

VOX CIVITAS

THE NEWSLETTER FOR EUKARYA FAMILY CENTER

WINTER 2023



A SEASON OF CELEBRATION

SPOTLIGHT

Aylor purchase creates
a bright future

UPPER SCHOOL

ECA students publish
their first book

BEACON HILL

How to get through
the winter blues

A Season of Celebration

Heading into a new year, it's easy to think of New Year's resolutions. What do we want to accomplish in the new year? How do we want to grow? Where do we need to change? A new year feels like a clean slate for many of us. However, while it's good to look forward with purpose, we can also see the beginning of the year as an opportunity to look back and celebrate what the Lord has done. This process of reflection helps to reframe how we approach seasons. Winter can be difficult for many with its cold, gray presence, and yet we look forward to it because we celebrate Christmas and New Year's with gratitude, cozy accoutrements, and delicious food.

Psalm 145:7 says, "They shall eagerly utter the memory of Your abundant goodness and will shout joyfully of Your righteousness." The stories in these pages are reminders to pause, thank our Father for his abundant goodness and celebrate. TLC provided free seminars this summer, reaching more than 60 members in our community to educate and encourage. It also raised money for a scholarship fund to support an ever-growing population of students in need (see p. 4). Scholé has added a myriad of new families, celebrating each one of them with its new weekly Family Spotlights (p. 5). Athletics is boasting another successful season of games, tournaments, and awards with the addition of new teams (pp. 6-7). ECA Missions had the incredible opportunity to send a team to Uganda this summer, ministering to orphanages and churches while being drastically impacted themselves (p. 8). We are thrilled to be moving the Academy into a new building and grateful for our community in helping prepare for the move (pp. 10-11). Upper school students successfully published their first book through their writing club, The Inklings (pp. 12-13). An alumnus shares his incredible story of hiking the entire Appalachian Trail this past year (pp. 14-15). The Marriage Institute of Winchester and Beacon Hill Counseling share helpful advice and information for marriages and making the most of the winter season (pp. 16-17).

While we have much to celebrate, it all pales in comparison to the joy of our heavenly Father, who made His presence known on earth in the form of a fragile, precious baby. Jesus will forever be the reason why we are grateful, in the midst of any circumstance. As we look ahead to a new year, we thank you for your part in all that God is doing within the ministries of Eukarya Family Center.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to each of you!

Dan Donnelly, Eukarya Family Center Founder
Joanie Hughes, Eukarya Christian Academy Principal
Crystal Means, Eukarya King's Cubs Director

Vox
Civitas

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CELEBRATE

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Engaging with the Community

Over the summer, The Learning Center (TLC) launched its Summer Seminars. Each month, TLC provided a two-hour seminar, free of charge, on the topics of Affect Regulation, Nutrition, and Biblical Parenting. Affect Regulation covered the neuroscience behind emotional regulation, how to practice regulating your emotions—as well as helping your children do so—and practical resources to dig deeper. Nutrition explored the gut-brain connection and how certain foods can encourage or inhibit brain activity in you and your kids. Biblical Parenting gave encouraging insight and instruction on loving your children like Christ, while remaining steadfast in scripture. Collectively, the seminars provided information and resources for over 75 members in the community and are now available for viewing on the website. You can access the videos here: <https://eukaryaacademy.com/tlc-seminars/>.



TLC Director Laine Everhart and volunteers sell snacks at a TLC fundraiser.

In the fall, TLC organized a hot dog and baked goods fundraiser, raising \$1,114.50 for its scholarship fund. The Center also provided, and continues to provide, services to 74 students inside and outside the Eukarya community.



Isaiah, with specialist Amy Mackie, has thrived at TLC.

Student Spotlight

“We have been at Eukarya for about eight years. We came to Eukarya in search of a place that would be open to working with a more specialized education — specifically for our son Isaiah, who had survived brain cancer, but was experiencing a lot of educational delays due to the cancer and the harsh treatment that comes with it. Eukarya has been such a blessing from the beginning, not only because they have created a loving environment in which Isaiah can be himself, but also because they have been so valuable in helping our family as we navigate his learning disabilities.

Over the years, as The Learning Center has grown and developed more, we have been blessed to be able to use many of their services and therapies that have really helped Isaiah. They have been flexible to allow us to try different therapies and see if they work and then adjust yearly. I truly believe that Isaiah would not be where he is now without the services he has received. Rae Cromeens has worked with him for years and her patience and love have proven to be instrumental in helping him be the best he can be. She challenges him to work hard on things that don't come easily. She has been a true gift to him.”

-RUTH TRUMAN, Parent

Vice Principal Joins the ECA Family

Over the summer, Eukarya Christian Academy (ECA) welcomed Bryan Ogle as Vice Principal. Bryan hails from Granite City, Illinois, and grew up in a pastor's home as the youngest of five. He received a B.S. in Christian Education at Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee, as well as a Master's in Youth and Family Ministry. He is currently pursuing his doctorate in education at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.



After serving as a lead pastor for many years, Bryan said he knew that the year 2023 would be one of transition for him and his family. After prayer and fasting, they made the decision to move to Winchester to be close to his wife's family. Without the assurance of a job, Bryan moved in faith and was fortuitously connected to the Academy through family. "It was then that the idea of a vice principal was placed in front of us. I have no doubt that it was God's design for me to be here."

As the VP, Bryan is enthusiastic about being part of the students' lives. "They have a call and purpose to fulfill in life. Their call may be as a teacher, mechanic, lawyer... the task isn't the most important aspect. The development of their Christian character is what will fulfill their purpose. And I am excited to play a part."

After God, he is most passionate about his family and arranges his schedule to prioritize spending as much time with them as he can. "My goal is to be a husband and father who, when it is time for me to leave this life, my family will want to be at my bedside."

Bryan brings a steady, faithful, and lighthearted presence to the ECA family with his experience, faith, and humor. Ministry and education have been his two passions in life and having had so much experience in the ministry world, he is looking forward to growing behind the scenes in the educational setting.

New traditions, families, & joys



Scholé has a lot to celebrate. The new families that have joined this year have added an abundance of treasures to the community, including many sweet babies! We have been able to celebrate each family, old and new, with our "Family Spotlight" on Thursday mornings. With each spotlight, the students get to introduce their families and share something unique to them.

In the classrooms, now holding nearly 50 students, new students are thriving and jiving well with the established students, creating a fun atmosphere to learn and grow together. Our new addition of a pre-K class is full of smiling faces and brings an entertaining as well as energizing level of life and silliness with learning. The elementary classes are enjoying lots of hands-on experiments and lessons, and the upper school students are having fun with new traditions, including daily "hot chocolate chats."

As a whole, Scholé is eager to move to the new campus. Families and teachers are excited to have more space and to be able to more easily share resources with the Academy. We will all celebrate when we have rooms to call our own!

-LISHA DETWILER

TRUE ATHLETES

A Record Season

Eukarya Athletics had six teams competing this past fall: Varsity and Middle School Soccer and Varsity, Junior Varsity, Middle School-A, and Middle School-B Volleyball. A record number of 86 athletes registered to participate.

MS-A Volleyball took 1st place in the Sacred Heart Middle School Tournament in October, and the team took 2nd place in the new Shenandoah Christian Conference (SCC) playoff. MS Soccer also placed 2nd in the SCC playoff, which ended in double celebrations on the same night.

Varsity Volleyball placed 12th in Division 4 at the National Association of Christian Athletes (NACA) and were honored with the Sportsmanship Award, which was voted by the coaches of other teams.

Varsity Soccer took 3rd place in the play-offs on November 3rd.

Varsity soccer athlete and senior Nate Ellison earned the All-Tournament player award.



The Road to Victory

Eukarya Varsity Soccer scored a victory over Rhea Christian Academy on November 1st, which sent them to our division's semi-finals tournament, where they took third place.

ECA was matched against Mt. Mission, who have typically played at the Division 1 level. The game was rough. The opponent was clearly misplaced. By the time ECA was down 10-0, the referees called the game 20 minutes early in a "mercy call."

Coach Cody told the refs that the ECA team had come a long way... not to get a game cut short. He said he had lots of subs he would love to play. This bold move of leadership shifted the entire atmosphere on both teams. Mt. Mission agreed to keep playing and it was an incredible sight. The referees left, coaches came in to play toward the end, and laughter and smiles were plentiful.

After watching the game, ECA Principal Joanie Hughes said, "It was a rough game, but the Eukarya team was amazing—remaining classy in a situation that teams (or coaches) with less character might not have handled as well. I would imagine many teams would have left the field in a huff, complaining about every part of what happened. Coach Cody and Coach Chris led the boys well. Relationship was more important than the win. This is a glimpse of what true athletes look like."



ECA Varsity Soccer and opponent Mt. Mission take a moment together after the game.



When He calls, We Go

Student perspective on ECA trip to Uganda **BY ANA CUTSHAW**

We arrived in Uganda around 1 a.m., drove four hours to our first school, were there for the sunrise, and went straight into our ministry to the children. Now you may think this is insane—I did at first—but even though I was tired, I was actually able to stay awake. And looking back on it, I can't help but think of how lucky I was to be able to make a slight sacrifice, like sleep, to do the work of the Lord in a place He so clearly loves.

That day we got to play with the children in a field and on the beach of a lake. There was one girl in particular who was very little and clung to me the entire day. When I would carry her she would barely let me switch her to my other hip because she thought I would put her down.

"I can't help but think of how lucky I was to be able to make a slight sacrifice like sleep to do the work of the Lord in a place He so clearly loves."

It was heartbreaking to see so many beautiful, sweet children, so starved of affection from their family, the people who are supposed to give them the most love. We were also able to visit the capital of Uganda, Kampala, and the worst slum in the country.

I will never forget walking down the streets and seeing literal human

filth in the streets, trash covering every surface, and water so green it could have been colored with food dye. We were in the slums with our local contact who ran a rescue program for girls in child prostitution there. The program focuses on giving children an education, because once a girl is in school, she would become safe. My heart broke. Most girls in the slum are made sexually active from the age of 10–12.

These kids were molested by their own fathers and told to keep quiet or they would be thrown onto the streets to fend for themselves. I got to speak to some of these girls while I was there, and while I have not experienced anywhere near the level of trauma these girls have endured, I was able to share my own stories where I was in similar situations and how even when I was at my lowest point, of attempting suicide, God met me there. He called me clean. He called me pure. He called me beloved. I encouraged the girls to look to God in the midst of their situations and I was able to pray with many of them for those very reasons. It was unforgettable.

We visited two churches and many other schools, including one girls' school where I had the opportunity to preach to over 900 girls, and another safari—this time with giraffes that we actually got to walk beside. And while there were a few complications (like two of our team members coming down with typhoid), this trip prepared me in ways I never thought possible to simply spend time and love on

MISSIONS

those hurting and broken, to share with them the love Jesus gives freely, and to act in that love towards them.

I don't share these gruesome details purposelessly, but to make you aware of the true environment in which some people live. They, just like us, are hurting, broken people who need God. And I am so glad we were able to give them a glimpse of Jesus. On both trips we were able to play against a women's soccer team (who played barefoot), letting the guys show off their skills, while many of the girls played with the children. It was the fun and joy more than anything that taught me to appreciate the little things in life.

At the end of our trip we were all forever changed, and on the way home we were able to spend a 21-hour layover in Istanbul, Turkey, where we visited some of the most

famous mosques in the world, and where I received a very strong call to minister to Muslims. While there are so many more details and



things I could share about these trips, I will say this: God moves and God heals. He is moving and working in ways we don't even know. But we must do our part. When He calls, we go. And remember where God guides, He provides.

"And the King will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of

the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'" (Matthew 25:40)

I encourage you to pray about going on or donating to one of our future trips to Uganda and to 'In the Garden Missions.' Thank you for your support and for reading about my experience, I hope I was able to speak to you in some way.

To read Ana's full story on her time in Uganda, visit <https://eukaryaacademy.com/community/a-message-from-ana-on-uganda/> or scan the QR code below.

Partnering with "In the Garden Missions"

Each Friday that ECA students buy lunch at the school, the proceeds go to sponsoring children at St. Katherine's Primary School in Uganda through 'In the Garden Missions.' Each ECA homeroom class supports one boy and one girl each. As the school year progresses, ECA partners with these students by praying for them, writing letters back and forth, and visiting them when they take student teams to Uganda. In third world countries, an

education is literally a ticket to life. In Uganda, girls who are age 12 and up can legally be taken into a marriage relationship, often against their will... unless they are in school. Our sponsorship of these students is life-changing for them, and for us. Can you imagine beginning a sponsorship for one of these students in kindergarten, growing up writing to each other, and then being able to go visit as a teen? This is the hope of ECA Missions. We are so

excited about this sponsorship launch and its potential for future growth.

.....

Rosette is 10 years old and in Primary Three class. Her best subject is English and she wants to become a teacher when she grows up. She likes to pray to God because "he hears everything." Rosette lives with both of her parents, who are peasant farmers. She has four other siblings at home.



AYLOR

A BRIGHT FUTURE

New building provides endless opportunity **BY MELANIE HILDRETH**

In September 2023, Eukarya Family Center (EFC) took possession of the former Robert E. Aylor Middle School, a 107,000 square foot building on 23 acres in Stephens City, Virginia.

Affectionately dubbed “NEukarya,” the school is a major asset. But it needed significant renovation before being ready to house Eukarya Christian Academy (ECA) and Scholé students, as well as other EFC ministries like The Learning Center.

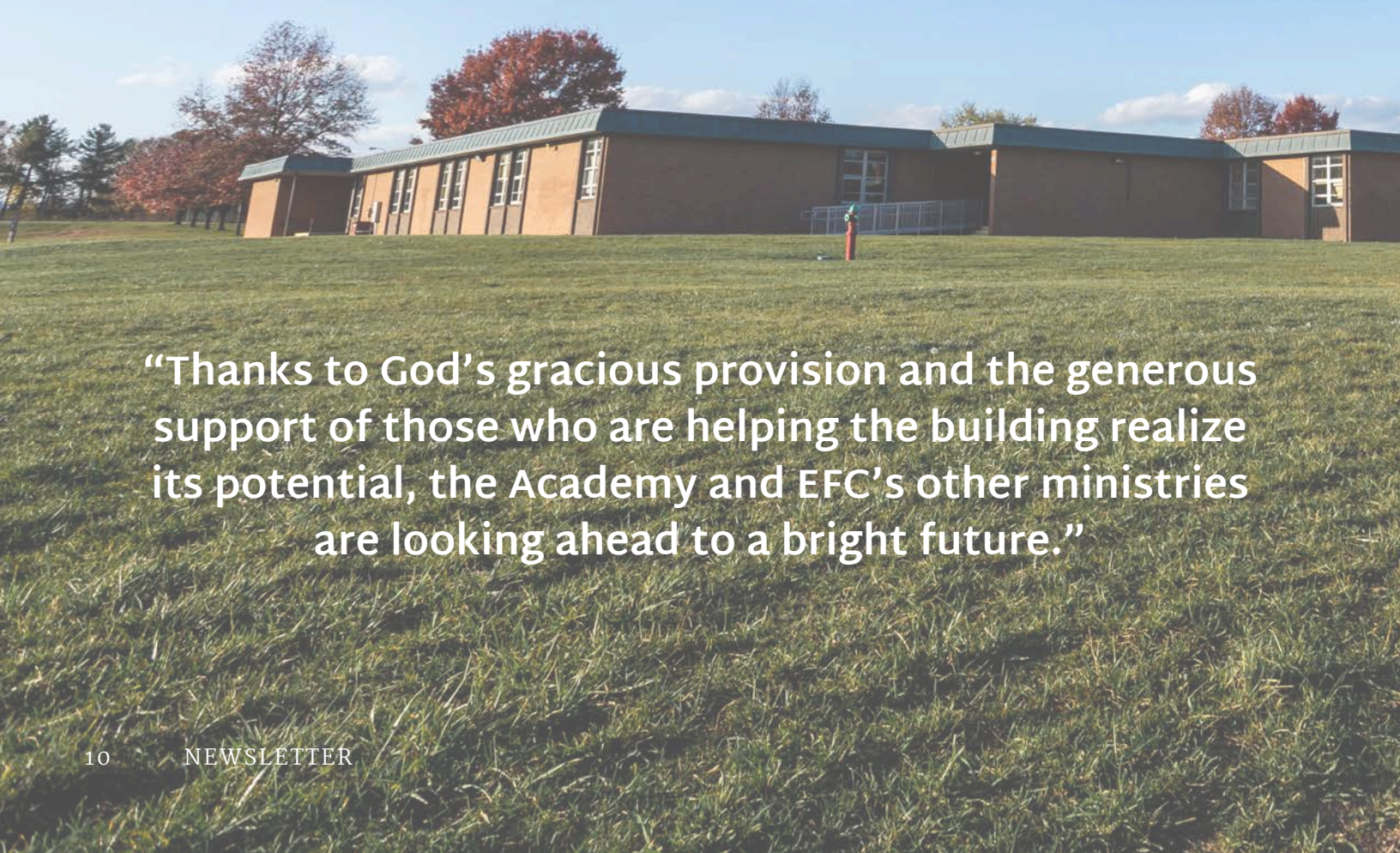
So this fall, members of the Eukarya community rolled up their sleeves to clean, paint, patch, rake, and move items from the old building on Valley Pike to their new home on Aylor Road.

While families pitched in to fix up the interior and exterior of the building, teams of experts meticulously assessed and renovated the school’s existing electrical, HVAC, plumbing, security, and Wi-Fi systems. They repaired broken windows and replaced locks. And they walked the grounds, clearing out materials left by the building’s previous occupants.

At every step, the team took care to ensure that the facility aligns with the rigorous operational needs of a K-12 school, adhering to accreditation standards.

Updates are proceeding in two phases: The first phase focuses on getting the building functioning, so that students can move in by early 2024. Once that happens, work on more aspirational and cosmetic projects can begin.

Eukarya’s goals for the building include taking classroom space from functional to exceptional, as well as making the most of



“Thanks to God’s gracious provision and the generous support of those who are helping the building realize its potential, the Academy and EFC’s other ministries are looking ahead to a bright future.”

of new spaces for drama, choral, and band programs; an ag room for trades and shop classes; and a full library and media center. With a new track, gymnasium, and an athletic facility, Eukarya Athletics can compete at a higher level with other schools.

Owning a building of this size comes with new, ongoing security and maintenance considerations, so the school will also be looking to hire new staff to meet those needs.

ECA has grown from a small handful of families to a robust community of more than 250 students. Thanks to God's gracious provision and the generous support of those who are helping the building realize its potential, the Academy and EFC's other ministries are looking ahead to a bright future.

"With a new track, gymnasium, and an athletic facility, Eukarya Athletics can compete at a higher level with other schools."



Every Saturday, groups of families and friends of Eukarya headed over to the school to help with projects.

Awakening Creativity

Teacher reflects on classroom imagination BY RACHEL HIMELRIGHT,

I'm enchanted with the Inklings writing group at ECA. There is a different energy in that room than in any classroom. Inklings is a club that meets for a little under an hour each Wednesday of the school year at Eukarya.

Our group is named after the Inklings that met at Oxford in the early 20th century and included C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien.

My hope is that the children will learn and benefit not only from the comments of their teacher, but also from the directed critique and in-depth discussion they can have about their work with the other students. The original Inklings group pushed each other in similar ways, and no doubt you are familiar with their achievements. I see two incredible things happen when students begin to unwind a story from their unique spool of memories and experiences.

“...the real benefit of the Inklings group is this awakening to the power of the creativity we've been given by our loving Creator.”

First, the students become excited to be given the opportunity to share something they've created with the world. The students gather willingly to sit quietly and work on a story they are crafting for publication. I hear their discussions in the halls and at lunch time as they wrestle together over what direction they should go in their narrative. Often, when they arrive in class, they happily relate to me the progress they've made since our last gathering. Since self-publishing has been simplified of late, each of the students has a reasonable expectation to see their work in a hard copy of a book at the end of the year. Many of the usual limitations that school necessarily places on a student's writing are removed in Inklings. We explore a variety of prompts and genres, but creativity is allowed

to have free rein. These characteristics enliven the students in a way that teachers wish we could see more often, and in turn, that offers encouragement to continue doing the job we have been given. The second event I'm privileged to witness is more like a slow blooming than the quantifiable excitement of my first point. Creative writing is often therapeutic for both the author and the audience. Fiction frequently allows a

Christian author to explore and think through not only an unbeliever's response to brokenness, but in turn how a Christian can respond in a way that shows Christ's love and draws the unbeliever toward Christ.

Our Inklings group remembers our desire to reach for ideas that are good and beautiful, yet we don't deny the Christian's responsibility to tackle some of the more difficult ideas that overshadow modern thinking. How should we think about

troublesome concepts like death, sin, and disobedience? Should we sugarcoat the impact these aberrations have on the lives of real people? As the teacher in the room who has experienced many times what is happening in the student's minds as they imagine how they will create situations and characters, I feel as if I have a front row seat to a kind of therapy my students didn't even know they needed.

This is sometimes buried beneath the surface of the story that at first glance seems rife with despair. Many incredible life stories are already intertwined in the space of brief existence occupied by these young people. I see some of them telling their own story. Often this is


UPPER SCHOOL

only an imperceptible thread that runs through their written work, and even the student who pens it may not be conscious it exists. Nonetheless, the act of pulling the story from their mind to express it on paper puts it to rest in their soul, and they leave lighter than they came. This is not every student, of course. For some, processing doesn't happen through writing. I think, though, that many children who choose to walk through this classroom door have discovered how enlivened they feel when they create.

Sure, we are thrilled to end the year with a product we can sell and be proud of, but I'm of the opinion that the real benefit of the Inklings group is this awakening to the power of the creativity we've been given by our loving Creator. Creativity is a natural outflow of the condition of the heart and is a powerful tool to awaken the sympathy of others toward our worldview. Inklings is part of Eukarya's

vision to create well-rounded students who understand the excitement of the idea that we've been given Kingdom work to accomplish that was individually chosen for us by a loving Creator, and that as we plug into Him as our source, our creativity has the power to change our lives and the lives of others. That's incredible.

Curious about other cool projects happening at Eukarya? Follow our Instagram to stay up to date!

@eukaryaacademy 

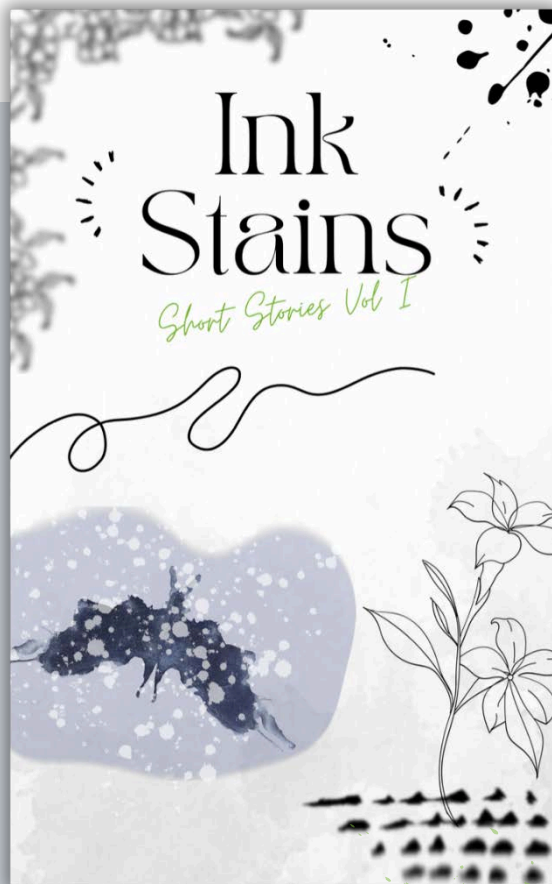
Ink Stains: Short Stories Vol. 1

ECA Inklings

Amazon

ISBN-13 : 979-8851914997

Ink Stains is a captivating collection of short stories written by talented high school students, covering a range of genres including romance, dystopian, and historical. Each story is unique and transports the reader into different worlds, where they will encounter unforgettable characters and be swept away by thrilling plots. From tales of blossoming love to dystopian societies struggling for survival, this anthology has something for everyone. Don't miss out on this impressive display of creativity and talent from tomorrow's literary stars.



Available on Amazon for purchase.

Trusting God on the Trail

Alumnus recounts his hiking experience **BY SARAH HYLAND**

“I think God made me do it,” says Casey Estep after hiking the entire Appalachian Trail—2,200 miles—in an impressive 159 days. Casey graduated from ECA in 2015 when there were only 40 students total at the school. Eight years later, many of his closest friends are from his time there, some even starting a Bible study that has been running for the past three years. “I found a community at Eukarya like I have never had before or since.”

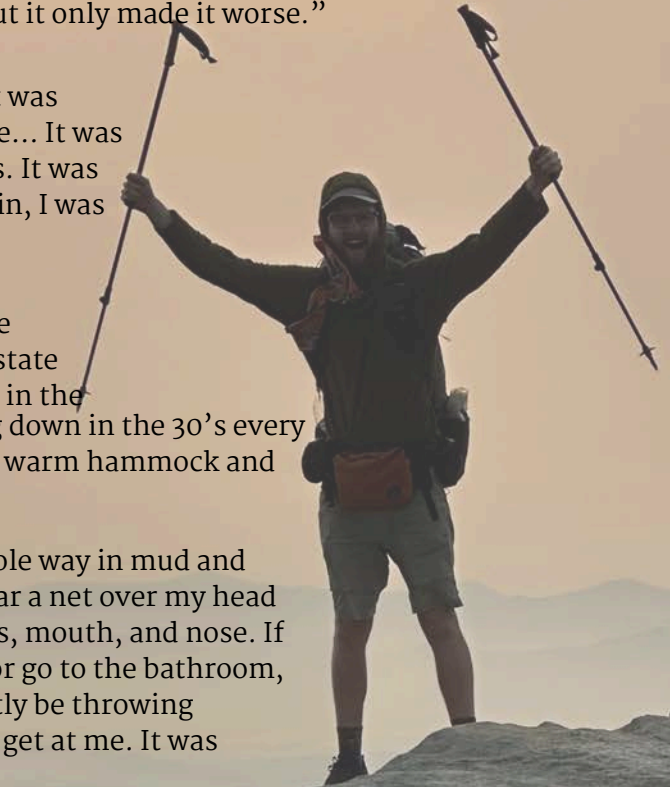
After graduating early as a junior, Casey attended Laurel Ridge Community College for a year before transferring to Christopher Newport University. There, he double majored in Information Systems and Information Sciences, and double minored in Computer Sciences and Leadership Studies. Since receiving his bachelor’s degree, he has worked as a systems engineer in Virginia, but left to pursue the trail.

In 2021, Casey had hiked the Tuscarora Trail—a 252 mile trail following the Appalachian mountains through Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia—and got the hiking itch. “I thought it was going to satisfy my desire to hike, but it only made it worse.”

So he decided to embark on five months of hiking. “It was incredible! It was the hardest thing that I’ve ever done... It was incredibly social—there were lots of other thru hikers. It was incredibly boring most of the time. I was always in pain, I was always hungry, I was always tired. It was great!”

Two sections were the most challenging for Casey: the Great Smoky Mountains in Tennessee and the entire state of Connecticut. He said it rained for five days straight in the Smokies. “Nothing was dry and it was so cold, getting down in the 30’s every night. The worst part of my day was getting out of my warm hammock and putting on cold, wet socks.”

Connecticut had other challenges, like hiking the whole way in mud and mosquito swarms at all hours of the day. “I had to wear a net over my head constantly so that they wouldn’t fly into my ears, eyes, mouth, and nose. If you stopped for more than 10 seconds to filter water or go to the bathroom, you would get swarmed. At night they would constantly be throwing themselves at my bug net over my hammock to try to get at me. It was mentally exhausting.”



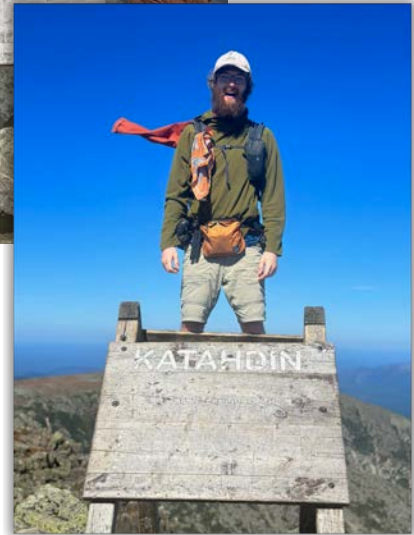
ALUMNI

Maine offered some relief and proved to be Casey's favorite part of the trail. He walked into Maine after one of the worst rain storms on the trail, disenchanted with viewpoints and exhausted, but the sky cleared in Maine and showed him an incredibly beautiful, rugged landscape. "For the first time in about 2,000 miles, I really felt like I was in the middle of nowhere."

While the trail was physically taxing, it was also mentally and spiritually draining. But Casey credits his trail family and reliance on God to help him get through. Six other hikers joined him on the trail and provided a deep sense of support almost the whole way.

Of his faith, he says, "There are two ways to go about doing something you love: a way that is for yourself and a way that is for the Lord. There were so many ways that I wanted to go about hiking this trail that would have been only for my own glory. Every time I submitted my will to the Lord's it was better than I ever imagined. That was true in the large-scale decisions like what direction to hike and who to hike with, as well as the small decisions like how many miles to do in a day."

After summing Mt. Katahdin in Maine and officially finishing the trail, Casey has celebrated by resting and eating as much as he can!



"There were so many ways that I wanted to go about hiking this trail that would have been only for my own glory. Every time I submitted my will to the Lord's it was better than I ever imagined."



Incarnating Love

Shifting our view of marriage **BY KIM HYLAND**

At Christmas, our minds turn toward God's greatest revelation of Himself through the incarnation of his son, Jesus Christ. God has shown Himself to us in through creation and His word, but nothing reveals more about God than Jesus's incarnation—God becoming human. Scripture tells us that Jesus is “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15) and “the exact imprint of His nature” (Heb. 1:3).

As such, He reminds us that we too are made in God's image (Gen. 1:27). Jesus's life, death, and resurrection reveal not only who God is, but also who He made humans to be. As both fully divine and fully human, His divinity displays the nature of God, and His humanity shows us what God intended all of His image bearers to be.

As humans created in God's image, we have been given relationships with others to teach us how to love like Him . . . and marriage certainly avails us of that lesson! The Apostle Paul's letter to the Ephesians establishes the paradigm by which we can understand marital love as God intends it to be.

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband” (Ephesians 5:25–33).

While marriage is meant for an individual man and woman, its ultimate purpose goes beyond the two individuals. Marriage is meant to mirror the love Christ has for His church. Understanding this gives

us a bigger vision of marriage and reveals the opportunity that we have to learn to love like Christ when we love our spouse. The love Christ has for his church is unconditional and unwavering, and this is the same kind of love we can strive for in marriage. With this in mind, we can see how the inevitable problems of marriage present opportunities to learn to love like Jesus. And when we do, our marriage becomes another incarnation of God's love.

We manifest in our flesh the kind of love that Jesus showed us in His. The grace, mercy, and forgiveness that marriage requires not only builds strong marriages and strong foundations in our individual homes; Christian marriage also becomes a witness to the world of the love of God.

This Christmas, as we reflect on Jesus's incarnation, let's also consider how the love we share with our spouse might be an incarnation of God's love to those around us as well.

A Rhythm of Celebration

Combatting seasonal depression with rituals **BY SARAH HYLAND**

The countdown for Christmas and New Year's has passed and everyone has expectantly prepared for festivities. Yummy food has been eaten, the house decorated, classic movies watched, and seasonal garb donned for a beautiful season of excitement.

And then it hits. The letdown that often comes after Christmas morning has come and gone, or the slow fade after 12 a.m. hits and party poppers on the floor tell us a new year has arrived and we are heading into a bleak mid-winter.

Every year about 10 million people in the U.S. are diagnosed with seasonal affect disorder, a kind of depression also known as SAD. Due to the lack of sunshine, SAD is typically attributed to a vitamin D deficiency—something our bodies naturally produce when exposed to the sun. This essential vitamin helps with the absorption of other vitamins, so when lacking in vitamin D, our bodies have a hard time processing and storing essential nutrients. Even more, when it's dark outside our bodies generate more melatonin—the hormone that helps us sleep—which makes us groggier than we would be in more sunlit months. People also tend to slow down in winter months, meaning fewer social activities and more time alone which can decrease dopamine (our motivation hormone) and serotonin (our pleasure hormone).

So what can help us get through the long, cold months when a lot of things seem to be going against us? It might be counterintuitive, but we can celebrate. Having an attitude of wonder, thanksgiving, and merriment towards the cold

months are half the battle of settling into a long winter. And even though Christmas and New Year's are gone, there are still ways to implement celebration and community when it's cold—all the while boosting our dopamine and serotonin levels.

Find a rhythm every week in celebrating something. Celebration is really just acknowledging and making space for something significant; whether that be with others, or by yourself. A cup of coffee with your spouse on a frosty morning is a way to mark the day. Make tea time an afternoon ritual with coworkers (or at home with the kiddos) to pause the humdrum, share conversation, and help with the midday slump (it helps if you have cookies to go with it!). Have someone over for dinner that you've been meaning to catch up with, and make a recipe you've been wanting to try. Get the family together for a night of games, everyone's favorite snacks and fun music. Plan to have an hour of alone time to read a good book, snuggle in a blanket, and light a candle. Go bowling on a Tuesday "just because." Go for a walk with a friend or your dog and notice the beauty of the season, even in the chilled air.

Finding a reason to celebrate, even if seemingly small, can be the key component in changing your mindset towards winter blues if you struggle with these months. Of course, if you find it hard to navigate and want to talk to someone, you can always find a listening ear at Beacon Hill Counseling.

Try it the Scandinavian Way

To combat the longest winters in the world, each Scandinavian country has a secret to help cope. The Finnish stay awake longer via copious amounts of coffee. The Swedes have beautiful sunrooms and take trips to tropical places. The Danish have "hygge", which doesn't directly translate in English but means an intentional slowing down to enjoy cozy, convivial time with the people you love most. Sometimes this can look like alone time. The Norwegians eat cod liver oil to boost their vitamin D and cozy up in rustic cabins in the woods. Which one sounds most appealing to you?





Eukarya Christian Academy

The Learning Center

Scholé

Athletics

Missions

Upper School

Lower School

Alumni

Eukarya King's Cubs

The Marriage Institute
of Winchester

Beacon Hill Christian
Counseling

Eukarya Family Center is a passionately Christ-centered para-church organization dedicated to strengthening families and building loving relationships within communities. Our vision is rooted in the belief that families are God's chosen building blocks for His church, His Kingdom, and all of society. We aim to achieve this through education and discipleship for children and students, strengthening marriages, training better parents, and offering programs that are outside the traditional role of the church. At Eukarya Family Center, we value right thinking and right living, building up people and community through loving relationships, and avoiding legalism, watering down, or becoming licentious in nature.

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Find our Lion's List Business Directory on our
website, EukaryaAcademy.com.



Eukarya King's Cubs celebrated a wonderful fall with seasonal activities, family events, and many smiling faces.

Activities included leaf hunting, acorn counting, and crop planting.



Thanksgiving was celebrated with families.

Preschool cubs had a blast celebrating all things fall with a Harvest Festival!



Follow
@eukaryakingscubs on
Instagram for more
adorable content!



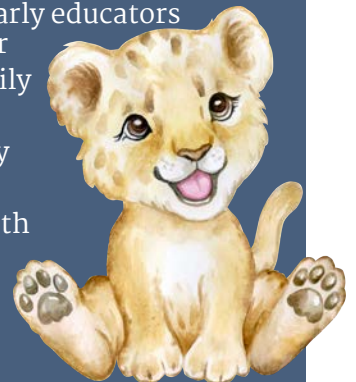
A Day in the Life of a King's Cub

BY CRYSTAL MEANS

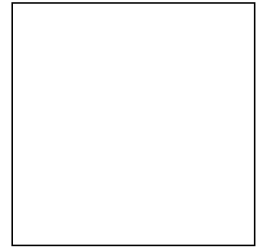
No matter the age, a day in the life of a King's Cub is filled with love, learning, and lasting life skills for their future! From infancy, our cubs are cultivating developmental, emotional, and social skills imperative for a successful life. Our two-year old cubs are continuing to grasp new life skills as they also begin to gain appreciation for God's Word, their peers, and others around them.



And once our cubs reach preschool, they are preparing academically for kindergarten while also acquiring a deeper understanding of God's Word and how to respond to challenges when things don't go as expected. The early educators continually pour into our cubs daily with love and direction as they navigate each season of life with us at Eukarya King's Cubs!

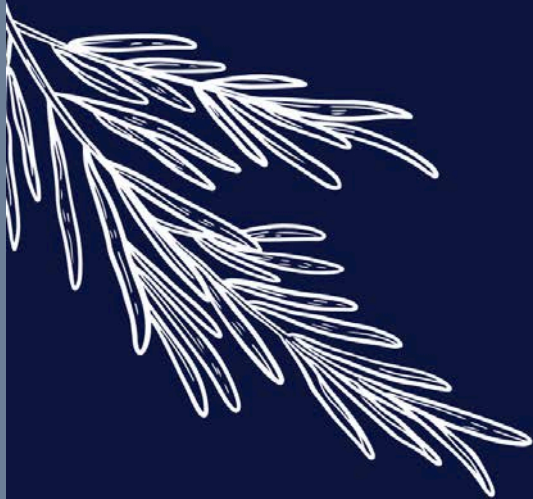


Eukarya Family Center
P.O. Box 664
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United States



You're Invited!

Saturday, February 10 Twenty Twenty-Four



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