy shows others that we are thankful for what Jesus has blessed us with and that we know our true happiness lies in Him.

The fourth way to let others see God in you is to accept others with grace, not judgment. The perfect example of acceptance, kindness, and justice can be seen in how Jesus treats the adulterous woman in John 8. In verse 7, Jesus says to those accusing the woman, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." Instead of judging and condemning the woman, Jesus shows her grace, compassion, and mercy. He calls her to leave her life of sin, and He focuses on the good in her heart. We have not been put on this earth to judge others, but to show them Christ's love and to accept them.

The next way to demonstrate your faith is to show humility. James 4:10 states, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you." The most humble person to ever walk this earth was Jesus Christ. Although He deserved all of the glory and all of the fame, Jesus never acted in order to receive admiration or compensation for His deeds. In our generation, it is extremely easy to get caught up in the race for fame and the desire to become a celebrity or influencer. We must realize what is truly important and humble ourselves before God so that we can do His will. Showing humility allows us to become more Christ-like and shows our faith to others.

Another way to let others know what you believe is by displaying self-control. Instead of being hot-tempered and becoming enraged in a crisis or a difficult situation, we should try our best to remain calm. When you are patient, gentle, understanding, and mature with the words and actions with which you respond to situations, people will recognize that you are trusting in someone with the power to work out any problem. James 1:19-20 says, "Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God." In order to illustrate



photo: Rory Tyson  
**Texas snowman** Rory Tyson's P.E. students built snowmen in a relay race.

righteousness, we must practice self-control and maintain Christ-like composure. By doing this, you will reveal to others that you put your faith and trust in the Lord.

The last way to express your identity as a Christian is to avoid worrying or stressing. One of my favorite Bible verses is Philippians 4:6, which states, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Another translation of this verse that I learned in a song says, "Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything." We have nothing to worry about or fear because we have the protection, presence, and power of God on our side. When you follow Christ and cast all your anxieties on Him, you will gain a sense of peace and security like no other. This peacefulness will show others that you trust that Jesus can give you all that you need.

In order to shine our light for the Lord and exemplify God's grace and mercy, we must show others our faithfulness to Him and His heavenly kingdom. This won't always be easy, but it will be worth your time and effort. When you are on the court or field, shopping at the store, or just walking in public, be mindful of how you present yourself as a member of the Christian community. As children of God, we are called to be faithful stewards of the Lord's grace and love. By loving others like Jesus loves us, forgiving others freely, displaying joy, accepting others instead of judging them, showing humility, maintaining self-control, and avoiding worry or stress, we will be effective ambassadors who lead others to the Lord.



photo: BCS yearbook  
**Special bond** Sisters Olivia (1st) and Evelyn Rodriguez (K4) enjoy a moment together.



# Leidlein tops runners; school tops \$100K in Jog-a-fun

By Nathan Joseph

Ever since its introduction in 1985, Jog-a-fun has been a staple fundraiser in the Brentwood Christian school year. However, in light of the current pandemic, things looked slightly different this time around. Paired with exciting incentives, healthy competition, and a fun day off from school, Jog-a-fun was a huge success,

bringing in more than \$100,000. On Wednesday, Nov. 11, students of all ages and backgrounds came to school prepared to run. Junior Jack Leidlein led all 5K runners with a time under 20 minutes, and fifth-grader Cori Fisher led all elementary lap runners with 32. As in past years, elementary students ran laps for 30 minutes in the BCS baseball outfield.

However, this year, the race started with the fifth-grade class beginning at 9 a.m. and went down to the PK-4 class finishing at 1:20 p.m. According to Jog-a-fun coordinator Sarah Wilson, this change was due to the cold weather early in the morning. This shift allowed the younger students to participate in the running during the warmer part of the day. After Fisher, the top runners from upper elementary were fifth-graders Aaron Mathis and Levi Sneed, and third-grader Evan Gittinger, with 31 laps each. In lower elementary, second-grader Grayson McKay led the way with 29 laps. “Running the 5K race at the same time as the elementary race means I rely heavily on volunteers and other BCS staff members to keep everything going smoothly,” Wilson said. Wilson went on to credit Coach Katie Smith and Brentwood mom Tracy Grooms for their extensive support in coordinating the secondary and elementary races. The secondary students ran the 5K with their cohorts on a staggered starting time, beginning with the seniors at 8:30 a.m. and concluding with the sixth-graders at about 11 a.m. Like last year, students ran on the BCS cross country course, but this year the route had been extended through the woods beside the road to Lamar, a route that takes only two laps around the campus to complete. This gives students an opportunity to see a large amount of the cam-

pus, containing lots of different types of terrain, which adds to the difficulty of the course. Following their first lap, students were rewarded with a green bead necklace; similarly, they were given a white one at the end of the entire 5K race. After the race, students who had earned their beads could be seen laughing and talking while enjoying popsicles and fresh fruit. Leidlein finished in 19:27, followed by freshman Renne Cooper, a cross country teammate, who finished in 20:01. Next came Brentwood’s top female cross country runners: seventh-grader Harper Counts with a time of 22:11, and freshman Katie Pittner in 22:53, who had recently led the Lady Bear cross country team to an eighth-place finish at the state meet. As usual, incentives were offered to secondary and elementary students for sending out sponsorship letters and raising money, all of which benefits the school. For K4-2nd, students who completed their sponsorship requirements were entered to win a trip to the Austin Aquarium. An upper elementary student and a middle school student each won a trip to iFly. High school students had the chance to win one of four \$200 Amazon gift cards. Names were drawn and prizes awarded at all-community chapel on Dec. 9.



**They're off!** Freshmen get out to a fast start during Jog-a-fun on Nov. 11. Katie Pittner (left), finished fourth in the school, and Renne Cooper (far right) was second overall on the 5K course.

# Justice Boyd speaks as NHS inducts 45 students

By Evelyn Lee

Brentwood held its 37th National Honor Society induction ceremony in the evening of Thursday, Nov. 6, in which 45 inductees were welcomed: 39 sophomores, three juniors, and three seniors, bringing the total number of school members to 118. This year’s ceremony featured a speech on resilience from Texas Supreme Court Justice Jeff Boyd. This ceremony was the largest indoor gathering on the Brentwood campus yet this year, with about 150 attendees. Held in the BOCC auditorium, there was plenty of space for families to socially distance safely. In past years, the ceremony has been held off-campus during lunch. However, this year’s set-up was so successful, NHS adviser Kaleen Graessle said she is considering holding the induction at BCS again next year. A dinner and reception was held outside around campus, where attendees found picnic

benches and grassy spots. Food was catered by P. Terry’s food truck services. Graessle, along with the current NHS officers, planned the ceremony and reception dinner. Current members also volunteered to usher at the ceremony. “This year’s officers did a great job thinking creatively about the induction and then executing it wonderfully,” Graessle said. Many students said that Justice Boyd’s speech was a highlight of the evening. “The best part of this year’s induction was Justice Boyd’s speech,” NHS president Grant Martinez said. “It was amazing to hear such a great mind full of wisdom pour into us as he did.” During his speech, Boyd spoke about the importance of resilience in difficult times, telling a story about Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Julio Urias. “(It was) one of the most interesting, and definitely most timely, speeches given at any of the NHS induction ceremonies,” Graessle said.

Due to COVID restrictions, the requirements for NHS service hours have been lowered. Graessle and the officers are currently working on scheduling service activities that work with safety guidelines.

“I’m definitely looking forward to being able to serve in new creative ways, along with the rest of the NHS members,” senior NHS secretary Andrew Geevarghese said.



**Members only** This fall’s 45 inductees into National Honor Society were honored in a ceremony in the BCS auditorium on Nov. 6. Afterward, students enjoyed P. Terry’s outside.



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: *Caroline Griffith*

*Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2021.*

# Both president and queen, star athlete loves friends

By Natalie Hargrove

You are sitting in your second period classroom and hear the announcement bell ding: “Good morning, Brentwood Christian. Today is Tuesday, Dec. 15, and it is an A day. We have a couple of announcements for you today...” This, of course, is the voice of our Student Council president.

Caroline Elaine Griffith was born on February 19, 2003, here in Austin, and since then has spread nothing but joy and kindness to everyone she sees around the Brentwood community.

“I have made some of the most important and happiest memories of my life (at Brentwood),” Caroline says. “I will forever be thankful for Brentwood and the time I have spent here.”

A BCS student since kindergarten, this year’s homecoming queen has not only participated in a wide variety of activities, but has taken leadership positions in those activities, including president of StuCo. She has made her biggest impact in sports, as she has blossomed into a three-sport star in high school: varsity soccer goalie, varsity softball first baseman, and varsity volleyball team captain.

Friend and varsity volleyball manager Grant Martinez says seeing her lead on the volleyball court has made it so clear that all the girls look up to her. Whenever the team gets down mentally she is the one that always steps in and lifts them back up. For example, when the team’s opponent would go on a run, she would call the team in for a huddle and give the girls a pep talk.

“Caroline participates in everything, and that is something I have always been impressed with,” senior teacher Jimmie Harper says. “Not only is she super involved, but when she commits to something, she gives it

everything she’s got.”

Caroline has spent all four years of her high school career on the Student Council and has spent countless hours decorating the hallways, setting up for events like Jog-a-fun, and has helped come up with new and creative ideas for students to enjoy.



“Caroline has never been afraid to speak her mind,” StuCo adviser Jeff Morris says. “She shows initiative, looks ahead to see what needs to be done, and keeps others focused on the tasks at hand.”

It is not an accident that others find their student body president easy to work with. Caroline has been very intentional about her leadership style.

“When I was younger, I looked up to the kids in Student Council,” she says. “The kids always had a smile on their face and created fun activities that everyone enjoyed. I wanted to be that leader that put a smile on other students’ faces.

Caroline is active at her church and youth group at Round Rock Church of Christ and participates in mission trips as well. She has traveled with her youth group to Colorado and got to experience an eye-opening experience called Wilderness Trek, which is a week-long hiking trip in the mountains.

Friend and classmate Brooklyn Allen says Caroline is such a sincere friend who seems to appreciate God’s creation everywhere she goes.

“I remember one night Caroline called me on her way home, and she was crying,” Brooklyn says. “She could not get over the fact that God created such a beautiful world for us to live in.”

When Caroline is not hitting a volleyball or creating new ideas for homecoming, she enjoys being with her friends. Whether they are eating out, jamming out at a concert, or swimming in Barton Springs, you can always count on Caroline having friends around.

But Caroline is not exactly high maintenance in her preference of activities. Teammate and friend Ashlynn Alvarado says if Caroline were offered a five-star meal, she would choose Chuy’s and their queso over that meal any day. Friends also describe her as sweet, sincere, caring, a welcoming spirit, and weird in the best ways possible.

“If you know Caroline, you know about her weird quirks,” Grant says. “The funniest of them all is that she eats pizza and hamburgers with a fork and knife.”

Caroline is not sure at the moment where she will be

attending school next fall, but she is certain that she will be majoring in business administration. After getting her degree, she plans on going into entrepreneurship or business management.

“My goal is to become a manager in the music industry,” she says. “I want to help people accomplish their dreams and be successful doing what they love.”

## Bubba

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And there’s no one better to pass off some of his knowledge to BCS student mascots. The man inside the inflatable Coyote began working as a mascot as early as middle school and has continued for 27 years. Students were impressed with his strength and athleticism.

As for the students who are working as the new mascot, Birdwell suggests that we should think more about the bear than the student.

“The mascot is its own entity; it is much more fun to interact with the mascot if we don’t think of the person inside,” Birdwell said.

## Local business

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and hosting, as well as maintaining the inviting atmosphere radiating from her patio. In addition to her personal preferences, she had to incorporate laws into the list of adjustments. This included masking up while in the restaurant and doubling the sanitization of seats, tables, and utensils – especially as cases continue to climb. There was uncertainty, especially in the beginning of the lockdown, but Luisa hopes her sales will increase as soon as the virus subsides and things return to normal.

Despite all the things happening, Luisa had some advice for the other business owners who are struggling. She encourages owners to keep going and keep advertising, to let friends know and spread news through word of mouth. She calls for them to keep on hoping and to “try to hang on,” – that there is always something good waiting around the corner.



# Mayfield connects through humor, love

By Katie Pittner

A classroom full of engaged, laughing students must be a norm for Brentwood favorite Taylor Mayfield. Although he is only in his third year of teaching at BCS, he has been beloved by students since the beginning of his time at Brentwood due to his ability to connect and relate with students, all the while making them laugh.

“Mr. Mayfield is engaging, and his style of teaching is very effective yet hilarious at the same time,” freshman John Youngdale says.

Raised in West Monroe, La., Mayfield grew up with one older sister and attended a small Christian private school where he was very involved in his student body. He was a National Honor Society officer and class president his senior year, and also participated in athletics, playing soccer and tennis.

After high school, Mayfield attended Harding University in Searcy, Ark.

“College gave me the opportunity to dive deeper into the things I was interested in and passionate about,” Mayfield says.

After graduating from college with a degree in English and a minor in Bible and ministry, Mayfield came to Brentwood and taught ninth-grade English, eleventh-grade Bible, and SAT prep his first year. He continues to teach these same classes.

Despite describing himself as someone who “at first may be written off” due to the longer amount of time it might take to make an impression, Mayfield quickly gained favor with his students. He has made his class something to look forward to, and his students describe it as creative and enjoyable.

“Everyone loves to be in his class, and they appreciate his easy-going nature,” junior Olivia Osborne says.

For instance, students enjoy group discussions in Mayfield’s class, and his Bible students especially appreciate Mayfield’s open ear to their struggles while he offers solutions up to them.

“In our Bible class this year, we have had some really good discussions, and he has shared some very personal things that have encouraged us through our own difficulties,” junior Sydney Cooper says.

Mayfield must have touched his first group of freshmen, because in December of 2018, the Class of 2022 gifted possibly the staple of Mayfield’s classroom to him: the Danny DeVito cardboard cutout that now resides on a windowsill in C235. When he received the gift, Mayfield was puzzled.

“I asked the only question I could think of – Why? – and they told me, ‘This is a gift everyone secretly wants, but no one will ask for

themselves,’” Mayfield says.

Ever since that day, Danny has gained fame throughout the school, and is even dressed up for the holidays. When asked what his favorite classroom object is, Mayfield has no doubt.

“I mean, how could it not be Danny?” he says.

Students love the fun and laid back atmosphere Mayfield projects, and an example of this is one of his favorite Brentwood memories.

This year, junior Josh Trevino tried to scare him by hiding in a cabinet. He found a spot in a very confined cabinet underneath the sink in his classroom. Unfortunately, he retreated to the space much too early, and ended up having to spend about 40 minutes in the cramped position. When Mayfield entered the room, Trevino emerged from his crawl space in pain, wearing trash bags from all-community chapel over his legs, and yelled only, “Zoo wee mama.”

“I’ve never seen Mr. Mayfield at such a loss for words as he was when I crawled out of that cabinet, covered in dust,” Trevino says.

In addition to adding a smile to everyone’s day, Mayfield is always willing to help those who are around him.

“He never seems too busy to lend a hand with whatever is needed. If he sees something is lacking or something that



needs to be done, he is very willing to step in and offer help,” fellow English teacher Dr. Paul Robison says.

Mayfield never shirks a question in the classroom, and he is willing to adapt to his students’ schedules. For example, he mercifully gave his English students who take Honors Geometry an extra day to complete their projects for his class, because of the close due date of their scale drawings.

Many students have described Mayfield as genuine and easy to connect with, appreciating his openness, especially in the classroom.

“I believe that students need to feel comfortable with their teachers, so I always try to find points of relatability,” Mayfield says.

Outside of his teaching, Mayfield is taking courses through Liberty University and is working toward a master’s degree in composition and rhetoric.

Mayfield’s hobbies include cooking, reading, writing short stories and novels, over-analyzing a good movie, and solving crossword puzzles such as the New York Times crossword. Mayfield also has picked up running.

“I can’t tell if it’s a hobby I actually like, or if it’s one I tolerate because it is good for me,” Mayfield says.

In addition to these activities, he and his wife, Brentwood nurse Amanda Mayfield, have an annual search for the worst Christmas ornament they can find. This year’s: an alien wearing a pink dress.

Students are very appreciative of Mayfield and the way he controls his classroom and his students’ progress level. He has been mindful of every person, and is willing to spend time to help his students, whether it be collectively or individually. When asked what he would do if he were not a teacher, Mayfield said he would most likely be in youth ministry.

“I want to be the person that I needed when I was younger,” he says.

For people who have worked with Mayfield or have attended one of his classes, it’s no mystery why students give him a huge ovation when he walks on stage. Whether he is teaching about The Odyssey or discussing God’s promises to Abraham, students find Mayfield open, kind, humorous, and a wonderful Christian example.

Dr. Robison sums it up this way: “He is a great man of God, a great role model, and a knowledgeable scholar.”

## Theater preps ‘Charlie Brown’

By Kaitlyn Weilemann

The spring musical is the highlight of the year for many across the BCS campus and community, from actors who enjoy making new memories and showing off their talent to regular audience members who love to see a good show. Even though things might look a little different this year, as they say, the show must go on.

“You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown,” by Charles M. Schulz, Clark Gesner, and John Gordon, will hit the stage on Feb. 4-6, directed by theater teacher Vanessa Malaere. The performance has two full casts that will perform on two nights each and will feature senior Mason Hejl as Charlie Brown, freshman Emily Mulcahy and junior Atticus Wigginton as Snoopy, freshman Landon Hejl and junior Cruz Wilkie as Linus, senior Laura Wilson and sophomore Kennedy Drennon as Lucy, junior Zoe Roetter and sophomore Lily Trueper as Sally, and junior Elijah Baron and sophomore Benjamin Gatlin as Schroeder.

The ensemble that will perform on all four nights includes the following cast: junior Emarylis Diaz as the Red Headed Girl, sophomore Lillian Ireland as Peppermint Patty, senior Nathan Morgan as Pigpen, sophomore Mia Fluitt as Woodstock, and sophomores Heather Wilson and Ocean Peterson as the Yellow Canaries.

Students auditioned either in-person on Nov. 16 and 17 or by sending in a video audition due by the morning of Nov. 18, receiving the callback list later that afternoon. In-person callbacks were held on Nov. 19, though online students could attend and stay separate from the other students to participate safely if they made the list.

The set will have a cartoony look as an ode to the production’s namesake, and it might follow the traditional idea of including large set pieces to make the actors look more like small children in comparison, though Malaere has put her class in charge of its design.

“I’m excited to see what my theater production class cooks up,” Malaere said.

There will be a pit orchestra of about six members this year, including band director Travis Pollard playing the flute, alto saxophone, and soprano saxophone; choir director Daniel Watkins on piano; and senior Asher Gentry playing the bass. Other



# ‘New’ coach guides varsity boys into expanded district

By Renne Cooper

After losing 2-0 at Hyde Park last Friday, Dec. 11, the varsity boys’ soccer team finds itself winless in its first three games and 0-2 in district.

Playing in a new expanded district, the Bears also find themselves with a new coach this year – Cash Miller, who is coaching both varsity teams after doing so for several years in the past.

Seven district games remain on the schedule for the Bears. The team has 27 players, with five seniors, but they are fairly inexperienced with nine freshmen. Miller said he sees a lot of talent on the team, but also quite a bit of immaturity. Sometimes they lack effort and attention during practice, and they fail to trust their coach.

“Once they stop trying to play as a bunch of individuals and buy into the team concept we will have immediate success,” he said. “It’s really up to the players when this happens for them, but it has to be their choice.”

The Bears’ first district game was played at home on Tuesday, Dec. 8, against Texas Military Institute, winners of three of the past four state championships in TAPPS Division II. At halftime, the Panthers had a 4-0 lead, and Mil-

ler decided to increase the offense by taking a defender out and replacing him with a forward. When the teams returned to the field, TMI quickly put another two points on the board. The Panthers went on to score six more goals for a mind-boggling final score of 12-0.

“They were really good at connecting with each other and finding open space. They were always talking, and every pass was intentional and on target. They played like professionals the whole game,” freshman Ike Ruiz said.

Junior Josh Trevino was also impressed with the Bears’ opponent and called the loss a learning experience.

“Seeing the way TMI was able to move the ball up and down the field with very few touches and listening to their communication throughout the game showed us how great our team could be with more work,” he said.

The second district game for BCS on Dec. 11 ended in a 2-0 loss at Hyde Park. By halftime, the Panthers had put one goal on the board thanks to a lucky shot. The Bears dominated the second half, but the Panthers scored again. Although Brentwood struck many as the stronger team, when it came down to taking shots on target, they struggled.

The Bears’ opening game of the season, a non-district home game on Nov. 14 against

St. Dominic Savio, finished as a 4-1 loss for Brentwood. At halftime, the Bears were down 2-1 with the single goal scored by junior Nathan Joseph. After that the Eagles had two great shots, making it 4-1. Near the end of the game, BCS was called for a foul in the box, but freshman goalkeeper Andrew Davis made a great save.

“We definitely have some kinks to work out, but I feel like we have a decent group of guys and I’m excited about this year,” Joseph said.

Miller, the father of two BCS grads who played soccer, said he wants his players to be willing to put in the work for success they may never see. He recalls his first season coaching at Brentwood when the team was 1-15, but those players started building a foundation for the program that led to several seasons reaching the playoffs.

“It’s about playing for something bigger than you and demanding more from yourself and those around you,” he said. “It doesn’t matter who the coach is if the players are unwilling or incapable of giving 100% every training session and every game.”

Miller said he could see himself coaching at BCS for many more years, and all those he has coached know he loves his players even more than he loves the game.

“The main goal,” Miller said, “is just to help the players grow on and off the field and be the best person they can be.”



photo: Sydney Cooper

**On the go** Junior Nathan Joseph heads downfield in the loss to TMI on Dec. 8.

# Glenn leads attack as soccer girls gain two quick wins

By Renne Cooper

After a win against TMI and a loss to Hyde Park, the Lady Bears are 1-1 in district (2-1

overall) with seven remaining games in the regular season. Brentwood came into this season with only two district wins in the past two years. The team hopes to start on a clean slate



photo: Kevin McKinnerney

**Fancy footwork** Senior Julia Glenn has nine goals in the Bears’ first three games.

with the return of head coach Cash Miller.

“They’ve worked hard and haven’t won a lot of games in the last few years, and I hope to change that this year,” Miller said.

On Tuesday, Dec. 8, the Lady Bears took a 4-2 victory in their first district game at home against Texas Military Academy. Missing two of their best midfield players, Brentwood did not appear to have a strong chance of success. But senior Julia Glenn scored almost instantly by dribbling past defenders and slotting the ball into the bottom right corner. A little while later, Glenn scored again after dribbling past opponents, and a goalkeeper mistake allowed the ball to roll slowly into the net.

Before halftime, Glenn scored yet again. She found some space after moving past two opponents and fired at the keeper, who made a good save, but Glenn moved to the rebound and buried the ball to complete her second hat trick in two games.

Glenn was not finished, though, because near the end of the game she fired a shot that soared over the keeper into the back of the net, giving Brentwood their fourth goal. In the final minutes of the game, as the Lady Bears’ stamina was fading, TMI scored twice in a row to make the final score 4-2.

“The game was intense and hard, but it was fun, and I am really happy we won and played

well even though we were missing two key players,” freshman Abby Muñoz exclaimed.

The second district match for Brentwood on Friday, Dec. 11, ended in a loss on the road to Hyde Park. The score was tied at 1-1 at halftime, but Hyde Park pulled away with four goals scored in the second half to win 5-2. Glenn scored both of Brentwood’s goals.

The Lady Bears’ season began with a non-district home game on Thursday, Nov. 19, against Veritas. BCS scored three goals in the first half, with senior Hailey Reich scoring the first and Glenn scoring the next two. Veritas opened up the second half with two goals, but Glenn finished them off by dribbling through several opponents and finishing to complete her hat trick and a 4-2 Brentwood win.

“We played very well together as a team, especially for it being the first time our entire team had been together,” Glenn said.

The team is composed of 16 girls, with the majority being seniors. The biggest struggle is a lack of substitutes, which means more fatigue toward the end of the 80-minute games.

Miller said his goal for the team is to make it to postseason play, but with freshman Macie Griswold seriously injuring her foot during a practice session, every player will have to work extremely hard to make that dream become reality.



# Volleyball earns six all-district spots, two all-state

By Aurora Tyson

The Lady Bears volleyball team’s season came to a disappointing end after an area-level loss to Lutheran South on Nov. 10 at Brentwood.

Despite the loss, the Bears had what many consider an amazing season, setting a school record with 15 consecutive wins this year. The girls went 7-1 in district, earning the title of district co-champions. There was a three-way tie between Hyde Park, St. Michaels, and Brentwood for first place, but BCS took the lead point-to-point against the other two teams. This year’s team had an overall record of 23 wins and only 5 losses.

Coach Rory Tyson said that a number of combined factors prevented the team from getting into a rhythm during the match against Lutheran South.

“Losing (sophomore) Ashlynn Anthony to contract tracing quarantine, going seven days without a match, and having to run a new rotation really hurt us,” Coach Tyson said. “We made a lot of communication mistakes that we normally wouldn’t make, and we never really got comfortable.”

Although the girls wish that they had gone farther into the playoffs, they are very proud of their season as a whole, and are happy with the year.

“This season was difficult because of the

pandemic, but Coach made it fun and encouraged us to make the best of the situation,” sophomore middle blocker Ashlynn Alvarado said. “We were all hardworking and determined, and that’s why we got so far.”

Team stats for Brentwood are as follows: 1,121 kills, 13.0 kills per set, 1,912 digs, 22.2 digs per set, 211 total blocks, 2.4 blocks per set, and 147 aces. Senior outside hitter Caroline Griffith led the team in attacks, with 410 kills and 4.8 kills per set. Griffith also led with 35 total aces.

Senior middle blocker Laura Wilson led the team with 83 total blocks and 78 solo blocks. Ashlynn Alvarado was a close second, with 82 total blocks, 67 solo. Senior libero Aurora Tyson led the team with a total of 513 digs and 6.0 digs per set. Tyson also led in serve receive, with 544 receptions and 6.3 receptions per set.

Junior setter Ava Alvarado led the team with 821 total assists and 9.5 assists per set.

Coach Tyson said that the girls dedicated themselves to preparing all summer, not knowing if they would even get to play, and she is proud of them for that.

“We feel blessed to have been able to play an entire season,” Coach Tyson said. “This is a special group of girls who have left their mark on the Brentwood volleyball program and started a new legacy.”

Griffith, Tyson, and Ava Alvarado all earned spots as first-team all-district players. Wilson

and Brooklyn Allen were each awarded with a spot on the second team, and Ashlynn Alvarado received honorable mention.

Griffith, Tyson, Ava Alvarado, Wilson, and Allen were named academic all-state, which is awarded to players who received spots on first or second team all-district and maintained a GPA of 90 or above.

Griffith also earned a spot as a second-team

all-state player, and Tyson received honorable mention.

“I’m really proud of my team, and I couldn’t have asked for better people to end high school volleyball with,” Griffith said.



photo: Kevin McKinnerney

**All-state libero** Senior Aurora Tyson led the Lady Bears with 6.0 digs per set, earning her honorable mention all-state.



photo: Kevin McKinnerney

**All-state hitter** Senior Caroline Griffith led Brentwood with 4.8 kills per set, earning her second-team all-state.

# Football team makes playoffs; sunk by injury, illness

By Natalie Hargrove

The varsity football team’s season came to a close on Nov. 20 after losing 27-21 in their home playoff game against Victoria St. Joseph. The Bears ended their season with a record of 4-4 and placed fourth in their TAPPS 5A district.

A week earlier, Brentwood finished the regu-

lar season facing Hyde Park in a game that, earlier in the season, many players expected to win easily. But the Bears lost 35-12, having to face the Panthers without several key starters and only 17 total players.

A socially distanced but loud crowd filled the stands as the Bears took the field for their playoff game. Junior quarterback Keller Jackson ran for the first touchdown, and junior Seth

Taylor scored the extra point, giving the Bears the first lead of the game. But the Flyers responded with a touchdown of their own.

In the second quarter, Jackson hit junior Ca-son Best twice in the end zone, giving the Bears a 21-7 at halftime. Unfortunately, the Flyers responded with three unanswered touchdowns in the second half, giving them the win.

First-year head coach Correy Washington said that overall they had a good season, and there is always room for improvement.

“The boys learned how to battle through adversity, and that is something that will prepare them for life,” Washington said.

The team faced many practices and games without key teammates, who missed games due to various injuries and illnesses. In the last two games, more than 10 players were unable to play, including six starters in the playoff game.

With the lack of numbers and experience, many of the boys played on both offense and defense during games. The Bears had many young athletes on the team, and this season gave those young players plenty of opportunity to gain experience. The season overall

was not a normal season with a limited number of games and multiple long road trips, but the team learned to be resilient and adjust every week.

“Our season was all right,” senior Zack Billante said. “We did not get all the results we wanted, but we fought and played hard, and that is what I am most proud of.”

Washington said they plan on getting bigger, stronger, and faster in the off-season, and he is excited to start working with the incoming freshman class.

“The goal is to practice on Thanksgiving Day next year, and hear Christmas music as we are preparing to play in December,” Washington said.

On offense the Bears were led by Jackson, who had 982 passing yards, 385 rushing yards, and 9 rushing touchdowns. Senior Bailey Cordes followed with 305 rushing yards.

Billante led with 417 receiving yards and 4 TDs. Best followed with 301 receiving yards and 2 TDs.

On defense Brentwood was led by Best, who had 91 tackles, and senior Aaron Lilya with 90.



photo: Kevin McKinnerney

**Final run** The Bears take the field on Nov. 20 for their playoff game against the Flyers.



# Youthful Lady Bears showing signs of grit, growth

By Juliet Booker

The Lady Bears have had a slow start to the 2020-21 season, losing their first five games. After losing all their district games last year, the girls had hopes for more success this year. Led by head coach Ariana Marks and assistant coach Katie Smith, things definitely started out on an interesting note.

“This season so far has been so different than any other that I’ve coached or played in,” Marks said. “The girls and us coaches have adapted to quarantines, cancelled games, and still have remained optimistic about our season.”

“We have a very young and inexperienced team, but they are learning and growing rapidly, so we expect big improvements throughout the season,” Marks said.

Smith said both she and coach Marks are excited to see how the season will go. Losing the leadership and experience of graduated seniors Jenna Riley and Kelli Tindel has definitely had an impact on the team, but senior Alyssa McLain and junior Alicia Gardner have read-

ily taken to their role of being the leaders for the team.

“As each practice and game go by, the team continues to surprise me because of the cohesiveness and the work ethic that everyone brings to the table,” McLain said.

Marks said she is excited for the opportunity to play basketball despite the limitations and new safety precautions. She continues to remain hopeful the girls will learn, grow, and have fun while playing.

“My goals for the season are to stay safe and healthy, for the girls to see improvement on and off the court, and to have fun playing the game of basketball,” Marks said.

More specifically, she said she and her coaching staff are trying to create a team culture “surrounded by defense and rebounding.” Emphasis is being placed on effort and fundamentals.

Following are the game results thus far:

**11/13: St. Dominic Savio 48-21 L**

The basketball team started off with poor ball handling which caused a few turnovers.

Even though they stole the lead for a little bit, Savio pulled ahead and the Lady Bears fell too far behind. McLain led the girls with 10 points, and sophomore Abbie Burcham had 8.

**12/1: St. Michael’s 59-37 L**

In the Lady Bears’ first district game, the Crusaders took the lead early and the girls just could not catch up. Gardner led the Lady Bears with 12 points.

**12/4: San Antonio TMI 36-34 L**

The girls found their groove and played an exciting nail biter of a game against TMI. Even though it was a loss, game commentator Jimmie Harper called the team’s ball movement “magical,” and the Lady Bears seemed to find their stride.

**12/8: @ San Ant. St. Mary’s Hall 47-26 L**

The Lady Bears had a rocky start and could not catch up after that. Lead scorer was Gardner with 8 points; freshman Aubrey Acheson and McLain each scored 6.

**12/11: San Antonio Providence 65-52 L**

BCS trailed at halftime 39-29 and battled on but could not catch up. McLain scored 21.



photo: Kevin McKimmerney

**Seeing the floor** Alyssa McLain, the team’s only senior, leads the Lady Bears with 13 points per game and plays a vital role in helping her teammates grow.

# New coach brings new culture for boys’ program

By Andrew Kent

After taking a tough 80-48 home loss to St. Mary’s Hall on Dec. 11, the varsity boys’ basketball team has a 2-7 record overall and is 0-2 in district. Playing in a district that expanded from four teams to eight this year, the Bears have challenges ahead and are facing them with a new head coach, Donte Mathis.

Last year, the Bears only won one district game, playing talented opponents with a very young team. This year’s team is also young, featuring only one senior.

Mathis, who was hired as a new coach last summer, is a former professional basketball player who spent a decade playing in Europe. In college, he played for Texas State, where he won the Southland Conference MVP in 1999. In recent years, Mathis has worked training young athletes for Elevation Skills Sports.

At BCS, Mathis said he wants to build a competitive program “from the top to the bottom.” The key will be implementing the necessary mindset in players.

“It takes time and the right culture,” Mathis said. “I truly believe we have the potential.”

Although the Bears have had a rough start to their district schedule this month, Mathis said it’s impossible to predict how the season will end up, especially with all the uncertainties related to the pandemic. Regardless of other factors, the most important thing to him is reshaping

the mentality of how his players approach the game and competing.

“We’ve got unbelievable kids with God-given ability. But these days, chemistry is everything, and if you don’t have chemistry, it will be a weak point in your team that stands out,” Mathis said. “We won’t be successful till everyone buys in.”

The Bears will have a varsity roster of at least 10 players on game days, with about as many at JV games. Captains for the varsity are senior Grant Martinez and junior Cason Best.

“I’m counting on these guys to lead the way in building the program. They have the mentality we need, exemplified in practice,” Mathis said.

When the season began, several team members were still playing football. In their first game against Veritas on Nov. 19, Brentwood only dressed six players. The teams battled in a close game until late, when fouls and an injury left the Bears with only four players on the court. Veritas pulled away to win 62-54. Junior Rylan Acheson led the way with 26 points.

Two days later, the Bears got their first win, defeating the Austin Royals at home, 52-32. Acheson, described by his coach as a “very versatile player,” again led the way with 16 points. Sophomores Evan Gruis and Nicholas Makumi were also credited by their coach as being key factors in the win.

After the Thanksgiving holidays, Brentwood

traveled to Thrall and beat the Tigers 55-45 on Dec. 1. It was their first game with a full roster, although they had only practiced together once. Junior Seth Taylor led the Bears with 18 points.

Many of the boys had not played meaningful basketball together since February, Mathis pointed out, and they are still learning what kind of mentality is required in order to be successful.

They soon faced a series of challenges when BCS headed to the Savio Tournament on Dec. 4-5. After opening with a 39-36 loss in a rematch with Veritas, Brentwood was overmatched against a solid Savio team, falling 67-30. The next morning, the Bears lost 55-38 to St. Andrew’s, led by Best’s 13 points. They concluded the tournament by losing to Round Rock Homeschool 55-47.

Brentwood did not have long to dwell on those losses before starting their district season with two home games last week. It started with a 74-39 loss to St. Michael’s on Dec. 8, followed by an 80-48 loss to St. Mary’s Hall on Dec. 11.

Gruis led the Bears with 13 points in the first game, while junior Connor Rohlack finished with 15 against St. Mary’s. Both opponents were among the best in the district, featuring “D1 prospects,” according to Mathis.

“They’ve really been thrown in the fire,” he said of his young team.



photo: Sydney Cooper

**Routine** Sophomore Nicholas Makumi shoots a free throw in the Bears’ home loss to St. Michael’s on Dec. 8.



# Elementary students take Sign Language class

By Carina Combs

This year, elementary students at Brentwood Christian are lucky to have a new class added: American Sign Language. Students in kindergarten through fifth grade are required to take this class, which is currently replacing Spanish as students' foreign language requirement.

In this class, students learn sign language and the importance of it. So far, they have learned letters, numbers, simple phrases, and a Christmas song.

"We have had Spanish for many years, and when the need arose to add personnel for languages campus-wide, we looked beyond only Spanish and found an amazing blessing in Mrs. Castro," elementary principal Jeremy Thornton said.

Crystle Castro is the teacher for this ASL class, and she has been involved with sign language since her childhood. Castro went to Texas State, where she earned a bachelor's degree in general studies and minored in psychology, sociology, and mass communication. Castro received an American Sign Language certificate

for ASL I-IV and visual gestures.

Fifth-grader Katherine Morgan said she thinks Castro is a really fun teacher.

"I also like how learning sign language is interesting, and most of the time simple," Morgan said.

Thornton said the need to communicate with the deaf community has always been in high demand.

"The opportunity to communicate with others who are hearing impaired presents amazing possibilities to serve and grow relationships," he said.



photo: BCS yearbook

**Buff Puff** Senior Asher Gentry hits against juniors in the traditional game on Dec. 10.

## 'Charlie'

continued from page 5

members have not yet been determined. This smaller size in comparison to previous years will allow the members to be socially distanced in the pit, and the two wind players will sit on opposite sides for safety.

"We didn't reduce the size of the prescribed orchestra, but rather chose a show that has a smaller cast and orchestra," Pollard explained.

Malaere said she chose this musical because it's practical to produce in such unprecedented times, and because it has personal significance to her, as she played Lucy professionally in Nashville, Tenn.

Along with this, Malaere explained how the musical's message lines up with some of the major things going on in the world right now. Its chief meaning at the end is "happiness is in the little things like climbing a tree and finding the right crayon and holding hands with your best friend."

Malaere said she hopes the musical will be fun for everyone involved, and that it can serve as a reminder that "there is happiness to be found" even in unexpected situations like the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There's a scene where Charlie Brown puts a bag over his head, and it's just such a thing I can picture my eight-year-old doing when he's embarrassed," Malaere said.

Other than the obvious obstacle of CO-

VID-19, Malaere has faced other challenges while putting together this production such as choosing who received the four principal character parts played by girls out of the many talented girls who auditioned, "and they didn't make it easy."

"The difference in performance was maybe the tiniest hair," Malaere said.

Rehearsals are on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays after school until the performance dates are closer, when there will be a few Saturday rehearsals to rehearse things like lights and sound with the actors. Each rehearsal will be limited to only the characters needed for the scene, and both actors who portray said characters will attend to learn blocking and rehearse for efficiency.

This year's musical has a new trick up its sleeve for the cast and crew to enjoy. Over the summer, sophomore Hunter Biegert completed his Eagle Scout Project by renovating the orchestra pit, cleaning out the costume and make-up rooms before painting the black walls white, and installing mirrors, lights, and storage racks. Biegert was assisted by his family, Malaere, Roetter, sophomore Keira McCormick, junior Zoe Roetter, and a church friend.

"We were wanting to get everything done in a week, but obviously that didn't happen," Biegert said.

Thanks to Biegert and his dedicated team, the cast and crew of "You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown" will have some much needed space and organization for their spring performances.



# Young students, teachers adjust

By Sarah Esman

Most elementary students and teachers at Brentwood Christian are happy to be back in the classroom this school year. At the same time, though, many students are still online, and teachers are facing new challenges every day as they strive to educate students who are both in the classroom and online.

The in-person students are glad to be back, and they are enjoying the time spent with friends. There is a wide range of things they have been enjoying this school year, even though the pandemic has been hard on them.

"Math class, it's my favorite. I can get through it really fast," fourth-grader Herbie Love said.

Even though in-person elementary students have been enjoying certain things about school, such as their favorite subjects, recess, extended day, and being able to see their friends again, there have been many challenges that have been difficult for them.

"Wearing masks, sometimes it hurts my ears because it pulls on them," third-grader Zoe McReynolds said.

Third-grader Evan Gittinger pointed out another problem.

"We have to share the field at recess because of coronavirus," he said. "We cannot go wherever we want to on the playground because of social distancing."

Keeping the students safe and enforcing COVID rules is a challenge teachers have faced, but the elementary students and school leaders are confident in their teachers' handling of the pandemic.

According to many elementary students, teachers have been making sure hand sanitizer is used by their students and masks are being worn.

Teachers have also changed many things

this year, such as seating arrangements, classroom procedures, and teaching styles.

"I used to walk around my room as I taught and write on the whiteboard," fifth-grade teacher Evelyn Ellis said. "Now, I am tied to the front of the room and needing to use a device so that my online students can see what I would have written on the board."

This device, which is connected to the teacher's computer, helps the teacher write on the digital whiteboard. This whiteboard is used to help the online students see what is being written, and the writing is projected onto the classroom's whiteboard in the front of the room for the in-person students.

The online students have their own set of challenges they are facing. According to elementary principal Jeremy Thornton, there were complaints about Zoom's functionality early in the year, but he said that all of those have been addressed and resolved.

"The complaints now seem to be more around missing their friends and the social interactions that cannot be accomplished online," Thornton said. "We do a lot to bring our online Bears into the classroom, but digital interaction has limitations, kinda like Facetime with Grandma will never fully replace a hug from Grandma."

Online students' grades have been dependent on the individual student. Thornton says that some students thrive on Bears Online, and some thrive in-person, but grades have not been impacted too heavily. Each student, like always, has his or her own personal struggles, whether it be nouns or multiplication, but both in-person and online elementary students have been doing well this school year.

"This year has been amazing. I cannot express enough how awesome my staff, faculty and students are," Thornton said.



# Girl Scout urges listening to bring understanding

By Lucy Belcik

As a Girl Scout, my job is to serve my community and those around me. Most people assume this means to accumulate service hours and volunteer as much as I can. That’s true, but it really is only part of it. I also need to identify problems in my community and find ways to address them.

On Nov. 20, I held a panel discussion about race at Brentwood. This was a part of my Girl Scout Silver Award, which is the second-highest service award in Girl Scouts.

Race, though not an unknown topic at Brentwood, is not discussed much in an organized way. This means that talking about it officially for the first time was probably an uncomfortable experience for most of the audience. But what I had hoped most for my audience was that they would simply listen. My belief is that listening is the first step to understanding. The long-term goal for this panel, and hopefully ones to come, is for students at BCS to understand better those around them, and the differences that might af-

fect them.

What I most wanted to get across to the audience was that even if they may not completely understand what was being said on stage, listening was the best way for them to walk away from the panel with something new learned, even if it was small. This is true for everyone at BCS. Arguments are more easily resolved when you listen to the other person. Classes are easier to take when you pay attention to the teacher’s words. In the same way, differences are more easily understood when you let the other person share their perspective.

Brentwood is a good place to be. If you are a minority, most likely you will not ever really be reminded of it, at least not by your classmates. In fact, some of the panelists were hesitant to speak on the panel, since they felt that they lacked negative experiences involving race at BCS.

However, it is not required that you have a big, horrible experience regarding your race to be able to speak about it. This is something that is easy to forget, especially when you go

to a school like Brentwood, where most minorities never have to deal with large injustices, and certainly never share the very small ones with a large audience. I wanted to make sure that my audience was reminded of this.

Another thing I had hoped for my audience to take away from the panel was that, even though they may have better experiences at BCS than somewhere else, minorities at BCS still have a different perspective – they see things differently, even from each other, just because of the color of their skin. This idea is harder to grasp for those who are not of a racial minority, simply because of what some might call the “Brentwood Bubble.” The fact that our school is healthier and more loving than others means that some are surprised when they are reminded that outside forces are still at work and affect them and those around them.

There was one final thing that I wanted the audience, as well as perhaps the panelists, to take away. The Bible teaches us to love one another, regardless of differences. It does not say to hide away our differences and to try to make

everyone completely the same. Yes, equality is something to strive for, and it is something that we have been striving for in America for centuries. But God also made us all unique, with our differences and flaws and talents. I hope that the audience and panelists know that even if they may be a minority themselves, or may be struggling to understand the perspective of someone different from them, it is okay not to fully understand. What isn’t okay is to give up, to stop trying to learn, and most importantly, to stop loving. Love conquers all obstacles, and when we learn to love others regardless of the color of their skin, everything else will follow.

## THE BEAR FACTS

Brentwood Christian School  
11908 North Lamar Blvd.  
Austin, TX 78753

The Bear Facts is published monthly by the journalism classes of BCHS. The paper is a learning tool which informs the student body while teaching students to become critical observers of their environment and to validate Truth within the context of the Christian world view.

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## Christmas Word Search

A	W	S	S	N	C	E	W	I	S	E	M	E	N
A	M	K	T	H	H	G	E	A	E	P	N	N	M
M	E	N	A	E	R	S	Y	G	E	S	A	S	A
A	L	I	R	B	I	I	P	A	D	S	A	N	N
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- GIFT  
BETHLEHEM  
ELVES  
STAR  
PEACE  
SILENT NIGHT  
TINSEL  
SNOWFLAKES  
ANGELS  
CHRISTMAS TREE  
BABY  
SHEPHERDS  
REINDEER  
SANTA  
CANDY CANE  
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