

Seasons of Hope and Change

Did the founders of our school ever dream we would have high school graduates by the time the school was 40 years old? That early season of hope sparked many seasons of changes. Four decades of growth and change led to this moment in time when we could finally celebrate the first five high school graduates from our Venture Program.

Despite school shutdowns across our nation due to the coronavirus, students at HMS were able to continue their lessons and complete the 2019-20 school year through Homebound Study. Planning end-of-year programs and ceremonies was difficult, however, when we needed to remain apart. Teachers and students scrambled to find ways to honor important traditions while making significant adjustments to planning.

Both the high school and middle school graduations included a virtual ceremony and outdoor, drive-thru parades where the school community could stop by to take pictures and cheer. Weaverland Valley Fire Department participated, sirens and lights in full blast, to honor senior Dominic Answer, who serves as a volunteer with their company.

Even though COVID-19 forced us to adjust graduation plans, it could not steal the joy of seeing the high schoolers in caps and gowns and having their speeches warm our hearts. In his

graduation speech, Doug Becker noted his appreciation for opportunities to develop his leadership skills, "Hinkletown has taught me things that will go well beyond an academic record."

Graduate Jack Stover shared his joy of joining the local business community. Jack was hired upon graduation by Conestoga Wood Specialties, his internship placement. Venture Program Coordinator Megan Ament commented, "We as a Venture team [of teachers] are honored to be able to help usher our students into the next step of their lives, whether it be into a career, college, missions, or a gap year. It's been such a blessing to walk alongside them through their years here and to see them growing in their friendships, growing as leaders and as community members, and growing in their faith as they prepare to make the leap from the 'safety' of high school to their next step."

The roots of community run deep at HMS. Wherever HMS grads go, we know they have received a foundation that has taught them that faith and life go together, and we need each other in the journey. In 1980, it was the grandparents of Venture Program graduate Micah Weaver who had a dream for a local Mennonite school for their children. They gathered members of their faith community together to purchase the



l-r: Dominic Answer, Doug Becker and Micah Weaver; Graduates not pictured: Jack Stover and Molly Kurtz

property and start that new school. The family of graduate Molly Kurtz was also involved at HMS in the 1980s. Forty years later, the seasons of hope and seasons of change prove God's faithfulness. What a blessing!

What Do We Do in Times of Crisis?

Times of crisis, change or loss are not always the times we think to stop and give praise to the Lord. Yet the words of God's servant, Job, spoke to me this past spring, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21) Reflecting on all that transpired from March through June this year, I'd say we wrapped up one of the most challenging and intense school years I experienced in my 27 years in education.

We lost much due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All the end-of-year community events and student celebrations were either cancelled or had to be drastically modified. The eighth graders

experienced the bitter-sweetness of completing middle school, yet without many of the traditions that are like icing on the cake at HMS. And different members of our community experienced losses in health or lives of friends and family due to the virus.

Yet we also received good gifts from God. HMS joyfully graduated our first high schoolers from the Venture Program. Teachers felt the loss of classroom time with their students, yet gained new technical and instructional skills that will help them better transcend any future disruptions to our school days. Many parents were strained with having to help teachers implement Homebound Study, yet the resiliency and partnership of both teachers and parents was inspiring. The



school lost significant revenue, yet God helped us cover the deficits with funds from generous donors and an emergency loan and grant. If we didn't look for the goodness of God in times of crisis, we could not look forward with hope and praise to God!

This coming year will be the 40th year of God's mission at HMS. God is faithful.

— by Dawn Landes,
Administrator/Principal

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Hinkletown Mennonite School

272 Wanner Road, Ephrata, PA 17522

Email: office@hinkletownschool.org

Website: www.hinkletownschool.org

Administrator/Principal: Dawn Landes

Director of Advancement: Jody Fausnight

Director of Enrollment: Melissa Beidler

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Homebound Study

When Pennsylvania schools closed down in mid-March, HMS faculty quickly switched gears to provide for learning at home. Students missed only a few days of school before re-engaging online and continuing assignments in their new learning environments. HMS teachers discovered new ways to connect with students and provided consistent support to parents stepping into the role of teacher. Patron Brenda (Wenger) Breckbill reflects:

"Homebound Study was a different ending than we desired for our school year, but my children did an excellent job adapting to the change in routine. They both missed the daily, in-person interactions with their classmates, but they persevered academically. Both children continued to wake up according to their usual schedule, eat breakfast, and then immediately began their studies for the day. Both kids took responsibility to be sure they were completing all their assignments, which made my life fairly easy in regards to my involvement. Timothy also had extra credit options as a middle schooler, which he often completed for

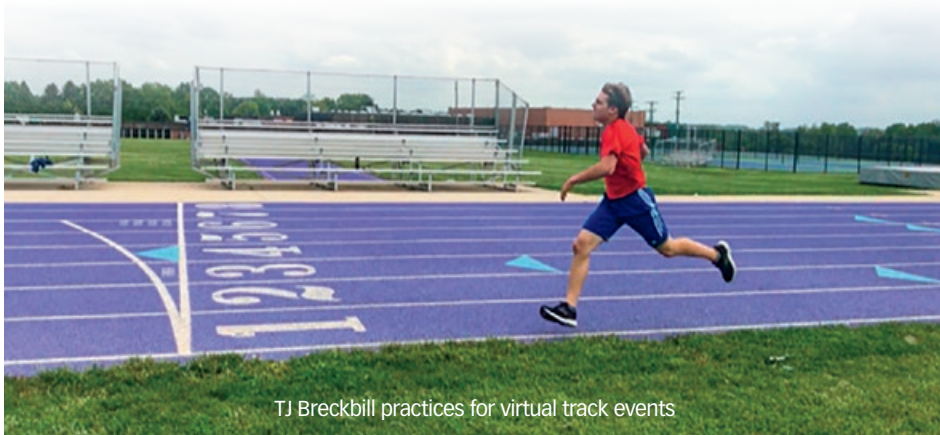
an extra grade boost. For some extra extracurricular support, I had Katelyn and Timothy create watercolor or acrylic paintings periodically, and I kept a log of their exercise that I'd submit monthly to [Physical Education teacher] Mr. Weaver as a way to hold them accountable for their fitness.

"The optional Middle School musical performance and virtual track event were both highlights for Timothy. I'm so grateful for these outside-the-box options to add some fun into an otherwise laborious and mundane trimester.

Katelyn's highlight was her class chat room where she was able to somewhat interact with her classmates. We are proud of our kids for their hard work, we're glad the trimester is over, and we wait eagerly for the start of school as it should be—where each student feels valued, noticed, and important to the dynamics of their

classrooms and school."

Students were still able to have community, but they clearly love being at school with their teachers and friends because of the community and hands-on learning experiences. That is who we are.



TJ Breckbill practices for virtual track events



Aslan, Juliana and Kai Umble encouraged their teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week

We can make Homebound Study work, accomplish most of the curriculum, and connect classes and teachers, but something is definitely lost in the process. Community doesn't happen by chance; it is built carefully, one brick of experiences at a time, day by day.

Valerie Martin (grade 8) –

"I love HMS because everyone is always so positive and makes you feel happy. When I go to school I am excited to see everyone – it's like family."

Michael Vizcarrondo (grade 9) –

"I really love how HMS is so passionate and devoted to God. I used to be really quiet and shy in middle school and elementary, but this year I gained so much confidence in myself and got to show people who I really am."

Jase Steffy (grade 1) –

"I really like going to HMS because I get to do activities. I loved making candy crystals in my kitchen chemistry cluster. I got to pick my own colors and flavor and then we got to eat it. I also like my class because we do things together and work together."

Jade Sauder (grade 4) –

"I am glad my parents send me to HMS because it is a Christian School and we can learn about God freely."

Education Virtualized

With our physical building closed, more online learning took place. Teachers video-recorded math and history lessons; they facilitated online book discussions; they created virtual art museums of student artwork and virtual concerts of student performances. Students competed in track & field events by video, and our exchange teacher from South Korea described her country's food, music and culture by video.

One advantage of this form of learning is that the virtual lessons are available for broader viewing. Teachers created an HMS Virtual Art Museum and Virtual Spring Concert to celebrate the creative work of students.

Check out the
**HMS Virtual Art Museum
& Spring Concert**



Alayna Regitz with her plant baby

Unexpected Joys

When I agreed to teach 7th and 8th grade Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) for the second half of this year, I was anticipating more class time with two groups of students that I really enjoy teaching. I looked forward to cooking, wood working, gardening and more! My plans were just coming together when everything dramatically

changed. Suddenly, I had to find ways to teach a very hands-on curriculum through distance learning. Thanks to a wonderful group of students and the way our school community dove into "homebound learning," I was able to offer hands-on experiences even while students were not on campus.

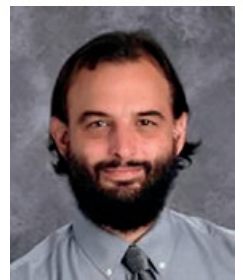
Seventh grade took up cooking at home! I decided to keep the options flexible so that families would not have to venture out for specific food items. Students practiced a variety of skills in the kitchen including selecting and reading recipes, chopping, slicing, dicing, baking, and roasting. Students shared pictures of meals that they cooked for their families. A parent of a seventh grade boy commented, "It was the best meal I've had in awhile," and his sister added, "as good as Mom's!"

Eighth grade kept a tradition alive by caring for plant babies during our child care and development unit. While this year was a little different, it was still a fun experience. Students picked up their

plant babies from school on one of the exchange days. Their first assignment was to do a gender reveal to discover if their baby was a boy or girl. They named their babies and spent a week caring for them and planning activities. Upon finding out that the plant babies would be available at the exchange day, one student responded, "Yay! We are getting our plant babies! I'm bored and ready for a new challenge!" Hopefully this experience gave the students a glimpse into the responsibilities involved in caring for a living thing.

Receiving photos and completed assignments from my FCS students was one of my greatest joys during homebound study. It was so rewarding to see that my students are still excited and able to learn in a hands-on way even while studying from home.

— **Michael Lichty,**
Middle School Science Teacher

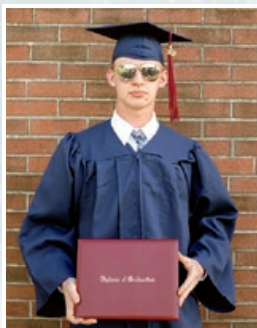


Kyle Denlinger prepared soup for his family

Venture Program Graduates



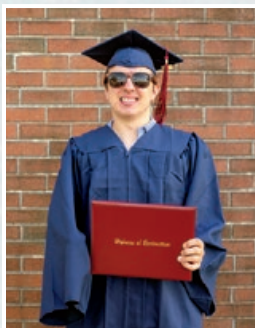
Dominic Answer attended HMS since kindergarten and was the first student enrolled in the Venture Program. Because of his involvement as a volunteer firefighter, he decided to complete the Lancaster emergency first responder training for his high school internship. *"I would like to serve Christ by being compassionate and kind to those I come in contact with so that they can see something different in me than the rest of the world."*



Doug Becker transferred into the Venture Program as a Junior and shared his love for leading worship and getting his hands dirty in the shop. He completed an internship at Timber Ridge Equipment and also gained some experience at Brubacher Excavating. *"I have been thankful for the way that Hinkletown is intentional about preparing its students for life outside of high school."*



Molly Kurtz loves art and working with children. She spent most of her internship time at her family's business, WebTek. Her friendliness and caring heart are gifts to those around her. *"My community service was volunteering with Citygate of Lancaster. Through this experience, it made me very grateful for what I have, and I realized there is a need in my back yard."*



Jack Stover was always full of energy and explored lots of vocational avenues. He excelled in his internship at Conestoga Wood Specialties in their finishing department and was invited to stay on in that role after graduation. *"This job has taught me responsibility; my boss is counting on me to get certain things done by a certain time and others are counting on me to get the job done."*



Micah Weaver was always open to learning something new. He interned with Town and Country Electric and Plumbing in New Holland as well as Burkholder Plumbing and Electric in Ephrata. He is excited to join the One Life program through Lancaster Bible College. *"Something I've learned at my internships is that even though you might not want to work for a certain person or at a certain house, you have to anyway. I also learned to make the most of every opportunity, for example, if you're working at someone's house and feel like they just need someone to talk to or like you should pray for them, to just be a light wherever you go, even on the job."*





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TO OUR
2020 8TH GRADE GRADUATES!



Eighth graders finished Middle School amidst the COVID-19 "storm" which meant missing out on some of the community aspects of attending HMS. Socially-distanced above (l-r): Valerie Martin, Marko Kondratyuk, Daniel Zimmerman, Clydde Bowman, Jeremiah Knowles, Jaeden Akinin, Paul Hurst, Joshua Welch, Julia Hoover, Madison Stauffer, Isabelle Stauffer, Caeley Zimmerman, Alayna Regitz, Hannah Jacke, Emma Musser and Sarah Benedick.