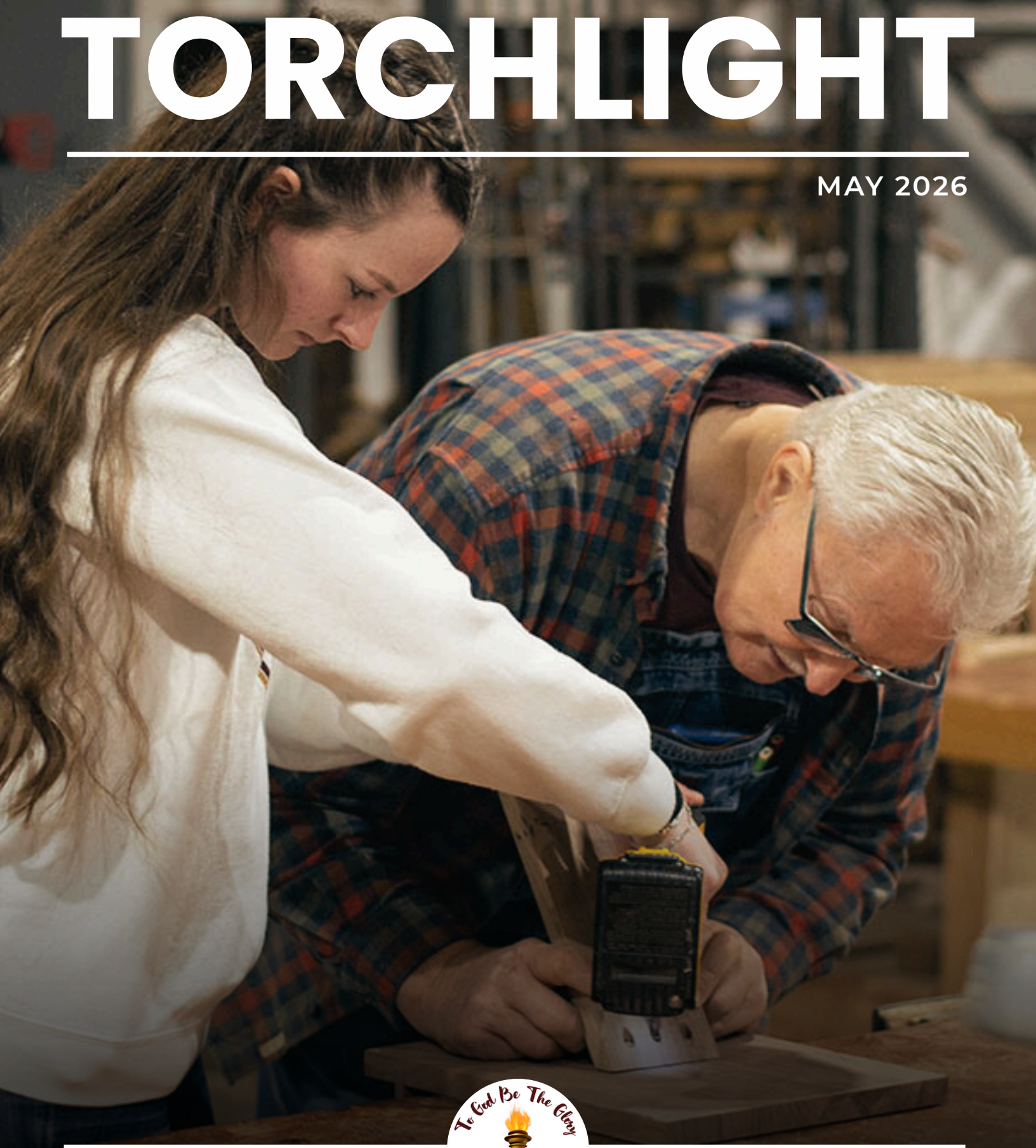


TORCHLIGHT

MAY 2026



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OUR MISSION:

Providing students with a Christ-centered, Bible-based education in which the quality of teaching reflects a commitment to Christ.

FROM OUR ADMINISTRATOR:

Dear Sunnyside Christian School Families and Friends,

A Great Day to all of you; I hope you are just fantastic (an introduction the coaches have used for years at Champ Camp). Thank you for your continued and tremendous support of Christian education and the Christian community at Sunnyside Christian School.

As I write this Torchlight article, we have just come through a meaningful season where followers of Jesus Christ prepared their hearts to reverently honor the sacrificial death of our Lord and Savior on Good Friday, and then joyfully celebrated His resurrection and victory over death on Easter morning. This incredible fulfillment of God's many promises in the Old Testament reminds us not only to be thankful, but to truly celebrate the goodness and faithfulness of our Triune God. I would like to take a moment to highlight some of these celebrations taking place at Sunnyside Christian School.

We celebrate the opportunity for chapel assemblies—local pastors faithfully sharing Biblical messages and proclaiming God's Word; video chapels exploring themes such as the Good News, the universe declaring the glory of God, and the Biblical call to “tame our tongues”; and community members demonstrating how God is working through them to bring Biblical principles into the marketplace.

We celebrate a community of parents and students who, though not perfect and not claiming to be, are united in proclaiming the Good News of salvation, pursuing Christ-like transformation, renewing our minds, and striving for obedient living as we live and work in God's world.

We celebrate God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness—truths that are essential in a world marked by sin and brokenness. We also celebrate the gifts and talents of the staff and students at SCS. Through the many activities and events throughout the year, our community comes together to create an environment where young people are taught Biblical principles and priorities—shaping both their earthly lives and their eternal perspective.

We have much to celebrate, all because our Lord rules and reigns forever. May the Lord bless you and keep you in His care.



In Christ Jesus,
Mr. Wagenaar

EXPERIENCING THE HEART OF JESUS



Our 4th grade and 1st grade classes teamed up for a special service project of painting rocks with encouraging messages to spread along the Sunnyside pathway.

As we began the new year in January and February, our students focused on Experiencing the Forgiveness of Jesus, guided by Colossians 1:13–14: *“He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”*

During this time, students reflected on the incredible gift of redemption and the grace Jesus freely offers. Through chapel messages, classroom conversations, and daily interactions, they were reminded that the forgiveness we receive through Christ is something we are also called to extend to others.

In March and April, we continue focusing on Experiencing the Prayer of Jesus, using Ephesians 6:18 as our guide: *“Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”*

Students are being encouraged to grow in their personal prayer lives and to see prayer as an ongoing conversation with God.

Looking ahead to May and June, we will close the year by focusing on Experiencing the Hope of Jesus, reflecting on Romans 15:13:

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

It is our prayer that students finish the year encouraged, confident in God’s promises, and ready to share the hope of Jesus with those around them.

KNIGHTS HIGHLIGHTS



1

Our football and cheer team put on an exciting Homecoming Pep Rally.



4

Three seniors worked together to restore a century-old Carmichael Ice Cream wagon as a part of a community service project.



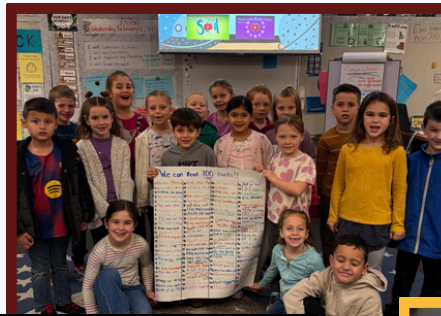
2

Kindergartners helping count boxes at our cereal drive. We collected over 300 boxes for our local food banks!



3

Mrs. Dalrymple's 4th grade class performed an egg drop challenge!



6

1st graders read 100 books in 3 days!

5

8th graders spent time making games to celebrate Blue Friday.



High school students competed in the "Math Is Cool" competition at CBC

7



8

The high school student council hosted a talent show complete with a teacher rock band, freshman dance-off, sophomore play, junior obstacle course, and a senior song with interpretive dance.



9

Some 4th and 1st graders spreading rocks along the Sunnyside Pathway.



10

PreK-4th Grade Christmas Program



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Since launching the Forward Together building campaign in March 2025, our committees have been busy working on the goal of consolidating the SCS learning community onto one campus at our current high school location. Beyond the buildings, this campaign includes providing a safer learning environment for our children, flexible spaces for differentiated learning, community areas for multi-grade interactions, and opportunities for additional programming. This campaign also greatly increases the number of families we can serve.

While we continue to make adjustments to the design and layout of our new buildings, we have moved forward with permitting for the construction process. A traffic study concluded we need to make no changes to Sheller Rd. Our next step is soil testing in and around the prospective construction zones.

We are so grateful for God's provision in a local family's \$1,000,000 matching gift, which was met by the end of 2025. This has given a significant boost toward our fundraising goal, but much more is needed. The fundraising team is seeking grant funding, and all ideas and assistance are welcome!

While we wait for final cost estimates and designs, we continue to meet with those who are interested in donating time, money, and services. If you haven't already, please prayerfully consider how you, your family, and your friends can be involved in this project.

Together, we are building not just for today, but for generations to come—developing leaders who will impact the world for Christ. Like the generations before us who had the vision to start and grow SCS over the last 75 years, we believe God is leading us to continue this vision for the next 75 years. “Providing a Christ-centered, Bible-based quality education for distinctly Christian living” is our school's mission.

We are thankful that several committees working within the campaign have led efforts in prayer, fundraising, and design. The Sunnyside Christian community is resilient, resourceful, and ready for our new campus!





BUILDING MORE THAN PROJECTS

Mr. Werkhoven interview conducted by Kendall Riel | Written collaboratively by Sunnyside Christian shop students

How hands-on learning shapes students at Sunnyside Christian

For many students at Sunnyside Christian School, the shop classroom is far more than just another period in the day—it’s a place where learning becomes real, skills take shape, and confidence is built one project at a time.

Under the guidance of shop teacher Leroy Werkhoven, students are discovering the value of working with their hands while developing skills that extend far beyond woodworking or metalwork. What happens in the shop is not just about building projects—it’s about building people.

A Foundation Built on Inspiration

Mr. Werkhoven’s journey into teaching began with a simple but powerful influence: his own high school shop teacher. “My high school shop teacher was the absolute best,” he recalls. “He inspired me throughout my life.”

That early inspiration, combined with a lifetime of hands-on experience, shaped his approach to teaching. Growing up on a farm, working with his hands wasn’t just a skill—it was a way of life.

“Anything that got done using your hands—that was my life,” he explains. That mindset continued into his time in the military, where he served as an inventory officer working with weaponry—an environment that required both technical skill and thoughtful precision.

Today, those experiences come together in a classroom where craftsmanship, discipline, and creativity intersect.

Learning by Doing

For students, the shop offers something refreshingly different from a traditional classroom.

Darrin Vander Meulen appreciates the change of pace: “We’re not in a classroom all day learning from books. We actually get to build things and learn by doing.”

Senior Jack Bosma gives a similar sentiment towards shop class. “It gives me the opportunity to work with my hands and learn new skills. Shop is a great change of pace from our other classes in school.”

This hands-on approach allows students to turn ideas into reality—and builds confidence along the way.

“When I first joined shop, I was scared to use the power tools,” says Adrian Islas. “But now I’m confident using any tool in the shop.”

That transformation, from uncertainty to confidence, is a common thread. Students are given the opportunity to try, adjust, and succeed, gaining independence as they go.

Carson Van de Graaf notes that the class gives students the freedom to take ownership of their work, building and repairing projects while developing practical, lifelong skills.

The Power of a Plan

At the core of Mr. Werkhoven’s teaching is one central idea: planning.

“I hope that when students leave here, they know that with a plan they can accomplish anything,” he says. “No matter what you do, you have to have a plan. Then you figure out the procedure. If they leave my class with that, I believe I’ve taught them everything.” That mindset has made a lasting impact on students.

Kendall Riel, currently working on a dresser, explains: “Mr. Werkhoven has helped me understand how to make a step-by-step plan that helps me reach my end goal. Even though my project is taking a long time, having that plan has helped me continue toward a finished dresser.”



Creativity, Skill, and Opportunity

The shop is also a place where creativity thrives. “I am able to make pretty much anything I want that is wood or metal related,” Kendall shares. “Mr. Werkhoven has helped me understand how the machines work and how to create a plan to reach my goal.”

Students gain experience with equipment they likely wouldn’t encounter elsewhere. “I used a CNC machine to make a sign for my room and a lathe to make a bowl,” Kendall continues. “These are machines I never would have had the opportunity to use on my own.”

For Ellie Roskamp, the class has become a favorite part of her day. Since her sophomore year, she has created nightstands, a bench, a charcuterie board, and even a wagon—projects she hopes will last for generations.

Senior Hannah Clapp has experienced similar growth over the years. After three years in the program, she now helps mentor younger students.

“Our school is beyond blessed to have the facility we do,” Hannah shares. “We are filled with gratitude for the donors who have made this possible.”

Moments That Matter

For Mr. Werkhoven, the most meaningful moments happen every day. “Every day when students walk in, it reminds me why I got into teaching,” he says. “Students are curious, and all I have to do is fill that curiosity and give them guidance.”

Those moments often lead to something powerful. “What I enjoy most is seeing the delight when the end product shows up,” he explains. “They are astounded that they can do this.”

A Legacy of Craftsmanship

Over the years, students have created an impressive variety of projects, many displayed in the school’s “hall of fame.”

From bowls and charcuterie boards to benches, tables, and detailed custom builds, each piece reflects effort, creativity, and growth.

“We’ve been blessed with an abundance of wood and materials from many people in the community,” Mr. Werkhoven says. “To name one favorite project would be inappropriate given them all.”

Faith in the Process

Faith is woven deeply into Mr. Werkhoven’s teaching. “I’ve been a Christian since I was very young,” he shares. “It’s part of who I am—this is what I believe, this is what I do.”



That faith shapes the way he views both his work and his students. “Wood is a structure; we have faith that it is sound,” he explains. “In the same way, we build relationships and trust.”

In the shop, faith is lived out through patience, perseverance, and purpose.

Preparing Students for the Future

In today’s world, Mr. Werkhoven believes these skills are more important than ever. “The tradesman is an absolute need,” he says. “People with the ability and knowledge to work with their hands are necessary.”

He encourages students to consider all pathways. “For so long, four-year degrees were seen as the key, but two-year degrees and trade certifications are just as needed. The opportunities are wide open.”

A Lasting Impact

Looking back, what matters most is clear. “Getting to know young people and helping them become the best they can be,” Mr. Werkhoven says.

Teaching at Sunnyside Christian has also given him something deeply meaningful.

“It’s given me purpose well past retirement. It gives me a reason to get up every morning—and it’s been a delight to work here.”

Building What Comes Next

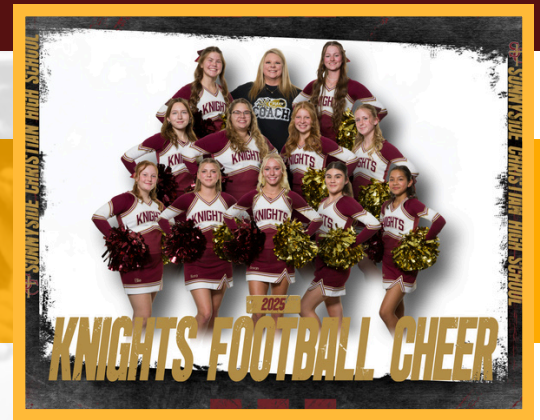
At Sunnyside Christian, the shop is more than a classroom—it’s a place where students discover what they’re capable of.

They learn to plan, to create, to problem-solve, and to persevere. Because in the end, they’re not just building projects.

They’re building skills, character, and a foundation for whatever comes next.

We would like to recognize Wayne Sylling and Roger Schrottenboer, who faithfully served as shop teachers and maintenance (Roger) at Sunnyside Christian for many years, leaving a lasting mark on both the program and the school in general. In their memory, gifts have been directed toward tools and equipment for the Vo-Ag shop—continuing to support hands-on learning for the next generation. We are grateful for the time, skill, and care they invested in this community.

KNIGHTS FALL ATHLETICS



The Sunnyside Christian football team finished 3rd in the Grape Division this season and competed in a crossover game in Waitsburg to close out league play. The Knights also battled in a state-qualifying game, coming up just short in a hard-fought contest. The team showed determination and growth throughout the season.



Sunnyside Christian volleyball had a strong season, finishing 2nd in the Grape Division in league play. The team competed hard throughout the year and continued to build on the program's tradition of strong play and teamwork.



Junior James Perez placed 2nd in Districts wrestling for Sunnyside High School. He was one match away from placing at state. Congratulations to James for your hard work this season!



KNIGHTS WINTER ATHLETICS



The boys basketball team earned a state tournament allocation and advanced to Spokane to compete at the state level. The Knights fought hard but were eliminated in the first round, concluding a season marked by strong effort and competitive play.



The girls basketball team competed well throughout the season and qualified for the league tournament. Although their run ended there, the team showed perseverance and continued development as they represented Sunnyside Christian.



A LEGACY OF STORIES

REFLECTING ON 38 YEARS WITH MR. D

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED/ARTICLE WRITTEN BY
SCS ALUMNI

An interview with Mr. D would not be complete without a plethora of personal stories, various accents, talking IB, and inside jokes. All that was missing was an extra large drink of “the nectar of the gods” (aka a Diet Coke).

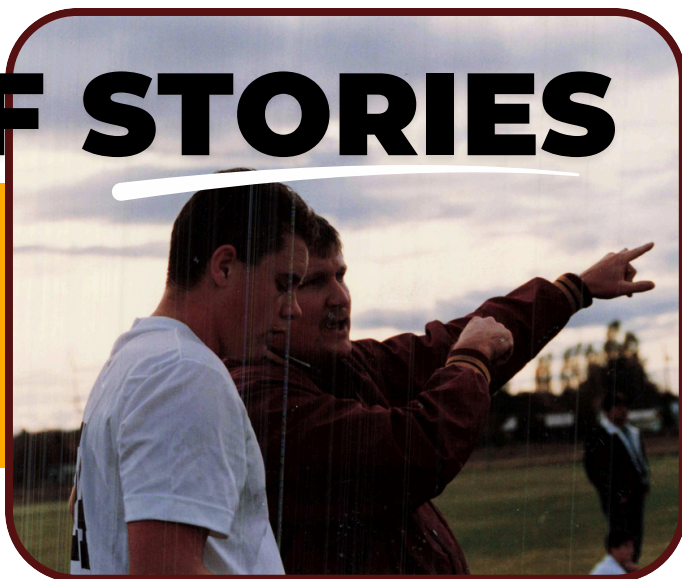
After 38 years at Sunnyside Christian School—and 40 years in the classroom overall—Mr. D leaves behind a legacy of storytelling, laughter, and deep relationships with students. We sat down with him to reflect on his years at SCS and what made them so meaningful.

When asked what first brought him to Sunnyside Christian School, Mr. D shared:

“I had taught for 2 years in Louisiana. The kids and parents made it an amazing school, but it was poorly run. So, we moved to Florida and I said, ‘I’ll never teach again.’ I was convinced of that. My dad was serving in the Christian Reformed church here in Sunnyside and suggested I put my name in for the sixth grade teacher position. I got the job, and Julie and I made a very interesting mistake. We thought we would tell God something. And we told him we’re going to be in Sunnyside for two years. I don’t know if you’ve ever heard God laugh, but He had to have thought... You idiot. When I finally retired, it was 38 years at Sunnyside Christian School. 40 years of teaching in total, including the two years in Louisiana.”

When asked what kept him here for so many years, his answer was simple:

“I think the biggest thing was kids. There’s just something about teaching, especially in the middle school. When you get in sixth grade, they’re still young enough to enjoy some kind of goofy stuff. But they’re old enough that you can talk with them not at them. Other teachers avoid 6th grade like the plague. I couldn’t do kindergarten. It’s like herding cats. I got to get to know kids not only in school, but on the bus. That was a really cool thing too. I drove bus for 27 years.”



Growing up as a pastor’s son also shaped how he viewed teaching.

“My dad being a pastor and modeled not being afraid to get up in front of people. When you get into a classroom and you have a gift to be able to communicate with some really precious kids, that’s almost like a drug. I so looked forward to coming every day to school. My dad always told me, ‘if you find a job you love, you’ll never work a day in your life.’ Then when I got to a really good school, like ours, and was able to take what I learned from Louisiana, and I started connecting with people, it was really special.”

“I think the biggest thing was kids. There’s just something about teaching, especially in the middle school. When you get in sixth grade, they’re still young enough to enjoy some kind of goofy stuff. But they’re old enough that you can talk with them not at them.”

Looking back at his early years at SCS, Mr. D remembers strong leadership and a tight-knit school community.

“I thought it was run really well. We’ve always had really good administrators that listen, and they have an open door policy. That’s what I noticed right away, that there was pretty much a blueprint. This is how we do things... What do you guys think?”

That really tells you something about an administrator because they're looking out for their teachers. And that's really important. And all of my administrators did that.

When we came here, the first graduating class was like five students. They were the closest, neatest, godly students. That place was spit and polished."

When asked what he misses most about teaching, his answer came quickly.

"First thing, kids. I do... I always said 'there's a time to work and a time to play, but when we play, we better have fun.'"

And what does he hope students remember from their time in his classroom?

"Stories. Hands down, the stories. When you get a connection with kids and you're honest, you become vulnerable."

"That God is the center of everything... That we can continue to build relationships with kids... That kids can come to school and have fun... I hope our school never loses its grip on true Christian education... That our students would ooze with Christianity."

Looking back on his years at Sunnyside Christian School, Mr. D summed it up simply:

"It was the best thing that ever happened to us. It took 38 years, but it's the best thing to happen to us. I got to meet teachers that are still my friends today and have gotten the joy to watch my students grow up."

His prayer for the future of the school reflects the same heart that guided his years in the classroom:

"That God is the center of everything... That we can continue to build relationships with kids... That kids can come to school and have fun... I hope our school never loses its grip on true Christian education... That our students would ooze with Christianity."

When asked if he would do it all again, his response was immediate:

"What, teach? Oh, yeah."

For generations of Sunnyside Christian students, Mr. D was more than a teacher—he was a storyteller, a mentor, a bus driver, a coach, and a steady presence in their lives. His classroom was filled with laughter, lessons, and a deep commitment to Christ-centered education. While his time in the classroom has come to an end, the stories he told, the relationships he built, and the faith he modeled will continue to echo through the halls of Sunnyside Christian School for years to come.

MEMORIALS

We are deeply grateful for the memorial gifts received throughout 2025 in honor of loved ones who have left a lasting legacy in our community. These generous contributions—given in memory of Stephanie Cain (90), Roy Cummins, Betty Grenz, Rita Parker, Mary Koopmans, Wilma De Jong, Wayne Sylling, Roger Schrotenboer ('68), Marie Duim ('49), Garrit Oord ('52), and Dolores Durbin—have been a meaningful blessing to Sunnyside Christian School.

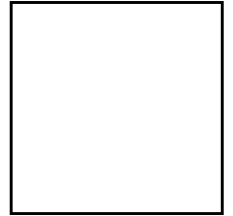
The majority of these gifts were directed toward Tuition Aid, helping make Christian education accessible to more families. A special designation was made in memory of Wayne Sylling, whose gifts were directed toward machines and tools for the Vo-Ag Shop, equipping students with hands-on learning opportunities for years to come.

We also give thanks for a memorial gift that continues to make a visible impact within our school. Through funds given in memory of Pete & Wilma Vis, SCHS was able to purchase two brand new band instruments—an euphonium and a French horn. Mrs. Nicky De Boer, our high school band teacher, along with her students, are incredibly thankful for these additions. The opportunity to enhance our music program in this way is both a blessing and a meaningful tribute to the Vis family's legacy.

We are humbled by the generosity of those who choose to honor loved ones through giving. These gifts not only remember lives well-lived but also invest in the lives and futures of our students.



Sunnyside Christian School
1820 Sheller Road
Sunnyside, WA 98944



KEEP UP WITH SCS

If you want to keep up with SCS news, dates, events, themes, lunch menus, etc. you can find all our information through the following resources:

Website: www.sunnysidechristianschool.org

Download Our App: In the app store - **Sunnyside Christian School**

Weekly Newsletter: email sheryl.duim@sunnysidechristianschool.org

Torchlight: email torchlight@sunnysidechristianschool.org

Facebook: **Sunnyside Christian School, SCS Foundation, SCS Auction, SCS Thrift Store.**

Current parents can follow **Parents of SCS.**

Instagram: [sunnysidechristianschool](#), [knights_athletics_](#),
[sch.student.council](#), [sunnysidechristian.ffa](#)

PTF: call or text: **509-643-8825**

email: ptf@sunnysidechristianschool.com

DATES OF INTEREST:

MAY 25 - MEMORIAL DAY- NO SCHOOL

MAY 28 - K-8 CHAPEL (8TH GRADE RECOGNITION)

MAY 28 - 5TH - 12TH BAND & CHOIR CONCERT

JUNE 4 - LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

JUNE 5 - HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

JUNE 6 - 32ND ANNUAL SCS FOUNDATION GOLF TOURNAMENT