

SUMMER 2019

MSCS

MENNO SIMONS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



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MISSION FIELD: MENNO SIMONS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Marvin Grasmeyer is a born and raised Calgarian who grew up with his 2 brothers and sister in Springbank Hill. Marvin attended Calgary Christian School and continued on to the University of Calgary where he obtained a Bachelor of Physical Education and a Bachelor of Education. He met his wife Cindy in his younger years while coaching at CCS and later their paths crossed again through a mutual friend. They married in 1994, the same year that he started his mission at Menno Simons Christian School. They have 6 children, Kristin (21), Alianna (20), Elias (19), Naomi (17), Vivian (14) and Josiah (11).



Marvin has a passion for the students which is evident in everything that he does at Menno. As director of the Athletic Program, he has ensured that Menno keeps an all inclusive approach because he sees the value in every student having the opportunity to be a part of a team. As a teacher, Marvin takes the time to get to know his students and their individual gifts and can often be seen working with students one on one in his classroom or a study space, not only helping solve math problems and algorithms but speaking truth into their lives. He invests in the spiritual growth and character development of our students by challenging them to work as PEACEMAKERS in all areas of their lives, even during basketball playoffs! He has even been known to show up on a yearly basis at the airport at 4:00am to pray over the Grade 9 class as they depart to go to SALTS.

As Marvin celebrates his 25th year teaching at Menno Simons Christian School, we met to talk about what inspires him, what drives him and what the future holds for him at his designated mission field: Menno Simons Christian.

WHAT INITIALLY INSPIRED YOU TO BECOME A TEACHER?

I don't know if anything actually inspired me to be a teacher. The funny story is that I was done with school, but my sister didn't think so. She did my university application for me and the fall after I graduated high school I was enrolled in General Studies at the University of Calgary. I decided that if I was going to be in university I wanted to play so I transferred into the Physical Education department. I had always really enjoyed coaching and knew that I wanted to coach kids, but realizing that there weren't many opportunities to have a career as a coach, I decided to do a Bachelor of Education degree after I finished Phys Ed because then I could coach in the school system. I loved working with kids and teaching wasn't much different! I coached my first basketball team at Menno in 1994 and this year was the first year that I haven't coached a basketball team!

HOW DID YOU END UP AT MENNO?

Cindy and I were married and attending Foothills Mennonite Church. At that time, pretty much the entire teaching staff went to Foothills Mennonite! Karen

CONT'D



Berriault was one of the teachers at the time and didn't want to teach her own kids, so when they heard that I was a teacher they had me come in to teach a few classes and then Terry Schellenberg asked me to apply. They created a position for me - math and phys ed and I've been doing it ever since! Five years into teaching at Menno I realized that it was a calling. My love of sports, my love of kids and serving God at the same time. Menno had become my mission field.

WHAT WERE THE EARLY YEARS LIKE?

It was hard in the early years, we were like the Israelites wandering the desert. Financially we were all being paid at least 30% less than what an average teacher at the CBE was making. We were always moving from school to school and always wondering where our finances would be coming from. But the community treated us so well, they appreciated what we did and were so generous with their time and resources. The small school size forced us to work together and do everything. I taught everything from Kindergarten to Grade 9, the first gym was the size of a volleyball court! I remember Judy playing every song for the school musicals on piano. I remember Joanne was not only our administrator but she would lead the musical, coach and teach. We all worked together - teachers and parents.

WHAT ARE SOME MEMORABLE MOMENTS?

A lot of my memories are around track and field and sports - I really enjoyed all the excursions! I remember Cindy had just given birth and was in the hospital with Naomi and I was caught in a snowstorm on my way back from Rolling Hills with a team.

I remember one of our fundraisers was delivering phone books, in an effort to raise money for SALTS. The entire Jr High would take Friday off and then meet back on Saturday to deliver phone books, 90% of the parents would come out to participate as well.

It was also fun walking out of the building and then waving to my mom and dad in the window of the house that the school now owns. They told me early on that I wasn't allowed to come over for lunch! It's been a privilege as well teaching all of my children - that's been fun.

WHAT IS THE CRAZIEST THING THAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU DURING YOUR TIME AT MENNO?

The year the gym floor flooded! There was a water pipe located under the stage where we currently store the chairs. After chapel on Friday the chairs were pushed in and they broke the pipe, we came back on Monday morning and the gym floor was covered in 6 inches of water... the school flood of 2012!

FUNNIEST MENNO MEMORIES

I remember playing baseball in the hallway with Gail Schellenberg. She was tossing me erasers and I had a makeshift bat using 4 batons nested together. She threw and I hit and watched one of the batons go flying off the top hitting Gail right between the eyes. Another time we were at a teachers retreat, we used to go yearly to Camp Valaqua. I was in a canoe with Sheila Miller and I spotted Sandy Karg and Lorraine Enns in a canoe a few feet away. I thought it would be funny to try to jump into their canoe and I ended up capsizing them and the school camera.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHANGES YOU HAVE SEEN TO EDUCATION IN YOUR CAREER?

When I got into teaching it was about exposing kids to different areas and opportunities - the experience of school. I feel now that there is a huge academic drive and push "to do". Get through the curriculum as efficiently and effectively as you can. I currently teach the Grade 9 students what the Grade 10's used to learn. Our society has changed too with club sports and extracurricular activities so that many of the families coming into the school have an elevation of expectations.

KNOWING WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF TEACHERS?

Don't take life too seriously. PAT scores only last for a month! The biggest advice that I'd give to myself is to remember that you teach children, not curriculum. Spend more time with the kids than with the curriculum.

WHAT IS YOUR PRAYER FOR MENNO?

That Menno will remain faithful to Jesus' teaching and will continue to be a place that children feel safe and loved and know that they are God's beloved.

SWEET EXTRAVAGANZA



Executive Director - John Lucas



Rudy Janssen Sr praying

Celebrating — 35 YEARS —

I remember my first introduction to Menno Simons Christian School (MSCS). I was a youth pastor looking for gym space for our church youth group and had rented a gym in Manchester Industrial Park. When I arrived it was an obscure location and the space was smaller than I had anticipated. I made a passing comment with sarcasm in my voice as I was entering the school “Who goes to school here?”. The kind individual who was letting us into the building said, “the greatest kids in the world, this is the little school that can.” I recognized then the passion that the MSCS people had for their mission and living out the purposes they had for Menno.

When my wife and I enrolled our daughter in MSCS eight years ago, we came to Menno on purpose with a belief that this place was going to be great for the life of our daughter and family. For the past eight years I have often recalled that statement through the good and the not so good, “this is the little school that can!”

I am so thankful for the goodness of God that has been shown to Menno Simons Christian School. Our 35 year history is living proof that God does work through people who believe.

On May 10 & 11 we celebrated our 35 year anniversary. Keeping in tradition with our Sweet Interlude, we hosted an afternoon High Tea and a Musical Extravaganza. We saw many faces that were integral to our 35 year legacy and I want to highlight one particular statement that was made that struck me to the core. At the beginning of our Friday afternoon High Tea, Mr. Rudy Janssen Sr. stood to open our time and he said “yes, we always need money BUT

we need to pray”. My heart was gripped as I pondered the gravity of that statement from one of our esteemed stakeholders. I was brought into a fresh awareness of our opportunity to educate the whole child at MSCS but without the Lord’s help we labor in vain.

As the Executive Director, it is my privilege to continue to help facilitate our legacy into the future. I personally believe that MSCS is a place that I want my daughter, and hopefully my grandchildren, to attend because of the historical commitment of MSCS to offer our kids an EDUCATION FOR LIFE. I see MSCS continuing to enable our students to be effective participants in our communities through our Christian discipleship, our service and our learned ability to be PEACEMAKERS in every aspect of our lives. I will strive to ensure that our students have the best possible opportunity for academic achievement but more than anything else for me, I am committed to assisting our students to integrate their Christian faith into every area of their lives. I desire for the students of Menno to make a lasting and Kingdom focused impact in the lives of every person they come in contact with.

I am asking you to join with myself and Mr. Janssen and continually hold up MSCS in prayer to the Throne of Grace. We need the Lord to continue to work on our behalf. I believe it is the desire of God to bless what we are putting our hand to here at Menno Simons Christian School.

John Lucas
Executive Director



Memoirs of a GRADE 9 GRADUATE

MY FOREVER FAVOURITE MEMORY AT MENNO...

"Playing basketball, playing Clash Royal in the stalls with Zach and going on the roof" – Jesse

"Is when Micaeliah, Bella, Ella and I bought a big tub of Reese Pieces ice cream at lunch and ate the whole thing. Those were the days" – Kiana

"My memory that I will remember is SALTS. SALTS was the best trip of my life and everyday was awesome on SALTS. It was something I will remember forever." – Hannah

"When I got popcorn and I could not open the bag and Keira tried to open it and it exploded all over the hallway. I also loved volleyball in Threehill's" – Alex

HOW WILL YOUR CLASSMATES REMEMBER YOU?

"Daydreamer, clumsy and always laughing" – Julia

"Loud, obnoxious, bad speller, an absolute unit" – Charlie

"My classmates will remember me because I am crazy and wacko. They will remember me as a girl who roasts people, kicks and throws crabs overboard." – Tiffany

"Loud, funny, hot, kind and closest to Jeesoo." – Zach

WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU LEARNED AT MENNO?

"SALTS, basketball team and Cool Math games." – Jeesoo

"The three most important things I learned at Menno is to be confident in yourself, to respect and accept others and to balance my priorities." – Daniel

"Try things that you haven't done before, never give up, how to be a leader." – Ryden

"To hang out with everyone because the more friends you have the happier you'll be. Be yourself and do what you want to do. I learned that it's okay to be different and unique in my own way." – Keira

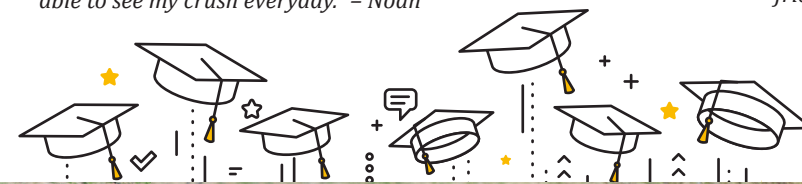


WHAT I WILL MISS THE MOST ABOUT MENNO...

"The people and the community! I have made so many life-long friends at Menno!" – Micaeliah

"I will miss the teachers and staff. The teachers are so kind and caring. I will miss all the students. Menno has become my family and it will be sad saying goodbye. All the field trips and opportunities Menno gives are amazing and I will miss it. Menno is my second home and I will miss all the staff." – Elise

"The fact that all my friends go to the same school and that I won't be able to see my crush everyday." – Noah



THE MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF ADVICE THAT I WANT TO PASS ON TO MY GRADE 1 BUDDY IS...

"Make good friends and to stand by their side. Don't let pressure force you to be friends with people who are not good for you." – Vivian

"Have no regrets." – Drew

"Be friends with everyone and never stop smiling." – Bella

"Do your best in everything! Menno will go by so fast. Make lots of good friends." – Ben

IN 10 YEARS I WILL BE...

"25 years old and travelling the world (if I have money, which is extremely unlikely)." – Jenna
"At McDonald's purchasing a hashbrown." – Ella

"24 years old..." – Jacob

"I will be done with university, working and earning good money, probably alone in a little apartment or still with my parents. Relationship? Not sure." – Karrell





SALTS

EXCEEDING THE HYPE!



I am so incredibly grateful and blessed to have had the opportunity to go on this trip. Ever since I came to Menno, SALTS has been hyped up by the grade 9 class as the thing to most look forward to. In my opinion, the trip definitely over exceeded the hype! This trip was one of the most fun and memorable times in my life. There were so many factors that went into making this trip so memorable: the crew, exploring the islands and the plants and animals, the amazing views and activities. For me the thing that made this trip stand out so much was the people. I have always loved my classmates and have had good friendships, but when I saw the size of the boat we were going on, I wasn't sure I would be able to handle them for 5 days! I found that I quickly learned new and surprising things about my classmates and their personalities and attitudes. When we went through the series of activities that includes working together to haul up sails, going on hikes, and learning about sailing, I got to see how my classmates engaged and what things they excelled at. I enjoyed being surrounded with such a positive group of people that really cared about your feelings and how you contributed to the big group.

One of my favourite memories from the trip was on the 3rd day when we got to take the Zodiac onto a small island and go for a hike along the rocks. When we got to about halfway through the hike we were told to go and sit alone away from everyone and just

silently reflect for 10min. I loved being able to just sit and listen to the rhythmic sound of the waves crashing against the rocks and noticing the small things like the yellow flowers peeking out from the tall blades of green grass. I also really enjoyed having time to just reflect on the first part of the trip and my time at Menno. I thought about how much Menno and SALTS has so positively impacted my life and all of the lifelong friendships that I have made while on the boat. SALTS has also greatly impacted my work ethic and I loved seeing how everyone had to contribute in order to run the ship. It takes a lot of people to do tasks like hauling the sails up or steering the ship and you really see how each person's help is valuable and appreciated because you can't do it all alone.

Overall SALTS was hands down one of the best experiences of my life! From the nature to the people I can't think of one thing that made it negative. I am so thankful and blessed for the opportunity to go on this trip with my grade 9 class and I would encourage any student who like me was hesitant to go, to just go for it and put yourself out there! This trip was an incredible experience and you don't want to miss out!

Micaeliah Urquhart
Grade 9 Student



Lessons from Narnia

This year Menno put on an amazing performance of The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe. It is an adventurous story about four children that find themselves traveling through a frozen land to reach a great lion named Aslan, as they are being hunted by an evil witch. I was lucky enough to be that evil witch they were trying to escape from. However, just as the White Witch pretended to be a wonderful queen with her kingdom all together, our cast and crew were also hiding some unintended excitement. There were some unexpected events that went on backstage, that you might be interested in knowing. Those events included my magical wand repeatedly getting lost among the many props, fight scenes where people ended up with accidental bruises, multiple cast members (specifically me) tripping over cords, and even slamming the sleigh into stumps as we raced onto the stage.

However, amidst all this chaos there is something amazing that happens onstage as everything comes together before your eyes. The stress of dress rehearsal mistakes and missing props fades away, your nerves and anxiety levels lower, and you look out on the audience and see all the amazing people supporting you. Teachers gave countless hours of their time to our play, small children watched with awe and terror, parents supported us with props, costumes, and makeup, and all of my peers pulled off amazing performances as we had a grand time together. I loved being a part of The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe performance and greatly appreciate the amazing Menno community that worked together to make it all possible.

The greatest lesson I learned from The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe story line is to have faith in what is not always seen. Memorizing lines over and over again caused me to look deeper into the story of Narnia. I realized that the beavers were counting on Aslan's return even though it had been decades since he had last been seen. Their land was being ruled by a Witch that pretended to be a kind queen. And as Lucy would say; "she is an evil witch who makes it always winter and never Christmas!" The Witch was influencing her kingdom to believe Aslan was a lie and that he was a monster. But some of the animals had faith that there was a better way, they knew that he cared and would return to save them. I believe that we can learn from their example as well. The animals focused on Aslan to lead them through hard times. In the same way, we can focus on Jesus to guide us to a Narnia lamppost in the darkness.

This particular play was so special for me to be a part of because it was my final performance at Menno. I can still recall last year when we were all asking Mrs. Carpenter to choose The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe as this year's play. She was awesome to listen to our repeated begging and was even more awesome to support us to do our very best, even if I was cast as a wicked white witch!

The White Witch aka Ella Hinz
Grade 9 Student



WHAT'S A TEAM?

Since this was my first year in junior high, I took advantage of the all inclusive sports program and participated in all the sports teams. Being part of a variety of teams made me realize that playing these sports is not all about winning. It's about having integrity, sportsmanship, learning how to glorify God through competitions; and most importantly it is about how to work as a TEAM.

Let me describe what I mean by **TEAM**. Trustworthy: you have to trust your team when you play, Encouraging: you have to encourage and support your team, Accepting: you have to accept what you do and you have to believe in what your team is doing, Mentorship: you can mentor your teammates and give them advice/your knowledge on how they could do better and be willing to be mentored yourself. These words all describe what I think a good team should be and what a good team should look like.

Although at the beginning of starting each sport I wasn't that good, I had a fun time learning and developing my skills, as well as, having a deeper relationship with some of the other girls in junior high. I had a fun time working as a team with them as well as laughing together.

I am so thankful for all the coaches who helped foster growth in our sports. All the coaches I had used their time to help us do our best and succeed. If it weren't for the coaches, the teams wouldn't have worked together as well as we did. I am so glad that we had such an amazing year, filled with awesome teams, coaches, parents - they made me love the sports I played more than I thought!

My first year in junior high was a blast, and I had so much fun participating in all of the sports. I can't wait for next year!

Nevaeh Pan
Grade 7 Student

CREATING SYNERGY

The first thing that comes to mind when I hear the words Menno Simons is community. Menno, since I came into this school 10 years ago, has been a positive influence in nearly every aspect of my life. It's given me countless opportunities to grow as a leader, as a student, and as an athlete. Over the past year our class has grown greatly. We've gone from classmates to a tightly knit group of friends; that sense of community is something I treasure every day, and will continue to remember well into the future.

The thing that has impressed me the most throughout my years at Menno is the growth. Not just academically or athletically, but also socially. The memories of just a few years ago seem so vivid. We all had our closest friends, and didn't seem to socialize too much beyond that. Over the past year especially, I've noticed an insurmountable growth in our class and how we communicate with each other. Obviously, everyone will have their best friends, but it's undeniable that this past year we've become a class that has limitless respect for each other, and is able to have fun with anyone and everyone. Together we have made so many great memories that will be cherished forever.

One of the things that I will always remember about being at Menno is the opportunities that we have been given. One of these opportunities is the annual sailing trip known as SALTS. It is a tremendous learning experience, and allows you to get to know your classmates even better. You may think that spending a week on a boat without showers and with 20 teenagers is the worst possible situation for anyone to be in. However, it was one of my favourite things that I've ever done at this school. EF tours, which is another trip that occurs every two years in which the grade 7 and 8's travel to Quebec City, Ottawa, and Montreal for a week is another one. But these trips show just a small fraction of the

chances that are presented to the students. Every day we are trusted with all sorts of tasks and duties that, whether they're enjoyable for the students or not, they are opportunities to grow and prepare ourselves for the future, and I could not be more grateful.

The most notable thing to me these past weeks leading up to our departure into high school is the synergy between our classmates. Synergy is defined as when individuals work together as a group, the outcome is greater than the sum of the individuals added together. Immediately when I heard that, I thought to myself, what better way to summarize our class. We are all great people, but when we're together we all make each other a little better and are an overall better class.

Our time at Menno is quickly coming to an end, as we prepare to enter high school. Our verse for this year, Deuteronomy 31:8, is a great send off for our class.



The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

This verse explains that no matter what you do and where you go, God will always stay with you. This verse is very applicable to us as we head off into this next chapter in our lives. We may be scared, sad, excited, or just not know what we feel, but it is comforting to know that we always have God with us no matter our circumstances.

Daniel Pytyck, Valedictorian
Grade 9 Student

