



THE BEAR FACTS

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BRENTWOOD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

DECEMBER 2016



BCS Christmas has familiar feel

By Benjamin Helyer

As one walks through the hallways of Brentwood Christian this season, the evidence of the impending holiday season cannot be ignored. Christmas lights pop up in many classrooms, a tree is added to the lobby of the CSA, and the hallways are filled with festive cheer.

The cheer is warranted, however, as exciting activities are happening all over campus. In elementary the annual pageant was performed, and the fourth-grade classes went to the Nutcracker. High school NHS members took a trip to Rosedale for the annual Christmas festival.

Among the most recent Christmas festivities was the annual elementary Christmas pageant, held last night at 7 p.m. in the auditorium. This tradition has been done since the school opened in 1963. Elementary music teacher Amanda Stanglin said she appreciates sharing more than two months of hard work with an audience each year.

"I love it when the pieces all start coming together, my students become aware of it, and they take pride in what they're doing," Stanglin said.

Another long-held Brentwood tradition is the *Nutcracker* trip. On Wednesday, Dec. 7, the fourth-grade classes headed to the Long Center to see an act of the classic Christmas-time bal-

let. After the performance, the students went back to Brentwood to enjoy a fancy dinner in order to use table manners which they had been learning about in class. Those who stood out received a Silver Spoon Award.

Fourth-grade teachers say they enjoy seeing the students take ownership of the challenge, showing their mature conduct both at lunch and during the performance.

"They really rise to the occasion," said teacher Summer Best, who also stated that she loves "watching the kids who struggle in other areas be successful" in displaying their maturity.

In the first grade, the annual trip to the Elgin Christmas Tree Farm was cancelled by the farm the night before the trip, planned for Dec. 5. There was no time available to reschedule before Christmas. However, the first-grade classes still had a fun-filled day, enjoying various activities in their classrooms.

Headed by PTF, the Angel Tree fundraiser encourages students to earn money by doing chores at home and then donate their earnings. Paper Christmas trees are placed near each classroom, and once students raise funds, they can put a paper angel on the tree with their name and the activities they did to earn the money.

High school students also spread joy this season on Dec. 8 at Rosedale. Juniors and some

band members in National Honor Society went to the school for the annual winter carnival. The band members hosted a small concert, and there were several other activities hosted for the Rosedale students to enjoy.

"It was awesome," senior Austin Greene said. "We got to put smiles on everyone's faces and light up the room with music."



photo: Laurie Weston

Fine dining Fourth-grader Jack Cope-land awaits his meal after taking in some of the *Nutcracker* ballet on Dec. 7.

'Super parents' deserve closer look

By Uyen Phan

"Hi, Teri!" Laurie Weston says as she waves at a pedestrian for the third time in 15 minutes. "She's the co-leader of Parents in Prayer with me," she says of Teri Rivas, as a beaming smile spreads across her lips.

Parents in Prayer co-leader, safety patrol member, fourth-grade *Nutcracker* luncheon's artistic patron — those are a few of Weston's contributions during her long hours on campus. It seems like she is available for almost anyone in need, whether it is a student or a school visitor, and whenever she is around, Weston's affability puts others at ease.

Weston, along with Kimberly Rutt, Nicole Alberda, and Lisa Lee, has been praised by the elementary faculty for her Christ-centered spirit of service and relentless dedication to the BCS community. These parents' names were frequently repeated when teachers were recently asked to point out a few stand-out

volunteers. Parents like these, who serve way beyond the VIP program, have truly earned the endearing nickname of "super moms."

"These few represent a host of dedicated super parents," fifth-grade teacher Cynthia Davis said, sharing her thankfulness for the chance to work with these moms. "They work tirelessly to bless others. Every party, project, and event in which they are involved is startlingly impressive."

Laurie Weston has been involved in the BCS community for three years. Her main works include the daily safety patrol, playset designing for the theater department, and leading the Parents in Prayer program, but she is almost always on campus to help with other tasks.

"She is one of the prayer warriors on Friday mornings for us," second-grade teacher Sandy Patterson explained. "She organizes many events on campus yet has time to stop by to encourage teachers all the time."

Weston said she loves safety patrol, which she insisted is enjoyable although it "sounds

ridiculous." Weston said she decided to join the team since her children, freshman Nick and sixth-grader Abby, want to do safety patrol, which requires her to drive them to school early every day.

"I can sit in my car or I can help out. I'm here anyway, so why not?" Weston shrugged.

When asked about the motivations for her contributions, Weston said she wants to spend as much time with her children as possible while she still can. She also said that she feels joy whenever she can help others.

"I am blessed to not work right now," Weston said. "And being a part of something is really cool; I can serve God by serving the school."



Having served the Brentwood community for approximately 10 years, Kimberly Rutt has got her hands in everything. She is

see **SUPER**, page 3

Lilly's story shows faith, perseverance

By Hannah Odom

Imagine being in the school cafeteria laughing with friends. Out of nowhere your dad takes you out and rushes you to San Antonio so that you can be laid on a cold table under a knife. You slap a smile on your face and act like everything is fine because your life depends on this procedure. This is the story of Lilly Ruiz.

The plucky BCS seventh grader received a kidney at the hands of Dr. Colleen Jay, a surgeon at University Hospital, on April 15 after struggling with low creatinine levels and other complications since birth.

The kidney came just in time. Lilly's creatinine levels were on the rise, and she would have needed to start dialysis soon, which would weaken her immune system leaving her vulnerable to life threatening illnesses.

Lilly said she felt tired the first few days after the operation, but once she got to go outside "for the first time in about a week and feel the sun," she felt better. She spent two weeks in the hospital and three more weeks in a hotel in San Antonio.

"The hardest part was being told when I was getting out and then having to stay like

see **SPUNKY**, page 8

photo: Melissa Samples-Ruiz

Fun-loving Lilly Ruiz has a new kidney to go with her old enthusiasm.

Teachers reflect on Christmases past

The Bear Facts asked a few BCS teachers some Christmas-related questions. Here are some of the best replies:

What is your favorite Christmas memory?

Dr. Brooke Hollingsworth: The magic of Christmas morning with small children, to whom even the wrapping paper is thrilling.

Jimmie Harper:

When my family and several friends got snowed in while we were visiting my family's cabin in East Tennessee.

Dr. Rachel Montesdeoca: Spending time with family and making Christmas bags to give to children who frequent and/or live in the streets of Ecuador.



Mel Witcher: Probably holding my son on his first Christmas.

What is your funniest/weirdest memory?

Hollingsworth: I had chicken pox over Christmas vacation when I was in kindergarten; I was so mad because I didn't miss a day of school. I got a doll with lots of accessories for Christmas and sat under the tree playing with it for days since I couldn't go anywhere.

Montesdeoca: One year we had to sleep in our car because it broke down on our way to visit my grandmother. We sang Christmas Carols that night and then were picked up later by my uncle. It was cold, but it was fun!

Witcher: Taking three days to drive from Kansas City to Denton, Texas, in an ice storm ... and with all the phone lines down, we spent two nights on the road and were unable to tell anyone where we were.

Favorite thing to eat over holidays?

Hollingsworth: Peppermint bark and cranberry bread.

Harper: Sausage balls. It's spicy sausage and cheese rolled up into a ball.

Witcher: Lemon meringue pie.

Best present you have ever received?

Hollingsworth: When we were dating, my husband gave me a watch; it had a black leather band and a mirror face with no numbers. It perfectly matched my taste, and I loved both the watch and him!

Harper: As a child: Any Legos I got were always the best gifts. As an adult: An original copy of Alexander Campbell's *Millennial Harbinger*.

Montesdeoca: Oh my, I have received a lot of good ones. I think it was a plane ticket home to spend Christmas with family.

Weirdest gift you have ever received?

Hollingsworth: When I was in New Zealand for Christmas, my best friend gave me a Christmas mobile. It has little Christmas trees hanging from it, along with a house and two

little Santa men. It is very Scandinavian looking. It seemed like a very strange gift to me then, but I cherish it. I hang it every year and think of her, even though we have lost touch.

Harper: A toy gas station.



Coollest present you ever gave?

Hollingsworth: One year I sewed a Little House on the Prairie dress for Lanae. She loved it!

Harper: I gave my sister a copy of *A Children's Illustrated History of Presidential Assassination*. I'll let you decide if that's cool or weird.

Montesdeoca: I got a jersey and cap signed by the Dallas Cowboys for my dad one year.

Real or fake Christmas tree? How important is that to you?

Hollingsworth: Real tree; not as important as it used to be. Both have advantages.

Harper: Fake. Very important. Ain't nobody got time to clean up all that mess.

Montesdeoca: I love a real Christmas tree, but a long time ago I stopped buying a real one,

especially because where we lived at the time they were not replanting trees.

What is a tradition you've celebrated since you were a child and you continue to this day?

Hollingsworth: We have a special fruit salad for Christmas breakfast: strawberries, oranges, bananas, and a bit of cinnamon. I think I have had it every year since I was old enough to remember.

Harper: Playing a game of dominoes.
Montesdeoca: The Spirit of giving to the Children of Ecuador.

Favorite Christmas carol?

Hollingsworth: Joy to the World

Harper: O Holy Night

Montesdeoca: Silent Night

Witcher: O Come O Come Emmanuel

If you have celebrated Christmas in another country, how is it different from here?

Hollingsworth: I was in New Zealand for one Christmas, and it was very different! It is summer then, so many families celebrate by going to the beach. Their favorite Christmas food is fruitcake, which is definitely NOT my favorite. They also pop Christmas crackers before dinner, which have paper crowns in

them, and everyone ate Christmas dinner with silly looking Christmas crowns on.

Montesdeoca: (In Ecuador) It is summer, not winter. We would eat ice cream and play outside.



What do you want for Christmas this year?

Hollingsworth: I know it's cheesy, but this year I am just looking forward to Lanae and John both being home!

Harper: More free trade between developed and developing countries.

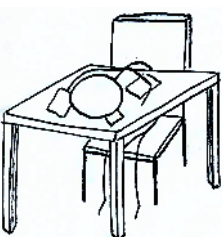
Montesdeoca: I want to make Christmas special for others.

The Honorable Omelettes Present: How We Study



Was I supposed to be doing something?

I'm a good listener...
Seniors:
And I've already been accepted to college anyway



Maybe I'll absorb it through osmosis

Or if I just stare long enough



Five minutes of work, time for a break

THE DEAR EDNA COLUMN

by the lovely Ms. Edna

READER: Are turtlenecks coming back?

EDNA: According to Mr. Mel Witcher turtlenecks never go out of style. If he says turtlenecks are in, then doggone it, turtlenecks are the next big thing.

READER: My grades are dropping faster than the temperatures. Help!

EDNA: Fortunately, we live in Texas, so they won't drop too far, and they won't stay down long, 'cause Texas is ALWAYS hot. If that fails, call 911.

READER: If you were an inanimate object, what would you be?

EDNA: You know that last fry at the bottom of the bag that single handedly betters your entire day, year, and maybe life? I'm that fry, but cold.

READER: Is cereal a type of soup?

EDNA: NO, but soup is the cereal killer.

READER: Pancakes or waffles?

EDNA: Waffles. Always waffles. They are superior to the pancake in shape, pattern, and uniformity of cutting. Plus, a pancake burned my crops and destroyed my home once. That was a difficult winter.

READER: If the sky turns gray should I run in fear?

EDNA: Nah, it's just the aliens testing out their new fog machine.

READER: How do I make the most out of my constantly deteriorating life?

EDNA: ~~If the rate of deterioration is constant, find the derivative of life and locate the maximum value of life of x.~~

Too complicated. Just make art. Sell the art and you will make enough money to get yourself back on one foot. Live life flamingo style.

‘Super moms’ a model of joyful volunteer spirit

continued from page 1

a homeroom mom, an elementary substitute teacher, and a driver for elementary field trips.

“When I think of Kim Rutt, I think ‘no task is too big,’” fourth-grade teacher Summer Best said. “I can go to her with a hair-brained idea, and she just grins and says, ‘Yep, I’ve got it!’”

Rutt said she specializes in sewing costumes, making ornaments, and decorating classrooms.

“God gave us different gifts. (Nicole Alberda’s) is special events, while mine is more ... crafty,” Rutt shared.

Rutt said that seeing how small children interact with each other and meeting new people are two of a few reasons she volunteers so often. She also said she wants to be involved in the academic lives of her children – eighth-grader Ethan and fifth-grader Lauren – as much as possible, making their childhood memories last.

According to Rutt, her favorite part about being a Brentwood volunteering mom is that the school gives out endless opportunities for parents to create for their kids. She said the students and faculty never mind her and other parents coming in to help around or do “extra stuff.”

“We are welcome here. It’s easy to volunteer because we are welcome and appreciated,” Rutt said.



“Super mom” Nicole Alberda is a veteran in volunteering. Her career traces back nearly 13 years – long before the VIP program was established. She began by being a homeroom mom and helping out in the cafeteria; now, Alberda says she finds her talent lying in event planning.

“She will be working like crazy, beautifully orchestrating a huge event, organizing dozens of volunteers, vendors, caterers, and helpers – and all we see in Nicole is pure joy,” Best said. “She thinks big, and she goes all out on everything she does.”

Like Rutt, Alberda said she started volunteering because she wanted to support her active first daughter, Chandler (Class of 2016), and loved to know about what was happening on campus. However, she concluded that it is her “gift of service” and the familial bond at BCS that continue to drive her with enthusiasm.

“There will always be a place for our family (at BCS) even when our children don’t attend school anymore,” Alberda said.

She said that volunteering, and the VIP program particularly, is a great chance for parents to meet one another outside the classroom and to set a model of service for their children. Her whole family lives by the last portion of Brentwood’s mission statement – “for lives of Christian leadership and service.”

“I think being part of Brentwood is being part of the body of Christ,” Alberda said. “It extends beyond the community.”



Lisa Lee started doing volunteer work in 2010 when her children, sixth-grader Brecken and third-grader Abigail, began attending BCS. Being a homeroom parent, photographing for events, and creating artwork with the students are among her favorite tasks.

“She covers all the bases,” third-grade teacher Carolyn B’Smith said. “I never have to worry about the details. She has it all planned.”



photo: Kay Taylor

Appreciated Laurie Weston (left) opens a gift from safety patrol officers.

Lee said she takes joy both in helping teachers and in working with children.

“I love seeing (the students’) minds work when I work with them to create special cards for their teachers or to draw a self-portrait for the art auction,” she said.

Lee expressed thankfulness for the opportunity Brentwood parents have to serve from pre-K through high school. She said she is genuinely impressed by the dedication of the staff and faculty in making Brentwood a safe place for the children, so doing VIP hours is the least she can do to show her gratitude.

Lee said she understands why it is difficult for full-time working parents to volunteer, but she guarantees that the investment will be worth it. She advises that busy parents can begin by helping teachers in easy tasks in order to find what fits their talents and schedule most. She also said she wishes more fathers and grandfathers would be involved in their children’s school activities, as it is an important stage in their lives.

“BCS is a very special place; once you get involved, you will be blessed a thousand times over!” she said.

Audiences catch tunes from choir, band, strings, Irwin

By Savannah Jowers

Out came the angelic voices and beautiful melodies as the students in choir and band were able to share their God-given talents with parents and teachers. In the span of eight days beginning on Dec. 1, BCS secondary students and a touring pianist entertained hundreds of people with three separate shows in the CSA theater led by choir director Whitney Wick and band director Travis Pollard.

Choir and band performed on Dec. 1 and Dec. 8, respectively, and on Dec. 6, Don Irwin gave his fourth annual performance.

On Tuesday, Dec. 13, the seven members of Brentwood’s string orchestra performed a separate show in the theater.

Reaching a loud enough volume was no problem with 80 high school choir members and 75 in middle school. Each group performed four or five songs, and the eighth grade sang with Encore. Freshman Encore member

Adrie Gruis said her favorite song is “Good-night Dear Heart.”

“It sounds really good with the group, and the story behind it is meaningful and inspiring,” she said.

Wick said the students already have a naturally beautiful sound and good expression, both in their faces and in the sound of their voices.

Accompanying the choirs on piano during the concert was Irwin, whose concert was a few days later.

On the Tuesday of the Irwin concert, the world renowned pianist played for elementary and secondary students in two separate shows during the morning. That evening, he played to a packed theater with no seats open.

Irwin is invited every year to Brentwood by Ron and Ali Knight, the Brentwood church couple who brings Irwin in as a gift to the school. He played mostly Christmas music, and between songs he shared stories about his interaction with such people as Nelson Man-

dela and Willie Nelson. In the lobby, the BCS string orchestra performed while kids were able to meet and take pictures with Santa.

The grand piano Irwin used is one that he donated to the school when he felt like he had too many. He also helped Brentwood get the piano in the choir room after he saw that someone was giving it away.

Led by Pollard, band performed two nights later with 59 high schoolers, 48 seventh and eighth graders, and 26 sixth graders.

The performance ended with the high school playing “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” by Michael Story. Pollard said his favorite song was the high

school’s version of “Greensleeves,” because his high school band played it, and it brings back memories.



photo: Daniel Ayala

Fa la la! High school boys ham it up as they perform a silly song at their Dec. 1 choir concert in the theater.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: Addy Hardin

Seniors featured in the Bear Facts were selected by a vote held among the entire BCS Class of 2017.

President and queen, yes, but also faithful servant

By Mary Womack

Many people can multitask and smile, but none have mastered the skill nearly as well as senior Addy Hardin. Addy began forming this valuable skill in 2004 when she walked into Mrs. Loftis' kindergarten class. Since that day she has become involved in almost everything on campus and is known for her incredible faith and flair for making friends.

"I would describe Addy as humble, fun-loving, responsible, hardworking, and confident," classmate and close friend Claire Nestor says.

Addy has been involved in Student Council for three years and was elected president her senior year.

"We wouldn't get anything done in StuCo without Addy," senior and fellow StuCo member Lindsey Scarborough says. "She's the glue that keeps us all together."

Addy, whose older sisters Bailey ('12) and Keely ('16) have graduated from BCS, has spent a lot of time at school. Not only has she played Brentwood basketball and volleyball since the fifth grade, but she is also Claw Crew "CEO," yearbook editor, NHS member, and positive vibes board coordinator. This deep involvement in her school helps explain why she was chosen as Homecoming Queen in October.

"Addy is by far the best leader in the entire senior class," senior Jordan Johnson says.

Through her copious amount of responsibilities Addy has become recognized school-wide for her leadership and organizational skills. Not only do students rely on her help with homework and problems, but teachers also have benefited from her generosity and her dedication. And though Addy seemingly has a superpower to manage multiple tasks, she has learned not to bite off more than she can chew. For example, at the beginning of the school year Addy was swamped in commitments and homework and had no idea how to deal with it all.

"My mentor group leader, Mrs. (Nancy) Tindel, gave me a book that talked a lot about saying yes or no and figuring out my priorities," Addy says. "And it helped me realize I have to be selective in time and energy. I have to make sacrifices."

This valuable realization Addy experienced will serve her well as she pursues a degree in business management next fall. Addy says her mother, Pam, who works in the BCS athletics office, was influential in this decision. During her junior year, Addy wasn't sure what she wanted to do, but after a conversation with her mom, she realized that she

loved working in StuCo and decided that business management was a good match for that. Addy's dream would be to pursue this degree at Pepperdine, but she also is considering Belmont and Texas A&M.

And although she is always loaded down with many responsibilities, Addy has not neglected her relationship with God.

"Even if you asked me to say something negative about her I couldn't," secondary principal

Carol Johnson says. "She speaks and you can see Christ in her."

Addy has carried her faith with her throughout her entire life, and it is a much larger part of her identity than anything else. Her junior year brought some unexpected challenges for Addy, but she says her faith was tested and she can appreciate how God works through difficult decisions.

"As I look back I can see God working in my life. I had a certain vision for senior year, and the dynamic definitely changed. I think it says a lot about how God works," Addy says.

Friends agree with Addy on the growth of her faith.

"I think Addy's faith has always been strong but really grown recently," Claire says. "She's gotten stronger, and her faith has become apparent in everything she does no matter how small."

This wise and mature view on God's plan has aided Addy in at her church, Round Rock Church of Christ. Last summer Addy had the opportunity to venture to Peru on a mission trip. Through this Addy says she realized how similar all humans are no matter their economic status or geographic location. This experience showed her how much her faith means to her, and how she wants continually live her life for Christ.

"The most important thing to me is to keep my priority in the faith. Especially because in my life I've seen effects of going through life without God," Addy says.

Many students and teachers alike have a hard time accepting that next year Addy will no longer be planning new and exciting StuCo events or offering them an encouraging smile in the hallway. But they all know that she will be just as helpful and kind wherever she chooses to go to college.

"Addy is one of the greatest friends a person could have," senior Morgan George said. "She is amazing in every way, and I am going to miss her so very much next year."



THE BEAR FACTS

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THE BEAR FACTS DECEMBER 2016

Loftises build relationships, model lives of faith

By Kaitlyn Baird

It's 5:30 p.m. at BCS, and while many teachers have already headed home, Devan Loftis and his wife Kaylee are in the gym mentoring basketball players and helping develop their skills. Not only are they preparing the team for the next game, but they're also preparing them for life by guiding them toward being stronger athletes, leaders, and Christians.

"For me, being involved with athletes is a fantastic job, and I love the kids and families," Devan Loftis says. "Doing that with Christian perspective and relationships built on shared faith is priceless."

The couple joined the Brentwood community in 2000, shortly after they got married, and there is no doubt the Loftises have made their mark on BCS during the past 16 years. Throughout the years, Devan Loftis has coached soccer, baseball, track, volleyball, and basketball, as well as teaching World History, U.S. History, and Government. Kaylee Loftis has coached volleyball, basketball, and softball, along with being a kindergarten teacher and pre-K teacher.

Of course, Devan Loftis has made his mark primarily through coaching basketball. In his 16-plus seasons with the Lady Bears, he has accumulated 370 wins, and his wife has coached with him for eight seasons.

However, there is more to the Loftises' coaching than game strategies and techniques.

"They taught me how to be mentally tough and have been great role models," senior Addy Hardin says.

The Loftises met at Harding University. Kaylee graduated with a degree in child development, while Devan received

a degree in social science. Before meeting, the two grew up far away from each other. Kaylee was born in Athens, Texas, and grew up in nearby Mabank. Devan was born in Greencastle, Indiana, and he grew up in Indianapolis.

Despite living nowhere near each other, they both had a common interest growing up: sports. Kaylee says some of her favorite teams were the Houston Oilers, LSU Tigers, Arkansas Razorbacks, and Texas Rangers. Devan was a big fan of Larry Bird, who played for the Boston Celtics, and he also followed the Indiana Hoosiers and St. Louis Cardinals.

Everyone seems to agree that the Loftises have a talent for coaching young athletes, too.

"He can see their potential and really help them develop that potential," says third-grade teacher Carolyn B'Smith, whose daughter Leah (BCS '03) was on the first few Lady Bears squads coached by Loftis.

Teaching and coaching are not the Loftises' only jobs. They are also the parents of three Brentwood students: fifth-grader Brinton, fourth-grader Lucy, and second-grader Macy.

Kindergarten teacher Diane Troutman says she considers Kaylee Loftis to be a blessing in her life.

"She gives godly advice and she encourages me so much," Troutman says. "I am amazed

by how well she manages to balance her life of being a full-time teacher, mom, wife, and assistant coach – and she does each job so well."

Flag football and basketball coach David Trevino found it easy to name admirable traits he sees in Devan Loftis.

"He is a hard worker, always trying to do better. He uses that same focus to be the best Christian, father, and husband he can be."

Both Kaylee and Devan Loftis agree that

they've had some "fantastic mentors" from Brentwood to help them along the way, including former elementary principal Dr. Libby Weed, former BCS president Marquita Moss, and teacher Mel Witcher.

"They taught us and showed us how to teach from a Christian perspective," Devan says.

Kaylee says she enjoys working with different ages and building relationships with kids.

"The sense of community, the friendships I have made, and being able to teach from a Christian perspective and worldview is something I enjoy," Kaylee says. "I also love seeing the innocence of my K4 students and how they grasp on to everything you say and do."

Devan says he enjoys building relationships with kids he coaches and their families. Another thing he loves is that the students at BCS can explore all of their talents, instead of just one or two, in a place that values God.

"I appreciated that BCS was different. I love that BCS pursues excellence but values being a kingdom school first," he says.

It doesn't take much searching to find parents of current and former students who are thankful for the time and dedication the Loftises have put into coaching their kids.

"He taught our kids lots about sports, especially basketball, but more importantly he was a constant reminder to us of how to conduct ourselves in Christ's image – sometimes especially as fans!" says bookkeeper Angela Taylor, whose daughter Kat (BCS '12) was coached by Loftis.

Senior Alicia Dixon says the two of them really care about the team and their relationship with God.

"They want us to be honoring God and serving Him," Dixon says. She also says the Loftises are "a pretty good picture of what a Christian family should look like."

For nearly two decades, the Loftises have dedicated a large portion of their lives to the Brentwood community, and surely everyone would agree BCS is blessed to have this couple. With their talent for mentoring, there is no doubt anyone who has been coached by them is well-prepared for life, both on and off the basketball court.



Lady Bears win Brookshire Classic in Tyler

By Nicholas Hunka

The Lady Bears basketball team is playing strong with a tournament win in Tyler on Dec. 3 immediately followed by a 52-49 win over

4A public school Smithville on Dec. 6.

The team has an overall record of 11-7 for the season as they prepare to start district play on Jan. 3.

Brentwood won the Brookshire Classic tour-

namment held in Tyler on Dec. 1-3. Despite not playing well and losing a game against The Woodlands John Cooper, the girls beat Cypress Christian, Carrollton Prince of Peace, and Tyler All Saints to win the tournament for the fourth straight year.

Senior Alicia Dixon was the leading scorer against All Saints with 19 points. Dixon and senior Addy Hardin both made the all-tournament team.

Head coach Devan Loftis said the team has played well even though they have had a tough schedule so far. He said the team strengths this year include experience from its four seniors and the team's ability to shoot well.

Loftis said that the main struggle the team faces is not enough practice time, especially with a game schedule that includes so many tournaments. In back-to-back tournaments last month, they played nine games in six days.

The team has had to deal with sophomore Nina Vazquez's injury as well. Loftis said the team needs to keep finding the necessary effort level.

So far this season Dixon leads the team in scoring and rebounds with close to 17 points and eight rebounds per game. Hardin averages nine points per game.

Following are recent game results:

11/10: @Savio 54-20 W

Loftis said that despite too many turnovers, he saw impressive shooting for a first game. Dixon played strong with 14 points, four steals and nice charge. Sophomore Jaelyn Wishard came off the bench with nine rebounds. Loftis said it was "nice to be back on top of this rivalry."

11/12: @Bartlett 44-16 W

BCS cruised to an easy win over the 1A public school in Bartlett.

11/15: @Lanier 41-24 W

After a sluggish start, the team held the 5A public school team to two goals in the second half and pulled away. Dixon led the girls with 19 points, followed by Hardin with nine.

11/17-19: BCS Invitational W L W L L

One week into the season, the team finished fourth in the BCS tournament. They won 62-18 against San Antonio Lutheran with 21 points from Dixon and 14 points from junior Emma Leidlein. In the second game, BCS lost 52-38 against Lubbock Christian. They struggled against the press and had foul trouble.

The Lady Bears then came from behind and defeated St. Andrews 38-32 in double overtime. After that came a 39-18 loss to Midland Christian and then a loss at the buzzer, 52-50 to Pantego Christian. Brentwood finished fourth in the tournament.

11/21-22: Fort Worth Lake Country Tournament W W L L

BCS started out with a 44-42 victory over Grapevine Faith in a game that went to four overtimes. Next they defeated Denton Calvary 43-20, holding their opponent to only three points in the second half. In their third game, the girls lost 43-35 to the host team, Lake Country Christian.

During the team's final game against PT Warriors, BCS was down 15-4 at the end of the first quarter and battled back to tie the game. The Warriors hit a free throw with four seconds left to take the victory. BCS placed fourth in the tournament.

11/28: @Taylor 59-51 L

BCS was trailing most of the game but battled back to a six-point lead in the fourth quarter. Taylor came back and scored at the buzzer to force overtime. The Ducks then made eight straight free throws to take the victory.



photo: Joslyn Hoffmeyer-Gay

Triple threat Senior Alicia Dixon looks for the open teammate during a game in last month's tournament at BCS. The Lady Bears will begin district play on Jan. 3.

Boys return to winter soccer with (sort of) new coach

By Jackson Baird

This season brings many changes for the varsity boys' soccer team. First of all, they have switched to winter ball from fall ball, which last year's coach Cash Miller has said will mean harder competition. Second, since the boys and girls teams are playing the same season, Miller is unable to coach both teams. He has chosen to coach the girls, and the boys will be coached by head coach Jesse Jordan and assistant coach Evan Johnson.

And without the Bears' all-time leading goal scorer Josh Sass, the offense may not be as explosive as it has been. But according to the players, the goal is still to win district and to not lose any home games.

Brentwood will take the field for their first

game shortly after Christmas break.

Last year the Bears fell short of their goal of winning the state title, losing 3-2 to McAllen South Texas Christian in the second round of the playoffs. This was a surprise to many, as the Bears had a strong team that blew through district play, but they had an off game that cut their playoff run much shorter than expected.

The Bears held tryouts on Nov. 14-18, after it had to be postponed a week due to rain. Jordan and Johnson narrowed down the team from 28 boys to a 22-man roster. They are led by senior captain Brandon Patterson, along with seniors Joseph Morhmann, Alex Matthew, Austin Greene, and Will Moncure.

Last year Patterson earned first-team all-district honors, while junior David Reich made second-team all-district and Matthew, Greene,

and Moncure made honorable mention.

Jordan has 30 years of soccer coaching experience, including at teams such as CC United Soccer Club, Lifetime Fitness, and Lonestar Soccer Club of Austin. He has also coached at BCS, most recently when the seniors were in fifth grade. He comes back hoping to reconnect with his former players and help develop his new players not only into good soccer players but also into godly young men.

"I believe that when I stand before God, He won't judge me on how many wins and losses I have as a coach and as a player, but He will judge me on how many young men and players I have mentored into becoming good Christians," Jordan said.

With the change to winter ball from fall ball the competition isn't the only thing that might

affect the Bears this year. Now they, along with all the other teams, have to deal with the cold weather, which could be more of a problem to the Bears since they have grown accustomed to starting their season in the hottest time of the year.

"I don't miss winter soccer, because it gets very cold," Greene said.

The Bears have a month off before their first game on Jan. 9 against Austin Veritas. Practices will continue every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from the start of eighth period to 5 p.m. During Christmas break the Bears will hold optional free play practices open to the team.

The Bears' practice time has been focused on conditioning, finishing, and winning one-on-one battles.

Varsity boys adapting to new coach, new style

By Blake Benton

After playing 13 games and two tournaments in a month, the BCS varsity boys basketball team is 6-7 overall and determined to have a winning district record. The boys' first district game is Jan. 6 against Concordia.

Brentwood's next non-conference game is at 7:30 tonight at home, where they will face off against head coach Jan Jernberg's previous team, St. Dominic Savio.

Jernberg and new assistant coach Drew Nikolvski have had their hands full trying to train the players to play their style of basketball.

"Our motto is play hard, play smart, and play together," Jernberg said.

According to Jernberg, the hardest part about coaching new guys is teaching them how to play the style he wants them to.

"There are a thousand different ways to skin a cat. Coach (Brian) Thrift had his way and he did a very good job, but I have my own way, and that is what has been hard about coaching this team," Jernberg explained.

Team members have said Jernberg is a dedicated coach who spends his time scouting out the opponents and preparing the team well for the upcoming challenges.

"Coach Jernberg brings the experience level and knowledge of the game that this team needs to succeed," sophomore point guard Connor Troutman said.

When it comes to team chemistry and leadership, sophomore Micah Best said he feels like the seniors lead the way on and off the court. The boys look to Jordan Johnson and Graham Marks for leadership and how to carry themselves the right way.

"We have really good team chemistry this year because we have a more experienced team with many returning players," junior Connor White said.

The Bears started their season with several easy wins including one over rival Round Rock Christian. Opponents have included everything

from 5A public schools to homeschool teams. Early this month, Brentwood placed third in the Tyler tournament, an improvement from last year, when they finished last.

The Bears have a 12-man varsity team with three starting seniors. Eleven varsity players are returning from last year, and the addition of four freshmen has added depth to Brentwood's roster.

Last year BCS won district before losing in the first round of the playoffs. This year they have moved up to 4A and have new district opponents, including Savio.

Johnson leads the Bears with an average of 15.8 points per game, and freshman Daniel Hickl leads with 7.2 rebounds per game.

Below are recaps of the Bears' games so far.

11/8: @Meridian 49-36 W

In the Bears' first game of the season, senior power forward Michael Hickl scored 18 points and grabbed eight rebounds. Sophomore point guard Connor Troutman scored nine points with two three-pointers, three rebounds, and six assists.

11/15: @Glenn 55-39 W

Brentwood defeated the Glenn Grizzlies 55-39 off of Michael Hickl's double-double, in which he scored 15 points and grabbed 12 rebounds. With football over, the Bears gained their senior star, Jordan Johnson. Johnson scored 10 points in his first game back.

11/17-19: BCS Invitational Tourn. W L L

BCS crushed rival Round Rock Christian 76-49 in their first game. Michael Hickl had another double-double, scoring 17 points to go with 10 rebounds. Marks scored 16 points and grabbed five rebounds. The Bears played St. Andrews next and lost 49-39. Daniel Hickl scored nine points and had 11 rebounds. In



Coach Jernberg



photo: Mere Rowlett

Watch this Senior Jordan Johnson, the Bears' leading scorer with 16 points per game, prepares to make a move against St. Andrews at the BCS tournament on Nov. 18.

their third game, the Bears lost to Katy Faith West 79-44. Marks led the team with 13 points, and Daniel Hickl scored 12 points and snagged eight rebounds.

11/21: Sci-Tech Prep 71-52 W

BCS found themselves behind in the middle of this matchup but came back and won by almost 20. Johnson led the Bears with 22 points and eight rebounds. Sophomore Samuel Dixon put up 12 points and had eight rebounds.

11/22: @San Marcos Homeschool 61-60

In this overtime thriller, Johnson once again came out on fire hitting 11 of his 16 attempted field goals for another 22 points with nine rebounds and five assists. Marks had a season-high 17 points along with seven rebounds.

11/29: Crockett 74-55 L

Playing a 5A public high school, Brentwood ran with the Cougars for three long quarters before Crockett began to break away. However, the Bears showed resilience against a much larger foe. Johnson had 21 points, eight re-

bounds, and four assists.

12/1-3: @Tyler Tournament W L W L

BCS placed third overall after starting the tournament with a 62-44 victory over Shelton and a 69-23 loss to Tyler All Saints. Against Shelton, Johnson once again led the way with a season high of 26 points and six assists. Daniel Hickl had a season high of 13 points and 11 rebounds, making it the first double-double of his high school career. Against All Saints, the Bears could not execute plays or find their rhythm all game. Brentwood took down Cypress Christian 52-34 in the third game, featuring Johnson's 21 points, eight rebounds, and four assists. The final game was a 71-52 loss to St. Thomas. Johnson had 12 points, and Marks had 10.

12/6: @Hyde Park L 60-50

Despite Johnson scoring 23, the Bears fell to the Panthers. Brentwood had not played Hyde Park in basketball since losing 89-31 at Hyde Park in 2009.

Girls' soccer team features usual mix of experience levels

By Michael Milicia

The season is underway for the BCS varsity girls' soccer team. They lost their first game at Hyde Park 4-2 on Nov. 17. Junior Rebekah Connor scored the two goals. They also lost their first district game 4-2 in Kerrville against Our Lady of the Hills on Dec. 9.

There are 14 athletes on the team including some who are new to the game of soccer. Freshmen Genevieve Graessle and Kelli Tindel, on the other hand, bring a lot of experience

from select soccer.

Last year's team had several talented seniors, including all-district players Sarah Connor, Rebekah Legband, and Hailey Miller. But several all-district players return, including juniors Alex Sass and Rebekah Connor, who were named to the second team. Those receiving honorable mention were juniors MaeAnne Herring, Avery Miller, and sophomore Madison Mosley.

BCS made it to the second round of playoffs last year, losing to Veritas.

Head coach Cash Miller coached the varsity boys last fall and the varsity girls in the winter. This year, since both teams are playing in the winter, he is only coaching the girls.

Miller said his main goal for this season is making playoffs.

"You always want to go as far as you can," Miller said. "We lost a lot of players last year to graduation, so this year is really a rebuilding or development year."

Sass, the team's goalkeeper, said she wants to set a new record of how many shots saved.

She also wants to be a good teammate. "I want to encourage all the new players to help them improve," she said.

After-school practices started at the beginning of November. Miller said that his game strategy will always be the same, which is to focus on keeping possession of the ball.

Graessle is optimistic about the season. "I think we will get a lot closer and stronger, physically and spiritually," she said.

Story of Helen Keller presents new challenges for actors

By Lauren Weilemann

Roughly one in 7,000 people in the United States is at least partially both deaf and blind, according to Gallaudet University.

Nowadays, society has learned how to accommodate those with special needs, but back in the 1890s having what was considered a disability meant a person was ostracized. One prominent person from this era, Helen Keller, is the subject of the famous play *The Miracle Worker* by William Gleeson.

The BCS theater program will be performing *The Miracle Worker* for the community in late January or early February. On Jan. 20-21, they will perform the play for TCSIT competition.

The Miracle Worker is the story of how a young blind and deaf girl, Helen Keller, living in Tuscumbia, Alabama, learned to communicate through the strong will and patient work of her teacher, Annie Sullivan.

Helen Keller will be played by junior Lauren Weilemann, and Annie Sullivan will be played by senior Camille Sunshine.

"I'm eager to present my interpretation of this amazing young girl, but I'm worried I will not be able to properly honor her memory, or I will be offensive to either the deaf or blind community," Weilemann said.

Being on the dominant side of such a complicated relationship can be equally as challenging and engrossing.

"Annie Sullivan is such a complex character," Sunshine said. "She's a very broken person, and she finds new purpose through someone very much like her. She was an incredible woman, and I've definitely learned a lot from her about loss, patience, and perseverance."

Helen became blind and deaf at 19 months after a bout with a fever. Her parents pitied

their daughter due to her disability and gave her whatever she wanted. Although Helen was an exceptionally intelligent child, she was willful and spoiled from the lack of discipline.

Annie, a former blind student herself who was originally hired by the Kellers simply to teach Helen how to be a docile and mannerly young woman, refused to give up there and matched Helen's stubbornness with her own. She finally broke through to Helen, enabling her to learn her first word, "water." Eventually their story was made into three movies and a full length Broadway play.

The BCS cast includes senior Kristyn Chambers as Kate Keller, junior Austin Biegert as Captain Arthur Keller, and freshman Luke Jackson as James Keller, along with an additional three seniors, two sophomores, and four freshmen.

"I am pretty excited," Jackson said. "I'm getting to act with some of the best actors I've ever seen – my celebrity crushes at Brentwood. They're like gods."

Jackson was not the only newbie in the cast who was thrilled.

"We've become a community, a team that works together," said sophomore Eric Glindemann, who will be playing three different doctors. "Everyone helps everyone."

Rehearsals have been productive when the theater has been available for the thespians' use. Despite the theater being used for other functions during the busy month of December, the cast was able to be resourceful and think on their toes. One rehearsal, they brought all of their set pieces into the theater lobby.

A unique feature of this production is that one of the principal characters, Helen Keller, does not speak. Everything she is thinking or feeling she must convey through her body lan-

guage.

"I wanted this role for the challenge, but I never anticipated how physically and emotionally challenging it would actually be," Weilemann said. "I have to wear knee pads so I don't hurt myself too badly while I'm throwing tantrums. I am completely wiped out by the

end of each scene, not to mention at the end of rehearsal."

Theater director Michelle Alexander worked hard to find just the right show to perform.

"I chose *The Miracle Worker* because I love the story," she said. "It's a timeless reminder of what we have that we take for granted."



photo: Mere Rowlett

Surprise! Sixth-grader Clara Tillotson is pelted with color by senior Tim Lee at Jog-a-fun on Nov. 16. High temperatures did not prevent BCS students from raising more than \$110,000 for their school. Top elementary lap runners included fifth-graders Colton McLain (38), Renne Cooper (37), and Catherine Pittner (32). Sophomore Riley Walker topped the older students in the 5K run, just ahead of classmate Eric Glindemann. The top female runners were eighth-grader Katie Rzepniewski and junior MaeAnne Herring. The top two runners among adults were the brother-sister duo of Jonathan Weed and Susan Womack, both BCS grads.

Spunky transplant recipient garners support from BCS community

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two weeks after that," Lilly said.

Some of Lilly's friends such as classmate Layla Hansen kept her company while she was away.

"I would die for Lilly," Hansen said recently when asked about her friendship with Lilly.

Layla brought cards to Lilly from all of the students in Kay Taylor's English class.

"Having all the support and love from all these people made me feel ten times better," Lilly said.

Lilly has been described as spunky, sweet, sassy, and outgoing.

"Lilly is too much," said classmate Alicia Gardner. "She is a boss in a small body."

Lilly was put on "the list" in mid-November of 2015.

"That first feeling was total fear," Lilly's mom Melissa Ruiz said.

Lilly only spent five months on the transplant list before she received a kidney.

"She blew my statistics," said the director of pediatric transfer program at University Hospital. "She doesn't follow the norm of how long you have to wait for a transplant, because so many people were praying for her."

Lilly was born a twin 11 weeks early on Sep. 9, 2003. Both Melissa and Lilly's father Chris Ruiz knew that this wasn't normal. When Lilly's sister, senior Mary Ruiz, was born there had been four medical personnel there; at Lilly's birth there were 14.

"I felt God's presence come over in a way that is audible ... saying 'It's going to be OK,' and I went from abject terror to absolute calm," Chris said.

Due to birth complications, her twin, Anna Grace Ruiz, died in the womb; Anna was positioned perfectly so that she saved her sister and her mom.

"She sacrificed her life so that Lilly could live," Melissa said.

Mary was four and a half at the time of Lilly's birth. "It really shaped Mary's personality to be a worrier over her sister" and to take care of others, Melissa said.

During Lilly's recent operation Mary took care of her younger brother Isaac Ruiz, who is in the fifth grade. She made sure that he stayed

entertained so as to reduce worry.

Through this time Melissa stood in calm strength for her family.

"Intense fear and trauma can't last forever, and you go back to being the same person with a little twitch here and there," Melissa said. "You have to choose either to be a victim of life or to say, 'We beat you.'"

Lilly will still have to be closely monitored with regular blood testing and will be on anti-rejection medications for life. Worst-case scenario, she may need another transplant.

"God has provided for us this far, and faith will see us through," Melissa said. "We've been at this 13 years, so we have a bit of practice trusting God. I guess we will continue the way we started!"