

THE CHIMES

HCA NEWSLETTER • SPRING SEMESTER 2024-2025



Laps for a Legacy!

Sunshine, sneakers, and school spirit! HCA's 2025 Jog-A-Thon brought our whole community together for a day of fun and fundraising.

Read more about how we laced up for a cause on page 6.



HAWTHORNE CHRISTIAN
ACADEMY



Our Mission

Hawthorne Christian Academy is committed to inspire and equip students to **grow** in spiritual maturity, to **achieve** academic excellence, and to **impact** the world for Christ.



Accreditations

Association of Christian Schools
International

Middle States Association of
Colleges and Schools



Photo Credit

Photos by: HCA Yearbook Staff
David Chen Photography

Cover photo by David Tierney

Table of Contents

SPRING SEMESTER • 2024-2025

A Word In Season	3
FROM THE DESK OF THE HEAD OF SCHOOL	
Student Spotlight	4
ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS	
Annual Banquet & Auction	5
WALK WORTHY!	
Jog-A-Thon 2025	6
HCA ON THE RUN	
HCA Showcase	7
ANNUAL ART EXHIBITS & INSTRUMENTAL RECITAL	
The HCA Graduating Class of 2025	8
CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!	
HCA Class of 2029	10
HIGH SCHOOL, HERE WE COME!	
Music Notes	11
AND ALL THAT JAZZ	
Academy Athletics	12
GO DEFENDERS!	
Faculty Commencements	14
HONORING OUR RETIREES	
Alumni News	15
WHERE ARE THEY NOW?	

HCA Leadership Team



SUZANNE BRUNO
**Interim Lower School
Principal 2024-2025**



JENNIFER EELMAN
Upper School Principal



TODD R. MITCHELL
Head of School



TINA TATUM
**Director of Enrollment &
Marketing** (Chimes Editor)



KEN BURRES
Director of Technology



DEBORAH FUCCI
Director of Guidance



TYLER VAN DYK
Director of Athletics

A Word In Season

FROM THE DESK OF THE HEAD OF SCHOOL



TODD MITCHELL
Head of School

Great is Thy Faithfulness!

As Pastor John W. Minnema, senior pastor of the Hawthorne Gospel Church, began his address to the HCA Class of 2025, he stood at a podium that was used in the Hawthorne Gospel Mission Tent nearly 100 years ago! He explained to the class that they have the distinct honor of graduating during HGC's Centennial Celebration! This was a poignant moment for me as I saw, on full display, God's faithfulness to the HGC and HCA family. This ceremony brought to mind afresh the lives being impacted with the gospel 100 years after that first meeting in a firehall in June of 1925!

As a part of HCA's sixth grade Bible curriculum, our students memorize Hebrews 11, often referred to as the "Hall of Faith." In it, we read of God's faithful people who put their faith in action, holding unswervingly to the Lord's promise of their heavenly city! And so it is, that with grateful hearts, we look back on all those who put their faith in action at HGC and HCA over the decades.

Among these faithful servants are people you may know. Pastor Herrmann Braunlin was HGC's first pastor, who led the church for six decades! Pastor John Minnema succeeded Pastor Braunlin and has led HGC and its ministries since 1986.

Jack Wyrzten moved on from HGC's Evening Bible School to start the Word of Life Bible Conference and Word of Life Camp (where, through the great generosity of a family, HCA sends our incoming freshman each year). George Sweeting attended HGC before becoming a pastor and eventually president of Moody Bible Institute. And, of course, Jack Raudenbush, one of HCA's beloved leaders.

There are many more whose names have been forgotten in this world, but whose faithfulness is celebrated by their Father in Heaven. There are scores of faithful servants who cooked meals, cleaned buildings, taught Sunday School, gave sacrificially, and mentored those who are now mentors themselves. This is how God works, He equips unworthy, incapable people who are open to His prompting and faithful in His service!

In my closing remarks to the Class of 2025, I challenged them, as I now challenge you. Let us recognize that none of the blessings we enjoy at HCA or HGC are built on our own shoulders, but on those who put their faith in action before us. Now, trusting the Lord, it is our calling to take up the cause, build on their foundation, trust in God's faithfulness, and impact the world for Christ!

HCA Highlights

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Lower School Happenings

When I first arrived at HCA, I was immediately struck by the close-knit community that makes this school so special. While parents, faculty, and staff work together each day to create a loving and supportive environment for our students, it quickly became clear that the heart of this community extends far beyond the classroom walls. The circle of care that surrounds our students includes not only parents and teachers, but also alumni, local ministry leaders, faithful church members, and extended family. This became especially evident during our spring event, "Grandparents and Loved Ones Day." What a joyful day it was! Our campus was filled with the smiling faces of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cherished family friends who came to celebrate with us. The excitement from our youngest learners was unmistakable. From the moment the day began, there was a palpable buzz of anticipation as students prepared to welcome their special guests.

We began the morning with a beautiful chapel service, where students shared Scripture and reflected on God's

truth with hearts full of joy. Following chapel, guests made their way into classrooms to enjoy student-led presentations, songs, art projects, and demonstrations of learning. Laughter and warm conversations filled the rooms as students proudly showed off their work. A delicious brunch, lovingly prepared and served by our incredibly hardworking and supportive PTF parents, concluded the morning in the sweetest way.

This event is more than just a celebration; it is a tribute to the deep intergenerational bonds that shape our students' lives. Grandparents and loved ones carry a legacy of learning not just academics, but of the gospel of Jesus Christ and all the blessing and joy our mission represents. Their presence reminds us that we are not walking this journey alone. I am now convinced that Grandparents and Loved Ones Day is my favorite day of the year at HCA!



SUZANNE BRUNO
Interim Lower School Principal 2024-2025

Upper School Impacts the World for Christ!

Impacting the world for Christ is an essential part of Hawthorne Christian Academy's mission, and this year our middle and high school students embraced that calling with passion and purpose. Through prayerful planning and generous giving, students raised over \$5,900 to bless others in need and demonstrate the love of Christ in action.

One of the causes supported was ACSI's (Association of Christian Schools International) Crisis Response Fund. With a \$4,386 donation, HCA students helped provide support for Christian schools in Georgia and North Carolina that were affected by Hurricane Helene. These funds offered encouragement and tangible relief to communities still recovering from the storm's impact.

In addition, our students raised \$1,600 for Destiny Rescue,

a Christian ministry committed to rescuing children from the horrors of human trafficking. Destiny Rescue meets the immediate needs of these children and works to restore their hope and future through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

These fundraising efforts reflect more than just numbers. They reveal the heart of the HCA community - a heart that desires to serve, give, and make a lasting impact.

Through these initiatives, our students lived out their faith and showed what it means to be the hands and feet of Christ in a hurting world. We are so thankful for their continued commitment to making a difference for Christ.



JENNIFER EELMAN
Upper School Principal

Annual Banquet & Auction

WALK WORTHY!

22nd Annual Banquet

HCA held its annual Banquet on Thursday, March 13, at the beautiful Indian Trail Club in Franklin Lakes, NJ. This year's event centered on HCA's 2024-2025 school theme, **WALK WORTHY**, and offered an evening of worship, fellowship, and celebration of HCA's mission and community.

The Distinguished Alumni Award was presented to Rachel (Rainey) Royle, HCA Class of 2013. Now serving in ministry as the Operations Manager at Saint Thomas Crookes Church in Sheffield, England, Rachel joined via video to share with warmth and gratitude about how her time at HCA shaped her faith. She credited her teachers and the biblical foundation she received at HCA for helping her grow in her walk with the Lord and directing her toward ministry.

The Building Foundations for Life Award was given to Pastor



TINA TATUM
Director of Enrollment & Marketing

John W. Minnema, Senior Pastor of the Hawthorne Gospel Church and faithful supporter of HCA. Pastor Minnema also served as the keynote speaker, offering a powerful message on the history and impact of HGC and HCA. His reflections pointed to the hand of God at work through generations of believers, and reminded the audience of the importance of walking worthy of the calling they have received.

This year's banquet also celebrated a milestone: the 100th anniversary of Hawthorne Gospel Church. With hearts full of gratitude, the HCA community praised God for a century of His faithfulness - 1925 to 2025. **Great is Thy faithfulness!**

We are deeply thankful for all who attended and supported this memorable evening. Your generosity and partnership continue to bless the students, families, and future of HCA.



Thank You, 2025 Banquet Sponsors!

HOST SPONSOR

Dr. and Mrs. Robert Kayal & Kayal Orthopaedic Center

PLATINUM SPONSORS

Columbia Bank Foundation

Mr. and Mrs. Douglas & Jenifer Hart
Regency Wealth Management

PRINT SPONSOR

PrintSolutions

GOLD SPONSOR

Brother's Carpet and Flooring

ADVANCEMENT TEAM

Todd Mitchell, Head of School

Tina Tatum, Director of Enrollment & Marketing

Lourdes Soto

David Tierney

Becky Vanderbeck

Jog-A-Thon 2025

HCA ON THE RUN



Jog, Defenders, Jog!

This spring, HCA's annual Jog-A-Thon once again brought our school community together for a special day of fun, fellowship, and school spirit at Defender Field. Under bright blue skies, students from every grade laced up their sneakers and took to the track, cheered on by parents, teachers, and friends. Some supporters even joined in for a few laps, making it a true community event.

The smell of grilled hamburgers and hot dogs added to the excitement of the day. Thanks to a dedicated group of parent volunteers, nearly 900 meals were served—fueling the runners and adding to the festive atmosphere. Laughter, music, and the sound of running feet filled the air as the entire HCA family came together in support of the school.

More than just a fun tradition, the Jog-A-Thon serves as a meaningful fundraiser for the Academy. This year's event raised over \$40,000, a generous outpouring that reflects the ongoing commitment of our families, past and present, to the Christ-centered education at HCA.

We are thankful to God for the beautiful weather, the willing hearts, and the unified school spirit that made this event such a raving success. At HCA, special events like the Jog-A-Thon remind our community that every step we take is a step forward together, bound by our unity in Christ.



BECKY VANDERBECK
Advancement Assistant

HCA Showcase

ANNUAL ART EXHIBITS & INSTRUMENTAL RECITAL



2025 Art Exhibits



ELIZABETH WESTERMAN
4th-12th Art Teacher

Annual Upper School Gallery Walk

HCA's annual Gallery Walk highlighted student creativity, craftsmanship, and God-given talents. The event featured a wide range of work across grade levels and showcased more high school senior art than ever before. Pieces from the capstone art class stood out for their strong technique and meaningful personal expression, offering a glimpse into each student's unique perspective and growth. The Gallery Walk was not only a celebration of artistic achievement but also a reflection of students' development, both creatively and spiritually. It was a joy to witness their work on display and to anticipate where their talents will lead next.



Annual Lower School Project Fair

The LS Project Fair was a beautiful celebration of student learning and creativity. Classrooms and hallways became galleries of writing, artwork, and projects, each reflecting the unique gifts God has given our students. From thoughtful reflections to intricate creations, students worked wholeheartedly, echoing Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord." We rejoice in God's faithfulness in shaping hearts and minds for His glory. Thanks to our dedicated teachers and families for making this event a success!



ELAINIE GONZALEZ
LS Admin Assistant

Conservatory Recital

We give thanks to God for blessing us with another joyful Instrumental Conservatory Recital, celebrating the talents of over 80 students in grades 4-12. Led by Mr. John Peterson, with support from Ms. Faith Boonstra and Mrs. Madeline Brower, the evening highlighted the dedication of our young musicians across brass, woodwinds, percussion, and strings.

The program opened with cheerful pieces by our 4th and 5th-graders, including "Hot Cross Buns," "Twinkling Stars," and "Ode to Joy." As the recital progressed, students each shared their progress, building toward the grand finale by the Middle School/High School Combined Concert Band.

The Concert Band's exciting set included "El Manto Dorado," "Afterburn Relaunch," "Jive at Five," and an energetic encore of "Uptown Funk." The performance was a wonderful display of skill, growth, and teamwork.



JOHN PETERSON
4th-12th Grade Instrumental Teacher

STEM Market

The STEM Market was a success! Fifth grade students designed, produced, marketed, and sold original products ranging from slime and origami to handcrafted soaps and fidget toys. The young entrepreneurs welcomed customers, showcasing their colorful posters and logos, and explaining why their creations were must-have items. Families and friends who visited the Market were impressed by the students' great creativity, and many products sold out completely!



MEREDITH KOHLBRENNER
5th-Grade STEM Teacher

The HCA Graduate

CONGRATULATIONS

Row 1:

**Honors, **High Honors, +NHS*

Sydney Chung **+ Boston College
Charmaine Manipon *+ Stony Brook University
Grace Cintron *+ Messiah University
Matthew Mitchell *+ OneLife
Naomi Swanwick Messiah University
Ava Hartung High Point University
Alina Ellis *+ Methodist University
Jayden Dachis *+ Boston University
Lillian De Boer Liberty University
Ava Higby *** Liberty University
Hannah Cintron Messiah University
Rachel Bustamante ***+ Boston Conservatory at Berklee
Olivia Feliciano *** Messiah University
Angelina Wollemberg Montclair State University

Row 2:

Joseph Lee Rutgers University
Yoav Sered Gordon College
Colson Prairie Joshua Wilderness Institute
Victor Henriquez Baez * University at Buffalo
Isaac Lee * Boston University
Josias Lopez Touch the World
Omari Richards SUNY Oneonta
Gianna Liberali Bergen Community College
Joy Park Parsons School of Design | The New School
Victoria Jones NC Agricultural & Technical University



Graduation Speech Highlights

Valedictorian: Sydney Chung

In her valedictorian speech, Sydney Chung addressed her teachers, family, and friends, and encouraged them all to trust God in every circumstance, knowing that He is faithful in all things. She challenged her classmates to continually lean on God, no matter the situation, and to show their faith through their actions, always acting in love toward others.

Sydney ended her address with a charge to her peers, as they move on to whatever lies before them, to pursue the Lord in all of their decisions. She encouraged them that this path leads to feelings of great joy and a sense of purpose that is simply not from this earth alone.

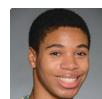


SYDNEY KYURI CHUNG
2025 Valedictorian

Salutatorian: Hugh Ryan

In his salutatorian address, Hugh Ryan spoke about the challenge of trusting God's plans without knowing the exact steps to take. He encouraged his peers to make God each of their number one priority, doing everything to honor and glorify Him. He also declared that, in doing so, God's will and plans will follow in their lives.

Hugh further charged his classmates to hold on to what is true by searching God's Word, and holding fast to the truths it possesses, and not pursuing the ways of the world because they will never be able to provide the peace and comfort that only God can bestow.



HUGH GRIFFITH RYAN
2025 Salutatorian



DEBORAH FUCCI
Director of School
Counseling Services

ing Class of 2025

ONS, GRADUATES!



Photo compliments of David Chen Photography

Row 3:

Franshesca Beltre **+ Seton Hall University
Jonathan Pascual New Jersey Institute of Technology
Elijah Suarez Undecided
Neha Venugopal **+ Rutgers University
Robert Taylor New Jersey Institute of Technology
Michael Sabato United States Marine Corps
Lourdgena Timagene Caldwell University
Lauren Edge Messiah University

Row 4:

Mia Morales * Montclair State University
Joseph Betz Liberty University
Landon Hawthorne Siena Heights University
Daniel Dykstra Lancaster Bible College
Zacharias Burres **+ Cairn University
Mitchell Wang * Wheaton College
Alexander Hanna **+ Seton Hall University
Peter How **+ Northeastern University
Eli Higby Liberty University
Cole Higby **+ Liberty University

Row 5:

Ryan Jones Messiah University
Hugh Ryan **+ Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Timothy Said New Jersey Institute of Technology
Gamaliel Perde * Messiah University
James DeBlock **+ Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

2025 Scholarships & Awards

PTF SCHOLARSHIPS FOR EXCELLENCE

Academic Excellence Scholarship

Sydney Chung & Hugh Ryan

Defender (All-Around Excellence) Scholarship

Gamaliel Perde

FAITHFUL SCHOLAR AWARD SCHOLARSHIP

Attended HCA Faithfully Since Kindergarten:

Rachel Bustamante, Ava Hartung, Ava Higby, Cole Higby, Eli Higby, Gianna Liberali, Matthew Mitchell, Mia Morales, Timothy Said, Robert Taylor

WELLSPRINGS COUNSELING SCHOLARSHIP

Lauren Edge

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LEADERSHIP Hugh Ryan

RENSSELAER MEDAL Hugh Ryan

BOOSTER CLUB SCHOLARSHIPS

Athletic Booster Club Scholarship

Zacharias Burres & Alina Ellis

Music Booster Club Scholarship

Yoav Sered & Rachel Bustamante

ACOSTA HISPANIC GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Franshesca Beltre

JVD SCHOLARSHIP

Daniel Dykstra

ROD INNIS "WALK IN TRUTH" SCHOLARSHIP

Gamaliel Perde

RONNIE & RENEE SIMON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Olivia Feliciano

HCA Class of 2029

HIGH SCHOOL, HERE WE COME!

Grad Addresses

In his valedictorian address, Nathan Kim reminisced on his experience of coming to HCA in 6th-grade and the apprehension he felt about being accepted by his peers. He recounted how he was immediately included by his classmates and the fun times they had during their Middle School years at HCA. Nathan thanked his teachers for helping the students learn and grow academically and in their walks with the Lord. He ended by quoting Colossians 3, challenging his peers as they move on to high school to do everything to the best of their ability, as unto the Lord.

In his salutatorian address, Phillip Ponce thanked HCA administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and peers for making HCA a wonderful and godly community. He talked about the memories he and his classmates have made over the past three years. Phillip then spoke on the HCA theme "Walk Worthy" and verse, Ephesians 4:1b-3. He encouraged his peers, as they move on to high school, to remember to live lives full of love, patience, humility, and gentleness and to walk worthy of the calling they've been given. He challenged them to be proud to represent Christ in everything they do - at school, at church, at home, and wherever God leads them.



DEBORAH FUCCI
Director of School
Counseling Services



Photo compliments of David Chen Photography

Headed to High School

These forty-two members of HCA's middle school graduating class are now officially high school freshmen! During the 8th-grade graduation ceremony, the 2025 Valedictorian, Nathan Kim, and Salutatorian, Phillip Ponce, addressed their classmates and teachers, reflecting back on middle school and excitedly looking forward to high school. We are excited for all that lies ahead for HCA's new freshman class.

HCA's class of 2029 8th-grade graduates were:

Gabriella Badee	Luke Hanson	Leyla Rosa
Levi Burres	Eli Henriquez Baez	Brittany Said
Leah Chan	Nari Kim	Aliyah Sanchez
Yuna Choi	Nathan Kim	Katelyn Schmookler
Leah Christians	Jayden Lee	Jeremiah Sdrak
Vincent Cook	Selah Lee	Avery Siepert
Treize Cruz	Colin McHugh	Savannah Slavin
Abigail Dykstra	Aiden Melendez	Olivia Standford
Rachel Fleming	Jace Morales	Xavier Tomeoni
Christian Freire	Adalyn Novik	Noah Tsuei
Salome Garcia	Nicole Ortega	Owen Tyler
Athanasius Gerges	Liliana Pagano	Greta Van Dyk
Alexander Gioe	Phillip Ponce	Caleb Wong
Claudia Hanikeh	Gabriella Rodriguez	Olivia Yu

Music Notes

AND ALL THAT JAZZ

Spring Semester Music Events

A Royal Rescue: A Tale of Crowns and Courage

HCA’s 16th annual Dessert Theatre, "A Royal Rescue," was held on March 7 and 8 in the Pavillion. These nights were filled with incredible music, compelling drama, contagious laughter, and delicious desserts. This year’s student-written script told the story of Princess Charlotte and her knight, Xaiver, who are fleeing from the Kingdom Aldoria after her uncle attempts to kill her and take the throne for himself. On the way out of the Kingdom, they meet a fairy in training, a group of rebels, and the lord of the town, Aldopho, with his cronies. They all must come together to fight and put the rightful heir back on the throne!

WorldStrides National Youth Choir Festival

In March, Servants of the King traveled to NYC for the Carnegie Hall National Youth Choir Festival held by WorldStrides. They worked under the direction of Jeffery Redding, the 2019 GRAMMY Music Educator Award Recipient, with other choirs from all over the nation. In NYC, Servants visited the Top of the Rock, attended a performance of "The Lion King" on Broadway, and worked with one of the Broadway performers to learn "Shadowlands." The highlight of the trip was singing at the Bowery Mission in NYC. This Christian mission works with those unhoused to provide food, clothes, shelter, and Chapel services. After the ministry of music, a group of students started talking to one of the men who was deeply touched by what he had heard. By the end of our time spent there, every student heard this man's story and witnessed him come to Christ! We continue to pray for him and praise God for allowing us to serve Him in this way.



CHRISTINE BROWER
Middle & High School Music Teacher



Music in the Parks Competition Results

MIDDLE SCHOOL CHORUS

1st Place, Middle School Mixed Choir Category

CHORALE

1st Place, Mixed Choir, I Category

SERVANTS OF THE KING

1st Place, Mixed Choir, II Category

WOMEN’S ENSEMBLE

1st Place, Women’s Choir Category

MEN’S ENSEMBLE

1st Place, Men’s Choir Category

PRELUDE HANDBELLS

2nd Place, Handbell Category

ALLEGRO HANDBELLS

1st Place, Handbell Category

CONCERT BAND

Superior Rating

NEHA VENGOAPAL (12)

Best Overall Soloist

NAOMI WHEELAND (10)

Best Student Accompanist – Violin

Academy Athletics

GO DEFENDERS!

Winter & Spring 2025 Defender Athletics



TYLER VAN DYK
Director of Athletics

Winter Awards

BOYS BASKETBALL

Daniel Dykstra (12)

Honorable Mention All League

Benjamin Fleming (10)

2nd Team All League

Honorable Mention All County

Ryan Jones (12)

Honorable Mention All County

Hugh Ryan (12)

2nd Team All League

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Baobab DeLorenzo (10)

Honorable Mention All County

Lusungu Mahowe (10)

Honorable Mention All County

Alyssa Ng (9)

2nd Team All County

HIGH SCHOOL BOWLING

Matthew Bavagnoli (11)

Honorable Mention All League

Honorable Mention All County

Joseph Betz (12)

1st Team All League

2nd Team All County

Zacharias Burres (12)

1st Team All League

2nd Team All County

Cole Higby (12)

2nd Team All League

Honorable Mention All County

Matthew Mitchell (12)

1st Team All League

1st Team All County



Annual Sports Banquet Awards

NJIC Sportsmanship Award: Grace Cintron and Eli Higby

PCCA Student-Athletes of the Year: Joseph Betz and Ava Higby

HCA Defender Athletes of the Year: Alina Ellis and Matthew Mitchell

HCA Athletic Booster Club Scholarship: Zacharias Burres and Alina Ellis



HCA 2025 Defender Varsity Boys Baseball



HCA 2025 Defender Varsity Track & Field

Thank You, Triple Play Sponsors!



Spring Awards

BOYS BASEBALL

Matt Bavagnoli (11)

Honorable Mention All League

Joseph Betz (12)

1st Team All League

2nd Team All County

Eli Higby (12)

1st Team All League

2nd Team All County

GIRLS SOFTBALL

Alina Ellis (12)

1st Team All League

2nd Team All County

Camilia Ramirez (10)

2nd Team All League

HIGH SCHOOL TRACK & FIELD

Evan Colena (9)

All-State

Cole Higby (12)

2nd Team All League

Honorable Mention All County

Gamaliel Perde (12)

1st Team All League

2nd Team All County

All-State

Hugh Ryan (12)

2nd Team All League

Honorable Mention All County

All-State

Olivia Sabato (9)

2nd Team All League

Honorable Mention All County

Robert Taylor (11)

2nd Team All League

Lourdgena Timagene (12)

2nd Team All League

Honorable Mention All County

All-State

AWARDS

Cole Higby (12)

NJSIAA Scholar-Athlete of the Year Award, 2024-2025

Faculty Commencement

HONORING OUR RETIREES

HCA Faculty Retirees



Sal Cusmano

HS BIBLE TEACHER

Time at HCA: 5 Years

Role at HCA: 10th-Grade Bible,
HS Bible Elective Classes

When I think of my friend Sal Cusmano, the first thing that comes to mind is, "this man walks with Jesus." Anyone who's known Sal, as a colleague, mentor, or friend, would say the same. His love for people and passion for the gospel is both clear and contagious. He motivates those around him to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). Sal's life is rooted in God's Word. Even a brief conversation with him usually includes Scripture. What an example! Sal, you will be deeply missed. May God bless you as you continue to serve Him in this next season. Take care, my friend! Be blessed!



MICHAEL LAMITOLA

HCA Chaplain | MS-HS Bible & History Teacher



Julie Mastin

MS MATH & SCIENCE TEACHER

Time at HCA: 30 Years

Roles at HCA: MS Math, MS Science,
Student Council, Girls Volleyball

For over 30 years, Mrs. Mastin has been a beloved part of the HCA community. While best known as a Middle School teacher, her influence reached far beyond the classroom. She served on the Academy Committee and brought leadership and energy as a volleyball coach. Mrs. Mastin's joyful spirit, love for the Lord, and encouraging words have touched students, families, and staff alike. Her presence has consistently reflected Christ's love and joy in every setting. As she enters the next chapter of God's calling, we thank her for her faithful service and lasting impact. We trust God will continue to use her in powerful ways.



JENNIFER EELMAN

Upper School Principal

HCA Staff Retiree



Isabel Davis

UPPER SCHOOL RECEPTIONIST

Time at HCA: 20 Years

Role at HCA: Bringer of joy to
families, staff, and students

There are people who shine the Light of Christ in all they do. For the past 20 years at HCA, Mrs. Izzy Davis has done just that. From her desk in the Main Office, she has served students, families, staff, and visitors with faithfulness, joy, and love for the Lord. At 85-years-old, Miss Izzy is retiring



TODD R. MITCHELL

Head of School

from HCA, but her impact will be long-lasting. I have said many times that having Mrs. Davis' desk outside my office door has been one of the greatest blessings of my life. She has been walking with Jesus for decades, and it radiates through her words, her wisdom, her work, and her spirit.

Whether collecting payments, overseeing transportation, or answering calls joyfully, she has done it all with grace, humor, and excellence! Her cheerful heart, quick wit, and steadfast faith have encouraged everyone around her. Izzy, you have impacted generations with godly wisdom and countless smiles. You will be deeply missed. Thank you for finishing this chapter with joy, strength, and faithfulness!

Alumni News

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Brandon and Kali (Burres) Cheeley ('19) welcomed their daughter, Karissa Joy, on September 20, 2024.



Christopher German ('05) and his wife, Daina, announced the birth of Nora Lynn on June 21, 2025.



Luke Rowland ('11) and his lovely bride, Oliva, celebrated their marriage on April 25, 2025.



Christian ('14) and Kristina Rubio welcomed their second child, Gloria Joy, on April 25, 2025.

Lower School Administration Updates

HCA is pleased to announce the Lower School leadership plan for the 2025-2026 school year and beyond. This June, Mrs. Wendy Littel officially initiated her Leadership tenure, serving as the Assistant Principal and transitioning into the role of Lower School Principal for the 2026-2027 school year. Throughout the upcoming school year, Mrs. Bruno will continue to serve as Interim Principal while also mentoring Mrs. Littel. Her steady leadership and wealth of experience will be a blessing to our Lower School as responsibilities are gradually transferred over the course of the year.

Mrs. Littel is a dedicated, godly educator who is committed to HCA and its mission. She is passionate about providing Christ-centered academics that focus on both the spiritual

growth and academic development of each student. Her connection to HCA runs deep. She is the mother of two HCA alumni and a current sophomore, and began her service at HCA on the Academy Committee before joining the faculty in 2013. Over the past three years, she has also served as a Lead Teacher in the Lower School. This leadership transition reflects thoughtful planning and prayerful consideration. The HCA community is encouraged to continue praying for Mrs. Littel, Mrs. Bruno, and the entire Lower School faculty as they enter this important season of transition.



TODD R. MITCHELL
Head of School



HAWTHORNE CHRISTIAN
ACADEMY

Address service requested

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Paramus, NJ
Permit #719

THE CHIMES

2000 State Route 208
Hawthorne, NJ 07506

Hawthorne Christian Academy

is committed to inspire and equip our students...



to **grow** in spiritual
maturity



to **achieve** academic
excellence



and to **impact** the
world for Christ

Connect with HCA!



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE
www.hca.org



GIVE US A CALL
(973) 423-3331 x206



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK
[@HCA.Defenders](https://www.facebook.com/HCA.Defenders)



FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM
[@hca.defenders](https://www.instagram.com/hca.defenders)