

FALL 2020

# UMEI ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

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## From The Board

**BY STEVE ENNS, CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

COVID-19 has created a new reality for us all. By this point, we are all fatigued by rules, restrictions, and the general upheaval of everything that was familiar.

This is exactly why UMEI has been so intent on creating a plan that would allow our students to return to the school they loved, while keeping them as safe as possible. We wanted them to be able to come back to something that resembled normal, even if it did look a little different.

And returned, they have. After a long absence, the school is full of life again. What a joy to see!

We all remember the lessons we learned at UMEI. Not just in English, History and Science, but from the shared experience of taking those classes in a school that cared, not just about our academic performance, but our personal and spiritual growth as well. We didn't just get our diplomas from UMEI; we also got a sense of community, social responsibility and leadership.

Please help us teach these lessons to students today. This year, our Autumn Campaign is more important than ever. Without being able to gather in large groups, we have not been able to hold many of our fundraising events. Please consider making a gift now to ensure that the valuable experiences that come from a UMEI education are available to a new group of young people.

I invite you to partner with us in serving our community by donating to our annual Autumn Campaign. This is your opportunity to invest in the youth of our community just as our community once invested in you. Every penny of your donation will go towards the costs of operating the school and providing the same personal growth you experienced at UMEI.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Yours in Christ,



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"We didn't just get our diplomas from UMEI; we also got a sense of community, social responsibility, and leadership."

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# A Note from the Principal

BY MRS. BEDAL

This verse is one of my favourites and has gotten me through a great many situations throughout my life, and has certainly kept me going over the last 6 months or so. At a time like this, it is hard to not feel shaken and to turn away from God, feeling like we have been abandoned. To the contrary, I believe my faith has been strengthened during the pandemic. God has given me the perseverance and patience to face the many challenges of operating a school during COVID.

I keep my  
eyes always  
on the Lord.  
With him at  
my right hand  
I will not be  
shaken.

Psalm 16:8

We worked all summer to prepare for the safe return of students for face-to-face learning, 5 days a week, on campus. We feel confident that our reopening plan is a solid strategy that not only focuses on the safety of staff and students while on campus, but also the continued provision of our quality academic program. Teachers are fully prepared to offer their courses online as well as in person. In fact, one of our grade 9 students will be learning remotely from the Toronto area. Our small size allows us to manage all the components of a return to school in a safe and timely manner... face to face or remotely.

Returning to school face to face is important to us because it will enable us to continue to foster the sense of community that has always been a valued aspect of an education at UMEI. As a member school of Mennonite Schools Council, UMEI adopts the core distinctives of being a Mennonite school, one of which is Community Builders. Community Builders intentionally engage with others around them and have a deep understanding of the body of Christ, with each part uniquely gifted and essential to the whole. Community builders experience healthy community mirrored by staff and teachers, activities geared to build school community, and interaction with the community outside their institutions. This distinctive is central to being a school that builds strong faith and learning community in which students and staff support each other. UMEI wants to continue to provide a welcoming community where it is emotionally safe to raise questions, to value and learn from differences, and to care for each other.



# A Note from the Principal

## CONTINUED

This support and caring of one another can be seen in so many different ways at UMEI. Here are just a few:

- Support of one another through difficult times, such as losing a parent, dealing with a sick family member or when dealing with personal issues. As a school community, we can come together and pray together.
- Support through generous giving. The most recent was the outpouring of support UMEI saw at the Fish Fry hosted with the Mennonite Home in August. We are thankful for all of the volunteers who give of their time for events like these, as well, to those of you who support us financially.

I believe that the most important aspect of building community for our students comes from our roots of being Disciples of Christ. At UMEI students know they are loved and valued by God which enables them to value and love each other. This also means that we want students to learn to be servant leaders, following Christ's example, living a life serving others and their community. All of these things are accomplished when we are on campus together, face to face. I'm proud of my staff and faculty for being flexible and patient during this time and into the future as we begin a school year with many unknowns. Even if we go online, UMEI has a record of amazing one-on-one connection with students and a very successful online learning program. Registration will remain open throughout the school year given that situations may change for families at any time.

So, as I move into my 23rd school year at UMEI, I know things will be a lot different ...and I will continue to keep my eyes on the Lord and with Him by my side I am confident that I won't be shaken!

# SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF

Introducing our new Science Teacher and our new Administrative Assistant.



## Introducing: Mrs. Hudders

### OUR NEW SCIENCE TEACHER

Born and raised in Essex County has caused me to fall in love with small towns. After Teacher's College I headed to Northern Ontario for some serious small town, small school living. Belonging to a small school leads me to love my job even more. I head out of my household door and hop, skip, jump to my workplace door. Both are equally as welcome and full of virtue. Returning to Leamington was a hard decision as I believed I would be saying goodbye to that feeling. Then in the summer of my job searching I was forward the email regarding the science position at UMEI. What a blessing!!! Thank you UMEI for inviting me into your family!

## Introducing: Megan Snippe

### OUR NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

While I did not personally attend UMEI as a high school student, I have the priviledge of being the older sibling of someone who is. As such, I have had a front row seat over the last 4 years to the incredible community, high academic standards, and whole person education approach that makes this school so special.

I'm incredibly thankful for the oppotunity to be a part of this staff and community and I look forward to watching the next generation of servant leaders being developed here at UMEI Christian High School!



# UMEI STUDENTS



## Abby Krueger

**GRADE 12 STUDENT**

What is your favorite thing about UMEI?

"My favorite thing about UMEI is the poeple. I always feel like I can fit in with the students, no matter what grade"

How have you benefited from being at UMEI for high school?

"I feel like I have grown as a person and found my true self through the school. The people withing the bulding have helped me to be myself, to know who I am and what I want to become."



## Simon Enns

**GRADE 12 STUDENT**

How do you feel UMEI is preparing you for your future?

"Becasue of the way that UMEI focuses on the whole student, I feel like I have been able to grow academically, spiritually, and socially during my time here. UMEI has helped me put together all of hte necessasry building blocks for my future."

How have you benefited from being at UMEI for high school?

"I have been able to learn how to really balance my time and my schedule when at home and at school. I have also learned how to go the extra mile to find answers and further my learning instead of doing the minimum and giving up when I don't understand."



## Brandon Snippe

**RETURNING 5TH YEAR STUDENT**

What is your favorite thing about UMEI?

"The practice and teaching of discipleship along with the academic challenges. Everything might not always come easy to you , but that is where the opportunity of going the extra mile and taking initiative to put forth your best effort is found. UMEI has that atmosphere of setting goals for your ultimate success."

How do you feel UMEI is preparing you for your future?

"UMEI is all about creating a work ethic for the future - for secondary school or the workplace in which you will undergo many different challenges. The advantage of facing challenges early in high school is that you are prepared. UMEI has been a great learning place for what is ahead and I am confident that I am prepared for my future."