

New school to teach old values

By Kelly Butler

Word is spreading around town that there's a new school on the scene. Haw River Christian Academy (HRCA) is Chatham County's first private Christian school. It's artsy, symbolic logo, which blends a wave into the pages of a book (textbook and the Bible) with the cross centered as its spine, invites one to wonder a little more about this new kid on the block.

In the Spring of 2007, a handful of families were united by a common desire and a similar vision. All of them were a year away from their first child entering kindergarten. Deep down they sought an alternative education for their children that would embrace traditions that have lost their value in today's society. They were immediately drawn to the classical Christian movement, which blends rigorous academics with a Christian worldview.

The task of starting a non-denominational, church independent, classical Christian school here in Pittsboro seemed like a mighty endeavor. With the example, experience, and success of existing schools across the nation, the first being founded by Douglas Wilson in Moscow, Idaho (Logos School, 1981) and now as close as Cary, (Cary Christian School, 1996), the founding members of HRCA have benefited from the fruit of other's efforts.

With immeasurable commitment, passion, and desire to establish such a school locally, things have fallen into place beautifully while gaining more interest and enthusiasm within the community. The by-laws were drafted and Haw River Christian Academy filed for 501(c)(3) non-profit status in May 2007. Then the school's membership corporation was formed. In August, the school became a member of the Association of Classical Christian Schools (www.accsedu.org). HRCA was officially announced to the local community on October 1 and hosted its first public meeting on October 25. Soon after, in November, Rock Spring Baptist Church agreed to initially house the school from its superb location along Highway 15-501, just south of the Haw River between Pittsboro and Chapel Hill.

This year, the school continues to progress at a steady pace toward opening this Fall. In January, the school's Board was formed. Staff members have been hired and student admissions are still underway. Fundraising efforts began this Spring with Krispy

Kreme doughnut sales, a direct mail campaign, and the school's first annual golf tournament at The Preserve at Jordan Lake. The school held two Open House events in mid-June, allowing interested families to get a sneak peek at the facility and meet staff members.

Given all of the accomplishments thus far and the steps that lie ahead, such as setting up classrooms and safety www.hawriverchristian.org, is the greatest source of information about it specifically, there are a lot of recommended books that explain the classical Christian school model — for example Douglas Wilson's "The Case for Classical Christian Education" and "Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning."

Basically, HRCA is a new school that brings back old-school methods to the classroom which were successful and sufficient in raising prior generations, including our country's founding fathers. It's about restoring a culture and recognizing that faith permeates all aspects of life. It intends to answer the big questions in life... Who are we? Where did we come from? And where are we going? An individual's answers to these questions define his worldview and cannot be separated from education.

The classical Christian curriculum is structured so that all subjects are taught with the perspective that God is the hub of all knowledge, history, and culture. Children are taught in accordance with their God-given stages of development. For example, young children are like sponges, absorbing incredible amounts of information. They can learn songs, rhymes, and recite facts with relative ease. Therefore, the classical method uses these tools to impart knowledge to kids of this age. During the middle school years, children begin to think independently and often develop a propensity for argument. The classical method uses this to help the students begin to formally arrange facts into valid logical order throughout all subjects. Once a student has obtained a knowledge of the facts (Grammar phase, grades K-6) and developed the skills necessary to arrange those facts (Logic phase, grades 7-8), he must develop the skill of communicating those arguments to others (Rhetoric phase, grades 9-12). In addition to the basic subjects, the curriculum blends in Latin, classic literature, great works of art, and classical music. The Chatham YMCA will also provide physical education classes for HRCA students.

Beyond subject matter, children are taught how to think and are given a love for learning. There is an emphasis on discipline, routines, personal appearance (e.g. school uniform), traditional manners, and respect for authority. The goal is to graduate students who will think clearly and listen carefully, being well prepared in all situations by possessing both information and the knowledge of how to use it.

Haw River Christian Academy is excited about opening its doors and growing with the community. HRCA will initially offer transitional kinder-



Riley Butler and Harris Sparks examine a book in the library of Pittsboro Baptist Church. PHOTO BY KELLY BUTLER

garten (ages 4-5), half-day kindergarten, and grades 1-2 with plans to add one or two grades per year until serving TK-12. It will operate on a more traditional school calendar in which classes will begin September 2 and end May 22 for the 2008-09 school year. The tuition breakdown is: TK for \$300/month, Kindergarten for \$360/month, and Grades 1-2 for \$460/month. Tuition is based on 10 months and includes 2 school uniforms.

Families who are interested in enrolling their child(ren) this Fall or in future years are encouraged to schedule a school tour and join the

school's corporation. Longevity of membership will become a deciding factor if there are more applications than available seats.

Kelly Butler and husband Sean are one of the founding couples of HRCA, where their children, Riley and Reece, will attend. They are Pittsboro residents. For more information, call 919.533.4139.

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**Coffeehouse Worship, 10 a.m.
Kid's Club and Manna & Mercy for adults, 9 a.m.
at Central Carolina Community College**

 **gracepoint**

FIRST MONDAYS OF EVERY MONTH

Restart for separated and divorced

Flamingo Restaurant, 7 p.m.

Theology on Tap conversation about contemporary issues,
Carolina Brewery, 7:30 p.m.

Heroes of Humanity Movie Series

Thursday July 10 — Thursday, July 31
Central Carolina Community College, 7:30 p.m.

Life and Faith 101. Got Questions?

Dialog with authors James Efirid and Paul Harms,
Sunday, August 3 — Tuesday, August 5
Central Carolina Community College, 7-9 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

The SoulJourn Living Earth Music Fest

Fescue 911 and headliner Bill Maloney from
Athens, GA, 6 p.m. Tickets \$10 at the show only.
Outdoors at Central Carolina Community College.
www.billmallonee.net

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1

The Fall Harvest Party

with The Time Machine Band, 7:30 p.m.
at The Chatham Mills. Tickets \$15 at the door
only. www.timemachinebandnc.com

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