

# Press On!

# FAMILY & FRIENDS

A PUBLICATION OF VALLEY LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL

**The VLHS Class of 2021 selected the theme of “Press On” with an accompanying verse from 2 Corinthians 4:8-10.**

What a fitting theme for this school year! It offers encouragement as we navigate the challenges while continuing to meet the needs of our students and preparing them as servant leaders for the future. “Press On” also provides an encouragement as we are all called to be servant leaders, sharing grace and truth.

*You'll find the theme of "service" woven throughout this edition of Family and Friends.*

Valley students are particularly grateful for the new - and larger - spaces this year. The new academic, arts, and athletic spaces from the successful conclusion of the GROWING Campaign, have enabled us to spread out more this year.

**Read more about the exciting completion of the GROWING Campaign on pg. 10.**

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**Julian Petzold**  
Executive Director

# A Special Message from the Executive Director

*I have experienced a wide range of emotions while enjoying the opportunity to serve as Executive Director. These emotions have almost all been positive emotions as I have opportunity to regularly recall my time as a student at Valley Lutheran. Wait a minute? Why aren't all my emotions positive? Let me explain.*

## I Remember...

I got out my old Valley Lutheran yearbooks the other day, and I experienced extremely positive emotions seeing pictures of friends, faculty, staff, and events that helped shape me during my youth. Those positive emotions were expressed in some smiles, laughter, and chuckles about the great fun found in meaningful relationships. Yes, I was alone when looking at the yearbooks, but even by myself, my emotions got the best of me and caused me to happily go back in time.

I enjoyed seeing Mr. Schlensker because he is the one who lied to me. Imagine that...a teacher flat-out lied to a student. He told me I could run cross-country to get in shape for basketball. I told him I would not actually join the team, and he said, "Come to practice every day, and you'll be ready for basketball." I did just that, but on the day of the first cross-country meet, he threw a team uniform at me. He claimed he never said I wouldn't keep practicing for basketball during each cross country meet. OK, maybe it wasn't a lie, but I certainly had no intention of doing that. Four years later, I qualified for the state meet. I still laugh at how he lied to me. Actually, he didn't. I just wasn't very perceptive. (Smile and chuckle)

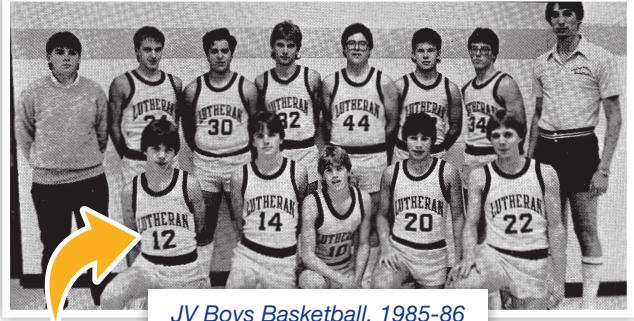
I enjoyed seeing pictures of me with Dr. Brandt as my JV Basketball coach – in the "Carpetdome." We were pretty good, and I remember he seemed to hate losing about as much as I did. I didn't care to see the picture of all of us in our really short shorts and knee-high socks. Horrible looking things, but even the coaches wore them. ('86 pg. 46) (out loud laughter)

The memories of other staff brought out the emotion of happiness due to my appreciation for their dedication to my success as a student.

Teachers always seemed interested in my personal development and invested in my academic success. They also cared about my spiritual development. I remember some great conversations around faith in science, math, literature, social studies, and art just as readily as in religion classes. In fact, recently Mrs. Lemanski (Guidance Counselor) stopped by the office for a visit, and I recognized her voice before I ever saw her. (Smile of appreciation)

I look at pictures of other Valley Lutheran students, and I recall so many fond memories as we "did life" together each day. I miss all the fun, goofy times filled with carefree silliness with others. I see pictures in the yearbook of old friends, and I can not help but associate many of them with at least one memory of time together. (some smiles, some out loud laughter – don't judge)

Although not in any yearbook, a memory I get to relive by being here every day is the table in study hall where I sat my sophomore year. It is seriously memorable. I sat there with one other person. I had no idea, of course, that I was sitting with my future wife and best friend. Jenny Zwerk and I sat together that year and began a friendship that has never stopped. In fact, this year we celebrated our 27th wedding anniversary! (Smile of thankfulness to God)



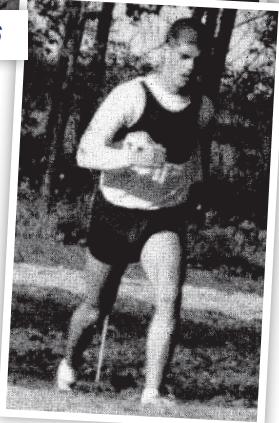
JV Boys Basketball, 1985-86



Varsity Boys Basketball, 1988-89



Cross Country Team , 1985-86



Now, let's go back to a less than positive emotion when looking at the yearbooks. I saw the picture of Mr. Busacker. I had him for three years of math, and he was an excellent teacher. One day, however, I was not an excellent student for him. I had a very important "conversation" I just had to happen with my friend, Kevin. After a few (OK it was actually a lot) of "looks" from Mr. Busacker, I did not stop talking. He finally stopped class, looked my way, and very politely said, "Mr. Petzold, you can be replaced with an empty space." In retrospect, I should have been replaced with an empty space. I deserved it, but he was very gracious to me. I still feel bad about that event. (Smile in appreciation to a gracious teacher)

Some of my most somber emotions from looking through the yearbooks came from seeing pictures of Matt Smith and Kahl Rodammer. I will never forget the day I came to school to learn that they were in heaven. I also remember being in Art class the day the space shuttle Challenger exploded in 1986 just after take off. Those memories bring raw emotions that still bring a real solemnness to my very being.

I remember these things and many more as I page through these yearbooks. Of course, there are many memories that didn't make it into the yearbooks those four years...and there have been many yearbooks before my four years and many afterward! I remember many things from being here at Valley, and I know many of you reading this now can conjure up many memories... and the emotions attached to them...if you were blessed enough to attend Valley Lutheran as well.

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## I Forgot...

**Since attending school here, I've forgotten many things as well. Here are just a few:**

- *I forgot how painful sweat is when it fills a fresh rug burn from the carpeted gym floor.*
- *I forgot how many stones I picked up when helping build the baseball field.*
- *I forgot most of what I learned in physics class, and I really needed it in college.*
- *I forgot whether my class ever won a single homecoming game or competition. Maybe we did. Maybe we didn't. (Chuckle)*
- *I forgot how much my parents cared that I was given the opportunity to drive nearly an hour from Millington every day to get a great Christian education.*
- *I forgot how faithful the teachers I had were to their calling from God to serve at this fairly new high school.*

And I've forgotten many more things I can't even write about. Not that they are bad. It's just that I truly forgot so many things.

This place hasn't changed...but yet it has!

As I finish my fourth month here, I continue to be filled with emotions. Most emotions make me smile and chuckle as I enjoy spending the days with dedicated faculty and staff. The staff is just as dedicated as always. That hasn't changed.

My emotions flow out of an incredible thankfulness for what the churches and previous faithful leaders have done to establish Valley Lutheran High School as a place of education and faith formation in the lives of high schoolers. That is still the core ministry of Valley Lutheran. That hasn't changed.

My emotions flow out of a deep sense of pride for "my high school" that is moving forward to be the best place of

Christian education in the Great Lakes Bay Region. Valley Lutheran is still moving forward in excellence in Christian education. That hasn't changed.

I am filled with great excitement to watch students compete in athletics, although they don't have to endure a carpeted gym floor. Valley Lutheran still takes pride in providing athletic opportunities to students. That hasn't changed.

My emotions are connected to the physical growth of the school building in the recent GROWING Campaign. The new music, art, and science classrooms to the east end, and the new weight room, Charger room, locker rooms, and office to the west end, are examples of commitment to quality educational facilities. I guess the same would be said of the original building, baseball and softball fields, soccer field, football stadium, etc. over the years. Valley is committed to quality educational facilities. That hasn't changed.

I have an immense emotion of joy greeting students every day. Valley Lutheran exists for them. The students have changed over the years, and it is daunting to think of all the students whose lives have been impacted through the ministry of Valley Lutheran. The student population has changed over the years, but a focus on students and their future is still evident. That hasn't changed.

In some ways, Valley seems so different than when I attended. However, in the same moment, I can honestly say that Valley hasn't changed much at all. That speaks volumes to the core mission of Valley Lutheran, and I'm thankful to be a part of that mission as Executive Director. I'll share more about the mission in another issue, but for now, as I said before:

***This place hasn't changed...but yet it has!***

To God be all the glory!

**Julian Petzold, Executive Director**



# Students Serving

## Key Club

Danielle Browning

Class of 2021

gives students the opportunity to volunteer with different organizations and on different projects. Through going out into the community and helping others, students have seen how richly blessed they are. Our students have seen first hand how much people appreciate the work they are doing.

### What are some of the projects the group has taken on during your involvement? How have those efforts changed in the current COVID climate?

Key Club takes on many projects in our communities and at Valley. At Valley, we sell different holiday themed treats for students. In our community, we have done shoeboxes for homeless men. Last year we filled 75 shoe boxes, these shoe boxes contain many items that these men need on a daily basis to properly care for their bodies. We send these boxes out in the winter so we include hats, gloves and hand warmers to keep them warm and also lots of hygiene products. Key club has helped out at Old Town Christian Outreach by handing out food to the less fortunate. This was a great success for our club. We had a lot of students go out and serve this community by giving them essential items. Key Club has also cleaned up a couple of grade school playgrounds in the spring. When COVID-19 hit in March I wasn't sure if Key Club was going to be able to happen this year. But I'm so glad it did! We are trying our



very best to do everything we did last year. Even though there are some more restrictions we are still going at it with a happy heart. All the members can't wait to get back out into our community!

### In what ways has being involved in Key Club prepared you to serve after graduating from high school and college?

Key Club has prepared me for the real world. I have a new outlook on how blessed I am and how I can help others through my blessings. I now know and understand that other people aren't as fortunate as I am and through my blessings I'm able to help them. Key Club has shown me how fun it is to serve others. Whenever our Key Club students go out into the community they all have smiles on their faces and they're so happy to be there and help other people. Seeing how happy my fellow club members are doing God's work makes me so happy. I can't wait to be in a group like this in college.

## Valley's Guiding Principle(s) through 2020

You may be wondering how COVID-19 has impacted the ministry of Valley Lutheran High School. Like educational institutions across the country, the end of last school year brought a startling shift and swirling uncertainty as the entire world worked to adapt amid the global pandemic.

However, **the ministry of Valley Lutheran High School continued**, as teachers quickly shifted to online teaching as everyone was thrust into virtual education the remainder of the school year.

We were grateful to be able to return to in-person instruction this past Fall, amid numerous adjustments and added procedures to ensure the safety of our students, faculty, and staff. At the time of printing, the state of Michigan has us in a three week "pause." We eagerly await the return to in-person education when we are permitted to do so.

Through it all, we remain steadfast knowing **face-to-face instruction provides students the optimal opportunity for high-quality academics, one-on-one coaching by faculty, the development of social and relational skills, and faith formation in a Christian school environment.** This has been happening at Valley Lutheran for years, and it will continue with "Christ as our Foundation."





# Students Serving

## Global Awareness Club

Ian Schoenmeyer

Class of 2021

the world. These causes change each year, but the goal is the same; to find efforts that are meaningful to the group and help in whatever way we can.

### What are some of the projects the group has taken on during your involvement? How have those efforts changed in the current COVID climate?

This year we put on a can drive at Valley to help support Zion Hemlock's food pantry and the Saginaw Rescue Mission, but in order to spice it up a bit there was an assembly in which each family group would use the food they brought in to make a sort of food sculpture out of items. This created the first Play With Your Food Drive at Valley. It was a great success, not only in the amount of food brought in, but it also brought our family groups and school together in a more interactive way.



This year during school meetings we are making recycled jean teddy bears for Wellspring's Camp Hope, which gives children who have lost a loved one a place where they can be around others who are going through the same thing and also help them in the grieving process. This mission has such a positive message as losing a loved one can be one the most difficult things to experience at any stage in life. And to be a younger individual it can be difficult to understand. We hope that the bears we help make in Global Awareness helps these children who are going through such a difficult experience.

Each year Global Awareness puts on Operation Christmas Child at our school. Operation Christmas Child is an organization that sends shoe boxes filled with gifts to children in impoverished areas of the world. Each student at Valley is encouraged to sponsor a box or two by purchasing the gifts and packing them on the day of the assembly. Last year Valley packed over 200 boxes. The boxes are then shipped all over the world. The organization not only delivers the physical items, but also shares the gospel with the children as they offer a course that teaches

### What is the purpose of the Global Awareness group?

Global Awareness is a group at Valley that supports different causes each year, both locally and around



them about Jesus. Each child also receives their own Bible in their native language for further study. OCC is doing great things around the world and it is awesome to be a part of putting it on in our school. (We still did OCC amidst the pause this year.)

For the past two years Global Awareness has sponsored a mission trip to Goodnews Bay, Alaska to put on a Vacation Bible School. The village is small and this mission trip is one of the only opportunities the village gets to learn about Jesus. In our school meetings we made tie blankets for the kids in the village. This was a great way that connected us to the mission we were supporting. We also did different fundraisers to help offset some of the cost of the trip. This past year, a couple of students including myself were part of the team that was planning on going. Unfortunately this was not able to happen due to the current pandemic. The team had to get creative in our support efforts. The other Valley students and I put together short devotional style videos that were posted on Facebook so the kids could still have some Biblical teaching. All the supplies including the blankets we made and craft activities were still sent. It would have been amazing to go on the trip, but I was excited to help the mission in a different way.

### In what ways has being involved in Global Awareness prepared you to serve after graduating from high school and college?

Global Awareness has shown me that I can make a difference in both my community and even the world. This group has shown me that the simplest tasks can have lasting impacts on the world. It is easy to think that such a small job of making blankets or teddy bears for children we may never meet or are halfway across the world won't do a thing. But the effort is not just you. The effort is many people working together for a common purpose. Global Awareness has shown me different ways I can be the hands and feet of Christ. I am more comfortable in serving because of my experience with the group and I will definitely be looking for ways to serve my community and world after high school.

# Alumni Serving

Interviews with VLHS Alumni  
who are serving in the world.



**Joel Klammer**  
Class of 1981



**Cynthia  
Winterstein Pape**  
Class of 1984



**Luke Kaul**  
Class of 2018

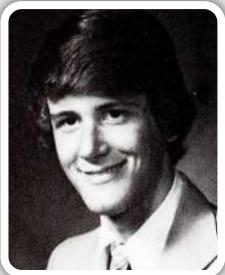
## What are some of your favorite memories from your years at Valley Lutheran?

**Klammer:** I joined Valley as a freshman during its first year. It was such a small group of students and faculty that we naturally felt close as we had school at our tiny temporary facility at Faith. I recall with fondness Mr. Schlesselman's daily quotes of wisdom that he would write on the blackboard, Mr. Schlensker's science classes, Mr. Thurber's classroom bathtub, the chapels, and the drama productions and basketball games in the "gym" (Faith's modified fellowship hall). When the current building opened, I remember working with the teachers to pick up used desks from a closed elementary school for Valley's new classrooms, the chapels sitting on the carpeted floor of the gym, and the excitement of moving into a new building.

**Pape:** I really enjoyed spending time with my friends at school events, such as basketball games and dances (especially Oktoberfest); working on the Valley Forge Newspaper and literally cutting and pasting stories onto the mock-up late into the night; playing in the Symphonic Band and going to competitions; being part of the stage crew for school plays; and, going to chapel every day, sitting on the carpeted gym floor.

**Kaul:** I have so many fond memories of Valley, it makes it hard to choose. I will never forget the experience of the freshman lock-in before the school year started. It was an eye opening experience to get to meet all of these brand new classmates (many of them from former rival schools) and finally get to learn their names and more about them. I think that that is one of the more interesting things about Valley. We all come from varying walks of life, different backgrounds, and locations about as diverse as you can get, and that makes Valley special. Any play I was in is also at the forefront of my greatest moments of Valley too, from when I was a minor character my freshman year and meeting all the seniors - who took me in as much as anyone - to being that senior that younger students look up to. All in all though, I think pep band during the football season might be my favorite. Even being just a couple years ago, those cold evenings with us blasting music as loud as possible are sharp and vivid.

## For Fun Interview Questions



**Joel Klammer**  
Class of 1981

**Where do you live?**  
Shanghai, China

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**  
Watch a good movie

**What is your favorite color?**  
Blue

**What do you always order when you see it on a menu?**  
Crème Brûlée



**Cynthia  
Winterstein Pape**  
Class of 1984

**Where do you live?**  
Saginaw, Michigan

**How do you like to spend your time when you are not at work?**  
I love spending time with my family & four dogs, gardening, traveling, and bicycling.

**What is your favorite color?**  
Purple

**What is one thing that you always order when you see it on a menu?**  
Reuben sandwich

## Take us on a brief educational and vocational journey since you graduated from VL.

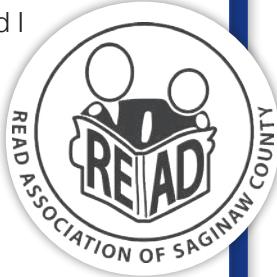


**Klammer:** My experience at Valley motivated me to go into Lutheran secondary education. I attended Concordia University Ann Arbor for four years and accepted my first call to Valley Lutheran High School in St. Charles, Illinois. There I taught science and computer science as well as acted as the Registrar. While there, I also had the opportunity to work part-time for Concordia University Chicago teaching Physics and at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory working in their Technical division. After seven years in St. Charles, my wife, Jane, and I received Calls to Hong Kong International School (HKIS). It was a surprise, but we always felt that the Lord was calling us towards the Mission field. In Hong Kong I taught Physics, coached, and served at Church of All Nations, the LCMS church there. While in Hong Kong I was blessed to be chosen for a Fellowship at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. HKIS graciously granted a year-long Sabbatical so we could attend Columbia and I could complete a master's program in Educational Leadership. After 12 years in Hong Kong, we accepted calls to Concordia International School Shanghai where my wife and I have served for the past 16 years.

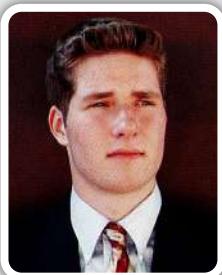
**Pape:** I pursued a Bachelor of Arts Degree of Elementary Education, graduating in 1988, and followed with a Master of Arts Degree of Education, focusing on Reading K-12, in 1994. I enjoyed teaching for 28 years in the City of Saginaw Public Schools as a classroom teacher for 10 years, and Title I Reading Teacher for 18 years, where I assisted struggling readers in grades K-6, retiring in 2017.

Since June 2017, I have served as the Director/President of the READ Association of Saginaw County, a non-profit organization. In addition, to stay current and involved with education, I work for Saginaw Valley State University as a Student Teacher Supervisor, Field Assistant, and Adjunct Instructor.

**Kaul:** I've done a bit of an unusual path. All throughout my high school experience I was gearing up to go to the best colleges I could think of, taking AP classes, doing every extracurricular I could, and researching majors and minors and what I could do with them. However, late in my senior year (no earlier than March) I began to seriously think about joining the military. I'd always liked the idea when I was younger, but never gave it too much thought. It was on a college visit that I decided college was not for me. After talking with the Navy recruiter in Saginaw, I went through the processing and was designated to be a "nuke" as they call it. My contract required background checks and a bit of time for processing, so I got a job as a bartender at the Bavarian Inn in the meantime, spent time with my family and friends, and prepared for the Navy. In January of 2019, I went to bootcamp during the "Polar Vortex", graduated in March and came to Charleston, South Carolina to continue my education, where I've been ever since. Soon, I will be off to Guam to continue my Naval career as a Nuclear Electronics Technician.



Luke, Silas (VL'20), and Elijah (VL'22) Kaul



**Luke Kaul**  
Class of 2018

### Where do you live?

Guam

### What is your current Navy Enlisted Classification?

Electronics Technician Nuclear, Third Class (E4)

### How do you like to spend your time when you are not at work?

I read extensively, mostly military science fiction and books about self sufficient living.

### What is your favorite color?

Indigo, followed by Mulberry, followed by Michigan Autumn

### What is one thing that you always order when you see it on a menu?

I always enjoy trying reubens when they are available.

continued on page 8

# Alumni Serving Continued

**The mission of Valley Lutheran is to “prepare our students as children of God academically, physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually to serve in the world today and tomorrow.” As an alumni, how has this played out in your life so far?**

**Klammer:** God asks us to be His hands and feet in this world. I believe that Valley truly equipped us as alumni for that calling. Whether it be the academics needed to achieve that goal, the physical strength for a service project to help those in need, the spiritual strength to share the Good News to those who may not know of Christ’s Love, or the emotional stability and social interaction to keep balance between God, vocation and family, Valley helped us to become holistically educated individuals who are able to tackle and engage the biggest problems facing the world both now and in the future.

**Pape:** Valley Lutheran instilled a love of learning and serving through the Christian education and atmosphere provided, instilling a growth mindset to continuously seek ways to help others. By knowing that we are lifelong learners with a mission to bring others to Christ, it opened the door to see how that could be accomplished after leaving Valley. As a public school teacher and non-profit director, I could not always directly speak about my faith, but I could be creative in the ways that I showed it and by forming programs to give others the opportunity to do the same. Whether formally allowed or not, Jesus always walks into work with me every day, nudging me to search for opportunities to show His love to others.

While my mom was recently in a nursing home for over three years, it gave me the opportunity to serve my parents and other nursing home residents. The READING STARS program, where students read to seniors at nursing homes, was created not only to fill a need for students to practice reading in a safe environment, but also provide visitors for residents, like my mom, to brighten their days. The program was inspired by my parents, who volunteered their time earlier in my life by mentoring at Stone Elementary, where I taught. While once reading to children, my mom and other residents enjoyed students reading and visiting with them. The Christian education and positive role models at VLHS, as well as my parents, provided examples of what servant leadership looked like, helping to see firsthand how to serve others throughout life’s journey. By receiving these blessings from Valley and my parents, it encouraged my husband and me to follow suit and give one of the best gifts possible to our children by sending them to VLHS to learn the same principles of faith and service through their Christian education.

**Kaul:** Bootcamp was stressful, mentally and physically, but especially spiritually. Our RDCs (effectively a drill instructor in other branches) strongly encouraged us to help one another with both actual tasks and when we were stressed. Many people had the lone wolf mentality initially, but one can only be alone so long. My relationship with Christ, fostered heavily by Valley, prepared me to help my fellow recruits in the stressful times. I hope to continue to be able to help people when they don’t know who to turn to in the future. Submarines, for better or worse, are small. So small, in fact, they usually don’t have chaplains, as such, it falls to the crew themselves to arrange services. I hope to be able to support the spiritual side of the submarine along with my actual job as a reactor operator in the future. All in all, I am not sure how long I plan to stay in the Navy, but I genuinely enjoy serving my country and those inside it.

## And what does that vocation of serving look like for you in the near future?

**Klammer:** I still believe that the Lord has plans for us wherever we are planted. I will continue to serve in Asia in various roles until He deigns it is time to move me on to another place of need.

**Pape:** Serving is not just what a person does, it's who they continuously strive to be. So while I will continue to serve the community by providing reading resources to help students grow and succeed through my work responsibilities, I will also look for ways to help and advocate for others in my daily life by showing kindness to strangers, offering help to friends and family, and standing up for what is good, right and true. There are always opportunities to reach out to others and it is our responsibility to find ways to do so, either in big or small ways.

**Kaul:** I will be serving on USS Oklahoma City, forward deployed out of Guam for the next 48 months. Beyond that, it is up to the Navy where they send me and when.



**Joel Klammer**  
Class of 1981

## The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly impacted education in various ways. Through all of the changes, what are the key elements of education that haven't changed?

I think that now, even more than before, the need for connection, empathy, concern for others, sharing the Gospel, and seeking to help those in need are even more relevant in education. Although always a key part of education, distance-learning and the pandemic, which separated people for extended periods of time, made these characteristics even more critical. Without these vital pieces, emotional, social, and even academic growth are limited.

### In what specific, and maybe unexpected ways were you able to serve your school and its community over these past months?

Early in the spring we reluctantly evacuated most of our faculty. At the time we thought that it would be a short-term measure, but quickly COVID became a world-wide pandemic, closing borders and canceling flights. I sent my wife and son to stay with my mother in Saginaw, but I remained behind to present at a conference in Hanoi. That conference was soon canceled, and all borders closed. The small number of staff who remained helped maintain the empty school building and attempted to prepare for the students' eventual return, including building handwashing stations required by the government. When we were able to return to in-person instruction in May, we had 20% of our faculty and 80% of our student body present. The handful of us who were still in Shanghai quickly found ourselves covering classes and supervision throughout the K-12 campus. It was exciting to have the students back in school but daunting with government regulations changing daily and with the minimal staffing we had on hand. We were blessed this fall with the ability to bring our staff back. On October 23, our last high school teacher returned, and we are finally fully staffed again.



*Handwashing Station*

## Share with us the mission of the READ Association and the positive impact that it has on our community.



**Cynthia  
Winterstein Pape**  
Class of 1984

The mission of the READ Association of Saginaw County is to help students increase their reading skills and discover the joy of reading. We accomplish this through matching approximately 300 mentors to work with nearly 600 students in 29 schools/libraries across Saginaw County. Since 2018, we have also added a family literacy program, Raising Readers Academy, to empower parents with strategies and activities that will assist them in becoming their child's first reading teacher; and, the READING STARS, where five classrooms travel by STARS buses to five nursing homes on a weekly basis to read to residents to practice reading skills and form intergenerational bonds.

Due to COVID-19, we have become innovative in our delivery of services. We have started the Digital Mentor Program, volunteers reading with students online through Zoom; the READ Book Delivery Program, parents sign-up their children online to receive 2-3 grade level, high-interest books delivered to their front door by volunteers (resulting so far in 1,358 families signing up 2,332 children to receive 5,831 books); Make A Senior Smile Project, collecting notes/cards/small favors from the community

to give to seniors in our partner nursing homes; and Raising Readers Academy, providing interactive sessions online. Each of these programs addresses the reading needs of children in their homes, schools, and community and provides support to help them move forward towards positive life options.



**Luke Kaul**  
Class of 2018

### Tell us about your role and the responsibilities of your position. What part do you find most satisfying? What part do you find most challenging?

The most satisfying aspect is the ability to make a living already at the age of 20. It's long hours, but it's honest and fulfilling work. The biggest challenge is the rigor of the academic program I'm enrolled in. Most military jobs are physically demanding more than mentally, but in my field, they certify high school graduates as reactor operators within just a year and a half (not including boot camp). That means we are fully capable of running a nuclear reactor. It's challenging, but doable. Valley did a very good job of preparing me for the academic side of my job.



# VLHS Gives Thanks & Celebrates Success of Largest Campaign in School History

## Five years ago...

the leadership of Valley Lutheran High School embarked on the largest campaign in school history. A campaign with bold goals to add-on to the building for the first time in the school's history, provide improved educational spaces to meet the needs of our students, ensure long-term financial stability, and continue to provide valuable financial aid during this special effort. All this came with a particularly bold goal of raising \$10 million to bring it all to fruition.

Why would school leadership take on this daunting task? To ensure Valley Lutheran High School remains an outstanding educational institution, with Christ as our foundation, preparing students to serve in the world today and tomorrow.

Now, the GROWING Campaign has officially concluded. Valley Lutheran leadership is overjoyed to announce the GROWING Campaign has raised over \$12 million over the past five years to support scholarships, campus improvements, foundation growth, and the long-term financial stability of the school. Thanks be to God!

"This campaign was successful because people truly love Valley Lutheran High School and want to see it continue to thrive well into the future," said Julian Petzold (VL'89), VL Executive Director. "We give thanks for the many blessings from God our Father, and we celebrate the generosity of many people who came together to make this campaign successful."



*Check out this time-lapse video of the East-end construction. Students, faculty, and staff are all grateful to be able to enjoy these new spaces!*



## New & renovated spaces made possible through the campaign include:



- A new music room
- Four new science labs
- Weight room

The campaign consisted of more than 5,600 gifts from more than 1,780 donors. This collection of generous people included alumni, parents of alumni, parents of current students, grandparents of alumni, grandparents of current students, parents of future students, community members, area foundations, and local businesses... even future students gave their support!

"One particular gift stands out in my mind. After visiting an association congregation, a boy right around the age of 10 approached me, and gave me a gift 'to help Valley,'" remembers Kyle DeWees, VL Development Director. "His kindness and genuine desire to give what he could to help, was incredible. That is a gift I will never forget."

Every school day, students, faculty, and staff enter the building through the new entrance; walking under the cross which offers a tangible representation of the love of Jesus and the faith that provides the foundation of everything in our school. VL teachers are enjoying the new, larger spaces, and are particularly grateful for the ability to spread out a little more this year.

A key to the success of the GROWING Campaign was in its design. Valuable scholarship and recurring annual needs were prioritized, enabling over \$1 million in scholarship funds to be distributed over the last five years. Keeping a Valley Lutheran education as accessible as possible is extremely important.

"The word 'family' is frequently used to describe Valley Lutheran," reflects DeWees, "it has been amazing for our students to see this project come to life and to know that there are so many people who care for them and who care for this school. I hope everyone who is connected to this school is excited and proud of this accomplishment."

- A new art studio
- New & expanded locker rooms
- A multi-purpose athletic room
- A new secure entrance
- Renovations to the main office
- New, larger hallway lockers
- Fresh paint & LED lights throughout the hallways

Valley Lutheran gratefully recognized the service of these volunteers, who helped lead the GROWING Campaign.



**Building Committee - Summer 2020**

Doug Kueffner (architect) • Todd Brechtelsbauer (VL'89)  
Jim Klein (VL'88) • Sarah Bartnikowski • John Brandt  
Mike Duclos (VL'95) • Josh Schmitt • Bill Wittig (Chairman)



**Campaign Cabinet - February 2020**

Pete Bender • Shawn Sny (VL'91) • Al Kaul (VL'87)  
Dwight McNally • Laura Conway (VL'98) • Lisa Helmreich  
John Brandt • Greg Causley • Matt Princing (VL'85)  
Gene Pickelman • Roy Schmidt • Mike Denno (VL'81)  
Not pictured:  
Katrina Kaschinske (VL'97) • Leslie Perry (VL'97)  
Brenda McNally • Lori Pickelman



# Boys Soccer Program Perseveres Amid Uncertainty, Earns Coach Guenther 500<sup>th</sup> Win

**They weren't sure if there would even be a season, but they were going to be ready either way.**

"I am most proud of our team for the dedication of our entire program this past summer. I saw a work ethic that I have never seen from our team before and I am very grateful for the time and effort we put into this season," stated Braxton Flood, a Senior and one of three Captains.

The dedication and work ethic paid off. The Boys' Varsity Soccer team finished the season 12-4-1, boasting a perfect 10-0 record in conference play, and earning the title of Conference Champion for the second year in a row. Unfortunately, the team exited the state tournament earlier than hoped, falling in the District Semi-Final game. The team also earned recognition as an All-Academic Team, meaning the team GPA was above 3.3.

Head Varsity Coach Doug Guenther reflected, "I remember learning on a Monday night that our season would begin the next day with masks, which we had not worn up to this point. We had a game scheduled for Wednesday and our practice Tuesday was our first with masks. We struggled to breathe, to keep them on, etc. Wednesday's game was a league game against an always tough Bullock Creek team. Our team came out and played an amazing game with great pace, teamwork, and an incredibly positive attitude. And that 24 hour span set the tone for a great, team oriented, successful season."

In addition to the abrupt start of the season, that first win of the season helped Coach Guenther pass a significant milestone in his coaching career: his 500th combined win (boys' and girls' varsity soccer). A few weeks later, the team aided Coach Guenther in passing another significant milestone: his 300th boys' soccer victory.

When asked to reflect on these milestones, Coach Guenther said, "I love coaching and have been blessed with a desire to continue coaching. I've been blessed with talented and hard working players over the years. That many wins conjures up many memories of many successful teams that I have been



blessed to be a part of. I usually don't have time for nostalgia as I am getting ready for the next season, but this off season, I have tried to revisit those pictures and memories and names to remind me of so many ways I have been blessed."

The total number of Varsity soccer games Doug Guenther has coached is a whopping 826!!

But Coach Guenther's coaching experience extends beyond the soccer pitch. His coaching history includes 23 seasons of boys' Varsity soccer, 16 seasons of girls' Varsity soccer, 9 seasons of boys' JV soccer, 1 season of girls' JV soccer, 13 seasons of Varsity baseball, 4 seasons of JV baseball, and even one season of golf. That is an incredible amount of time on the sideline/dugout/golf cart! And it's an incredible dedication to the growth and development of Valley Lutheran student athletes.

Braxton commented, "Coach Guenther is one of the best coaches that I have ever had; and the relationship that I have built with him over these past three years is one that will last a lifetime. His dedication to the program and the game of soccer is one of the things that make Coach Guenther an incredible coach. During school, I could find Coach Guenther at any point during the day to talk about tactics, team chemistry, or the scouting reports for upcoming games. We could just talk soccer for what seemed like forever. Soccer is always on his mind, which is what makes him the great coach that he is, and will continue to be."

"Coaching, like teaching, is not predictable (I have learned to see that as a good thing). I love being surrounded by young people, I love the energy they give me, and I love the opportunity to share faith, hope and love with a small group of individuals each and every year."

From all your players, past and present, and from the greater Valley Family: thank you Coach Guenther.

# Issue Reflections



Valley Lutheran High School is a place where Spirit-led servant hearts are nurtured and cultivated. It is written into the mission statement and evidenced by past and present faculty and staff, alumni and current students who “serve in the world today and tomorrow.” This issue of Family and Friends has highlighted just a handful of those servants, and shared some of the recent changes around Valley as we continue, by God’s grace, to faithfully serve the families and students of the Great Lakes Bay Region.

This past summer the new cross at the front entrance of the school was dedicated to the memory of Bev Feldkamp, one of many faculty members who has left a legacy of service. This Fall, we welcomed back one of our own, Julian Petzold (VL'89), to serve as the new Executive Director following Dr. John Brandt's retirement - 42 years of faithful service at VLHS. Miss Felkamp, Dr. Brandt, and Dr. Petzold all provide examples of what

Peter exhorts in 1 Peter 4:10: “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” Service, apparent in the lives of our faculty/staff.

Service is apparent in the lives of our alumni as well. Valley graduates are heeding the call to a continued life of service. They can be found in places such as: leading a local service organization, serving in unexpected ways while teaching overseas, or serving in the armed forces. As Cynthia Pape (VL'84) shared, “Serving is not just what a person does, it’s who they continually strive to be.” This begins while at Valley, as student organizations like the Key Club and Global Awareness group specifically aim to be the hands and feet of Jesus in serving both locally and globally. Valley’s student leaders carry these experiences with them into their college experiences and vocations, becoming another generation of alumni who use their God-given gifts to serve others. Joel Klammer (VL'81) summed it well: “Valley helped us to become holistically educated individuals who are able to tackle and engage the biggest problems facing the world both now and in the future.”

This is the service to which Valley Lutheran continues to be called each and every day - to prepare students for life and their unique futures. How grateful we are for the completion of the GROWING Campaign that has positioned us financially and with new spaces to continue to meet the needs of our community both now and in the future.



**As we close out this issue of Family and Friends, may you also be reminded of the ways God has led and called you to serve in His Kingdom. To Him be all glory and honor!**

## YES! I will support the ongoing ministry of VLHS.

Valley Lutheran continues to be a vibrant and impactful ministry because of the financial support of many. **Please prayerfully consider how you join with your own gift of support.** We are indeed, blessed to be a blessing.

### Please designate my donation to help:

- Student Aid Fund
- Annual Needs of VLHS
- Please send me information about Valley's Legacy Circle so I can support Valley through my estate.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed:

\$50     \$100     \$250     \$500     Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

To donate online, visit [donate.onecause.com/vlhs/donate](http://donate.onecause.com/vlhs/donate)

**Please mail this form to VLHS, 3560 McCarty Rd, Saginaw, MI 48603 or email information to [hbehnke@vlhs.com](mailto:hbehnke@vlhs.com).**

# Alumni News

Family and Friends is a publication of Valley Lutheran High School that is delivered to alumni two times a year, in the fall and spring. To submit a story idea or if you need to update your address, contact Heidi Behnke at 989-790-1676 or email [hbehnke@vlhs.com](mailto:hbehnke@vlhs.com).

## CLASS OF 1985

Brad Hubbell and Mary (Atkins) Smith, both from the class of 1985, were married on September 12, 2020. An outdoor reception took place at brother Bart's (VL'87) due to COVID. Mary's son, Zachery Smith (VL'17) was best man, Mary's sister Wendy was her Matron of Honor and Brad's daughter Maddie and son Nate were also in the wedding party. They had a dance floor out under the stars and are blessed to have found each other at this point in our lives.



## CLASS OF 1990

Shelly Bergelin, (VL'90) married David Biver (the voice of Valley) on March 21, 2020 just before the country shut down for the next 3 months. Shelly's daughter Sarah Bergelin (VL'17) was her maid of honor and Dave's son was his best man.



## In Memoriam

### Mark Schmidt

VL '88

April 1, 2020

### Dawson Kuhl

VL '22

August 19, 2020

### Eric Malmo

VL '87

August 27, 2020

### Rebekah (Mundt) Blackledge

VL '95

November 12, 2020

## CLASS OF 1992

Scott D. Browning

(VL'92), principal of St.

Paul Lutheran School

in Fort Worth, Texas

was named 2020

National Distinguished

Principal by the

National Association

of Elementary School

Principals (NAESP) "Mr. Browning was nominated and chosen by his peers through a nationwide search process and is one of three private school educators selected by NAESP," says Dr. Rebecca Schmidt, director of School Ministry for the LCMS.



## CLASS OF 2004

Katey (Knoll) & David Ackerman, both VL'04 grads, were married August 1, 2020.

## Military Alumni Information

**Are you currently serving as an active or reserve member of the military? Do you know a grad who has been honorably discharged or is now a Veteran?**

Valley Lutheran is compiling a list of alumni currently serving in, or honorably discharged from, the United States military. If this applies to you, or a VL grad you know, please complete and return this form to Valley Lutheran.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Currently Stationed \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form to VLHS, 3560 McCarty Rd, Saginaw, MI 48603 or email information to [hbehnke@vlhs.com](mailto:hbehnke@vlhs.com).

# Alumni News

## CLASS OF 2011

Bringing NCAA Division III tournament experience as both a player and a coach, Kayla Engelhard (VL'11) joined Central College's (Pella, IA) women's basketball program as assistant coach in 2020. Engelhard is a 2015 graduate of Calvin University (Mich.) where she earned first-team all-Michigan Intercollege Athletic Association honors in 2014-15 after averaging 13.1 points. She earned her Master's Degree in Sports Administration from Concordia University Chicago. In 2018-19 she participated in the Women's Basketball Coaches Association Mentor Program and attended the Women's Coaching Summit in 2018. She is a National Strength & Conditioning Association-certified strength and conditioning specialist.



## CLASS OF 2012

Marissa (Cisneros) (VL'12) married Jason Pressler August 19, 2019. They are currently residing in Grand Rapids. Marissa works for Hope Network Neuro Rehab as an Occupational Therapy Assistant.

## CLASS OF 2012

Elizabeth Ringel, (VL'12) is the Director of Student Ministries at Rosewood Church in Jenison.



## CLASS OF 2016

Nate (VL'16) and Sarah (Enge) (VL'18) Englehardt, were married on September 18, 2020.



## CLASS OF 2016, 2017

Daniel (VL'17) and Delanie (VL'16) Plamondon were married on November 14, 2020.

## Dear Alumni:

We'd love to be able to be in touch with you!

Do you know the addresses of these alumni? If so, email [hbehnke@vlhs.com](mailto:hbehnke@vlhs.com) with details.

1981.....	Inga Rice
1982.....	Pamela Petre
1982.....	Todd Poorman
1983.....	David Neumann
1983.....	Elizabeth Pfund
1984.....	Dawn Munger
1984.....	Kristen Miller
1984.....	Paul Pappas
1988.....	Brian Pullen
1990.....	Tammy Nowaczyk
1991.....	Bryan O'Connor
1991.....	Eric Parsons
1991.....	Steven Nash
1992.....	Jennifer Pashak
1993.....	Andrea Mueller
1993.....	Andrea Price
1993.....	Angelo Perez
1993.....	Ashley Neumeyer
1993.....	Brad Reisig
1993.....	Charles Patillo
1993.....	Jason Murray
1994.....	Brent Nuffer
1994.....	Trisha Mysliwski
1995.....	Beth Naeger
1995.....	Jessica Morlik
1996.....	Nicole Pontious
1997.....	Adam Peters
1997.....	Andrea Perez
1997.....	Carrie Newton
1997.....	David Norris
1997.....	Tiffany Rapson
1998.....	Michael Nothelfer
1999.....	Christen Paez
1999.....	Matthew Morris
2000.....	Susannah Morris
2002.....	Megan Reinig
2003.....	Yeok Park
2006.....	Sonali Patel
2008.....	Taylor Patterson
2009.....	Rina Pashak
2015.....	Hye Kyung "Ava" Park



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THE 18TH ANNUAL

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