



VALOR

Avail Academy Newsletter

Voice

Winter 2022



WHAT WE BELIEVE

Mission: Avail Academy provides quality education that is fully integrated with a biblical knowledge of God and his world, supporting Christian parents and the church in nurturing children as disciples of Christ.

Vision: Avail Academy will thrive as a provider of distinctively Christian elementary and secondary education and will lead the larger community to adopt Christian education as a priority.

Values: Cultural Connectedness, Thoughtful Discipleship, Nurturing Community, Transforming Education, Opening Opportunities

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Greetings from Avail Academy! In-person education is in full swing at all Avail campuses and our team is active in providing instruction in every classroom that is focused on equipping and preparing our students to discover that they have been created by God for an exciting purpose and have been called to live for Christ in His world.

Recent statistics from the U.S. Department of Education have indicated that more than 1.5 million students have left traditional public schools since the start of the pandemic. The pandemic, increased parental concern about traditional public school education, and pervasive on-line learning gaps, have led parents to seek something different. In the process of evaluating choices, parents are discovering what their children are being taught in the classroom on topics of sexual identity, various forms of anti-Americanism, and Critical Race Theory.

Similar to the growth in enrollment that we have seen at Avail, other Christian schools in the metro area are also seeing an increase. What an incredible opportunity for Christian educators everywhere to partner with even more families in teaching students how to live and think as Christians for such a time as this.

We could not do this important work without you. Thank you for the many ways in which you support Avail through the giving of your time, talents and treasures. What an honor it is to serve together in Christ's Kingdom.

Gratefully,

Bethany J. Schuttinga, PhD
President





REMEMBERING ARLAN KOPPENDRAYER

Arlan Willis Koppendrayer, age 63, of Minnetonka, MN was welcomed into the arms of Jesus, his Lord and Savior on December 24th, 2021. Arlan is survived by his loving wife of 36 years, Susan; his daughter Mattie, and sons Nathaniel, and Jacob.

Arlan grew up in Long Siding Minnesota, went to Community Christian School and Pease Christian Reformed Church. He was an ordained minister in the Christian Reformed Church. While in Canada he started Hope Fellowship and was a history teacher at Durham Christian High School. In 2004, he and his family moved from Ontario Canada to start Calvin Christian High School. Arlan Koppendrayer, James Vande Glind, Wendell Schaap, Terri DeVries, and Steve Arenholtz were the inaugural staff and met for one year prior to students to design the curriculum, high school structure and find a location for the new school.

Arlan was the Avail/Calvin Christian School High School chaplain, Bible, and history teacher. He was passionate about the themes of shalom, building intentional Christian communities, the sovereignty of God, and the integration of a Biblical perspective in all aspects of life. He worked with a team of students to design weekly high school chapels and was a frequent speaker at Avail Academy events, Arlan retired from teaching in 2020.

Anyone who knew Arlan Koppendrayer as a friend, a colleague, or a teacher knew that he cared about what matters to God. It wasn't surprising to hear that when he woke up after surgery, he requested to hear 1 John 3:1: "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" It wasn't surprising to hear his response: "We matter! In the gospel, we matter!" That was Arlan's consistent message throughout his fifteen years at Avail.

Arlan served as one of the founding faculty members of Calvin Christian High School (now Avail Academy High School). He began developing curriculum with the founding faculty in the summer of 2004 and served as Bible teacher, Social Studies teacher and Chaplain through the 2018-19 academic year. He was instrumental in developing structures for teaching high school students a biblical view of the world. He was dynamic and direct. It didn't take long for people to know what mattered to Arlan.

Students matter. When guests visited the high school, and teachers were asked to introduce themselves with their name and what they taught, Arlan would say, "I'm Arlan Koppendrayer, and I teach students." Students loved him for his in-class attention-getting antics (including his knack for balancing things on his head during discussions). Arlan wanted his students to know they were loved by God and often began the lecture portion of his lessons by addressing students as "Beloved...". As Chaplain, Arlan developed student-led processes for planning and leading weekly chapels. Their growth, ownership, leadership and discipleship matters to God, so it mattered to Arlan.

Community matters. Arlan was instrumental in creating a student culture in which Christ-like community was essential. He led many on and off-campus retreats to build student relationships and insisted on students working out their differences. Students bought into it. Today at Avail Academy High School, community continues to be a buzzword among students, and they continue to believe that Christ-like community is an essential component of healthy discipleship. Love and right relationships matter to God, so they mattered to Arlan.

The Kingdom matters. Arlan taught students to recognize the influence of secularism and to think Christianly about the world around them. Arlan unashamedly advocated for Christian education. “How can one truly know the creation without a

knowledge of the Creator?” he often asked. Although Arlan was outspoken about the responsibility of the Christian community to design and support Kingdom institutions, he also believed strongly in God’s providence and what he called God’s Kingdom agenda. When some of us worried about the high school’s success, Arlan confidently replied, “If God wants it to work, it will work”.

It was a privilege to have been able to work alongside Arlan in the work God did and continues to do here at Avail. The legacy that Arlan leaves behind is that all of these things matter because they matter to God. That truth was central to the biblical story—the biblical view of the world—that Arlan passionately taught his high school students and spoke often to the Avail community. His words from an early article he wrote about Christian education say it so well.

“Today we teach our students to be agents of shalom because one day shalom will flourish. Today we teach our students to share the good news and to transform culture because one day they will inhabit a city whose builder and maker is God. Today we help our students to have the eyes of faith because one day their faith shall be sight.”

By Mr. Wendel Schaap and Mr. James Vande Glind



HIGH SCHOOL – FRIDLEY CAMPUS

Students are engaged with business in an inquiry based unit. Students at the high school met with 8 experts both on and off campus. In addition to engaging with these experts, students researched and developed their own small business plans. Teams of students then met with several more experts and worked on turning their business plans into presentations for a live ‘Shark Tank’ that wrapped up the study. The ‘Shark tank’ experience included team presentations to acquire loans for their business start up from several of the banking experts as part of the final presentation.

SMALL BUSINESS BASED UNIT:

- Dan Roberts (small business banker) and Mollie Kelderman (Cottage Bakery Owner)
- Steve Veenstra (owner of Twin Cities Tandems) and Melissa Johnston (Small Business Banker)
- Jason Paris (owner of Paris Painting and Partner in Aleph Holdings)
- Mike Olstad (President and owner of Frontier Fire)
- Steve Ling (Real Estate Lawyer and Small Business Owner) and Peter Larson (Sales Force Consultant and small business owner)

HIGH SCHOOL CONTINUED

How can we create beautiful podcasts that help build community?" High school students in this track focused their research on podcasting equipment, the history and development of podcasting, types of podcasts, and learned about quality podcasting tips.

The group also spent time creating a podcasting studio. At the beginning of the IBU planning, the students submitted and received approval to purchase podcasting equipment and remodel part of the office conference room into a podcasting studio.



One of the products of student learning included a guide for how to use the podcasting equipment and tips for how to develop quality podcasts. This will be useful as students use the new podcasting space for Journalism, Student Initiative Projects, etc. Each student developed content for two podcasts that were recorded in the new studio.

– Mr James Vande Glind

Athletics: Spectators are welcome and encouraged to come and cheer on the Valor! Avail Academy students and staff are free. Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for non-Avail students. Home games are live streamed on the Avail Academy Facebook Page.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

NHS Sharing and Caring Drive: NHS partners with local non-profits as part of their commitment to support community efforts. This year NHS is partnering with Sharing and Caring Hands. Sharing and Caring Hands was established to be a bridge from the caring, concerned community to the people in need of their help. The NHS goal is to raise \$200 and fill 6-20 gallon bins of donations.

Environmental Science: Students in the Environmental Science class went out into the local community to help remove Buckthorn. Students lived out their role as earth-keepers by helping to minimize Buckthorn in our forests. Buckthorn is an invasive species that is threatening Minnesota's local forests. The Environmental Science course is a 5 credit college course offered on campus at Avail and taught by our very own Mr. Vande Glind! This course is a yearly student highlight at the high school. Thank you students for helping our community in this way, and thank you Mr. Vande Glind for leading this course!



ELEMENTARY – BLAINE CAMPUS

Science Fair: Congratulations to our 7th-grade students for completing their Science Fair projects! Carsten Bruin, Hannah Kocinski, and Ainsley Mick will have the opportunity to compete in the St. Cloud Regional Science Fair in February.

Christmas Programs: The middle school students joined the high school as choir and band students shared their musical gifts and talents with the Avail community. The focus of the concert celebrated Christ's birth and the final song "Holy Holy Holy (Jesus Reigns)" was a beautiful reminder that we serve a holy God and who reigns yesterday, today, and for eternity to come!



Valor Live: One way that our middle school students get to serve as community-builders is by visiting the High School campus for Valor Live. Our 8th grade class from the Blaine and Edina campuses made a winter trip to the High School to participate in the 2021 Amazing Race and a performance by our high school of The Best Christmas Pageant Ever.

Athletics: Cross Country Wins! Congratulations to the Valor girls for winning the North Suburban Parochial School League championship meet. The top 5 cross country runners- Ainsley Mick, Alethea Rieke, Stella Hagen, Josie Kuipers, and Solveigh Farley - combined for a team score of 32. The Valor boys team, who was led by individual champion Brock Moreton, finished with 61 points.

Congratulations on a successful volleyball season for our 5th and 6th grade B-Squad team. The girls finished the year with a 3rd-place finish in the league tournament.



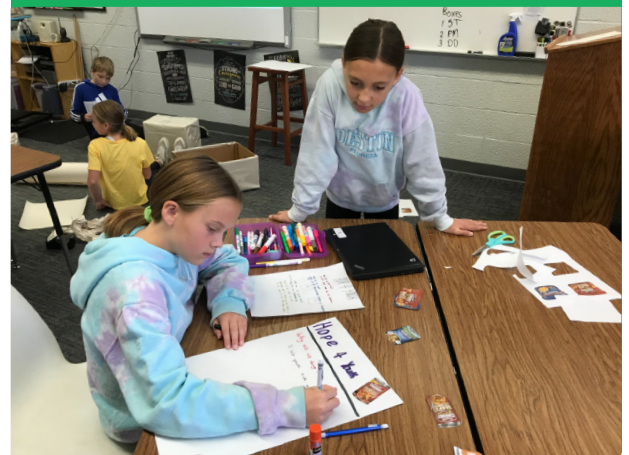
COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

Operation Christmas Child: The 4th grade students participated in Operation Christmas Child. They received a fun thank you video from DJ Andy at KTIS!

5th Grade Highlight: As part of their learning this year, the 5th grade class is supporting a local organization, Hope4Youth, that assists youth in Anoka County who are experiencing homelessness. They presented an opportunity for all Avail students to join them in collecting Chunky and Progresso soup for their food needs as part of their Out of the Cold campaign as winter approaches. They will also be having a 5th grade Out of the Cold event where the class will spend time outside in the evening together to experience life outside in the cold and raise awareness for the challenges of being homeless.

Our deep hope is to join Hope4Youth in ending youth homelessness. Our goals are to: 1) help the kids who are homeless to have hope and a future, 2) raise awareness of the problem with other kids in school, and 3) to follow God's command of Micah 6:8.

– 5th grade class

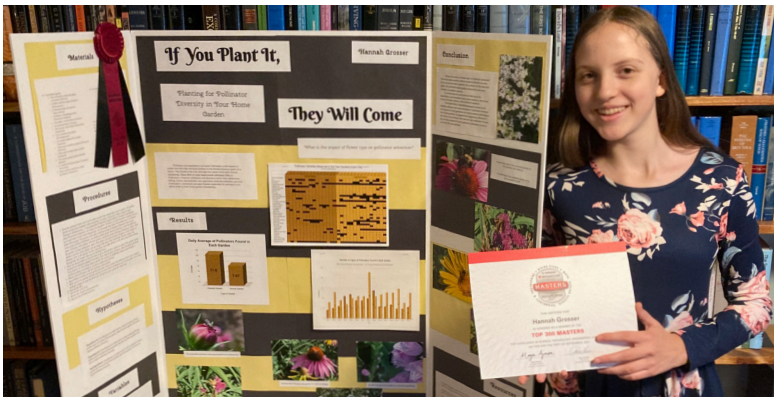


ELEMENTARY – EDINA CAMPUS

Christmas Programs: Grades 1-5 performed the Christmas Musical, Isaiah Jones, and Kindergarten sang several Christmas songs. The Middle School choir and band students presented a beautiful Christmas concert at Calvary Church.



Science Fair: Eighth grade student, Hannah Grosser, received her award for advancing to the Top 300 in the 2021 Broadcom MASTERS® competition, the nation's premier STEM competition for middle school students. Hannah's science fair project that was selected to advance was titled, "If You Plant it, They Will Come: Planting for Pollinator Diversity in Gardens and Small Farms."



Athletics: The Avail 7/8 Volleyball Team (pictured) took home the third place trophy in the SSYO (Minneapolis) and the CC (St. Paul) Twin Cities Championship. The 5/6 Volleyball Team took first place in their division.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

The 8th grade Language Arts class storyline comes from Jeremiah 6:16 *"This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."*

We spend time during devotions talking about what it looks like to follow the path God is creating for us, and the novels we read in 8th Grade all point to real-world ways to do that. In December we read Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, with the theme of seeing and acting for the needs around us just as God sees and acts with compassion for each one of us. We have shoes hanging on our story wall from people that have been examples to us for how to walk the Christian faith, so when we were thinking of ways we could have an impact, shoes seemed a natural connection!

There are several organizations that collect and distribute shoes to those in need, and we chose Souls For Jesus. Its mission is to "share the love of Christ by distributing shoes to the underserved in Sub Saharan Africa."

The 8th Graders created a marketing campaign with a goal to collect 75 pairs of new and gently used shoes. The generosity of the Avail community far exceeded our expectations! In just one week, families gave 132 pairs of shoes that will soon be on their way to the Souls for Jesus headquarters. We are grateful for the opportunity to look beyond our own needs and practice sharing the love that Jesus showers upon us. We are so blessed to be part of a community where we can use the academic curriculum as a path to learn more deeply how to be a servant of the Lord and to step out in faith.

– Mrs. Julie Amen



ALL CAMPUS NEWS

The Valor 5k Challenge took place on Saturday, October 2nd 2021 at Lake Harriet. We had over 700 registrants for the event and it was an amazing morning celebrating Avail Academy! It was a blessing to be able to meet in-person again at the Lake! \$115,937.57 was raised for Christian Education at Avail Academy!

Thank you to each of you for being a part of our Challenge event and for helping us exceed the goal! Thank you to Valor Challenge our event sponsors....Cardigan Donuts, Kowalski's Market, Lunds/Byerlys, Go Condition, Caribou Coffee, Chick-Fil-A, Coldstone Creamery, and MyBurger.

Our 60th Annual Fellowship Dinner was held at the International Market Square on Saturday, November 13th, 2021. Bob Stromberg was our featured entertainment for the evening. It was a wonderful evening of fellowship, laughter and sharing stories of how God is working in the lives of our students and community to live with purpose. A total of \$257,047.63 was raised for Christian education at Avail Academy! Here is a video that we shared with our guests during our dinner:
<https://vimeo.com/647004323>

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Avail Academy continues to develop its network of business partnerships. If your business would like to partner with us as an Avail Accelerator, please contact Heather Wessman at hwessman@availacademy.org. If you make use of one of our business partners' services, thank them for their support of Avail Academy. We value the partnership!

Thank you to our 23 Avail Accelerators who have continued to support Christian education at Avail Academy.

Avail Accelerators

PLATINUM PARTNERS

- Aaron Hall, Attorney
- Anduril Partners
- Bethel University
- Erickson and Wessman, P.A.
- Highland Bank
- Letterman Sports
- The Mission AM 980 KKMS Radio/
The Fish Twin Cities
- PrinsBank
- Salmon Wealth Management
- Veil and Wild Orthodontics

GOLD PARTNERS

- Frontier Fire
- National Christian Foundation
- Tyler Miller Team, EXP Realty
- University of Northwestern

SILVER PARTNERS

- Christensen Group
- Dale Carnegie
- Plantscape, Inc
- RE/Max Advantage Plus-
Clint Kuipers

BRONZE PARTNERS

- Ertech, Inc
- Four Corners Exploration
- Grant-Shannon Staffing
- The Platinum Group
- The Werth Group MN

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Avail Accelerators Business Partnership Coffee is returning this spring!

Date: Thursday, March 31st at 7:30am to 8:30am

Where: Erickson and Wessman Law Firm at Bell Bank Plaza
3088 American Blvd. W Bloomington, MN 55431

RSVP: Please email Heather Wessman at hwessman@availacademy.org if you plan to attend

Cory Wessman from Erickson and Wessman Law Firm will be hosting fellow Avail parent, Matt Norman for a morning together to learn about how Matt has implemented his faith in coaching business men and women across the midwest.

Do you know of someone interested in learning more about Avail Academy? **Schedule a Tour** to see our Blaine, Edina or Fridley campuses in action!

Grandparents Day is scheduled for Friday, May 6th at all of our campuses! Stay tuned for more information.

Would you like to be added to our Avail Academy email updates? Sign up **HERE** or go to our website: www.availacademy.org.



Matt Norman
is President &
CEO of Norman
& Associates,



which offers Dale Carnegie programs in Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, and South

Dakota. Dale Carnegie provides its tools and courses through a global network, helping to improve the way people think and work together. Norman & Associates also offers practical talent strategy in the areas of hiring, onboarding, strategic planning, and goal alignment.

Matt's coaching and facilitation has helped Fortune 100 corporations, non-profits and entrepreneurial firms to transform the way they engage employees and clients. He has trained sales leaders across the world on coaching and developing their salespeople, coached physicians and clinical staff on leadership and teaming skills, enhanced the marketing and business development skills of attorneys, engineers and commercial bankers, and helped shared services teams to create more value through their partnerships with the business.

Matt has been named to the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal 40 Under Forty list and the Minnesota Business (Real) Power 50. And he has led Dale Carnegie to double its revenue in the North Central US over the past five years.



**Avail
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Christian Education on Purpose

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