

Alumni Echo

News and updates from Belleville Mennonite School - October 2022



Our 2022 Alumnus of Year award goes to JB Eby, a 1988 graduate of Belleville Mennonite School. After graduation, he attended Hesston College and received his associates degree in liberal arts. Following a year of work at a local body shop, JB completed his degree in business administration at Eastern Mennonite College.

After college, JB worked for Metzler Forest Products for a time handling administrative tasks and eventually had the opportunity to purchase an established business in Yeagertown. Under JB's direction, the body shop became Precision Autobody, which he owned and managed for 7 years. He then had a car and truck accessory business in Burnham for 3 years before closing that and becoming a business partner with Ben Hartzler at Mid-State Roofing for another 3 years. JB then returned to Metzler Forest Products where he was the business manager for 7 years. He eventually left that position to start B & H Restoration, which he currently operates.

JB has served on the board at Valley View Haven, the Finance Committee at BMS, and at Locust Grove Mennonite Church where they attend. He shares, "Although I don't seek things out like this, I have always felt that if I was asked to help in a particular manner, one that I have some experience or expertise in, then I should consider that opportunity. I am a faithful believer that you don't have to have a long list of amazing abilities to be used by God. Just start with the small things you can do, and He will develop you into the person he wants you to be. He's still working on all of us!"

JB is married to Heather and they have 2 daughters, Madeline, a 2021 graduate of BMS, and Olivia, a junior here. He currently helps to lead their Sunday School class at Locust Grove. JB & Heather take great joy in traveling and visiting new places and look forward to many more trips in the years to come.

Thank you, JB, for your life of service and leadership. Your willingness to try new endeavors and to participate in the community using the gifts and abilities that the Lord has placed in your life is an encouragement to us all!





Our 2022 Young Alumnus of the Year Award goes to Aaron Spicher, a 2008 Graduate of Belleville Mennonite School and 2013 graduate of Eastern Mennonite University. After earning his degree in Elementary Education, Aaron spent a year working at TCO fly fishing shop in State College working retail and guiding fly-fishing trips. In 2015, he began working for the state of PA and spent 3 years working at the Youth Forestry Camp 3, a juvenile detention center in Trough Creek State Park. In 2018, Aaron transitioned to working at ChildLine, the state child abuse hotline. Last year, he moved up to his current job with the Commonwealth of PA, where he works for the Office of Child Development and Early Learning as a Certification Representative, licensing and inspecting childcare facilities.

Aaron is married to Tara, who works part-time as a music teacher at BMS. They have 2 boys - Harvey, age 2, and Cooper, age 1. They attend and are actively involved at Kish Valley Grace Brethren Church. In his free time, Aaron enjoys being outside with the family, fly fishing, playing disc golf, and hunting. Thank you, Aaron, for your life of service and discipleship that continues to impact those around you for Christ!



May He give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do. 2 Thessalonians 1:11



The plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purpose of His heart through all generations.

Psalms 33:11

Grandparents Day 2022 was a powerful and precious time together! We recently hosted more than 200 very special guests for a morning filled with worship and fellowship. Many of our honored attendees were alumni who enjoyed the special time with their grandchildren.

Pictured to the left, clockwise:

Arlene Kauffman ('71) with Jonas, 10th grade; Lowell ('83) & Savilla Peachey with Declan, Kindergarten; Brenda (Byler) Mathews ('75) with Carter, 2nd grade; and Rod Kauffman ('81) with Jalyne, Kindergarten.



Reflections on BMS by Aaron Spicher

I've been looking back, thinking about how BMS blessed me as a student and realize that presently, BMS is really blessing my family. It's a great place; my wife loves working here. She has great co-workers and I think everyone who works here feels the same. Then, I look ahead and anticipate how BMS will bless our family as we look forward to sending our kids here in a few years.

What specifically about BMS shaped where I am today, my job, and my interactions with people? Yes, the education was great here. But the best memories I have were always from the simple acts by teachers who taught me valuable lessons through them. At the time, I didn't realize that they were valuable lessons. As an adult now, I realize how good they were.

Starting out in elementary school, when I was in 5th grade with Mrs. Glenna Young as our teacher, our class was in the basement down by the art room. We were the only class down there; a rowdy group of kids; there were a lot of boys. One particular year, we had a lot of indoor recess. That didn't go well with the boys in my class. There were a lot of hyperactive kids including myself in that room. We discovered a really fun game to play. We called it floor hockey. We would take the little square erasers, cut them in half, and wrap tape around them so they slid across the floor really well. Then we'd take Mrs. Young's rulers and use them as our hockey sticks. We'd push our desk to the side of the room, check each other into the wall and the desks, and we would break her rulers. She always let us play. She would always tell us not to break her rulers, and inevitably, someone would break a ruler. But she always let us play.



Moving forward to high school, Mr. Herb Zook was our gym teacher. We had a curriculum one year with badminton – kind of an odd sport. For some reason, the guys in my class and I fell in love with it. It was a fun activity for us in gym. Herb recognized that and would pull us out of study halls to “set up the nets” and then we got to spend the rest of our time making sure the equipment was okay!

Additionally in high school, we would try to waste 10-15 minutes of class every morning with Mrs. Ann Quinn. We always thought we were getting one over on her by talking and getting her distracted, only to come to find out that we were talking and she was listening. We thought we were getting ahead, but she was listening to us. We were being heard and we were building trust in her as a teacher. We would go to her with more than just educational problems and we weren't afraid to ask questions in class.

Lastly, Mr. Bob and one of my favorite memories. It was actually just about 8 months ago that I found out how Mr. Bob was connected. During half days in high school, some friends and I would go to one friend's house and connect our video game consuls together using an ethernet cord. Four of us would be in one room of the house and the other four would be in another room. We had different TVs so we couldn't cheat on each other by seeing what the others were playing and we spent countless hours doing that.

I was reminiscing with one of my friends recently about that as a great time. He asked me, “Did you know that Mr. Bob gave us that ethernet cable? I went to him and asked if he knew where I could buy a 100 ft. long ethernet cable. Mr. Bob could've just told me to go to Best Buy or find one online. Instead, he said, ‘hold on one second.’ A couple minutes later he came back with this ethernet cord.” *(continued on pg. 4)*

So where am I going with all this? These are lessons that I apply to daily life and work.

Back in 5th grade, Mrs. Young understood our needs. She knew that we were a rowdy bunch of boys who needed to get our energy out somehow. Even though we broke her rulers, we ran into desks, and had erasers flying around the room. I'm sure we drove her nuts with it, but she never showed that and she always let us do it. Why? She understood our needs.

I would imagine it would have been very easy for her to say, "Stop doing that. It's not appropriate. But she understood that we were benefitting from that. In everyday life and work, oftentimes there are things that come up, that frankly may annoy me, but it's always benefitting someone. Glenna showed me how to sit back, recognize that just because it's not benefitting me at the time, people have needs, and if I can let them do their thing, they will grow from it.

Moving on to Mr. Zook in gym class: He noticed our enthusiasm and he fostered that. He tried to get us more involved when he saw that we were excited. As I go about work and interact with coworkers and daycare providers, I try to keep that in mind. How can I encourage them? How can I foster their excitement about something? Sometimes there's not a lot of excitement about anything. So what is the badminton in that person's life right now that I can find and throw in there to help build them up?

And Mrs. Quinn: She knew that we needed to talk and vent. She knew that she had a schedule and a class to get to, but she listened to us anyway. She heard us, and she built our trust because of that. Many days I have a tight schedule going from one place to the next and it's something I try to keep in my head. Do I need to listen to someone? Does someone just need to talk? It's okay if I'm 5 or 10 minutes late to my next appointment, because this person needs to talk and I'm there to listen to them.

The simple acts of the teachers here taught me how to succeed, and how to show God's love both in life and in the workplace.

Lastly, one of my favorite memories with Mr. Bob: That simple act of kindness that he probably didn't even think about when he did it - giving that ethernet cord to us made memories that 20 years later we're still talking about as one of our fondest memories from high school. I'm quite certain that it's not within his job description to hand out technology and I hope I don't get you in trouble, Mr. Bob!

He recognized that he could do this simple act of kindness. He made ten high school boys very happy and helped them make memories for a lifetime.

I think about that often in my job. What's something small that I can do for someone? Am I going to go above and beyond my job description says? Sometimes a little extra research or giving small assistance; that tiny act, that really doesn't require much from me can make an impact that maybe they'll still remember in 10 or 15 years.

To close, the education is very important in a foundation of school, but the simple acts of the teachers here taught me how to succeed, and how to show God's love both in life and in the workplace. I want to leave you all with a challenge: I challenge you to be mindful of the things that you can do which will have a lasting impact on the people you encounter every day!



Let all that you do be done in love. 1 Corinthians 16:14