

Parent Newsletter

Volume 2 | Issue 2 | 10.17.18

EACH month our administrative team wants to give you information relevant to your child's experience at Wheaton Academy as well as to talk about key issues that we face as we seek to partner in helping students know Jesus better, develop a biblical worldview, discover their gifts and prepare for God's call on their life.

This month we want to talk about these topics:

- Homecoming Reflection
- Senior Service Day
- Freshman Learn About Science and Art in Chicago
- Student/Teacher Conferences
- Parent Resource

We are thankful for our community at Wheaton Academy; we have a wonderful group of students and families. In the year ahead, having the opportunity to work with you and your child is truly a privilege.

The mission of Wheaton Academy is to nurture growth in students through relationships, excellence and service to the glory of God

Homecoming Reflection

Many say that Homecoming at Wheaton Academy is "the most wonderful week of the year," and I would have to agree. The week is full of activities and opportunities for students, parents and alumni. The purpose of the week is to build our community and to give our students the vision that we can have fun in a way that brings great honor and glory to God. Some of the highlights of the week this year were

- an old-fashioned field day.
- over 400 students coming together at Sonny Acres to pack over 1000 bags for students in the Puente del Pueblo ministry.
- the amazing creativity of the students as they dressed up as space travelers and nerds; then on Wednesday, all of time was represented in "Era" day.
- our LAUNCH event where students came together and raised \$1559 for the 20 orphans we sponsor with Kids' Alive.
- the first ever Thursday Night Football event, complete with a great win and a horse that was just a part of the amazing pre-game festivities.
- the Friday night orchestra and choir students playing and singing--side by side with alumni, some who were back for their 50-year reunion.

I could go on and on, but I am so thankful for our community at Wheaton Academy. The enthusiasm and participation of our students is atypical for high schools and reminds me of my intense gratitude for the students and faculty at Wheaton Academy.

Senior Service Day

Last week while our freshmen, sophomores, and juniors took the PSAT, our seniors had the opportunity to spend the day in service to our community. Since we are trying to prepare students for life after they leave Wheaton Academy, this day is designed strategically for them to have ownership and choice over where they will serve. We want our students to feel led and compelled to serve not just while they are in high school, but also in their churches and communities for the rest of their lives. One student reflected, "I greatly appreciated the school's willingness to let us pick a service activity. This allowed us to serve in a location that matched our passion. It also encouraged us to learn how to set up a project in the local community."

This year students served in a variety of locations. Over 50 students and faculty chose to go to Feed My Starving Children in Aurora, and another large group went to Wyncscape Health and Rehabilitation. Other students served at our local PADS for the early morning 6:00 a.m. shift, played music for residents at the DuPage Care Center, and tutored for Puente del Pueblo. Yet another group of students helped their local churches or former schools, supporting these institutions that have special significance for them. One of the outcomes of the day was that our students continued to build the college readiness trait of gratitude. One student remarked, "After serving, I found myself to be very grateful for the opportunities that I currently have." We are thankful for the leadership of our senior class in setting a tone for serving others.

Wheaton Academy is seeking to expand innovatively into cross-curricular activities.

Freshman Learn About Science and Art in Chicago

On Friday, October 12, the freshman class embarked on a field trip that had been weeks in the making. Wheaton Academy is seeking to expand innovatively into cross-curricular activities, and the freshman class benefitted from the work of English teacher Brigitta Engebretsen and physics teacher Katelyn Johnson, who capitalized on an opportunity to show students that the skills learned in English intertwine at times with the science of physics. In English class throughout the month of October, Ms. Engebretsen had her students envision and create characters that could be deployed into a larger story. Students spent time in class thinking through character traits—both appearance and personality—that would come to life in the form of a story. Then, on Friday the 12th, the entire freshman class ventured to the Museum of Science and Industry to peruse the Pixar animation exhibit, where students learned the way that stories and characters, which started as sketches on a napkin, are transformed into the films that captivate millions. Students were in awe of the laborious process, learning that rigging requires every pixel to be placed exactly and rendering even a single image can take 30+ hours. Many students spent hours in the exhibit, and some were even inspired to pursue animation and filmmaking as a career. Upon returning to Wheaton Academy, now students will take the characters created in English across the hallway to physics class where they will have the opportunity to bring their character to life. While English and physics may seem worlds apart, they are often seamlessly intertwined in the professional world. The freshman students glimpsed one of countless arenas in which the two disciplines interact: one of the most influential film studios currently impacting our culture.

Student/Teacher Conferences

At Wheaton Academy, our learning philosophy is grounded in the importance of focusing on our students' progression toward mastery of the learning standards coupled with developing our six college readiness traits—perseverance, social intelligence, self-control, gratitude, passion and hope. As you consider the opportunity we will have on October 24 and 25 to bring students, parents and teachers together at conferences to discuss student learning and development, here are a couple of important reminders:

- Students are the most important part of the learning process, so having them at the conference is critical; in many cases, they will be the leaders of the discussion.
- While grades are indicators of progress, they should not be the focus of these conferences. Rather, focus on the learning standards and habits that students are demonstrating will allow us to emphasize the learning process which—when effectively implemented—usually solves any problems with grades that might exist.
- Sign-ups are available on-line this week. To schedule conferences, follow these steps:

1. Click on the Conference button under the “What’s Happening?” tab on Wheaton Academy’s website and read through the instructions at the top of the page.
 2. Click on Register for Multiple Conferences and follow the step-by-step online instructions to create a schedule for each student based on the available time slots for the teachers you selected.
 - a) Enter the number of students you will be registering, and press **Continue**.
 - b) Enter the name(s) of your student(s).
 - c) If your student is unable to participate in conferences, please make note of this point in the COMMENTS section so the teacher can plan accordingly.
 - d) Select **Continue**.
 - e) Select all the teachers you would like to meet with and select **Find Schedules with Common Dates**.
 - f) Select which day you would like to schedule conferences.
 - g) Select the times for each teacher.
 - h) Do the same for the 2nd day if needed.
- If a teacher does not have availability at a time when you are also available, or the conference spots are full, please email the teacher to set up a time for you and your student to connect with that teacher.

This opportunity for our faculty and students to spend time with you as parents is designed to celebrate the progress in classes, as well as to set challenging goals for the future to allow students to achieve their potential. We are grateful for your partnership with us as we seek to help students grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ, develop a Biblical worldview, discover their gifts and equip them for their future study and vocation.

Parent Resource

Axis “Our mission is to empower the next generation to think clearly and critically about what they believe to take ownership of their faith...”

I had the privilege of attending a conference with leaders of many other Christian schools through the CESA (Council for Educational Standards and Accountability) organization. Because of this rich time of learning, I want to share with you a resource that was introduced during one of my sessions. AXIS is a Christian organization whose mission is “...to empower the next generation to think clearly and critically about what they believe and to take ownership of their faith. We do this *not* by outsourcing parents, but by resourcing them to disciple and transfer legacy to their children as they face life’s questions and challenges. We also support faith leaders in churches and schools by providing content and facilitators who effectively introduce and address life’s toughest topics.” As you can see, their goal is to work with parents and educators to help them understand the culture in which our students are living and provide resources, grounded in Biblical truth, to help students interact with and respond to that culture. Their website has many resources, quite a few of which are free. These tools can be helpful as we seek to engage our students with tough topics like social media, television shows and video games our students are watching and playing, pornography, mental health and suicide prevention, sexuality, vaping, and substance abuse. While [AXIS.org](https://www.axis.org) certainly is not the only source of this type of information, I was encouraged that [AXIS.org](https://www.axis.org) offers resources that have been created and developed by like-minded believers in Jesus Christ who are driven to help our students know Him better and live from a Biblical worldview.