

**ALUMNUS PROFILE: DAVID RUPKE by Joanne Knibbe**

When David Rupke walked through the doors of Timothy Christian School in Rexdale in September of 1963, he and 40 other Grade 9 students little knew how the history of TDChristian would unfold.

David's parents were strong supporters of Christian education; both grandfathers had helped launch the Holland Marsh Christian School in the 1940s when newly-arrived Dutch immigrants were settling the area. Now, as their children began reaching high school age, some of the Holland Marsh parents had joined others in the greater Toronto area to form a high school society.

The following year, Grade 9 and 10 classes met in the basement of the Second Christian Reformed Church on Albion Road. David remembers that the "school bus" was actually an Econoline van driven by teacher Jack Olthuis. At the end of one wintry day, Jack gave David the keys to warm the "bus" up, and David drove it around the parking lot doing donuts with everyone on board. On another winter day, the driver struggled with the slippery roads because three guys on the bench seat at the back kept shifting their weight to make the van fishtail.

David's dad went with other board members to look for property on which to build a high school. Upon coming home, he informed his wife that they had found a suitable property in Woodbridge and had signed a commitment for \$10,000 each as a down payment—equivalent to about \$78,000 today. She was understandably furious!

David left TDChristian after Grade 10; the range of courses offered back then was limited, and his interests and abilities leaned more towards working with his hands. He graduated from King City High School and completed a course in hydraulics and pneumatics at Centennial College. He has worked as a truck driver, farm manager, and builder, as well as in waste water operations.

Though "retired", David is using his talents, expertise, and experience to make a difference internationally. He has served in Honduras and in Ethiopia, where he is currently involved in a project helping the Ethiopian people to reforest, provide food for themselves, and boost their economy.

David observes that TDChristian has come a long way since 1963. He believes that every student would benefit from spending time volunteering in a developing country—to explore the world outside the classroom, to learn from people who live in different circumstances, and to discover the meaning of service.



**STUDENT LEARNING: TAKING ON A SECOND LANGUAGE by David Hagen**

After a six-year hiatus, Computer Science is back at TDChristian. Last year, eleven Grade 11 students signed up for an online course in the subject. This year eight of them are taking the Grade 12 course in-house, while a growing number of Grade 11s are tackling the online course.

Many students find that while Comp Sci requires rigorous logic to code a program, it also allows for a lot of creativity in problem solving and provides the opportunity to create something out of essentially nothing. Since technology is all around us and expanding every day, the ability to use a programming language is a very helpful skill, and advantageous when it comes to university or job applications. Careers in technology are increasing in fields such as stem cell research, robotics, the internet of things, and many other areas, making a course like this one more relevant than ever. Along with the Robotics Club and the Engineering Block course, the addition of Computer Science has helped to produce a vibrant technological learning environment at TDChristian.



*Two grade 12 students problem solve in Computer Science class.*

**STAFF PROFILE: A CULTURE OF BOUNTY by Richard Peters**

It's August 1, 2016. Two days ago I was being killed by my wife on the stage of the Gravenhurst Opera House. Yesterday I was flying into Chicago's Midway Airport. I've never been to Chicago, but the city is for improv what New York is for theatre. And now I'm sitting in a black box classroom with students from all over the world: Japan, Australia, and every corner of the US. Mornings focus on improv; afternoon classes teach improv as a way to generate sketch comedy. And while I had to pay my travel, room, and board, the school has pitched in for the classes, and I want to make sure TDChristian gets its money's worth!

The first sketch class kicks butt. And it kicks my butt. Second City works out of a culture of bounty, meaning they believe that ideas are limitless and there is no such thing as writer's block: you are a writer because you write, not because you have an idea. And so, we write. All of us. A five-minute sketch every single night for four weeks. And we learn techniques and forms, and are given story-generating tools that annihilate the excuse "I don't know what to write." And that, in my books, is worth the price of admission.

Looks like TDChristian is going to be offering a sketch comedy writing class next year!





## STUDENT LEARNING: INVESTIGATING THE EARTH'S BUILDING BLOCKS

by Vivian Templeton

The Chemistry quarter of Grade 9 Science focuses on parts of the atom, bonding, and properties of matter. In learning these concepts, we continually refer to the periodic table. Its odd shape arises from arranging the elements according to their structure and properties; based on their relative positions in the table, information about one element can lead to inferences about another. As we study the periodic table, students are introduced to the order, patterns, and design of chemistry.

Everything on earth is made up of the elements of the periodic table: they are the "building blocks" of our world. Although some of them are rare or unstable and have few practical applications, others are found in everyday substances.

Students in the class each chose an element they found interesting and researched its practical applications in both pure and combined forms. They also investigated the element's physical properties, chemical properties, health effects, and environmental impacts. Then they displayed their information on a dodecahedron, with each side showing a different fact about the element.

Five projects are pictured (clockwise from top left): Emma DeVries – aluminum; Naomi Boot – silver; Nathan Bellsmith – fluorine; Emily Mikelsons – lithium; Brianna Ferguson – silver. William Groot - Pascal, Cayley, Fermat Classes.



## STAFF PROFILE: LEARNING AT A GARBAGE DUMP

by Marjorie Helder

I never imagined I would go to a garbage dump for professional development. However, this past summer I went on a tour at the Edmonton Waste Management Centre in Edmonton, Alberta. As a Geography teacher, I was very excited to learn more about how this world-renowned facility, currently diverting over 50% of waste from the landfill, was working toward a diversion rate of 90%.

Edmonton's current waste management system includes a large composting facility for food and yard waste; a location for recycling plastics, newspaper, boxes, tin cans, and glass jars and bottles; a centre for electronic and electric parts recycling; and the Reuse Centre, a large storelike facility that provides free reusable items and art-and-craft workshops to Edmontonians. Its newest innovation will be the Waste to Biofuels and Chemicals Facility, which will convert tons of waste into methanol (to create plastics and solvents) and ethanol (used in fuel). In addition, by-products from the old landfill (1975–2009) continue to be an important part of Edmonton's waste management. Methane gas from the organic waste is collected and converted into electricity to power 4,600 homes annually, while leachate, the contaminated water at the bottom of the landfill, is captured, processed, and later cleaned at the wastewater treatment plant.

Waste disposal has always been a concern for humans. However, impressive possibilities arise from "mining" our garbage for resources. Now I'm challenging my students to imagine a world that embraces a system of sustainable waste management. Who knew that a trip to the dump could be so inspirational!



## STAFF (AND ALUMNI) PROFILE: ERIC AND BRUCE VRIELING by Colin Hoving

"Raceway" (sleeves that connect to the wall to hide cables and wiring) was the word of the summer as I began my first year working at TDChristian this past August. Although not hired as a techie, for my first few weeks I worked alongside Bruce and Eric Vrieling, and it was a fitting start to my time here. I got to know them ten years ago as a student, so was happily able to start my new job with a pair of familiar faces. The Vrielings used a lot of unfamiliar words and concepts, but as the days went by I picked up more and more.

Eric and Bruce, as many know, are the twin technologists here at TDChristian. Eric started in 2001, and Bruce, after volunteering in 2002, officially joined the staff in 2004. Ten years after graduating I find that technology at TDChristian has advanced by leaps and bounds and continues to improve each year: computers and wifi everywhere, laptops and tablets for the teachers, info screens, Macs for video editing, new applications for communicating with parents, and the list goes on. Eric and Bruce are the backbone of this complex technological organism.



Eric (black shirt) and Bruce (striped shirt) Vrieling, hard at work in the Tech office.

When asked what they enjoy most, they both named interaction with students and doing work they love at a place they are very fond of. Outside the tech room they are assistant coaches on several school sports teams; they also have a sailboat and have taken many students and alumni out on the water. Their connection with students outside the classroom, learning about who they are and challenging them in their faith, has always been appreciated. It is hard to imagine where TDChristian would be without their contribution.

**Are you one of our alumni? We'd love to hear from you!  
Go to the alumni section at our website at [www.tdchristian.ca](http://www.tdchristian.ca)!**