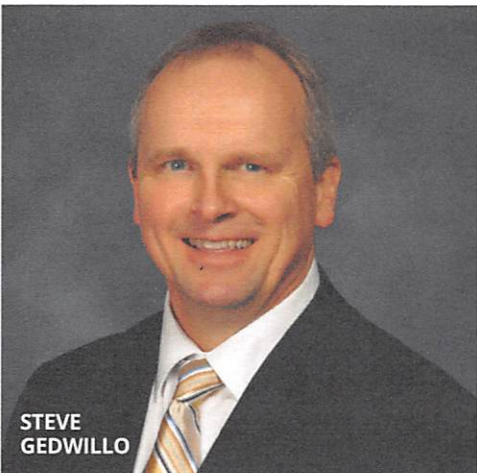




**CONCORDIA**  
LUTHERAN SCHOOLS OF OMAHA  
FOUNDATION

**GIVE**  
GRACEFULLY  
& GRATEFULLY

**PRAYER. IT ALL BEGAN WITH PRAYER. FOR MANY YEARS, INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS OF PEOPLE PASSIONATE ABOUT LUTHERAN EDUCATION PRAYED FOR A MISSOURI SYNOD LUTHERAN SCHOOL TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE RAPIDLY GROWING AREAS OF WEST OMAHA. IN 1996, GOD ANSWERED THOSE PRAYERS BY INSPIRING THE REVEREND DAVID L. BLOCK, THEN THE PASTOR AT DIVINE SHEPHERD LUTHERAN, TO GATHER THESE PEOPLE TOGETHER TO PLAN AND CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR A NEW LUTHERAN SCHOOL IN OMAHA.**



Through God's blessing, the group's determination and Pastor Block's passion, the initial funds were raised and the West Omaha Lutheran School Association was formed! In the fall of 1998, Abundant Life Lutheran School was opened.

Since then, God has continued to lead passionate and talented education professionals, volunteers, families, donors and congregations to develop and support the ministry. By God's grace, we have grown into Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha, and together, we guide the next generations to be faith secure, world ready, Kingdom leaders.

Over the years, Concordia has been able to develop its facilities and grow a wide variety of excellent activities and academic programs - thanks to supporters' gifts designated to these specific purposes. Fine Arts productions, athletic equipment, STEM / robotics programs, and our new Junior High wing are just a few examples. What a blessing for our students!

Designated gifts, however, are only part of the financial equation. In addition, Concordia relies on generous donors to "fill the gap" between

revenues from operations, such as tuition and fees, and the actual costs of fulfilling the mission in an excellent, God-pleasing way. As it is with most ministries, gifts that "fill the gap" in the annual operating needs are the financial lifeblood of Concordia.

In order to recognize and encourage regular giving that closes this financial "gap", we have developed a "donor honor roll", of sorts. This honor roll recognizes donors that give an annual minimum total of \$1500 to the Concordia Omaha Fund. The Concordia Omaha Fund is a title that encompasses all gifts which "fill the gap". Gifts such as "where most needed", tuition support, gala purchases or undesignated are included under the Concordia Omaha Fund title.

With the support of Rev. Dr. David L. and Carlyn Block, we have named our donor honor roll the Block Leadership Society. This naming is a tribute to the Blocks' dedication to establishing Concordia and shepherding it through its early years. Look for a listing of the 2019 Block Leadership Society members in this newsletter. Whether or not you are able to join the Block Leadership Society in 2020, I ask each of you to prayerfully consider what you can do to "fill the gap" for Concordia's students!

Most of all, as has been done since the start, please pray for Concordia. Pray.



In His service,  
**Steve Gedwillo**, Director of Advancement



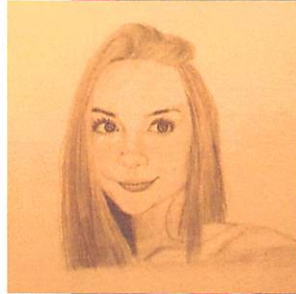
# Why I Give

**OTIS AND CLARICE HOWARD** are faithful Concordia Omaha supporters and have been for several years. You can often find them in the bleachers cheering on both their own grandchildren and other Concordia students as well.

It all started several years ago when the Howards' grandchildren, Justin and Emily Otten, were attending Concordia Academy at St. Mark's church. Clarice and Otis would often assist with carpool duties and got to know their grandchildren's friends. They then started attending many extra-curricular events like volleyball games for Emily and Justin's basketball and baseball games. Although Emily is now a Senior and Justin is a Sophomore, you will usually find Clarice and Otis in the stands cheering on Concordia athletes from the Reserve team on up to Varsity. Otis shares that he enjoys watching the student athletes perfect their skills year to year. Otis played football, basketball and did track at a Lutheran High School in California. He then played one year of college football at Concordia University of Nebraska where he met Clarice. Their daughter, Julie, met her husband, Nick Otten, at Concordia Nebraska as well! Clarice enjoys cheering on all of the athletes as many don't have anyone else there for them. She appreciates that many parents are both working and aren't able to always make it to their child's games.

The Howards are also financial supporters of Concordia Omaha. They have blessed the school with designated gifts towards various athletic programs over the years. "We want to help develop the students both spiritually and physically so that they can in turn glorify God," said Clarice. They understand that in a small school there are not always extra dollars to support sports programs and that many parents are already challenged to pay tuition. She also shares that she has made new friends with other grandparents over the years and plans to come to Concordia events even after their grandchildren have moved on to college!

Support like the Howards' is greatly appreciated by both the students and Concordia leadership! Thank you for investing both financially and personally into the students. You have made a difference!



What's  
*Happening*

*Thank you!*

This spring, the  
Concordia Scho



# Why I attend Concordia- Mekalah Neddo

If anyone can speak to the benefits of attending Concordia Lutheran Schools, it would be Mekalah Neddo, a 2020 Senior at Concordia Jr.-Sr. High School. Mekalah has a very interesting story that covers it all; a home school experience from K-9 grade, Concordia for eighteen months, public school for her Junior year and then back to Concordia for her Senior year.

Mekalah enjoyed being home schooled, but as the youngest in the family and as her parent's work schedules changed she began to desire the opportunity to be in a classroom setting. She did research on education options in Omaha and then told her parents she wanted to go to Concordia. After much discussion the decision was made that she would start at Concordia for her second semester of ninth grade; Mekalah was thrilled! There was a transition as she now had to get up and out of the house earlier in the day and learn how to follow the bell schedule. However, there were many benefits as well. She shares, "I got to be in lots of extra-curricular activities like

Harmonics and the Worship Team. I also got to discuss my faith in my classes and with teachers."

Sadly, due to work changes for Mekalah's parents they decided she would attend public school for her Junior year. This was another transition for her. There was no prayer in school now and it was harder to focus on her faith. She says, "my faith was still there it was just hard to live it at school."

Once again things changed, during the summer of her Junior year, and she was able to return to Concordia for her Senior year. Mekalah shares that, "Concordia is definitely my home." Mekalah says that she loves Concordia because here she knows everyone and can be friends with everyone. Another interesting difference Mekalah noticed was that her public school curriculum was easier, but her grades were not as strong. At Concordia the classes are more difficult but her grades were higher. She believes that the atmosphere and more personalized relationships make a difference.

## Young Leaders Make a Difference

"Growing Leaders" is an elective class offered to Jr. High students at Concordia and has proven to make a difference in the Omaha community. The class, taught by Mr. Andy Jipp, is designed to encourage students to think about taking steps in their lives to step up and be all that God has designed them to be. The students learn to "lead" themselves by setting goals, becoming more organized and reflect on their gifts and talents. Each leadership lesson has an image that accompanies the lesson to help them remember what they have learned. In addition, the students learn what it means to be a servant leader by planning and executing a service project.

Before COVID-19 changed the way school happened at Concordia, the students and staff donated 100 boxes of cereal that were designated to be donated to Open Door Mission in Omaha. Mr. Jipp delivered the cereal with the help of other teachers who had also collected items in their Life Groups to bless those living at Open Door Mission.

**THANK YOU** to all who helped Concordia meet their goal of raising \$28,000 for the Music department. This was recently matched by the Rupert Dunklau Foundation!

## Ways to donate

1. IRS disbursements
2. Company matching programs such as Union Pacific and Berkshire Energy group.
3. Thrivent Insurance member's Choice Dollars
4. Give online at [Concordiaomaha.org](http://Concordiaomaha.org)

*Rising to the challenge!*

**WITH THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19**, which lead to the school building closing as of March 16, Concordia Omaha continued to deliver new curriculum to our students via online learning. Consequently, our expenses have remained the same while many of our families are now challenged to pay tuition. Please consider making a donation to our Covid Relief Fund so that we can help our families meet those commitments.

*2020 Annual Concordia Gala was an event filled with celebration and generosity. We are thankful for a total of \$170,000, in donations, raised for future student opportunities.*



## Foundation Board

Mr. A. William "Bill" Kernen-Chair

Mr. Del Toebben-Vice-Chair

Mr. Lee Handke

Mrs. Gail Hawkins

Mr. Lloyd Probasco

Mrs. Gaye Lynn Schaffart

Ex Officio Members:

Mr. Rob Cooksey

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Mr. Aaron Sailer

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A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF CONCORDIA  
LUTHERAN SCHOOLS OF OMAHA  
FOUNDATION **SPRING 2020**

## Alumni Spotlight

*Corvettes, Cadillacs and Marriage* sounds like a country song. This is actually a description of what **Ian Gensler ('13)** has been up to! Ian attended Hillsdale College where he majored in Economics and minored in Math. He interned with ConAgra Brands and JP Morgan Chase, and was hired by General Motors as a financial analyst after graduation.

Last summer Ian and his new bride, Kendra, moved to Franklin, TN. There, he works in the GM Spring Hill plant where they produce Cadillacs and the new Corvette that will come out later this year. Kendra works as a first grade teacher.

Ian is thankful for his time at as a Mustang. "Concordia developed me as an individual with both a good education and spiritual foundation, as well as allowing me to build great friendships!"

## 2019 Block Leadership Society Members

The Block Leadership Society is comprised of Concordia friends who, in 2019, gave gifts of at least \$1500 to the Concordia Omaha Fund, the fund that supports annual ministry operations (see cover story).



*Rev. Stephen and Peg Bartelt*

*Ardis Bergquist*

*Rev. Dr. David and Carlyn Block*

*Chad and Lisa Cole*

*Rob and Dawn Cooksey*

*John and Linda Davis*

*Nate and Allison Domsch*

*Drexel Mechanical, Bob and Denise Drexel*

*Walt and Linda Duda*

*Steve and Lori Gedwillo*

*Greg and Jody Gesell and family*

*Richard and Pat Hahn*

*Ryan and Sommer Hahn*

*Lee and Jennifer Handke*

*Kirk and Gail Hawkins*

*Jason and Kim Hess*

*Roger and Nita Holmes*

*Mic and Nancy Johnston*

*The Bill and Leona*

*Kernen Family*

*Don and Kelly Klepser*

*Richard and Ruth*

*Laughlin*

*Rob and Sarah Lindau*

*Alex and Amber Mazzeo*

*Barb and Kevin Meier*

*Elvina L. Miller*

*Glenn F. Mueller*

*Lloyd and Ruth Probasco*

*Larry and Joyce Raabe*

*Eric and Laura Rice*

*Joe and Carla Risko*

*Lisa and Aaron Sailer*

*Gaye Lynn and Joe Schaffart*

*Mark and Pam Shrader*

*Leon L. Siedlyk*

*Andrew and Chrystal Sigerson*

*Todd and Donna Strubbe*

*Scott and Kim Sucha*

*Del and Phyllis Toebben*

*Dean and Theresa Warneke*

*Corey and Cali Watton*

*Doug and Jean Wilshusen*

*Dave and Darcie Zauha*

*ANONYMOUS - Seven Society Members*