

# PATHWAYS

"SHOW ME YOUR WAYS, LORD, TEACH ME YOUR PATHS." PSALM 25:4

HCA's vision is to inspire students to love learning and live lives worthy of the calling of Christ.

## UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

**April 1** - Africa Day ([sign up](#) to help; Term 3 ends (no joke!))

**April 4** - Term 4 begins

**April 8** - Nature Explore Work Day #1 - [RSVP](#)

**April 13** - 1/2 day for all students; Parent-Teacher Conferences (sign ups coming next week); also Nature Explore Work Day #2 - [RSVP](#)

**April 15** - Good Friday (no school); deadline for Financial Aid applications (1st round decisions)

**April 18-22** - April vacation

**April 29** - hearing screenings (info coming next month)

**May 9** - Professional Development Day (no school)

**May 16-20** Scholastic Book Fair

**May 19** - Fine Arts Evening (Art show and Spring concert)

**May 21** - HCA 5K - [register here!](#)



## PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

I hope that your students enjoyed the long weekend last week! The staff was thankful for the opportunity to receive important training for teaching students with chronic stress and trauma. Over the last 2-3 years, we have noticed the impact of chronic stress on ourselves and some of our students. I'm sure many of you have felt it as well. Our staff found tremendous value in what we learned, so I would like to share a little of it with you. To begin, it was helpful to understand the way God wired our brains. We have specific areas that are responsible for specific functions, but the two that are most impacted by chronic stress and trauma are the limbic system, which is responsible for emotions, and the cerebral cortex, which is responsible for logic and learning. Within the limbic system is the amygdala, the part of our brain that is constantly determining whether there is a threat. When there is not a threat, our brains continue to work freely, learning, thinking, playing, etc. If a threat has been perceived, the body responds with our 'stress response.' This includes diverting energy away from the cortex, which is responsible for language, learning, and logic. The senses heighten, blood flow is sent to the limbs (for potential flight), and muscles tense. For students (or anyone) that has lived in chronic stress for long periods of time, especially the early years, their stress response can be easily triggered.

Not all stress is bad. Some levels are good, some tolerable, and some toxic. Trauma is a stress response that pushes you past your window of tolerance and into fear. The window of tolerance is our capacity to experience and absorb stress before we enter a stress response. Pictured as a glass of water, it is the space left in the glass before overflow. When we are not living in heightened stress, we have lots of room in the glass before overflow. For those living in chronic stress, the glass may be nearly full all the time and a stress response can be triggered easily and often. Since the senses are heightened during stress, the trigger may be as simple as a sound, smell, sight or light touch.

Students with a small window of tolerance are always working hard to regain control from the limbic system in order to learn. They have more difficulty focusing and are more sensitive. They may not perceive the world as a safe place.

What can we do to ensure that all of our students feel safe?

The presence of safe people is the beginning. Those safe people need to be aware of their own state of mind and non-verbal communication. We can be aware of our tone, our volume, our cadence. We can use few words, since the language and logic center is not working at full capacity.

Some helpful strategies to employ include:

- **Playful engagement** disarms fear and affirms your joy in being with them
- **Behavior matching** is when you match the student's physical position, expression, or choice
- **Healthy touches** which includes high fives and side hugs
- **Words of affirmation** that are sincere and speak truth over their identity
- **Routines** that provide connection they can expect regularly
- **Giving the student a voice** by listening attentively, helping to identify and verbalize their needs, giving choices

We want to reassure all students that they are safe, be attuned to the cues they are giving and receiving, and provide connections with safe people so stress responses can calm and decrease.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made. God is so good to create us exactly as He has, and also to help us understand the way we were created so we can support one another. As life presents challenges for our students, we want to be responsive to their emerging needs. We are pleased that this is the beginning of an ongoing conversation that can benefit all of our students.



**Honoring God through  
Creative learning and strong  
Academics in a caring, fun-  
filled school!**

## Principal's Book of Excellence Award Recipients:

Kylie, Lydia, Isabelle, Scarlet, Luciana - for fixing the gazebo after the thunderstorm

Elena - for being a servant-worker

Caleb - for consistently being very creative with art projects

Tayo - for being helpful in assisting classmates in art class

Benassi - for tremendous effort and creativity in art class

Alexi - for reflecting God as a community-builder by encouraging classmates to have fun together

Abigail - for outstanding leadership in seeking out friendship, participating in godly conversation, and constant service to others

Wesley - for his appreciative and willing spirit

William, Lily, Lexi, Kira, Kylie, Elena, Caleb, Brianna, Isabelle - for being servant-workers and unloading heavy bags of compost and bringing them to the Outdoor Classroom

## Teacher Appreciation Week Info

The Parent Teacher Council will be organizing a Teacher Appreciation Week in May (tentatively May 2-6) and we are looking for people to be on a sub-committee to plan a way to honor our amazing teachers. If you'd like to find out more, or be on the sub-committee, please fill out this [interest form](#).

We are excited about the Spring Fitness Challenge referenced in the email sent from Mrs. Cleveland on Tuesday!

[You can order an HCA 5k logo pedometer for only \\$7.50!](#)



# PLEASE TAKE NOTE...



## READ-A-THON UPDATE:

The results from the Readathon are in!  
Click [here](#) for details!

### LOOKING FOR SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES at HCA?

We love having parent volunteers! When you are looking for a way to plug in here at HCA in a meaningful way, please check our [website](#) for current volunteer opportunity listings!

### Calling all prayer warriors!

Prayer is a powerful tool that can be exercised anywhere and on behalf of anyone. The Lord tells us to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:2) and to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). With that in mind, HCA is **forming a school prayer chain** to support our school community when needs are expressed. **We are looking for people to pray!** You would be on an email list of individuals committed to pray for requests from families at HCA. If you are interested in being on this list please email Rebecca Burley at [becka2911@gmail.com](mailto:becka2911@gmail.com). If anyone has a PRAYER REQUEST for our warriors to pray over, please fill out [this form](#).



## Easter Resurrection Egg Hunt

Who: for HCA students, Pk-8th

What: a resurrection egg hunt

Where: the HCA field and Nature Explore play space

When: April 14th in the afternoon

Why: to help our students focus on the true meaning of our Easter celebrations

How: please consider donating plastic eggs, old Easter baskets, or recyclable plastic containers (old wipes containers) that can be made into an "easter basket". Please send donations by Monday, April 11th by sending them in with your student - thank you for any supplies you can send in!

## Nature Explore Revitalization:

**We need your help!**

We have 2 work days planned on 4/8 and 4/13, 12:30-4:30pm to revamp, revitalize, and renovate our certified Nature Explore Play Space.

All the info can be found **HERE.**

**WPI** is having a STEM event for students next month at Polar Park in Worcester! To learn more about this amazing opportunity for students, please visit:

<https://wp.wpi.edu/touchtomorrow/>

### **JOB OPENING**

#### **Ministry Support Coordinator**

Know a man or woman who may be a good fit? Holden Chapel is looking for a qualified candidate, on a part-time basis. Get a detailed job description by emailing [dmarinone@holdenchapel.org](mailto:dmarinone@holdenchapel.org).

Interested candidates should be prepared to submit a resume, with a cover letter and both a personal as well as a professional reference.

## HCA 5K!

Mark your calendars so you can join us for the 4th “annual” HCA 5K Walk/Run. This fun, family-friendly event will take place on **Saturday, May 21st**. The 5K benefits our school and students, as well as increases our visibility within the community. We hope you will partner with us to make this event as successful as possible.

There are several ways you can get involved:

- 1) REGISTER to walk/run
- 1) Recruit business sponsors for the event
- 2) Form a team to multiply your impact
- 3) Volunteer at the event, as a Road Marshall or at the Registration Area

We hope you and your family will form a team (5+ members who register), help us recruit business sponsors, and encourage others to do the same! Please note that current HCA Families receive a discount when registering.

[REGISTER HERE!](#)





# Preschool News!

## Important Dates to Remember:

**ASAP:** Please finish and submit your preschooler's Ages and Stages questionnaire online as soon as possible

**April 1st:** Africa Day—Friday students will participate with their teachers; parents of 3 day students are invited to attend Africa Day with their preschooler

**April 13th:** 11:30AM dismissal and optional preschool conferences—see Sign Up Genius if you'd like to schedule a conference (schedule coming next week)

### [VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!](#) [Nature Explore work days](#)

**April 8th Nature Explore work day part 1** (12:30 - 4:00 pm) volunteers needed! Help us with some demolition of old sandboxes and assembling new outdoor furniture and equipment! [See Sign Up Genius](#)

**April 13th Nature Explore work day part 2** (12:30-4:30pm) This is the half day/ parent teacher conference day. Volunteer to help us finish assembly work as needed, and setting up the nature explore space with our new equipment! [See Sign Up Genius](#)

**April 15th:** Good Friday (no school)

**April 18th–April 22:** Spring Break (no school)

Hello! Buenos Dias! Ni hao! Jambo! Czesc! If you visit the HCA Preschool this March, you may just join us for our 'Trip Around the World'! Our journey began in the United States of America, where Preschoolers could be heard saying "I am an American" and learning songs about our country, like "God Bless America" and the "Star Spangled Banner". A game of "Repeat After Me" helped introduce them to "The Pledge of Allegiance", which they will learn and recite daily in the "big school" (aka downstairs!).

Our journey continued south to Puerto Rico where a preschool mama/HCA teacher joined us! She shared a nursery rhyme of sorts that grown ups sing to their babies, let us listen to the song of the Coqui, and brought yummy dishes for us to try that are common in her culture! She even read The Very Hungry Caterpillar to us in Spanish! The children loved the adventure of our trip and we are so grateful for her accompaniment as we were passing through!

Next we traveled on to China, wearing some traditional clothing and serving pretend rice while practicing chopsticks. Then we took a day trip to Ireland of course, where the Preschoolers loved learning about St. Patrick and how he shared Jesus' love with people who didn't yet know Him! Their favorite part of our trip was having to retell the story when their teacher told it to them with false information (after learning the story in small groups)! They loved having to correct her and had amazing recall at the details of the story.

Our journey will next take us to Africa, where we will visit both the east and west coast in Cameroon and Kenya! A preschool mama joined us and shared about her heritage in Cameroon, and we will take a safari ride through the grasslands to see the African animals that live there!

We will round out our trip in Poland, where we are hoping to learn some Polish words from our Polish speaking Preschool friend and his mom (he promises to share with us when she comes in). We have had quite the adventure on our trip around the world!

Throughout our whole trip, we have celebrated the music and dance, food, clothing and language of each culture. Our trip has been full of diversity and joy, and questions and excitement! Preschoolers know that Jesus loves the little children of the world. People all over the world worship Jesus! We can worship God wherever we come from, and we spent time each day thanking God that He is always with us, no matter where our journey takes us.



# Team A News!

## Help Needed:

We are always in need of recess monitor helpers on a daily basis. **Recess for Team A is 11:30am-12:00 pm** Monday through Friday. You may sign up to be on the recess monitor schedule [HERE](#).

### Kindergarten Update from Mrs. Coombs:

Our classroom has been working so hard over the past few weeks preparing for Africa Day. I am so proud of and amazed by these students every day. There is still so much to learn before Term 3 ends and I can't wait for our class to show off what they have learned on Africa Day!

As the Read-a-Thon has come to an end, I want to say how proud I am of the entire Kindergarten. Everyone did a fantastic job reading. Even though the Read-a-Thon has ended, we need to continue to keep reading. Remember it is just as important for children to be read to as it is for children to practice reading on their own, so I ask that you keep reading at home. If you are in need of book suggestions, please reach out and Mrs. Lucier and I would be happy to suggest and/or lend some books to go home with your child.

Spring is finally here and Kindergarten has taken full advantage of the warm weather. Any opportunity we have, we are outside - either learning, having extra recess time, and/or enjoying a nice picnic for lunch. The warm weather has encouraged the class to start planting our classroom seeds. We learned about what seeds need in order to grow, and compared those needs to what we need for our bodies to grow, as mentioned in Jeremiah 12:2, "you have planted them and they have taken root. They grow and bear fruit." It warms my heart when I hear, "look it grew some more!" and "I need to go get my journal and draw because it got bigger," and "I can't wait to see the flower when it is done!"

### Grade 1 Update from Mrs. Richardson:

Term 3 has been such a great adventure in Africa, and more specifically Kenya. We continue to learn about grasslands and animals that live there. If you ask your student what the "Big Five" are in Kenya, they will tell you the top five wildlife many people travel to see. To go along with learning about grasslands and Food For Life, we planted grass seed to make a grassland for Africa Day.

Speaking of Africa Day, our classroom is in its beginning stages of becoming a small Masai village. We have started making our hut, grassland, and have been working hard on our Masai outfits. Our classroom activities on Africa Day will be jewelry making and jumping contests. Our class learned all about jumping contests and we even had a class contest (it was a blast)!

Our FUNdations is really taking flight! We recently wrapped up chapter 9 and are starting chapter 10. We are now able to identify main characters, settings, and the three main events that occurred in a story. Our reading is soaring! Keep up the fantastic reading at home too.

Lastly, we are LOVING tracking the healthy foods we are eating in Grade 1. Our Food For Life bulletin board has a rainbow, and after snack and lunch we add the colors of the fruits and veggies we are eating. So far, orange foods are taking the lead! We are excited to see what color we end up eating the most. Our Eat The Rainbow challenge will end at the closing of April.



**Grade 2 Update from Mrs. McGrail:**

Hujambo! We are thoroughly enjoying learning and exploring the beautiful land of Kenya! In Social Studies, we have learned about Masai traditions, home life, home styles (ask your littles what traditional mud houses are made of), education, language (although there are many languages spoken in Kenya - more than 68 - Swahili is the mother tongue of this nation).

For Bible, we have been busy working through the New Testament, taking time to participate in activities and in-depth conversations to strengthen our relationships with God.

In Science, we are having a blast exploring the African grasslands and the vast array of creatures who live there, both big and small. We just wrapped up individual African animal research books (WOOHOO!!) This served as a tremendous effort and has taken well over two and a half weeks to complete from initial choosing of animal, to research, to fast facts, to draft, to final written copy, and lastly building of book and adding illustrations! You are not going to believe how amazing these books are!

Food for Life has been full of MyPlate, learning African dance, jumping into fitness with Masai warriors, and learning about Kenyan cuisine.

For Math, we are currently chugging through Unit 7 which focuses on addition and subtraction facts. This week specifically we are learning faster ways to add and subtract three sets of numbers. Lastly, this week in FUNdations we continue to work on Unit 11. It's incredible to see students grow in their reading skills and their breakdown of words.

We continue to be busy preparing for Africa Day on April 1, 2022. In the next two weeks, we will be going even further in our learning as we put into practice the Swahili language (number counting and basic phrases), begin cooking Kenyan meals, designing traditional garments, completing our mini clay houses, building a mudhouse in our classroom, preparing our classroom for Africa Day, practicing our Masai jumping skills, and so much more! We all look forward to our school's grand celebration. Kwaheri!



# Team B News!

## From Ms. Rennie's Desk:

I have finally been able to start building memories with my students by bringing back luncheons!!! It is precious time to share a home-cooked Italian meal, on my mother's china that my father brought back from Japan when he was in the Korean War. I love to spend time with your children!

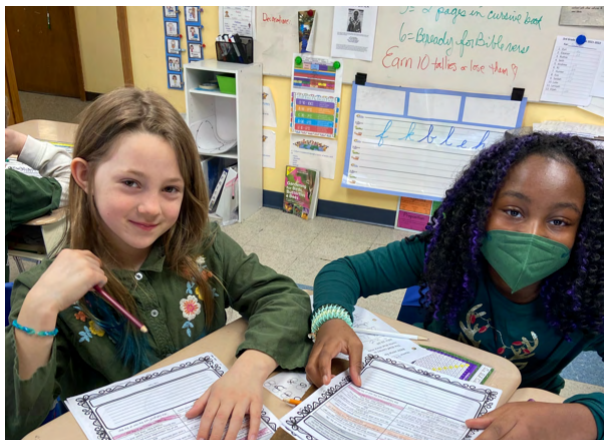
There is a hum of excitement as we get our room ready for Africa Day. I have provided costumes for each student that they keep in their cubbies. Next week we will make Jollof rice and we have two scheduled visitors, on two different days, who will share their experiences with us of growing up in Cameroon.

In Math, we are finishing up with geometry and will then dive into fractions, so it's still important to keep up with memorizing multiplication facts. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!

Keep an eye out for next week's Weekly Peek for April's free choice book report information, guidelines, and rubric. The February missionary book report presentations were fantastic (see pic below)!!!

We are also looking forward to the upcoming study of Ecuador for our Latin American focus in 4<sup>th</sup> term.

Thank you for your continued love and support! I am so grateful to be part of your children's lives.



Working hard in Grade 3....



3rd graders recently dressed up for their book reports on Christian missionaries



### From Mrs. Velarde’s Desk:

Things are really beginning to ‘take shape’ as we near the end of Term 3. The 4th graders have been participating in a rather advanced project that incorporates math, science, and social studies. The 4th graders each chose an African grassland animal, and used both proportions and fractions to determine the size of the head. The students then drew the heads and turned their 2D pictures into 3D creatures. There have been so many “light bulb” moments that have been so exciting for the entire class to witness. It has been such a joy to see new skills and natural abilities bloom through this project. Our animal heads will be on display in our classroom for Africa Day, April 1st.

We have also been participating in “move-it March”. The school as a whole is working toward moving more during the month of March. The 4th graders have challenged themselves to walk 1 mile per day. The quick miles have been great brain breaks and the students have really enjoyed the chance to wake their bodies up from its long winter’s nap. Stay tuned as we prepare to close Term 3 and begin our final term of the year!



# Middle School News!

## Fifth Grade Update: Time Flies When You're Having Fun!

The old adage that time flies when you're having fun is so true. Just the other day, one of the middle schoolers pointed out that we only have 11 weeks left of school. How is that possible?!?!

Earlier this month, the fifth graders had an "in house" field trip where they spent the entire day preparing for Africa Day on April 1. We had so much fun bringing their idea to create an "Escape Room" to life by cutting, pinning, sewing, crafting, painting and gluing, that, before we knew it, the school day was over. Akpe (thank you) to Mrs. McGrail (a student's grandmother) and Mrs. Heenan who taught us how to sew, and to Ms. Kelly (Miss Legro's friend) for sharing stories from her short-term mission trips to Ghana.

It is hard to believe that in just 2 short weeks we will begin our fourth and final term together. The fun will continue during Term 4 as we...

- ...head to Guatemala on the final leg of our journey around the world.
- ...get our hands dirty once again working in the garden.
- ...move more with the Food for Life fitness challenges.
- ...plan to go on our first "real" field trip in 2 years.



An HCA Grandma shares her talent for sewing with Grade 5

It has been said that it takes over 400 repetitions to create new synapses in the brain (true learning), unless it is done with play...then it takes less than 40 repetitions. I'm looking forward to all the fun and new synapses that will form as this year continues to fly by!

## Sixth Grade Update from Mr. Shea:

Since our last newsletter, we have been learning about Nigerian and other African cultures through their writing and through their favorite games. We started a preparatory unit this week on "Reading Beyond the Text." The unit is designed to help students understand three things: the context in which a story is told, the subtext the author includes without knowing, and the things we can learn from what the author left out of the story altogether. While we are working with this idea using African literature (and later on continuing this idea into film and Latin American literature) the goal is to give students useful tools they can use for understanding God's Word and world.

Africa Day is quickly approaching and our students are very excited to build, create, and share the things that they have learned. Our study has focused greatly on African hospitality and how to make people feel welcome, no matter what we have or what our space looks like. Grade 6 students have chosen to use Africa Day as an opportunity to invite other students throughout the school to come and learn a traditional Nigerian version of the game of mancala, as they show off what they have learned about being welcoming and loving to their guests.

We do have some immediate needs in order to get our Africa Day up and running! Please feel free to send in any clean recyclable building supplies (extra cardboard, empty cans/bottles, ect.) with your students. We are hoping to recreate a small Nigerian home inside the classroom in order to host our Mancala Party on Africa Day!

## Seventh/Eighth Grade from Mrs. Gordon:

Does anyone else get excited every year at this time? I get excited for longer warmer days, more opportunities to be moving and learning outside, and the hope of new growth!

7th and 8th grade enjoyed a simple and fantastic field trip recently visiting some local African markets, shopping for loads of fresh ingredients, cooking together, and finally dining Ugandan style. This field trip fit in beautifully with studying Ugandan culture, reading through the book *Food Rules* (which serves as a guide to help people take practical steps away from the Western diet), and experimenting with personal food preferences through an exposure experiment. The students noted these elements of our day as feeling un-American:



7th and 8th graders cooking a Ugandan dinner together following their field trip!

- waiting for everyone to be seated before starting eating
- the food we ate
- we don't usually spend so long preparing food
- that we took our time
- having one conversation while eating instead of a bunch of little ones

Coming up soon, we will be...

- bringing jump rope, everyday chores, honey, beef stew, and Ugandan hospitality to Africa Day
- articulating personal stories of God's redemptive work in our lives
- increasing the amount of steps we take daily through creativity and various challenges

### Words from Mr. Hayward:

Greetings students, parents, grandparents, guardians, and all interested readers of Pathways! Happy Spring to you all, perhaps (besides our coastline, mountains, woodlands, and history) the best feature New England has to offer. As we are about to enter the final lap of this school year at HCA, we complete our survey of the Old Testament with the Jewish people returning from exile, considerably chastened by that experience. God allows them to resettle in The Promised Land

(520-400 BC). Once they are again established in Judah (the OT books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi tell the tale), their situation remains precarious. The empires of Persia, Greece, and then Rome will call almost all of the shots over the next 450 years, as the Jews wait for deliverance from injustice and oppression. The longing for a Messiah has grown to a fever pitch when - silently and in complete obscurity - He finally arrives. When Term 4 begins (April 4!), we'll spend most of it on the life, times, ministry, and eternally relevant impact of that One Life. Stay tuned.