

SPOTLIGHT ON MISSION

Positive stories
Valuable work



Linden Christian School encourages global outreach

Spots

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WINNIPEG, MB—Not many principals encourage students to leave the school grounds. But Robert Charach, head of Linden Christian School, believes getting out of the classroom is essential to a good education. In fact, equipping students to serve communities in the larger city and across the world is one of the school's core values.

"We want to teach the students the blessing of giving. Not only financially, but of their time, of their gifts and talents...it's right out of the Scriptures," says Charach.

At Linden, this servant attitude is integrated into classroom instruction. Teachers make students aware of local and international events and causes. And each grade gets involved with a different outreach and missions project.

Grade 4 students gather toiletries for Winnipeg's Lighthouse Mission. The Grade 5 class visits with senior citizens in the community. And those in Grade 11 put on a bake sale to raise money for the Children's Cancer Foundation in honour of a former classmate who passed away from the illness.

"It starts right in Kindergarten," says Charach. "The Kindergarten students collect mittens for Agape Table. We try to get them exposed to different ministries and opportunities in the city, that's the local part."

But Linden Christian's community vision goes beyond the city limits. Cam Stephens, the school's director of spiritual care and campus life, says the ultimate purpose comes directly from Christ's commission in Matthew 28.

"With the Great Commission you have this command to share the gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the Earth," he says. "That ends up being our guide as we seek how is it that God has called us both to share the gospel and to meet the needs of people in all of those



Robert Charach presents The Great Commission Award to Brian Dueck at the LCS Graduation in June 2011.

courtesy Linden Christian School

- Linden Christian School is a ministry of Grant Memorial Baptist Church.
- Linden Christian School was founded in 1987 with 33 students and today has 879 students attending from Kindergarten to Grade 12.
- Province-wide reputation for educational excellence.
- An integral part of Linden's core values statement is "equipping students to serve in the local and global community".
- The school has been recognized for excellence in performing arts and athletics.
- The school provides a Christ-centred education and is committed to developing student leaders.
- 28,000 square feet of new educational space complete in 2011.

communities."

So, instead of just learning about global causes in the classroom, Stephens headed up a team of 14 high school students and took a trip down to Guatemala. There, students spent 10 days visiting hospitals and community homes and even led a vacation Bible school-type program. Another team will leave this February.

Stephens believes the trip was life changing for every one of the team members. Two students decided to sponsor children from the community after they returned home. It also helped Brian Dueck, another trip member, to be chosen as one of only six World Vision Youth Ambassadors in Canada.

The trip was truly educational, Stephens says, because kids came



Grade 8 student Steven Olson with LEGO representation of funds raised for a World Vision school building project. *courtesy Linden Christian School*

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to understand a deeper purpose behind what they had been learning in the textbooks. "We're trying to instill the 'why' behind the 'what,'" he stresses.

"When you're able to experience purpose and you're able to take part in something larger than yourself, I think that's when life really becomes alive," says Stephens. "A lot of kids were able to experience that on the Guatemala trip."

Even the students who are too young to take the trip are getting involved in Linden Christian's global vision. This year, students from Grades 5 to 8 are raising money to construct an entire school building overseas.

Steven Olson, a Grade 8 student and part of MYSL (the middle years student leadership), is creating a schoolhouse replica out of LEGO blocks to represent each dollar donated to the project.

"It's to show the progress of the middle years building the school through World Vision," says Olson. "It's made of 1,500 pieces. Each brick is worth 10 dollars and every time we raise \$1,500, we add a section to it."

The numbers, when added up, are staggering. "It's understated," says principal Charach, "but the students raised \$50,000 last year for different projects.

"I tell my students that we are blessed in Canada," Charach continues. "God has blessed us so we can bless others, and we are called to be stewards of what we have been given."

Judging by the way they are embracing these outreach projects, the students appear to be catching on. The school has provided a missional perspective that can make a Grade 8 student sound like a life-long motivational speaker.

"Our job is trying to create a better world," says Olson. "We are trying to encourage the entire middle years to join with us, because kids can make a difference."

With every dollar raised, with every prayer prayed, the students at Linden Christian are making a difference. It's changing them into the next generation of leaders, and it's changing communities around the world.

Cam Stephens sees the growth happening each day. "The students are saying, 'I'm able to bring what God has given me—the little I have in my hands—and apply it to something much greater. Then we can see what God does with it.'"



Guatemala Missions Team 2011

courtesy Linden Christian School



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