

Unity Christian High School

***Faith, Excellence, Service***



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# **Freshman Mixer**

## August 26, 2022

We had beautiful weather to get all of our freshman together for our annual Freshman mixer!

They went to the gym and found their groups. Once they were in their groups they used clues to find their leaders who were student council and B.I.L.T. students.

Once they found their leaders they enjoyed pizza and face painting for some added team spirit. The teams competed against each other in games that were hosted by our teachers!



**182 freshman**  
**20 student leaders**  
**9 games played**  
**18 teams**  
**55 pizzas**

**an afternoon full of bonding...priceless!**



## **Senior Retreat 2022**

Unity Seniors Commit to Infusing Faith in All of Life, Making it “More Than Words”

*with Mr. Dan Landstra*

The first rays of sunlight shot through the trees like lasers shooting across the horizon. Long, slender shadows shrank, inch by inch, as the sun made its slow journey farther into the morning sky. The warmth of the sun on this late August morning gave assurance that summer still had some life left.

The first car pulled into a parking spot close to the school, shortening the distance of the walk to the waiting buses and trailer. A Unity teacher gave a silent “good morning” wave to another early arriver while taking out a large duffel bag along with a sleeping bag and pillow.

One by one more cars began to arrive. Thirteen of them were driven by teachers. The rest represented the members of Unity’s senior class.

At first, while the group was still forming, the atmosphere was subdued. It was clear this early on a Saturday morning was not a typical *up-and-at-’em* time of day. Little by little, as more seniors arrived, yawns were replaced by smiles and tired eyes were replaced with excited faces. Eventually Unity’s band trailer

was stuffed top to bottom and front to back with all the student’s gear. And after a “welcome donut” the entire group loaded onto school buses, turned north on 48th Ave., and headed to Grace Adventures in Mears, MI. for our annual senior retreat.

We packed a lot of activity into the next 24 hours! Laser Tag, volleyball, hiking the dunes, clay shooting, archery, swimming, being launched into the water off a huge inflatable called “the blob”, dodgeball, and three different times of worship and reflection with the entire group. We also tried (somewhat unsuccessfully) to sleep a little too!

As Unity seniors begin their last year of high school, going on this retreat allows us to have very intentional time building relationships in an environment outside of school. We pray our seniors will further the relationships they have with their classmates and teachers, but most importantly, we pray our seniors reflect on and make or continue a commitment to Christ.

In our community building sessions at Grace, we centered

our Biblical emphasis on the book of James and used as our theme the expression, “*More Than Words*”. (We are using James and “*More Than Words*” with all our students through chapel and devotions this year as well.)

Senior year of high school is a transitional year – going through the last of twelve years of a familiar routine to the uncertainty of what comes next. It can be a stressful period of life. We want our seniors to make that transition equipped with a faith-infused Biblical worldview, having the knowledge and skills to use Scripture as a lens for every aspect of life.

Spending intentional time studying the book of James on the retreat planted the seeds of what faith in action might look like for young adults in 2022. Listening to the stories of many of their teachers, hearing how they learned through mistakes, witnessing the power the gospel has to change lives, and understanding God’s call to listen to the Word *and* do what it says, set the stage for the seniors to experience God on the retreat and throughout their final school year. •



# Victory Day 2022

This year we had 35 participants, 60 band members, 55 students, teachers and coaches helping, and 75 football players who helped bless our participants.

Thank you to everyone who had a hand in helping our 2022 Victory Day run smoothly.

We had a beautiful, sunny day with lots of fellowship. We praise God for this!

We would like to personally thank *Lisa Huisman* for her photography and *Bret Bakita* from Wood Radio who was our fantastic announcer.





# Parent Night

November 16, 2022

Join us on Wednesday, November 16 for a Unity community night featuring the presentation “*Compassion, Conviction, and Controversy...Moving Forward in Community.*” Dan Landstra, Unity’s Director for Spiritual Life, will lead adult community members to consider how best to navigate the intersection of a faith infused Christian education and a culture of increasing division.

Stay tuned! More information is coming soon on Unity’s social media!

# Grandparents Day

November 22, 2022

Calling all of our proud, Unity grandparents! Please join us for our Grandparents Day at Unity Christian High School on November 22, 2022.

Beginning at 1:00 PM, there will be a program to welcome you into our school! Following this time of worship, your grand child(ren) will take you on a tour of their day!

Mark this date down in your calendar, and please contact the Development Office if you have any questions at (616) 662-4011.



a photo from our last Grandparents Day in 2018!

# Development News

## Donate Your Vehicle

Do you have a vehicle that is no longer of use to you, and you really don’t want to bother with selling it? Unity Christian can take it off your hands and find the best way to turn it into cash for UCHS. Running or not, please call the Development Office for more information (616) 662-4011.

## Alumni News



For alumni information updates, please use the QR code to the left, our website -- connect -- alumni, email us at [development@unitychristian.org](mailto:development@unitychristian.org), or call our Development Office at (616) 662-4011.

# Anticipated Unity Expansion

## with Mr. Jerry DeGroot Principal/CEO

Unity is committed to the future of Christian education in this area. Increasing enrollment at the high school, middle schools, and grade schools has challenged Unity to make future-focused decisions supporting students in the short term and well into the future.

Unity Christian High School serves approximately 10% of Ottawa County residents. Over the past ten years, Ottawa County has been the fastest growing county in the state. As a result, Unity and our feeder schools are experiencing rapid growth. The chart below displays the enrollments of the seven Christian primary schools in Eastern Ottawa County. To meet increasing needs, we must remain diligent in our planning ensuring Unity Christian is able to support our growing community while we serve families with a commitment to Christian education.

God has blessed Unity Christian and all our local Christian schools with generous communities who have always been supportive and committed to Christian education. Along with the other K-8 Christian schools, Unity is planning for more facility space to support the increasing number of students along with adding critical programming spaces that will assist in developing the gifts of God's children.

At Unity, Christian education is flourishing through the commitment to excellence and faithfulness to God's word. We are honored to invite you to join in our mission through participation in our new capital campaign. Through this \$23 million campaign, current and future students will be blessed. New and renovated spaces allow for Unity's mission of developing followers of Jesus to be

infused into the lives of a growing student body.

Unity provides an extensive curriculum: from core academic areas to a variety of elective and co-curricular options. The opportunity to continue providing a faith-infused, excellent education through expansion and renovation is exciting! The changes include more classrooms, an improved counseling center, doubling the industrial arts space, additional space for the fine arts and performing arts programs, additional science classrooms, larger engineering and CAD space, and a new space for the robotics program.

Included in this issue of the *Tidings* is a more in-depth review of the anticipated expansion of Unity. We invite you to pray as we plan, fundraise, and discern God's leading in this sequence of our ongoing mission to develop followers of Jesus.

## Eastern Ottawa Christian Schools Growth

School	K	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	Total Students 2022/23
Alexander	59	56	43	44	33	28	28	29	19					339
Barrault	29	25	27	25	31	25	26	22	16					226
Hudonville	115	97	116	94	105	92	88	99	80					886
Jonison	51	34	43	34	40	37	29	31	34					333
Lamont	23	14	16	12	11	11	10	7	6					110
South Olive	13	12	8	18	4	6	7	4	9					81
Unity										182	187	150	149	668
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>2,643</b>

## Predicted Future Enrollment

2022/23 Enrollment  
2023/24 Predicted Enrollment  
2024/25 Predicted Enrollment  
2025/26 Predicted Enrollment

	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	Total
2022/23 Enrollment	182	187	150	149	668
2023/24 Predicted Enrollment	182	187	150	150	683
2024/25 Predicted Enrollment	192	187	164	187	725
2025/26 Predicted Enrollment	188	192	164	182	726

# Proposed First Floor Plan

## Industrial Arts/CAD/Engineering/Robotics

The northwest wing of the school will boast renovated and newly added spaces that will reflect the needs for the 21st century student. These spaces allow for experimentation, hands-on activities, and design opportunities. They also provide fresh opportunities for students to experience innovative technologies, while laying a foundation for potential career options in the skilled trades.

## Science Classroom

Experiencing God through a greater understanding of His creation is a defining trait of the Christian school science classroom. Increasing space committed to the study of science and providing state-of-the-art equipment and technology will improve student's ability to research, experiment, and discover God's handiwork in creation.

## Counseling Center

Consolidating current classrooms to create a counseling center creates an environment and culture of caring for students. Whether they are scheduling classes, researching careers, navigating the complexities of a teenage life, or seeking guidance on post high school education, the increased space and functionality of the counseling center will serve our students well.



## Staff Commons

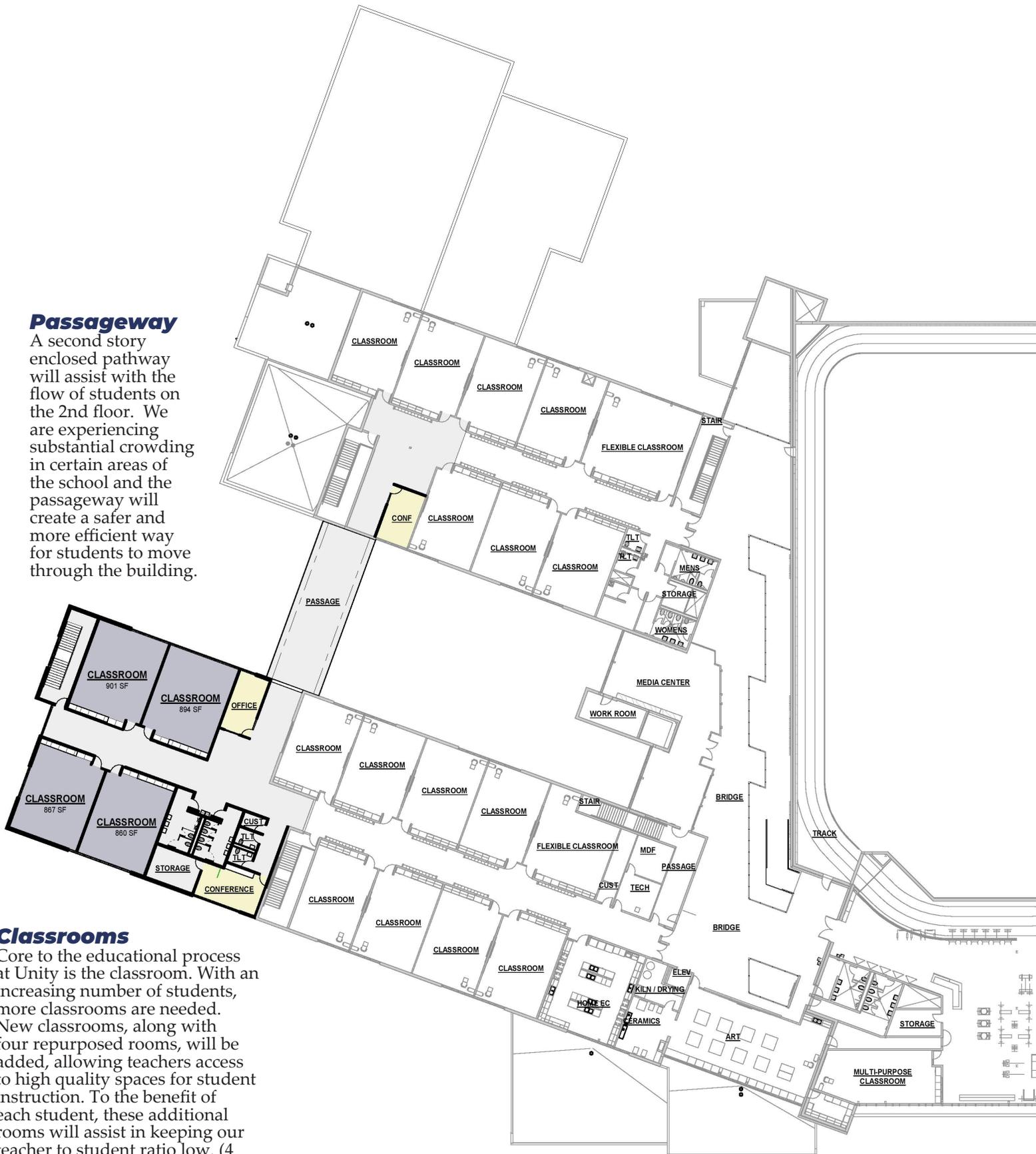
Our staff is central in establishing and maintaining the spiritual, academic, and social culture at Unity. They work together in community so providing adequate space for collaboration and fellowship allows them to effectively carry out Unity's mission. A growing staff is exciting for our future, and we are dedicated to support their needs.



# Proposed Second Floor Plan

## Passageway

A second story enclosed pathway will assist with the flow of students on the 2nd floor. We are experiencing substantial crowding in certain areas of the school and the passageway will create a safer and more efficient way for students to move through the building.



## Classrooms

Core to the educational process at Unity is the classroom. With an increasing number of students, more classrooms are needed. New classrooms, along with four repurposed rooms, will be added, allowing teachers access to high quality spaces for student instruction. To the benefit of each student, these additional rooms will assist in keeping our teacher to student ratio low. (4 classrooms upstairs, 5 classrooms downstairs, and 4 classrooms will be repurposed)

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What is the timeline for the project?**

Unity has begun fundraising and already has \$7 million in gifts and pledges. Thanks be to God! The fundraising effort will continue by contacting Unity community members by way of the Tidings, email, phone, and mail through the end of this year and into 2023. We are currently documenting the project in order to obtain more accurate pricing. Our goal is to break ground in the spring of 2023. As details become known, updates will be forthcoming.

## **Can the project be split up and completed over time?**

The success of this expansion project is dependent upon those who support the project through their generosity in giving. Recognizing the growth in the Christian elementary schools and populations in Ottawa County, a plan to move forward with expansion is inevitable. Plans are in place to identify pause points in the building process if funds are not matching current building timelines. Maximizing every dollar is crucial to keeping the necessary project on schedule and God willing to conclude the entire project – fully funded in a timely manner

## **What is the total cost of the project, and will Unity incur debt?**

The cost to complete the entire project is currently estimated at \$23 million. Unity will need to use a short-term loan during the construction process but will not service any long term debt. The fundraising campaign for the original building allowed for pledges to be paid in five years or less and was successful. Over 3,500 different donors gave to the project. We plan to contact even more donors as this is the best way to keep high engagement in Unity Christian's mission and to keep individual donations manageable.

## **Are Unity's feeder schools also in need of facility expansion?**

Yes, a renewed commitment to Christian education has been evident in all of the Eastern Ottawa Christian Schools, and in some cases, these schools need more capacity for students. Although each feeder school maintains its own identity and board of trustees, there has been a commitment in recent years to work together for the betterment of all schools. Revive resale shop is the perfect example of this. We will work together to increase donor engagement and remain sensitive to each other's needs.

## **Will these additions adversely affect the affordability of tuition for some families?**

No, Unity is committed to helping families that desire a Christian education for their children regardless of their ability to pay. Because of our generous community we have been able to help any family that requests need-based help. We are committed to avoiding long term debt and direct tuition dollars to educator costs and facility maintenance. God has truly blessed us through the generosity of our Unity community of supporters in keeping us debt free. Thank You!!

**For more information regarding Unity's expansion, further clarification, or determining how you can be involved, please contact:**

**JERRY DEGROOT**

Principal/CEO

(616) 669-1820

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or

**TROY BILLIN**

Director of Development

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## Fall Arrives

After closing 2 days to change over to the new season, **revive** reopened on Wednesday, Aug 31, bursting with Fall fashion, furniture, home goods, decor, florals, and so much more! The store looked so full and so beautiful as volunteers and managers walked the aisles in preparation for the crowds of people already lining up outside the door long before opening time. And when that time arrived, so did the eager customers! All day the carts changed hands from one finished shopper to the next one walking in, check-out lines wound all the way around the store and back again, dressing room racks filled and refilled again, and hangers piled up higher and higher. When the "Open" sign

was finally switched off, we held our breath to see what kind of numbers God had blessed us with this time. And as is always the case, He did not disappoint. That first day of Fall shopping brought in a record \$21,195 in sales and sent out almost 5,000 purchased items! More than anyone had dared to imagine! And yet somehow, at the end of the day, the store still looked full, still looked beautiful. It was like God had done His holy multiplication again, giving more than we expected or could make sense of. All glory to Him for all He has done!

## The Little Things

Sometimes it's the little things. Like a Disney Princess sleeping bag for sale at **revive**. A mom was shopping with her young daughter when the girl spotted the sleeping bag and asked her mom if she could please buy it. Her mom responded that she would think about it

and continued down the aisle. Meanwhile an older gentleman in the next aisle happened to hear their conversation. He made his way over to them, and after asking the mother first, he was pleased to give the little girl the \$5 she needed to buy her Disney Princess sleeping bag. A simple act of kindness but something that surely blessed the little girl and her mother, and probably made his day too. Just as it warmed the hearts of the **revive** cashiers who heard the story that day. And now maybe it's encouraging you too, just to hear of someone doing something small and good in a world that seems full of animosity these days. And maybe it even makes you want to do the same: pay for someone's coffee, pick up someone else's trash, hold the door for a stranger, offer your bottle return money to someone in the checkout line. Because we too can do just a little thing and watch the ripple effects of blessing it creates.



**Fall Reopening**  
Wednesday, August 31  
Record breaking day  
\$21,195 in sales

## Doing Their Part

reVive is full of volunteers that pour countless hours into making the store the wonderful place that it is. And each one brings a unique set of gifts. Some are great with people and do a marvelous job cashiering, some are organizational

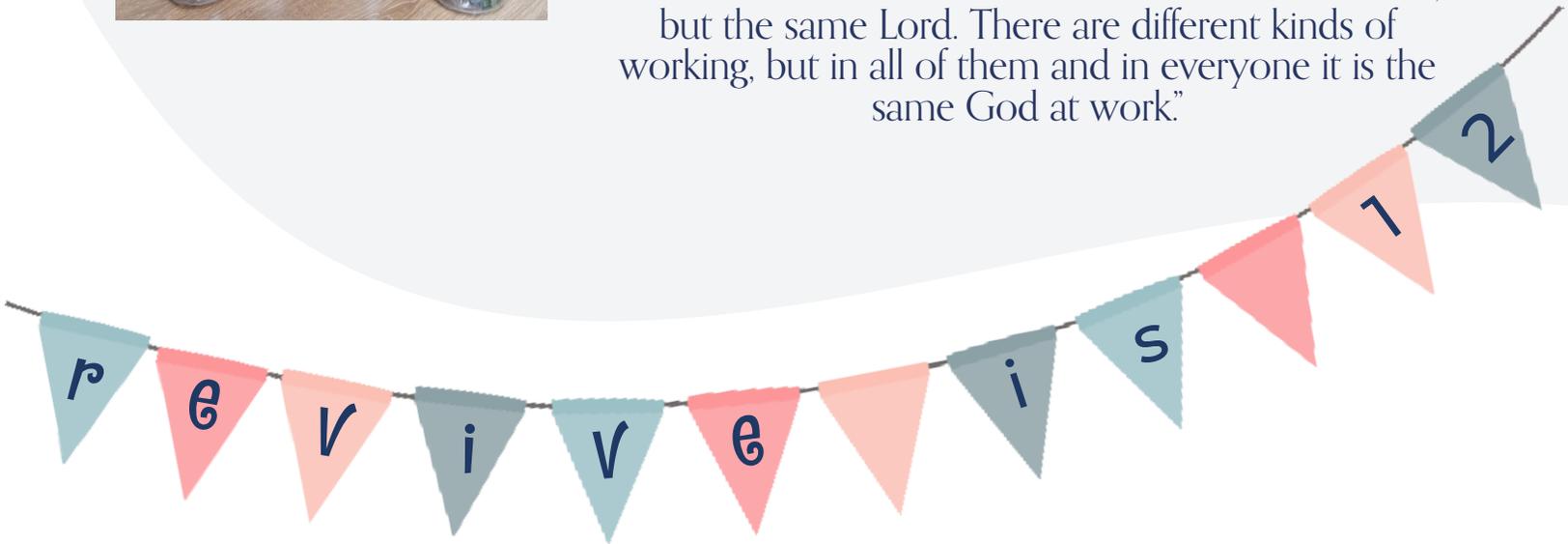


wizards, others can figure out the most complicated electronic item, and others are a whiz at sorting clothing. The list of ways reVive volunteers put their abilities to work is long and varied. One new volunteer has found a way to bless the store by taking on the Matchbox car division. He picks up and sorts through all the small toy cars and trucks donated each week, looking for the ones that hold a little more value, grouping like kinds, and even purchasing the broken ones for the joy of fixing and rebuilding them. Later he

returns them to reVive in neat and appealing packages with a fair price for all the moms, grandparents, and kids to find on the shelf and happily bring to the register to buy. What a great example of I Corinthians 12 when we find our unique niche and pursue it with excellence. We don't have to be good at what everyone else is good at or do the big jobs others seem to tackle; we just need to do what we can do, offering it as a gift and watching God use it to bless others in a way no one else could.

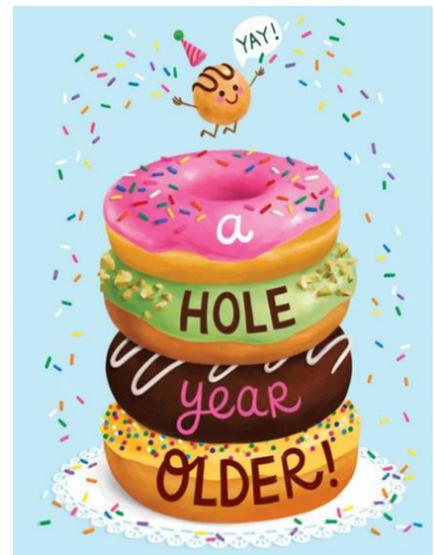
### I Corinthians 12: 4-6

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.”



## Here's to a Dozen Years!

reVive is celebrating a Dozen years of donating, volunteering, shopping, and giving to our schools the first week of October! Come celebrate with a “Doozy” of a sale on Dozens upon Dozens of great items for you, your home, and your family! And maybe even a Donut or two as well! There's something for everyone at reVive, and the fact that it costs so much less is just the icing on the...Donut!





Unity Christian High School  
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[www.unitychristian.org](http://www.unitychristian.org)

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***“developing followers of Christ  
to be leaders”***