

# DAMASCUS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

## ChalkMarks



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A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FOR  
DCS FAMILY AND FRIENDS

# ACSI

### *Accreditation – What Is It And Why Bother?*

While preparing to chair an ACSI Accreditation Visiting Team for a Christian school seeking to become accredited, I pondered the value of committing a huge amount of time, effort, personnel and monies involved in going through this process. Why bother? Is it really worth it?

Before answering those questions, it is important to define what accreditation is. Accreditation is the process of demonstrating objectively that your school has met or exceeded the rigorous standards established by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) that indicate you are a school of excellence and qualified to be called accredited.

This proof of excellence is through a comprehensive document called the Self-Study, prepared over a three-year period by the school staff and others associated with the school documenting how your school has met the standards in ten different areas – Philosophy,

*Accreditation is the process of demonstrating objectively that your school has met or exceeded...standards*

School Organization, School, Home and Community, Personnel, Instructional Program, Library, Media Resources and Technology, Student Services (student activities, guidance services and health services, Support Services (transportation, food services, safety and crisis planning), School Facilities and School Improvement. Comprehensive questions are asked in each of the ten fields. The school is required to provide information on how they are meeting the standards along with a thorough documentation of the

Curriculum Guides showing what is being taught at which grade levels. A team, made up of Christian school administrators and staff from ACSI accredited

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### *A Heartfelt Note Of Thanks*



The following note was received from our Damascus neighbor **Becky W.**, whose husband recently died. During this difficult time, the DCS family has stepped in to provide meals, prayers and moral support. Becky writes, "To all the families at DCS and DCC, thank all of you for all of your support and prayers. It means so much to my girls and I. All of the kindness has been overwhelming and very appreciated. Thanks again to you all. Sincerely, Becky W., **Hayley, Courtney and Karlee.**" Please continue to pray for the family as they seek to make the necessary adjustments after the passing of their husband and father.

### *Recycle Those Pop Cans And Help Send DCS Students To DC*

Rather than simply tossing those empty pop cans or going through the hassle of returning them to a local store, let us do it! Please bring your empty pop cans to school and deposit them in the container under the catwalk. We will take care of sorting them and turning them in for the refund. All proceeds go to help our 10<sup>th</sup> graders raise money for their June 2008 Washington, D.C. trip. Thanks for your support!



= \$ for DC Trip



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schools, visits the school and spends approximately three long days verifying the school's Self-Study. The visiting team then sends their recommendation to grant accreditation (or not) to the ACSI Regional Accreditation Commission who reviews the report and acts upon it.

Is accreditation worth it? Very much so. By going through the extensive process of researching and writing the Self-Study, you find areas of weaknesses or non-compliance which need to be addressed. It forces you to take an objective look at your total school operation and ask yourself, "Is our school meeting or exceeding these standards? Are we a school of excellence?"

When Damascus Christian School went through our accreditation process, we found areas that needed attention; it forced us to modify, revamp, implement or discard earlier practices. It sharpened our focus. We became intentionally better at what we were doing.

When the visiting team arrived on campus in February 2005, we were ready. Here are some of their written comments at the conclusion of their visit:

"Damascus Christian School has successfully demonstrated that they meet the standards for accreditation for the Association of Christian School International, that the mission statement guides the ministry of the school, and that they are committed to achieving the vision of their school."

"Administration, faculty, and staff are qualified to perform the functions for which they are assigned. Instructional personnel have acquired the appropriate credentials required for their positions."

"The overall atmosphere of the school community is positive and one that fosters spiritual growth, academic excellence, emotional maturity, and Christ-like character."

"Evidence exists that students are learning, that the level of achievement is high, and that they are well-prepared to defend their faith. Student morale is high, enthusiasm for activities abounds, and support of each other within the student body is obvious. Older students in the upper grades of the high school program provide strong role models for those in the lower grades. Opportunities exist for older students to mentor younger students, to be involved in learning activities with younger students, and to serve occasionally as aides for instruction in the lower grades."

"Activities and athletics occupy a significant level of priority in the school, but is not out of balance. Fine arts are given an equal level of emphasis and seem to earn the respect and recognition of the students, parents, and the outside community."

The visiting team concluded their justification-for-accreditation comments by saying, "It (DCS) is unquestionably one of the finest Christian schools in the region and one that we proudly recognize as accredited by ACSI."

Is accreditation worth the time, expense and man-hours? Without a doubt. It ensures those who place their children in an accredited school that they can have confidence that the school has done due-diligence in providing evidence that they are a school of excellence.



### DCS Mom Completes The Boston Marathon. Congratulations, Julia!

**Julia C.**, wife of **Kevin** and mother of **Jonah** (4th grade) and **Gabriel** (first grade) has a rather unusual avocation! Not only is she a practicing nurse, but she manages to carve out time to work out and prepare for marathons!

In order to compete in the world-famous Boston Marathon, one must meet minimum standards at pre-qualifying marathons, which Julia did. Last fall she entered our local Portland Marathon and met the criterion which qualified her to run in her female age group in Boston. Her comment? "It was amazing to be a part of something like that!" Julia completed the grueling Portland 26-miler in under 3 hours and 50 minutes to place her in the starting line-up in Boston (along with 21,000 others, give or take a few hundred).

The first portion of the race was downhill. The next 16-21 miles were through rolling hills, until mile marker 20.5, where they faced the daunting Heartbreak Hill. Here is where many runners "hit the wall" and are unable to complete the race. Not so with our Julia. She continued on, running past Wellsley College, where the girls lined the course and screamed encouragement to those who had made it thus far. At the end of three hours, forty-minutes, Julia crossed the finish line, placing just over 8,000th in the field of over 20,000. Her reward? A t-shirt, a "Finisher" medal, and the knowledge that she had conquered something many of us never will even attempt.

Her next challenge? The Chicago Marathon next fall, where she will join two other DCS parents – **Pastor Steve Hardy** and **Doug Goebel**. As Julia put it, for her, running is a longing fulfilled and is sweet to her heart. Run on!!

### *And The Winner Is...*

**Lisa I.**! She will be enjoying a \$25 gift card for Starbucks, compliments of the DCS *Scrip* program. You too can be a winner. Simply purchase *Scrip* each week and your name will be added to the periodic drawings we have. Congratulations Lisa!

