



Lion Spotlight

Mrs. Courtney Eiler: Faith, Family, and the Journey to DCS
by Oli Barefoot

Courtney Eiler's journey to working at DCS is a story of family, faith, and finding the right fit. She started her career with an accounting degree from Belhaven University and worked in accounting until she had her first child. At that point, she chose to be a stay-at-home mom and stayed home until her youngest started kindergarten. When DCS first opened, Courtney felt a strong pull to have her kids there. In 2014, when she and her husband decided to enroll their oldest son, she mentioned during their family interview that she'd love to work at the school if there were any openings. Soon enough, she was offered a role as an assistant teacher, and both of her sons started at DCS, too. Over the years, she taught in 2nd, K4, and 1st grades until she moved to an office position in 2021. One of the most special parts of the job for her was being able to see her boys and their friends every day while they were students and being part of a close team of coworkers she truly loves. She appreciates the unique environment at DCS, where everyone can support each other and even pray together when they need it. Outside of work, Courtney loves spending time with her family and friends, shopping at thrift stores, and supporting the Lions, even if she doesn't get to as many games now that her own kids have graduated. One of her favorite Bible verses is Isaiah 40:31: "But those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not faint." When it comes to advice for students, she says, "Keep your eyes on Jesus and don't worry about being called a 'goody-two-shoes' for doing the right thing. You're never too young to make a difference for Him."

DISCOVERY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Learning Leadership: DCS Juniors and Seniors Explore History Through Reagan Movie
by Austin Eklund

The juniors and seniors at Discovery Christian School recently took a field trip to watch "Reagan", a film that offers an interesting look at the leadership and political journey of President Ronald Reagan. The movie provided good insights into his presidential campaign and leadership style. This made it a meaningful experience for students studying history. This trip was a great opportunity for students to learn about leadership, history, and unity while deepening their understanding of how past leaders shaped the nation.

The "Reagan" movie highlighted key moments in history but also emphasized the importance of leadership, resilience, and service to others. These are values that are central to the mission at DCS. For the students, it was more than just a history lesson; it was a chance to reflect on the qualities that define a great leader and how they can apply these lessons in their own lives. As they watched Reagan's perseverance through challenges, students were reminded of the power of being united and the impact of strong leadership in shaping a community. This experience provided a deeper connection to the lessons learned in the classroom and encouraged students to consider how they, too, can lead with purpose and integrity.



8th Graders Lead the Way: Weekly Devotions Foster Growth and Unity
by Aaron Engel

After Spiritual Emphasis Week, the 8th-grade class at Discovery Christian School felt inspired to take their faith to the next level by starting their own weekly, student-led devotion. Every week, they gather in Mrs. Blair's room, where parents generously provide donuts for the group. One student takes the lead each week, sharing a devotion or Bible study with their peers, creating an opportunity for growth and leadership within the class.

Some of the devotion topics the 8th graders have explored so far include the power of God's will in their lives, navigating friendships and relationships, managing stress, and the importance of unity. By focusing on relevant, real-life issues, the students have deepened their understanding of Scripture and strengthened their bonds with one another.

Following the devotion, the students break into smaller prayer groups, lifting each other up in prayer and supporting one another in their walk with Christ. This has been a beautiful example of how the students are stepping up in their faith, taking ownership of their spiritual growth, and fostering a sense of community. We are incredibly proud of this group of 8th graders for their initiative and dedication to growing together in Christ.





SCHOOL NEWS



Unforgettable Moments: DCS Celebrates Historic Homecoming Week

By Austin Eklund and Joshua Hancock

Homecoming Week at Discovery Christian School was a time of excitement, school spirit, and memorable moments, bringing the entire school community together to celebrate in style. From the first day to the last, students, staff, and families were filled with enthusiasm, engaging in activities that reflected the diverse and creative spirit of DCS.

The week started off with themed dress up days. Each day of the week brought a different way to show school spirit. On Tuesday everyone showed their lion pride by being “on fire” for the lions. Next, DCS stayed “afloat” on Wednesday with floaties and sunglasses flying everywhere. Later on, the lion family showed their sports enthusiasm by wearing jerseys on Thursday. Last but not least students dressed up as their assigned decades in a rivalry of the ages. It was like walking through a time machine.

The homecoming parade was a hit with students tossing candy and beads to the crowd. Parents, grandparents, and students enjoyed the excitement. The celebration continued with a decades-themed pep rally that brought energy and laughs. Teachers entertained everyone with the “Dancing Through the Decades” dance-off, representing the decade they were born in, with the 2000s group taking the top spot, followed by the 90s and 80s. Cheerleaders, the dance team, and a spirited game of musical pom-poms added to the fun, making it an unforgettable event for all.

For the first time in school history, the Homecoming game was played on the new DCS football field, making it a historic moment for the school. The football team has worked hard all season, and the excitement of playing under the lights for Homecoming made the game even more special.

At halftime, the homecoming court took the field. The Homecoming maids looked stunning as they were presented to the crowd, with each one radiating grace and beauty. As the crowd waited in anticipation, the moment arrived to crown the Homecoming Queen, and the entire stadium cheered as Miss Rachel Parr was crowned 2024 Homecoming Queen.

Homecoming Week at DCS was a huge success, filled with moments of joy, school pride, and a sense of unity. From the parade to pep rally to the final whistle of the game, Homecoming Week was a celebration of the DCS spirit, and everyone involved made it an unforgettable experience.





SPORTS



Historic Season: Discovery Christian Girls Soccer Achieves Milestones On and Off the Field by Riley Campbell

The 2024 Varsity Girls Soccer season at Discovery Christian School (DCS) will be remembered as a truly momentous one by students, faculty, and community members alike. The dedicated student-athletes on this team achieved several incredible milestones, including a winning season record, a playoff appearance, and a district championship. In a historic first for DCS, the school hosted a playoff game on its own field, allowing fans to rally around the team on home turf. The district championship game, which the team won in a thrilling matchup, was also held at DCS, marking an unforgettable moment for everyone involved. Students, staff, and the entire community praise God for the team's achievements and the goals they have reached together.

Blaire Kelly, a junior and one of the team's standout players, shared her thoughts on what made the season so special:

What was your best memory of the 2024 season?

"My favorite memory of this season was scoring a 'hat trick' against St. Augustine. (A hat trick is when you score three goals in a single game.) That moment really stood out for me and gave our team a boost."

What are your goals for next season?

"My main goals for next season are to win district again and to keep growing as a team, both mentally and physically. I want us to become stronger and more united on and off the field."

What was the best part about playing a playoff and district final game on DCS's home field?

"Getting to play those games at home was amazing because of the support from the fans. Hearing the crowd cheer us on made us feel like we were part of something bigger."

What advice do you have for the graduating seniors from the team (Kaitlyn Gaylor, Olivia Teten, Sarah Benton, Rachel Parr, and Kylie Sutphin)?

"To the seniors, I'd say: focus on your own journey, stay positive, and keep your priorities straight. We'll miss you, but we know you'll do great things!"

As the season comes to a close, Discovery Christian is thankful for God's grace and guidance. The 2024 Varsity Girls Soccer team has left a lasting impact on the school's athletic program and inspired a sense of unity and pride throughout the community.





SPORT SNAPSHOTS



Pink Out Day: Discovery Christian Honors Breast Cancer Fighters and Survivors
by Riley Campbell

Discovery Christian recently hosted a special Pink Out pep rally to raise awareness and show support for those affected by breast cancer. Students, staff, and the community dressed in pink to honor survivors and encourage ongoing awareness for breast cancer prevention and research. The gym was filled with energy as everyone rallied together, and a powerful sense of unity was felt as the school recognized the importance of supporting those impacted by this disease.

Later that evening, during the football game, Discovery Christian held a moving tribute to honor staff members who have either won their battle against breast cancer or are currently fighting it. These courageous women were celebrated for their strength, resilience, and inspiration to others in the community. It was a meaningful day for all, as the school joined together in prayer and support for these brave individuals and all who continue to fight against breast cancer.



Making History: Discovery Christian Cheerleaders Shine at First MAIS State Competition
by Oli Barefoot

For the first time, Discovery Christian's cheerleaders competed at the MAIS State Competition, marking a milestone for the team and the school. Their months of tireless work and dedication shone brightly on the big stage, and their performance was a proud moment for everyone involved. Many students and staff came out to cheer on the team, showing strong support for these talented girls. Discovery Christian couldn't be prouder of their hard work, determination, and the incredible spirit they brought to the competition.

Cheerleaders are Blaire Kelly, Riley Campbell, Mallory Mayfield, Katie Stamps, Emily Straut, Marley Jackson, Maddie Dewease, MK Gaylor, Brynn Kelly, and Karoline Sutphin



Hoops: Basketball Season Kicks Off
by Joshua Hancock

Basketball season at Discovery Christian School tipped off at the end of October, with the JV girls' team celebrating an impressive season opener victory against Woodlawn Prep, winning 20-11. This strong start has generated excitement across campus as the Lions prepare for what promises to be an action-packed season. The students are packing in the student section, full of cheers and excitement. The white out game boasted an extraordinary number of student spectators. To boost school spirit, DCS has planned a series of fun and themed spirit days, including White Out, Camo, Christmas Sweater, USA, Neon, and Preppy. These themed days give students the chance to show their support and creativity, adding to the charged atmosphere in the stands during games. The DCS community is looking forward to coming together to support both the boys' and girls' teams as they strive for success on the court. Let's go, Lions—good luck to all of our athletes!



MISSIONS



Growing in Faith: The Impact of Spiritual Emphasis Week at DCS by Aaron Engel

Some of the most incredible experiences I've had at DCS have been during Spiritual Emphasis Week (SEW). I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior during SEW in my freshman year in 2023. Chapel during SEW has a charged atmosphere where we, as students, are allowed to just let go. It is safe. There is no condemnation. There is no one looking at you the entire time. There is no one there to judge you or think that you have no right to raise your hands and worship. There is freedom, honesty, and compassion.

Now, don't get me wrong, there are plenty of times that I'd love to skip chapel, but I have seen and felt the Lord move in chapel, especially during SEW. There's something about everyone being together and being able to just freely worship.

During SEW, we usually have special speakers who come and talk to us about their life or give their testimony.

This also gives me a good look into how God can take regular people and use them, even if they have done some terrible things in their past.

Another great thing about SEW is that it seems to come at just the right time, especially when I need it most. When I'm struggling with decisions, homework, or even when my tennis game is completely off, God shows His love for me and reminds me that He is always there. The Holy Spirit never fails to show up during SEW and move in powerful ways. I can easily say that SEW has been one of the best weeks of my life at DCS and has forever changed me. Because of SEW in 2023, I dedicated my life to Jesus, and I have not looked back. I can now say, "Who the Son sets free, oh, is free indeed, I'm a child of God, yes, I am! In my Father's house there's a place for me, I'm a child of God, yes, I am!"

This year, Spiritual Emphasis Week (SEW) was an incredible opportunity to dive deeper into our faith and hear from powerful speakers. On the first day, we were blessed to hear Ken Freeman speak about having a faith that can be tested and trusted. He reminded us that a faith that hasn't been tested can't be trusted. It really hit home for a lot of students, as we realized that God allows challenges in our lives to strengthen our faith and trust in Him. He also spoke about how God is always on time—never early, never late. This reminder of God's perfect timing was a good reminder that we don't need to worry or rush through life because God has everything under control.

On days two and three, we had the opportunity to hear Cameron Tate speak about how we, as followers of Christ, are called to be different and set apart. One key point he made was that our prayer should be for people to see the difference in us. This challenged me to live in a way that reflects Christ's love, even in the smallest moments. He shared Colossians 2:7, which says, "Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness." This verse reminds us that the deeper our roots go in Christ, the stronger our faith becomes, and the more we can reflect His love in everything we do.

Patrick Sanders led the 4th and 5th graders in Bible study, teaching them the difference between just knowing about God and truly trusting in Him. It was a great reminder that our faith isn't just about knowledge, but about fully trusting and relying on God in all things.

One of the most exciting outcomes of SEW this year was the decision of the 8th graders to start their own weekly devotion, student-led. It has been amazing to watch this group of students step up and take ownership of their faith in such a powerful way. They've shown incredible leadership, coming together each week to pray, share God's Word, and encourage one another. It's inspiring to see how their passion for Christ has grown, and it's a reminder that when we fully embrace the call to be set apart, God works through us in ways we never expected.



EDITORIALS



Building a Safe Space: The Importance of Anti-Bullying Initiatives in Schools
By: Brody Williams

In schools across the nation, bullying continues to be an ongoing and harmful issue. Reports show that one in every five students still experiences some form of bullying during the school year (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). This scary statistic shows that schools have a culture of harassment and exclusion that impacts students'. An effective anti-bullying initiative is not only important but essential to make sure there is a safe learning environment where all students feel valued and respected.

Different forms of bullying affect students based on gender: males are more often physically bullied (6%), while females face higher rates of rumor-spreading (18%) and social exclusion (7%). These statistics highlight the need for schools to address bullying in all its forms. Also, the fact that nearly half of bullied students fear repeated incidents shows how unsafe these students feel.

The consequences of bullying are severe and wide-ranging. Students who are bullied are at higher risk for depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues that can extend into adulthood. Bullied students also often suffer from lower grades, and in some cases, their experiences lead them to drop out of school. These outcomes show that bullying does not merely impact the here and now; it can alter a student's entire future. This further shows that an anti-bullying initiative is not about addressing isolated incidents but about preserving the long-term impact.

Cyberbullying has made bullying even harder to deal with because it follows students everywhere. Almost 15% of students ages 12 to 18 say they've been bullied online and it's even more common for middle schoolers. Unlike face-to-face bullying, cyberbullying can go on constantly and is harder for adults to notice. This 24/7 exposure takes a big toll, with almost 70% of cyberbullied tweens saying it hurt their self-esteem, and over 30% saying it damaged their friendships.

Schools need strong anti-bullying programs that cover both in-person and online bullying. These programs should focus on open communication, teaching students how to recognize and report bullying, and building a culture of empathy. Currently, only 46% of students tell an adult about being bullied, leaving many to suffer alone. Often, even these reports lead to no consequences. Better education and awareness can help more students feel safe reaching out, so no one has to face bullying on their own.

Anti-bullying programs need to address why students are targeted. Bullying based on identity can have serious impacts on students' self-esteem and creates divisions in the school. To truly stop bullying, schools should promote acceptance through policies and classes that celebrate diversity and teach understanding.

It's also important to educate those who bully. Studies show that students who bully are at higher risk for mental health and behavior issues. Anti-bullying programs should identify and support these students with counseling and conflict resolution skills to help prevent future incidents.

Parents and communities need to work with schools to fight bullying together. Anti-bullying programs are more effective when students see everyone—from teachers to parents—united against bullying. This support helps create a place where empathy is the norm, and every student feels they belong.

Addressing bullying isn't just about preventing physical harm; it's about teaching kindness, strength, and understanding. Having a strong anti-bullying program is so important for students' mental health, self-worth, and future. With ongoing commitment, Discovery Christian could create a positive environment where respect and diversity are valued, and students feel safe to learn and grow. Let's work together to make this happen DCS!



PRAYER REQUESTS



Let us pray.

If you would like to add someone to our community and school-wide prayer list, please send their name to any of the six newspaper staff members or email bblair@dcs lions.com. Thank you!

- The student body of Discovery Christian
- Everyone impacted by Helene or Milton
- The country
- All teachers
- All first responders
- All staff
- Military-deployed and non
- Church leaders
- Heather Edmundson
- Jayleen Thurman and Family
- Adley Sanders
- Tate Harlan
- The persecuted church
- Wendi Teten
- Preston Gordon
- Kevin Walker
- Eunice Bruce
- Stephanie McCrory
- Family of Ayden Temple
- Nad Saiphoo
- Julia Chacon
- Adrian and Mat Turner
- Ben and Jessica Jarratt
- Restoration Church
- Hearts of Students
- DCS Athletics
- Scotty Paul Hartman
- Bill Jerrolds
- Donovan Lichte
- Noah Perry
- Carla Sanders
- Parker Scarborough
- Jimmy Wayne Wilson and Family
- Kayla Jones
- Anderson Blair
- Anthony Sullivan
- Students new to DCS
- Kelly Day
- Kelsey Jernigan
- Lisa Kitchens
- Marsha Pilgrim
- Mary Jackson
- Megan Schirmer
- Mindy Perkins
- Tobie Valdez
- Wanda Reeves
- Annah Craft
- Dawn Parker
- Jason Miles
- Jenny Grubbs
- Mark Murphy
- Matthew Ryan
- Elizabeth Foster
- Jayleen Thurman
- Cory Herrington
- Traci Brown
- Wendy Bairfield
- Courtney Eiler
- Allen Sanders
- Angie Holmes
- April Benton
- April Kyzar
- Ashley Arinder
- Becky Hemphill
- Brad Cliburn
- Brian Rowe
- Brittany Blair
- Cara Shelton
- Carla Morgan
- Carlia Rushing
- Christian Macoy
- Cindy Bynum
- Cindy Loftin
- Dawn Taylor
- Debby Rowe
- Debra Brown
- Deia Sanders
- Donna Murphy
- Eric Walters
- Heather Walker
- Jeff Cannon
- Jessica Wade
- Keith Dewease
- Kim Germany
- Kim Macoy
- Laurie Martin
- Linda Macoy
- Paula Cook
- Rich Mayfield
- Sandy Andrews
- Sara Beth Lyle
- Sharon Pilgrim
- Carlie Pate
- Hurricane Victims
- Layla Stewart
- Serenity Anderson
- Raylee Reed
- Carly Cook
- Gabe Kemp