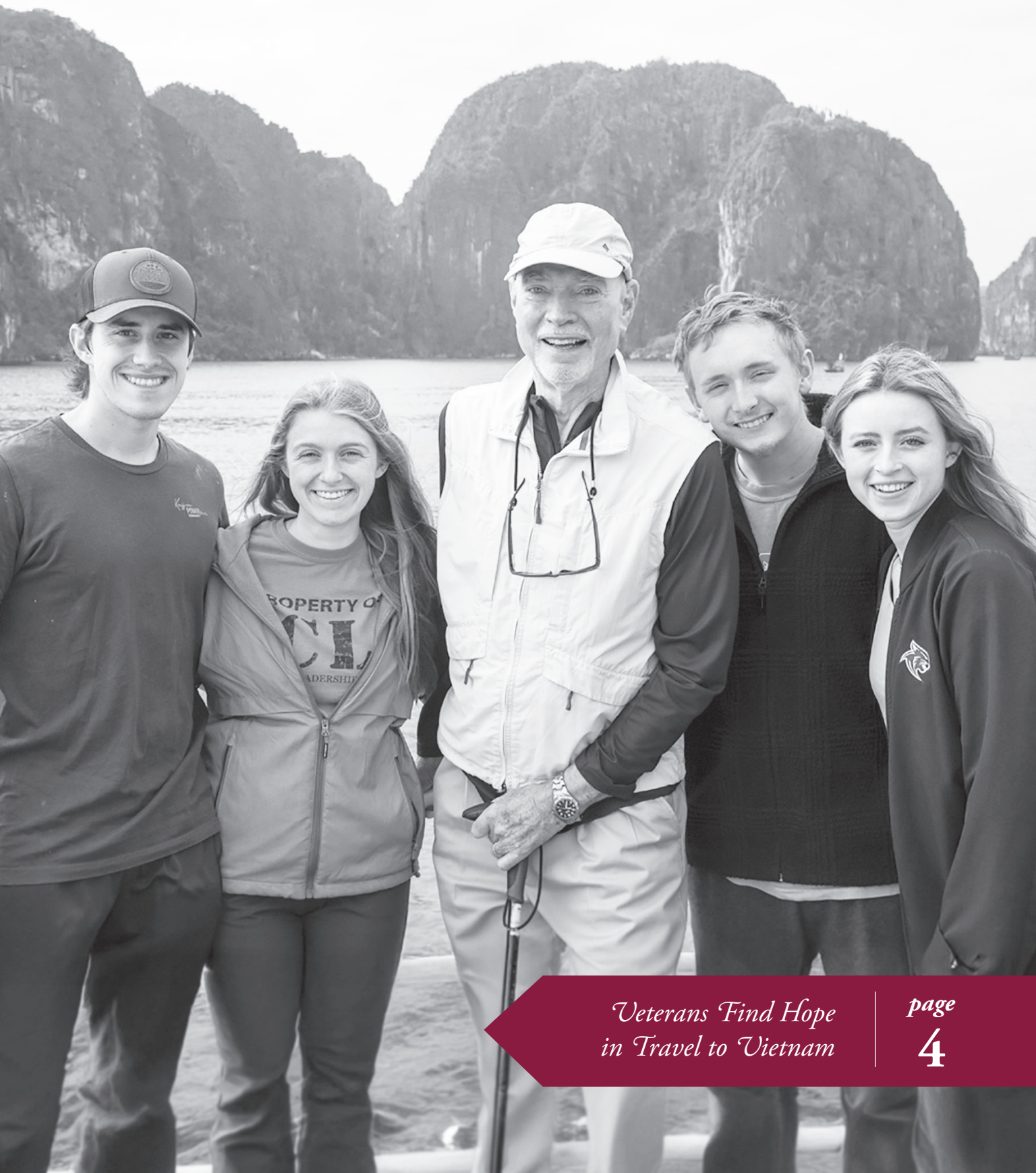




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OZARK VISITOR

COLLEGE of the OZARKS® ... Hard Work U.® | www.cofu.edu | Point Lookout, MO 65726



*Veterans Find Hope
in Travel to Vietnam*

page
4



LEADING WITH HEART

At College of the Ozarks, we believe that leadership is more than a title—it's a calling. It is about serving others with humility and purpose. This spring, as we reflect on the stories within these pages, one theme stands out: leading with heart.

On page 4, you will read about the transformative experience of students who traveled to Vietnam as

part of the College's Patriotic Education Travel Program. These students didn't just visit historic sites; they walked alongside Veterans, heard their stories, and bore witness to their sacrifice. The journey deepened their understanding of patriotism and service, leaving a lasting impact on their lives.

The same spirit of service is evident on page 7, where alumnae Sallie Hitchcock and Dr. Stacy McNeill demonstrate their commitment to supporting students through mentorship and encouragement. Both exemplify what it means to care for others, nurturing the next generation with wisdom and compassion.

We also celebrate the contributions of Jim and Jennifer Freeman, who have faithfully served the College for decades. Their retirement (page 12) marks the conclusion of a chapter defined by dedication, kindness, and a genuine love for the students and mission of *Hard Work U.*®

At School of the Ozarks, our laboratory school, College students pour into the lives of our younger students. On page 19, you will meet those who serve as mentors and role models, shaping the next generation with their time, knowledge, and care.

Finally, on page 17, we highlight events like Character Camp and the College's participation in Tim Tebow's Night to Shine—both vibrant examples of leading with heart. Whether guiding new students or celebrating individuals with special needs, our students and staff embrace opportunities to serve.

These stories remind us that leadership at College of the Ozarks is not about prestige; it's about people. It's about stepping forward with compassion, conviction, and a willingness to make a difference.

As you turn these pages, may you be inspired by the countless ways our campus family leads with heart. May you also find joy in abundance as you *follow your heart ... wherever the Lord leads.*

Warm Regards,

Dr. Brad S. Johnson
President, College of the Ozarks

Spring 2025 Volume 116 Number 4

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Incorporated in 1906 as
The School of the Ozarks

Founded by an early Presbyterian
missionary, College of the Ozarks is
an interdenominational, Christian,
four-year, Work College.

The College does not discriminate on
the basis of sex, race, color, age or ethnic
origin in its educational programs,
activities, or employment policies.

College of the Ozarks®

Hard Work U.®

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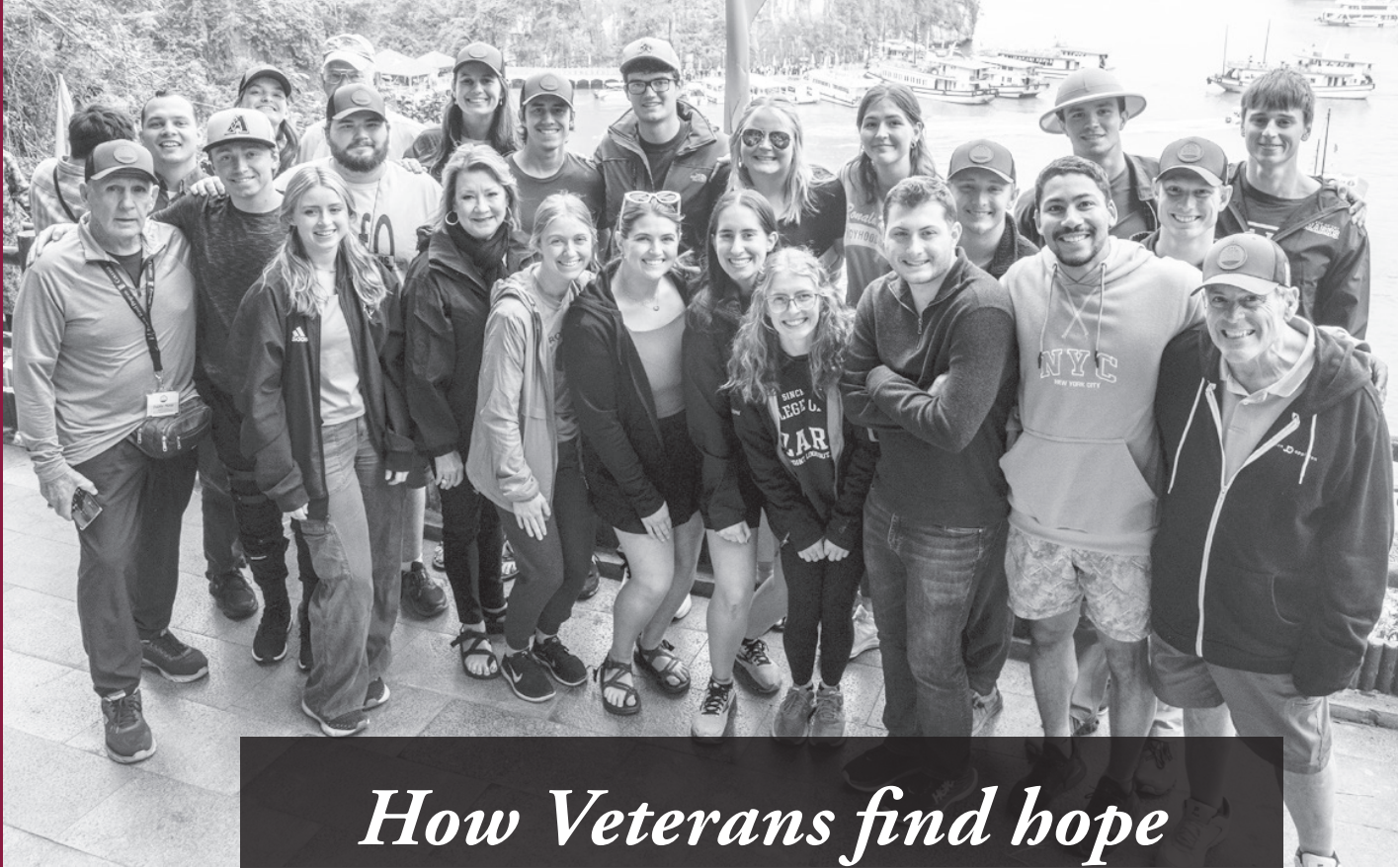
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Old Memories, New Friendships



How Veterans find hope in travel to Vietnam

By Valorie Coleman, Director of Communication & Public Relations

At College of the Ozarks, patriotism is more than a concept—it is a living, breathing part of students' education. Through the Patriotic Education Travel Program, students embark on transformative journeys, walking in the footsteps of those who served and sacrificed for America, and live out the College's patriotic pillar.

Last winter, 20 students traveled to Vietnam alongside five Vietnam War Veterans, including Col. John Clark, a former POW held at the infamous Hanoi Hilton. This extraordinary trip provided students with firsthand accounts of history, deepening their understanding of the Vietnam War, its lasting impact, and the resilience of those who fought.

The students' experiences were shaped not only by the places they visited but by the Veterans who accompanied them. One of the most profound moments occurred at the Hỏa Lò Prison, better known as the "Hanoi Hilton," where Col. John Clark shared his powerful testimony. Standing in the very cell where he endured unimaginable hardship for six grueling years, students listened as he recounted his story of survival, faith, and perseverance.

"I really believe in College of the Ozarks, what they're doing, what their mission is," Clark said. "I've never seen a group of young people like these—the way they pull together and relate to the Veterans. It's inspirational, and I just love being a part of it."

The emotional weight of the journey left a lasting impression. Ian Joshua “Josh” Hallam, one of the participating students, reflected on the significance of honoring Vietnam Veterans.

“The reason I wanted to come on this trip was because Vietnam Veterans never received the welcome home they deserved. I wanted to be a light in their lives, to show them gratitude and joy,” he said. “I’ve bonded with all the Veterans—they feel like grandfathers to me. They’ve shared so much, and I am beyond thankful for this opportunity.”

An Unforgettable Educational Experience

The trip was more than a historical tour; it was an opportunity for students to gain a deeper appreciation for service and sacrifice. Prior to traveling, the students completed an in-depth course on the Vietnam War, taught by Dr. David Dalton, a beloved professor with over three decades of experience at the College.

“The course concluded just days before the trip, giving students a fresh understanding of American involvement in Vietnam,” Dalton explained. “But it’s on the trip that their understanding grows. Spending time with their assigned Veteran builds a relationship that lasts a lifetime.”

For the Veterans, witnessing modern Vietnam was equally enlightening. The nation has moved forward rapidly, boasting a thriving economy and breathtaking landscapes. From the rice paddies of the Mekong Delta to the pristine beaches of the South China Sea and the majestic mountains of the Central Highlands, students and Veterans alike were struck by the beauty surrounding them.

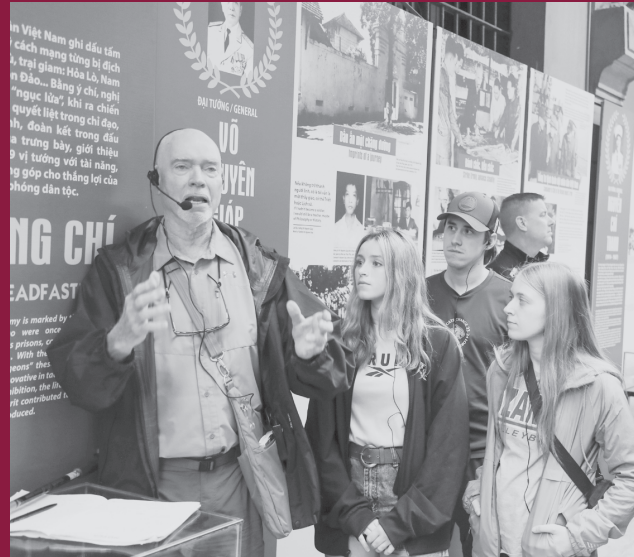
Maveric Richards, another student on the trip, marveled at the unexpected scenery: “I didn’t expect to find some of the most beautiful landscapes I’ve ever seen in Vietnam. It took my breath away.”

Beyond the history and landscapes, the trip fostered deep bonds between students and Veterans. These relationships are the heart of the Patriotic Education Travel Program—ensuring that the stories of America’s heroes are preserved for future generations.

“My group, the one with Colonel Clark, has stayed so close together,” Richards said. “I didn’t expect to form such deep connections, but this trip created friendships that will last a lifetime.”

Lessons in History, Love, and Understanding

As students and Veterans traveled together, their conversations extended beyond war stories. Discussions of faith, forgiveness, and unity took center stage. Chief Warrant Officer 4 Michael Howard emphasized the significance of understanding history: “This is an incredible opportunity



“We’ve got to overcome the fear of one another. Just because you have different hair or you look different or you speak differently, it doesn’t mean a thing. I think what the students need to know is not about my war experience. What came out of it was that we have to learn to love one another.”

– First Lieutenant Earl “Hap” Culp

for students to grasp the history of Vietnam and the experiences of the Veterans who served there. They listen to our stories and see firsthand the places where history unfolded. The next generation is our future, and if they don’t understand the past, they’re bound to repeat its mistakes.”

Veterans also imparted wisdom on the importance of love and acceptance. First Lieutenant Earl “Hap” Culp shared a lesson that resonated deeply.

“We’ve got to overcome the fear of one another. Just because you have different hair or you look different or you speak differently, it doesn’t mean a thing. I think what the students need to know is not about my war experience. What came out of it was that we have to learn to love one another.”

College of the Ozarks remains steadfast in its commitment to patriotic education, ensuring that students not only learn about history but experience it in a deeply personal way. The Patriotic Education Travel Program exemplifies the College’s vision to develop citizens of Christlike character who are well-educated, hardworking, and patriotic.

As these students return home, their stories will serve as a beacon of hope — proof that the next generation cherishes American heritage and is prepared to carry its legacy forward. The trip to Vietnam was not just an educational endeavor; it was an affirmation of faith, resilience, and the enduring power of gratitude.

At College of the Ozarks, patriotism is not merely taught—it is lived. ■

VETERANS:

Colonel John Clark,
U.S. Air Force (RETIRED)
Chief Warrant Officer 4
Michael Howard, U.S. Army
(RETIRED)

First Lieutenant Earl “Hap” Culp,
U.S. Army
Colonel Ed Gruetzmacher,
U.S. Army (RETIRED)

Seargent Major Edward Neas,
U.S. Marine Corps (RETIRED)

STUDENTS:

Ellie Trim
Taylor Galioto
Clancy Callahan
Rebecca “Mainnie” Wilson
Abigail Johnson
Kate Howdeshell
Andie Comfort

Naomi Foskett
Makenzie Henderson
Savannah Walker
Joseph Ford
Ethan Gwin
John Vollmann
Ryan Wade

Kannon Onstott
Zane Kelley
Maveric Richards
Cadan Kauffman
Ian Joshua “Josh” Hallam
Shelomi “Sho” Miner

CHAPERONES:

Chassidy Brittain,
Director of Patriotic Activities
Brigadier General
James Schreffler, Vice President
for Patriotic Activities

Dr. David Dalton, Distinguished
Professor of History
Dr. Raine Prather, Assistant
Professor of Nursing
Dr. Nick Sharp, Assistant Vice
President for College Operations

Mr. Mark Young,
Professor of Theatre
Mrs. Lisa Young, Associate
Professor of Theatre
Shann Swift, Photographer
Lori Vanderpool, Travel Nurse

A College that Cares:

Cultivating Bright Futures



By Micah Jacobs, Junior Public Relations Major

At College of the Ozarks, education is more than academics—it is about transforming lives. Rooted in a Christian worldview, staff and faculty hold that their calling is to care for students—not just in their academics, but as individuals. From initiatives like the Helping Hand Fund to involved and caring professors, the College equips students with the tools they need to thrive. Students at College of the Ozarks defy odds and rise above their circumstances, all because of the unwavering support they receive. This is because College of the Ozarks is built upon a mission that aims to meet student needs: to provide the advantages of a Christian education to the youth of both sexes, especially those found worthy, but who are without sufficient means to procure such training.

This mission is accomplished in a plethora of ways

that all reflect the College's five pillars: academic, Christian, cultural, patriotic, and vocational. In this edition, the Academic Pillar is highlighted along with the support extended to students.

Sallie Hitchcock, a staff member at College of the Ozarks, leads the charge in providing student support. Hitchcock began at College of the Ozarks as a student. She graduated in 1996 with a degree in criminal justice and an emphasis in corrections and psychology. She went





“In every aspect of College of the Ozarks there seems to be a place to find support.”

– Jacob Lewis, junior criminal justice major



to work in public service as a probation and parole officer for 22 years. Now, she works at the same College where it all began, as the administrative assistant to the provost of the College and coordinator of student support services. In this role, Hitchcock assists students in achieving their academic goals. In June 2025, Hitchcock will take on a more specific position, when she assumes the new title of director of student support and success.

“Students come here to pursue their academic goals, but they also come with needs affecting their academics,” Hitchcock said. “They come with stories, life experiences, or even health struggles. The College supports our students in all of these areas, even if they don’t seem like they directly affect their academics.”

Hitchcock is correct that students never lack support at College of the Ozarks. From resources such as the Student Counseling Center to the Armstrong McDonald Clinic located on campus, and academic-driven resources like tutoring and coursework assistance centers, students are surrounded by an abundance of assets designed to meet their needs.

Bridging the Gap

The resources offered to our students encourage them towards academic success. This is encapsulated in Hitchcock’s daily work.

“I meet with students weekly, and we discuss solutions to the problems that are hindering them from achieving their academic goals,” Hitchcock said. “When strategies are given to them, they are encouraged and inspired to meet those goals.”

Hitchcock serves to bridge the gap between students’ needs and the resources to help them along the way. This is a striking

reflection of the mission of College of the Ozarks.

Foundations for the Future

Success at College of the Ozarks extends beyond the classroom. Dr. Stacy McNeill, dean of academic enrichment, sees this firsthand.

“In my time at C of O, I have seen that success is about more than just academic ability,” McNeill said. “It’s about learning how to be resilient, navigate challenges, and persist even when things get difficult. Our students are not just working toward degrees — they are building the foundation for their futures.”

The College provides an array of resources to ensure students thrive, and their stories reflect the impact of this support.

Jacob Lewis, junior criminal justice major from Mountain Home, Arkansas, reflected on his academic experience at C of O.

“In my first semesters, I struggled with figuring out how to adjust to life here,” Lewis said.

It didn’t take long for him to find the resources he needed for these transitions. He found exceptional help from student workers at the College’s chemistry department and math department, as well as professors and administrators like Hitchcock. Lewis testifies to the fruit of success in pursuit of his academic goals.

“In every aspect of College of the Ozarks,” Jacob said, “there seems to be a place to find support.”

Ethan Gardner, sophomore child studies major, echoes a similar testimony to Lewis.

“I had to learn how to study and how to prioritize getting assignments done,” Gardner said. “It was hard to navigate this balance at the beginning. After meeting with Sallie Hitchcock and Dr. Stacy McNeill, they got me on a path to identifying and achieving my goals.”



— a college that

CARES

College of the Ozarks —

Gardner reflects on the ways that College of the Ozarks is assisting him, not only in his undergraduate degree, but in his future education as well.

“I am thinking about going to grad school, which requires certain academic scores,” he says. “The College is helping me lay a solid academic foundation, equipping me to attend grad school.”

Students at College of the Ozarks are receiving the resources and tools necessary to continue succeeding after graduation.

Advancements in Student Support

Gratitude and encouragement are repeated themes in the words of students. But it doesn't stop there. College of the Ozarks has continued advancing student support by initiating a new campus resource, named The Center for Student Support and Success (CSSS).

“We are excited that The Center for Student Support and Success finally has become a reality after many years,” said Dr. Eric Bolger, vice president for academic affairs and provost of the College. “The Center’s new director, Sallie Hitchcock, has an established track record of supporting students’ academic progress. I’m confident she will serve our students well.”

The CSSS is a dedicated space for students who are experiencing grade struggles or simply need resources for navigating college. Through the CSSS, students may obtain information on other campus areas that provide assistance with math or writing, academic advisement, counseling services, and financial aid. These resources have nurtured the College’s academic pillar in surprising ways, and the numbers prove it.

“In the 2023-24 academic year, College of the Ozarks reported

a retention rate of 90 percent and a graduation rate of nearly 70 percent,” McNeill said. “We consistently outperform national projections. That speaks to our faculty and staff’s dedication, but also to our students’ determination to invest in their futures. Many are breaking generational patterns and rewriting their stories.”


These numbers reflect the College’s unwavering commitment to its mission. Through dedicated faculty and staff, accessible academic resources, and new initiatives like The Center for Student Support and Success, the College equips students with the tools they need to thrive. As graduates leave with a strong academic foundation, it is apparent that C of O is, indeed, a college that cares.

“C of O is a place that truly changes lives,” McNeill said. “The investment we make in our students today impacts generations to come.” ■

COLLEGE *of the* OZARKS®

BY THE NUMBERS:

A TRADITION OF IMPACT

ACADEMIC 

61 nursing students performed clinicals in local clinic sites including Cox Health, Mercy Health, and other clinics in Stone, Taney, and Greene counties during 2024 fall semester.

education students completed their student teaching at regional schools during fall of 2024. **8**

101 students graduated from the College in December of 2024.

freshmen began the pursuit of a bachelor's degree at the College this spring. **150**


By Carissa Jefferson, Senior Agronomy and Agribusiness Major

At College of the Ozarks, every number tells a story of hard work, Christ-minded stewardship, and excellence. Whether through academic achievements, Christian outreach, cultural contributions, patriotic experiences, or vocational pursuits, students are embracing the College's mission in tangible ways. From student nurses serving in local clinics to education majors shaping the next generation, from hand-crafted stained glass to thousands of fruitcakes made with care—each statistic reflects the ongoing commitment and impact of College of the Ozarks.

College of the Ozarks helps students thrive. Also known as *Hard Work U.*, the commitment to combining rigorous academics with hands-on work education is producing graduates who are not only knowledgeable but also resilient and hardworking.

As students enter the College, they immediately learn the expectations for character and work ethic, responsibility, and productivity. Who reaps the benefits? Everyone. Local, regional, and even national employers recruit College of the Ozarks graduates. They know they have excellent work ethic and are well-rounded individuals of the utmost character. Graduates benefit deeply from developing character, gaining experience, and graduating debt free.

While visiting the College, guests have the opportunity to purchase student-made products, featuring the work of hundreds of students. The students prepare food products from scratch that consumers can purchase from the College. Elayna Doctorian, junior speech communication major and Fruitcake and Jelly Kitchen student worker, expressed her gratitude for guests who purchase the products she makes each day, enabling her to graduate debt free.

CHRISTIAN 

1,543

Operation Christmas Shoeboxes were packed by students and employees of the College in fall of 2024.

students attended The Call, a leadership summit focused on teaching each attendee how to live into their identity in Christ, this spring. **64**

“It is really a unique privilege to have someone consume products that I made. I love to go to The Keeter Center and talk to guests about these items. It is a really neat experience, and the guests are always excited to hear about it.”

– Elayna Doctorian, junior speech communication major and Fruitcake and Jelly Kitchen student worker

“It is really a unique privilege to have someone consume products that I made. I love to go to The Keeter Center and talk to guests about these items. It is a really neat experience, and the guests are always excited to hear about it.”

The College provides a wide array of student-made products to the public. Those items include baked goods, like fruitcake and lemon pound cake, fruit spreads, such as the popular apple butter, student-milled products, like malted pancake and waffle mix, and the most recent addition, peanut butter.

Doctorian recognizes what a blessing it is to be able to work to offset the cost of tuition and prepare for her future.

“Working for my tuition removes the strain as I think about my future. I know that I do not have to worry about paying off debt as soon as I start working after graduation. Additionally, working during college has taught me time management, how to prioritize tasks, and what it is like to be treated like an adult in the workplace.”


At the College, students are not only focused on their future career. The College is equipping them for a lifetime of meaningful work and service. Graduates are proof that the combination of academic excellence, work experience, and Christian values can create leaders who make a difference—both locally and globally. Here’s a look at the difference being made, one number at a time. ■



CULTURAL

590 plus stained-glass pieces were created by the College’s students and sold to local and global guests in 2024.


plus students, employees, and guests attended the Leonard B. and Edith Gittinger Convocation that featured Jenna Bush Hager in fall 2024. **1,500**



PATRIOTIC

College of the Ozarks students traveled to Vietnam in December 2024 to hear the stories of 5 Vietnam Veterans in the locations where they served. **20**

40 students from the College embarked on the annual CitizenTrip® to visit our nation’s Capital and learn more about its history in September 2024.



VOCATIONAL

100,000 plus fruitcakes were made by students and sold to guests globally in 2024.

50,000 plus fruit spreads were crafted by students and consumed by thousands of guests in 2024. More than 15,500 plus guests visited the Edwards Mill & General Store in 2024.

LIVING INTO GOD'S CALLING: *Discipling College Students Together*

By Carissa Jefferson, Senior Agronomy and Agribusiness Major

"Bringing light to the beauty of God's transformative work," is the mission statement that Dr. Jennifer Freeman has lived out during her time at the College. Jennifer's impact has been characterized by helping students find their God-given gifts and abilities and teaching how they can utilize them throughout their lifetime.

Jennifer serves as an associate professor and the director of Christian formation at College of the Ozarks. Her 25-year journey has changed the face of the Christian community life on campus. She earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri, a master's degree in leadership from Fuller Seminary, and a doctorate of worship studies from Robert Webber Institute of Worship Studies.

Over the years, Jennifer has lived out her mission by discipling and encouraging students to embrace their spiritual gifts. When she started, the College had no formalized discipleship program or pathway for students to explore who God created them to be. Jennifer saw the need for a program that taught students to be Christlike citizens who will go out into the world to be the hands and feet of Jesus in their homes, churches, jobs, and communities, but more than that, she realized a need for community transformation.

"I wanted to reform the way we think about Christian community," she said.

To grow the community atmosphere on campus, Jennifer dedicated her time to becoming a part of the campus community and learning how students, faculty, and staff interacted with each other. She found that the best way for her to guide,

teach, and form relationships with students is by walking alongside students where they are. Through that process, God showed Jennifer how to see young men and women through His eyes, each person displaying their God-given potential.

"I want students to be able to live into their God-given abilities and gifts," said Jennifer. "I have learned over the years that sometimes it takes somebody to challenge the students for them to step into those gifts."



Photo by Kate Fried Photography



Jennifer has been used by God to nurture the gifts in students and encourage them to grow. Noah Lofgren, senior marketing major, has embraced his ability to lead because Jennifer saw his potential and challenged him to live into it.

“Jennifer saw things in me that I did not see in myself,” Noah said. “She placed me in positions to lead and grow, knowing that I was not super confident, but that I would improve. Because of that, I have been able to see my potential and have grown. Having someone like that believe in me and say that I can do it meant so much to my growth.”

Jennifer helped to develop the program known as The Thrive Pathway, which teaches students how to lead, utilizing their own spiritual gifts by taking them through a series of steps that help them find who they are as individuals in Christ and then embrace that uniqueness in how they live out their lives.

Micah Arnold, senior music major, is one of the hundreds of students whom Jennifer has mentored through the program. Jennifer has helped Micah see how her

God-given gifts can be used to further His kingdom.

“Jennifer has helped me learn to appreciate more the gifts God has given me, especially my gift of teaching,” Micah said. “She has helped me hone my love for learning and sharing truth. She has helped me see how to do it in a way that is most helpful to those hearing. She has inspired me to dream big about how God can use me in the church.”

While Jennifer has been making an incredible impact on campus, her husband, Jim Freeman, has been doing the same. As Director of the Vanek Center for Vocation and Callings, he has helped students find their God-given callings for the last 10 years at the College.

Jim has a bachelor’s degree in broadcasting and film from Central Missouri University and a master’s degree in organizational leadership from Evangel University.

Before he joined the staff full-time, Jim was frequently on campus leading Bible studies and assisting in retreats.

Through that time, he naturally formed relationships on campus and eventually joined as staff, fulfilling

“ I want students to be able to live into their God-given abilities and gifts. I have learned over the year that sometimes it takes somebody to challenge the students for them to step into those gifts. ”

– Dr. Jennifer Freeman, associate professor and director of Christian formation



the couple's calling of discipling college students together.

Jim's goal has been to build on the Christian foundation of the College, a foundation that Jennifer has built upon over the years. Jim's goal was to reduce the stress of job searching on students and show them that their career choices do not define them.

"I want to bring in the deeper meaning of Biblical understanding, helping students graduate with a recognition that their vocation does not define them, but who they are in Christ does," Jim said.

Jim's Christlike mindset directed him to change the name of the career center. The resource is now called The Vanek Center for Vocation and Callings, which better embraces the vision of the College and honors a long-time supporter of the College, Dorothy Vanek.

"My goal is to teach students to know who they are and who God made them to be, the skills He gave them, the values He instilled in them, and the passions He created within them," Jim said. "When students can communicate that to employers, that is a direct form of worship that can be carried with them into their careers and beyond."

Jim and Jennifer have two sons and daughters-in-law, Caleb and Carissa and Zac and Bethany. They now find enjoyment in their roles as grandparents to Finley, Truitt, Piper, Bella, Cameron, and

Addie. After retiring this May, the couple plans to continue living into their calling to disciple young people together. Additionally, they are looking forward to spending time biking, playing pickleball, and enjoying other outdoor activities. ■

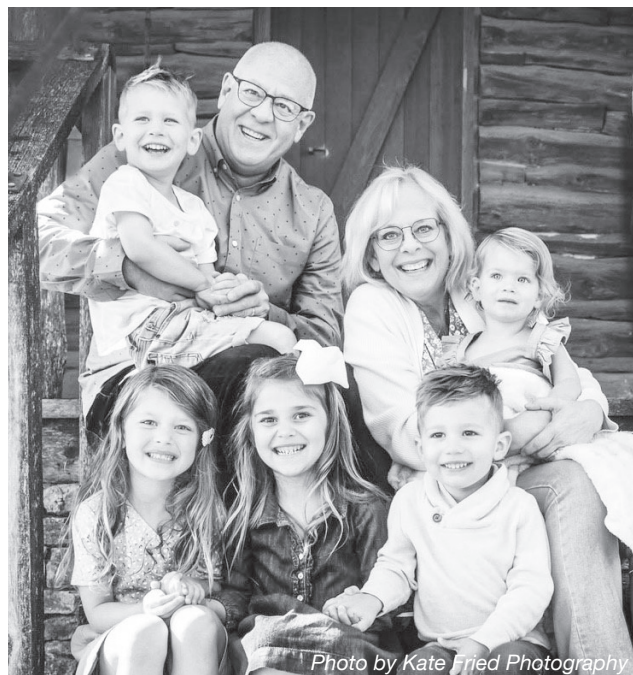


Photo by Kate Fried Photography

DECEMBER 2024 MEMORIAL SCROLLS

Robert Anderson from Charles and Sally Anderson
Kendall Andrews from Sally Andrews
Ashley Babbitt from Linda Randolph
Johnnie Barnes from Maureen Bettman
John Robert Barr IV from John Barr III and Angela Mullins
Aubrey Ann Blevins from Susan Mayo
Caleb Clere from Jerry Watley
Jim Corbin from Fred Keehn
Margaret Cordell from Mr. and Mrs. Tommy Norrell
Jim Creitz from Dr. and Mrs. Wesley Mullen
COLENE ELMER CROFT FROM DAVID BAKER
Debbie from Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Nail
Leon Ellis from Mr. and Mrs. James Nichols
HENRY AND HELEN FELIN FROM MR. AND MRS. J. KENNETH RALEY
Mary Riordon from Kathleen Bonham
William Fraser from Kathleen Bonham
Gail George from Susan Mayo
R. M. Good from Dr. and Mrs. John Goodwin
Fran Goodrum from Sam Patti
Josephine Dancy Harris from Juliette Schreiber
James P. Keeter from Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Aylward
Curtis and Nenita Kekoa, Sr. from Curtis Kekoa
Mary Beth Kolb from Kathleen Bonham
Phillip Lockard from Emily Lockhard
Henry Loyd from Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Loyd
Ronald Mayo from Susan Mayo
Patti S. Mease from Carol Mease
Judy Milum from Susan Mayo
Lee Merrill Nation from Sandra Nation
Sonjia Olstad from James Olstad
William E. Pearce from Sarah Pearce
Eric Thomas and Ruth G. Peterson from Mr. and Mrs. Victor Peterson
General Jerry W. Ragsdale from Mr. and Mrs. David Gravelle
KENNETH RALEY FROM MR. AND MRS. J. KENNETH RALEY
Gary Revelle from David Jobe, Sr.
Col. Judith D. Richtsmeier from Nancy Heisterman AND LAWRENCE WITZEL
Dr. Reed and Margaret Ann Rings from Marcie and Don Solin

Allen Salisbury from Linda Salisbury
Monty Scarborough from Mr. and Mrs. Russell Scarborough
Mavis Scheurle from Hallye Bone
WALT AND JOAN SMITH FROM MR. AND MRS. STEVE RHYNARD
Lewis Topliff from Dr. and Mrs. Michael Topliff
Veterans from Stephen Brown
Nina G. Vieth from Donald Vieth
Ernest Weigle from Beverly Weigle
Arthur White from Michael Lee
Philip and Margaret Zirkelbach from Mr. and Mrs. Ted Zirkelbach

JANUARY 2025 MEMORIAL SCROLLS

Luisa V. Andrae from Michael Andrae
John Beck from Beck Brother's Citrus Inc., Mr. and Mrs. Byron Claghorn, Margaret McNatt, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Reinecker, PH Freeman & Sons Inc., Jacqueline Teal, and Linda Whittaker
Aubrey Ann Blevins from Susan Mayo
REGINALD AND JAMIE CRAIG FROM MR. AND MRS. JIM CRAIG
Jim Creitz from Dr. and Mrs. Wesley Mullen
Dr. Theodore Davis from Dr. and Mrs. John Goodwin
Debbie from Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Nail
Gail George from Susan Mayo
Iva Jean from Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Riley
David P. Johnson from William Johnson
Ronald Mayo from Susan Mayo
William Rex McKinney from Frances Lundgren
Judy Milum from Susan Mayo
Phillis Ann Powers from Mr. and Mrs. Dan Blankenship
Monty Scarborough from Mr. and Mrs. Russell Scarborough
GLORY STACK FROM MR. AND MRS. TIM KEY
Lewis Topliff from Dr. and Mrs. Michael Topliff
Veterans from Stephen Brown
LARRY WAGGONER FROM ROBERTA WAGGONER
Rosezella Watkins from Lima Community Church of the Nazarene and Mr. and Mrs. Scott Young
James Wirth from Tina Tang

FEBRUARY 2025 MEMORIAL SCROLLS

Aubrey Ann Blevins from Susan Mayo
Jim Creitz from Dr. and Mrs. Wesley Mullen
Debbie from Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Nail
Gail George from Susan Mayo
Robert Hataway from Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hunt
Allan Lane from Eugene Conner, Elizabeth Murphy, Mr. and Mrs. Andy Repak, Daryll Repak, The Taylors, The Vasilions, and The Williamsons
Micheal Leo from Darlyne Pettinicchio
Ronald Mayo from Susan Mayo
Judy Milum from Susan Mayo
Becky Ramer from Lori Huber
Col. Judith D. Richtsmeier from Mr. and Mrs. Edward Mueller
Geneva Runner from Pat Tolbert
Monty Scarborough from Mr. and Mrs. Russell Scarborough
Lewis Topliff from Dr. and Mrs. Michael Topliff
Veterans from Stephen Brown
Rosezella Watkins from Kimberly Elliott and Nancy Sidney

DECEMBER 2024 HONOR SCROLLS

William R. Bolling from Dennis Uchtman
Jacque Boyd from Robert Durham
Jody Braswell from Dr. and Mrs. Weston Wiebe
Lani Brogan from Sean Brogan
Barby Carlson from Mr. and Mrs. Brian Flower
Rick and Cynthia Celeste from Mr. and Mrs. Rick Fitzpatrick
Dr. Jerry C. Davis from Mr. and Mrs. John Smith
June Goff from Mr. and Mrs. Russell Scarborough
The Charles and Victoria Hohenberg Family from Matter Family Office
Kent and Sue Hohensee from Mr. and Mrs. Todd Harm
Dr. and Mrs. Brad Johnson from Dr. and Mrs. Weston Wiebe
DR. BRAD AND LAURA JOHNSON FROM JUDY BROWN and Martha Cloud
Johnny Johnson from Mr. and Mrs. Rick Fitzpatrick
Emma Krummel from Mr. and Mrs. Mark Stehlin

Memorial and Honor GIFTS

Michael and Christine Lapinski from Mr. and Mrs. Todd Harm

Marci Linson from Dr. and Mrs. Weston Wiebe

Stan and Debra Maxey from Patricia Stone

Alex McCreath from Dr. and Mrs. Weston Wiebe

Dick and Gerry Meyer from Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Perry

Dr. Brian and Mrs. Margret Moore from Dr. James Jacobs

Walter Purdy from Brenda Plute

Joyce Raley from J. Kenneth Raley

Natalie Rasnick from Dr. and Mrs. Weston Wiebe

Dr. Reed and Margaret Ann Rings from Marcie Solin

FRANK AND GRACE ROYER FROM MR. AND MRS. GARY ROYER

Brigadier General James Schreffler from Dr. and Mrs. Weston Wiebe

The Coburn Schrock Family from Mr. and Mrs. Jim McHale

CYNTHIA SULLIVAN FROM JONATHAN SULLIVAN

The C of O IT Team from Jeff and Tamara Schneider

Veterans from Stephen Brown

Veterans of Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq from John Smith

RuthAnn White from Michael Lee

Vicki Wrosch from Dr. and Mrs. Weston Wiebe

Natalie from Ellen Black

Team and Colleagues from Drs. Hayden and Sue Head

JANUARY 2025 HONOR SCROLLS

William R. Bolling from Dennis Uchtman

Jacquie Boyd from Robert Durham

Dr. Jerry C. Davis from David Osterman

June Goff from Mr. and Mrs. Russell Scarborough

Emma Krummel from Mr. and Mrs. Mark Stehlin

Robert Stricklin from The Trout Busters of Missouri

Veterans from Stephen Brown

Veterans of Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq from John Smith

FEBRUARY 2025 HONOR SCROLLS

William R. Bolling from Dennis Uchtman

Jacquie Boyd from Robert Durham

THOMAS V. BOYER FROM DAVID BOYER

DR. JERRY C. DAVIS FROM CHARLES DOWNEY

June Goff from Mr. and Mrs. Russell Scarborough

Emma Krummel from Mr. and Mrs. Mark Stehlin

Bowman and Pamela Perry from Mr. and Mrs. Charles Parker, Jr.

Veterans from Stephen Brown

Veterans of Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq from John Smith

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College of the Ozarks hosts Character Camp for spring 2025 incoming class



College of the Ozarks, also known as *Hard Work U.*, redefines what it means to receive a college education by dedicating an entire week, called Character Camp, to preparing incoming freshmen for success. Guided by its vision to develop citizens of Christlike character who are well-educated, hardworking, and patriotic, the College ensures new students are equipped to excel academically, build meaningful relationships, and establish a robust support system.

This spring, 150 incoming freshmen dove into Character Camp from Jan. 6-12. Character Camp is a cornerstone of the College of the Ozarks experience.

During Character Camp, students

were welcomed into the College of the Ozarks family through a series of intentional activities. They formed connections with peers, familiarized themselves with campus resources, and laid the groundwork for their academic and personal growth. By fostering a sense of belonging, the program ensures students have the support they need to thrive.

Students were organized into 14 groups known as “families,” with each family led by two upperclassmen who embody the character and values that define the College. These “moms and pops” served as mentors, guiding the incoming students through the week and helping them navigate this chapter



of their lives.

As the semester unfolds, the “families” formed during Character Camp will reunite three times to check on students’ progress and deepen the bonds they’ve created. These reunions will include another service project, underscoring the College’s enduring commitment to character development and community impact. ■

College of the Ozarks Senior Recognized as National Leader at Inauguration Day

Madelyn Sestak, a senior marketing major and president of Young Women for America (YWA) at College of the Ozarks, represented her college and community on a national stage during Inauguration Day in Washington, D.C., on January 20, 2025. Chosen from

more than 300 YWA leaders nationwide, she was invited in recognition of her leadership, service, and faith.

Her invitation came through Concerned Women for America (CWA), the nation’s largest women’s public policy organization. On

January 19, she attended CWA’s Donor Celebration Dinner, where she spoke alongside CEO Penny Nance and other leaders. “It was a privilege to look into the eyes of those who have supported me, making this work possible,” Sestak shared. “Being part of this historic

moment and sharing how God has worked through our YWA chapter was truly humbling.”

Sestak shared an inspiring message encouraging others to step into service: “Making a difference in the world starts by making a difference

in your own community. Love where you are, and God will open doors to greater opportunities.” ■

College Of The Ozarks Hosts The Ninth Night To Shine For Guests With Special Needs, Feb. 7

College of the Ozarks hosted the ninth Night to Shine event on Friday, Feb. 7, in the Silver Dollar City Parlor at The Keeter Center. The College, along with churches around the world, partners with the Tim Tebow Foundation to make this event possible and celebrate God’s love for people with special needs.

The prom-like event welcomed more than 100 guests from Stone and Taney counties. More than 200 College of the Ozarks faculty, staff, and students volunteered—helping with hair and makeup, shining shoes, cheering for the guests as they entered on the red carpet, and serving as “buddies” or chaperones for the entire evening.

“One of our goals at the College is to exemplify the character of Christ by serving and loving

others,” said Dr. Justin Carswell, vice president for Christian ministries and student development. “Night to Shine is an event that enables our students to embody the hands and feet of Christ for our honored guests. The best part of the night is seeing the faces of our guests light up as they meet their buddies and prepare for a night to remember.”

Night to Shine is a memorable experience for everyone participating.

“For many of our guests, this night was a first—a moment where they feel seen, cherished, and celebrated



as the unique and beautiful individuals God created them to be,” said Lori Simmons, community service coordinator. “As we poured into their lives, we were also profoundly impacted. This event transformed the hearts of our students at College of the Ozarks and gave them the privilege of serving others and experiencing the deep joy of putting love into action.” ■





LIVING THE VISION: *C of O Students Set the Example*

By Gabrielle Adair, Sophomore Public Relations Major

College of the Ozarks humbly began in 1906 when Rev. James Forsythe answered the call to start a high school, originally called The School of the Ozarks, for young students who did not have the means to obtain a Christian education. In 1956, The School of the Ozarks added a two-year junior college to the four year-high school program, and in 1965, the four-year college program was set in place. In 1990, the name of the School was officially changed to College of the Ozarks.

In 2012, the College reopened School of the Ozarks, a laboratory high school for grades 9-12. Subsequently, the College opened grades K-6 in August 2014 and added grades 7-8 in August of 2015, completing the K-college model.

School of the Ozarks is located on the same campus as College of the Ozarks. Both S of O and C of O are founded on the same mission: "To provide the advantages of a Christian education for youth of both sexes, especially those found worthy, but who are without sufficient means to procure such training."

This mission is what unites the College and the K-12 School to

MISSION:

To provide the advantages of a Christian education for youth of both sexes, especially those found worthy, but who are without sufficient means to procure such training



the College, students at C of O have an opportunity to be uniquely involved in this mission, pointing the younger students to Christ by serving as student workers at S of O. They help the School in their office work, student supervision, tutoring, and coaching. Often, one will find a college student helping a younger student with a math or reading lesson. Additionally, C of O students step up to facilitate S of O school drop off in the morning and pick-up in the afternoon.

At first glance, these tasks seem ordinary; however, the student workers play an essential role in the mission of the School. At the beginning of spring 2025, Dolloff shared a devotional with the student teachers, stressing the importance of leading by a Christlike example.

“Students start becoming like their teacher, especially if they like their teacher personally,” Dolloff said. “In so many ways we have godly, Christian college students who are a little younger than the teachers, and students see Christ in them.”

C of O students can bless S of O and its students by working to meet their needs. In return, the College students are blessed by the experience and insight that working at S of O provides.

work together to fulfill the overriding vision: “To create Citizens of Christlike character who are well-educated, hardworking, and patriotic.”

Dr. Brad Dolloff, dean of School of the Ozarks, shared that he believes that as C of O and S of O work together, they can help students of all ages grow and flourish.

“We’re all involved in the transformation of lives to have a Christlike character,” Dolloff said. “There are close to 1,800 students on this campus, and about 300 of them happen to be under the age of 18.”

Because S of O is located on the same campus as

“ Working at S of O, I have the experience of working with students, teachers, and in the office. ”

– Kamryn Bradshaw, senior elementary education major



“Basketball, and athletics in general, has always been important to me from an early age, but through School of the Ozarks, I have been able to connect my faith in Christ with the game I love.”

– Abigail Ketchum, senior child studies major

Kamryn Bradshaw, senior elementary education major at College of the Ozarks, shared about the growth and experience she has received in the three semesters she has served at S of O. She works with students from kindergarten to eighth grade. Having attended the S of O high school, she was thrilled to have an opportunity to go back and be involved in the School’s mission as a college student.

“Working at S of O, I have the experience of working with students, teachers, and in the office,” Bradshaw shared. “This experience is different than a substitute, teacher’s assistant, or office worker. This job sets my resumé up to be a little more unique.”

Bradshaw continued to share how working at S of O shaped her view in teaching students.

“I have learned to never limit students,” Bradshaw said. “Every student has the potential to be amazing.”

Abigail Ketchum, a senior child studies major at College of the Ozarks, applied at the end of her freshman year for the student worker position for the S of O athletics department. Since the fall of 2022, she has served as one of the assistant basketball coaches for both the junior high and high school girls’ teams.

“Coaching at S of O has given me the opportunity to experience the sport I love from a new perspective,” Ketchum shared. “Basketball, and athletics in general, has always been important to me from an early age, but through School of the Ozarks, I have been able to connect my faith in Christ with the game I love.”

Most importantly, Ketchum’s experience in coaching at S of O taught her that she can teach students to be Christlike wherever she goes.

“I thought I was just teaching them basketball skills, but really, I was teaching them how to give glory to God in everything, be a good teammate and friend, and to always work hard,” shared



Ketchum. “I used to think that a missionary was someone whose only job was to preach and share the Good News, but I have learned to be a missionary wherever I am.”

The C of O student workers are doing much more than helping the S of O teachers and administrators complete daily tasks. They are teaching the younger generation by example what it means to be a citizen of Christlike character.

“If someone goes from kindergarten through high school, then attends College of the Ozarks, we have close to two decades to pour into that person and hopefully see a yield of fruit of Christlikeness that gives back 100-fold when it is done,” Dolloff said.

In 1906, Rev. James Forsythe felt a burden to develop citizens of Christlike character.

Today, the College students who have been uniquely impacted by this vision further it by helping plant new seeds in the hearts of the young students at S of O so that they, too, can produce fruit. ■



SALT *AND* LIGHT

Grounding Students
with a Heart of Service



By Madelyn Sestak, Senior Marketing Major

“You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl, instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”
Matthew 5:13-16 NIV

What does it mean to be salt and light? The mission of School of the Ozarks encourages students and faculty to engage in community service projects throughout the year, which is a tangible way to be salt and light in the world. The School sets aside service project days, sends

students on mission trips to St. Louis and Kansas City, and partners with various ministries.

“To give ourselves in service and love is ultimately imitating the love and generosity contained in the triune God,” said Graham Polk, School of the Ozarks senior. “Not only have these service opportunities taught me to lean into the uncomfortable and vulnerable places the Spirit leads, but it has also encouraged bonds and friendships in a way only serving together can.”

Every year on Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, S of O students watch his “I Have a Dream” speech first thing in the morning and then go into the community and serve. The School’s cultural pillar is to cultivate an appreciation of the fine arts, an understanding of the world, and adherence to high personal standards. So on this day, they teach students about

Reverend King's family wishes to use this day to serve others. They focus on Dr. King's idea that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," and they go out into the community with this idea in mind.

Initiatives like this help instill a culture of service in students. "This year's senior class came to me at the beginning of the year and told me they wanted to be known as a class that serves and as a school that serves," said Dr. Brad Dolloff, dean of School of the Ozarks.

For example, on one of the annual early release Fridays (where S of O teachers are given the opportunity for professional development), the seniors took it upon themselves to reach out and serve with Christian Action Ministries. This organization serves to combat food insecurities in Taney and Stone counties by helping people with basic resources, encouraging self-sufficiency, and building community.

"Most kids would have said, 'Hey, an early release, let's go have some fun. Let's go to someone's house or watch a movie,'" Dolloff said. "But our seniors said, 'Let's go to Christian Action Ministries and work to help them sort, pack, and distribute items.'"

Later that semester, this group of seniors went back to Christian Action Ministries after noticing they could use some more help. "I love that it's getting into their system. It's a part of who they are as Christ followers. Because we follow Him, we find a need, and then we serve," Dolloff said.

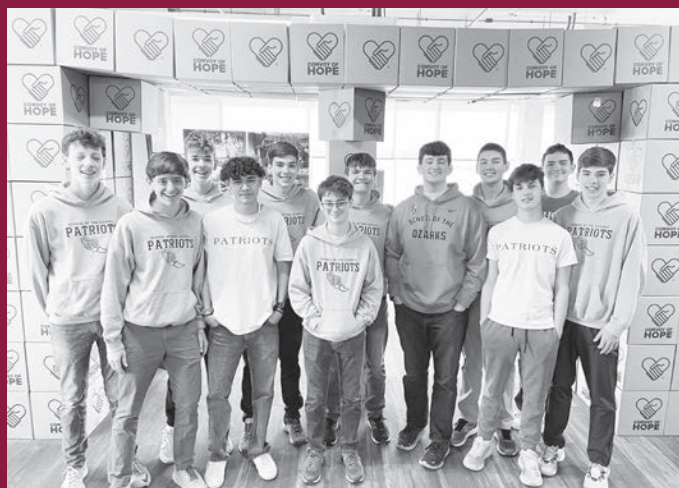
This spring, School of the Ozarks students traveled to Springfield, Missouri, to serve at Convoy of Hope. This organization serves as a humanitarian, faith-based organization on a mission to feed the hungry and bring help and hope to communities that need it most. The School has seen the immense impact Convoy of Hope has made domestically and internationally and desired to serve alongside the organization.

Throughout their day of serving, the students prepared fliers, packaged washcloths and clothing items, and helped prepare for an upcoming women's conference.

"Encouraging and leading students to actively participate in thinking of others' needs expands the focus and understanding of the importance of a Christlike life of service," said Amy Martin, assistant professor of humanities. "Beyond the classroom setting, we want our students to embody the act of sacrifice and giving."

S of O plans to continue to serve with Convoy of Hope and learn more about the important work they are doing with disaster relief and climate-controlled greenhouses.

Additionally, the patriotic pillar at School of the





Ozarks encourages students to have an understanding of American heritage, civic responsibility, love of country, and willingness to defend it. When Capt. Caleb Dunnam, assistant professor of patriotic activities at College of the Ozarks, was deployed last spring, staff, faculty, and students joined arms with the S of O club, Pitch In for Patriots. With a mission to serve those who have served, many on campus make a monthly pay deduction to fund the account. Because Dunnam serves as a chaplain, some of the funds go towards that specific ministry, helping with praise and worship instruments, electronic equipment, and microphones.

In these ways, the students of School of the Ozarks embody the call to serve in their communities and beyond. By serving those in need, they reflect Christ's love through action. These experiences not only enrich the lives of those they serve but also shape the hearts of the students, creating a lasting impact on their personal and spiritual growth. Through intentional service and a commitment to living out the Gospel, the students of School of the Ozarks continue to shine brightly, bringing hope and light to a world in need.

"Our hope is that students learn to be salt and light," Dolloff said. "In order for salt and light to be effective, they have to be poured out." ■



College of the Ozarks Establishes Center for Classical Christian Education

Last year, College of the Ozarks established the Center for Classical Christian Education. The CCCE is housed in the School of the Ozarks Upper School and directed by Dr. Brian Polk, director of the Center for Classical Christian Education. This new initiative reaffirms the College's commitment to the Christian and academic pillars.

Polk, previously serving as the Associate Professor of Natural Philosophy at School of the Ozarks, is leading the CCCE in forming initiatives. Through his position, Polk oversees several key initiatives, including the promotion of the Classical Christian Education Conference hosted annually in March and the Classical Christian Teacher Training for educators held in the summer. This event provides

training for educators seeking to integrate faith and classical learning in their classrooms.

For Polk, stepping into the role of director was an extension of his passion for classical Christian education.

"I knew that I wanted to spend the second half of my career investing in the bigger picture of classical Christian education," Polk said. "The Center is the result of being in the right place at the right time."

Polk's journey in classical Christian education began in 2006. He was initially drawn in by the community of classical Christian education schooling programs. When he learned that the purpose of the classical Christian education was to cultivate wisdom and virtue, he knew he had found his calling.

"I knew I had found my forever home," Polk said. "I've since discovered the rich tradition that classical Christian education seeks to renew and pass on to students and I cannot imagine myself doing anything else."

A key mission of the Center for Classical Christian Education is to provide opportunities for students from Classical Christian Education schools who might not otherwise afford a college education without incurring debt. Additionally, the Center assists classical Christian schools nationwide by connecting them with College of the Ozarks graduates who have minored in humanities or classical Christian education. By doing so, the College helps address the growing need for passionate, faith-based educators. ■

School of the Ozarks Celebrates 10th Annual Prairie Days, Bringing History to Life for Students



School of the Ozarks celebrated the 10th anniversary of Prairie Days, an immersive educational experience that transports students



back in time to the days of Laura Ingalls Wilder. Designed to make history come alive, Prairie Days engages students in hands-on

activities that mirror the daily life of pioneers. During this week of activities, students sew buttons onto pocket bags, churn butter

for their pancakes, weave baskets, learn to jig, and enjoy live fiddle music. A highlight of the experience is a visit to Mansfield, Missouri, where Laura and Almanzo Wilder spent their final years, allowing students to further connect with the history behind the beloved “Little House” books.

“This day is the most anticipated day of the 2nd grade school year,” said Chrissy Martin, associate professor at School of the Ozarks.

“Learning about Wilder’s life through a book is one thing, but putting on a prairie dress and a bonnet and walking to school with your lunch pails in hand is a completely different level of learning. It is learning that sticks.”

Prairie Days reflects School of the Ozarks’ commitment to developing well-educated students through experiential learning. By stepping into the past, students gain a deeper appreciation for

history, literature, and the pioneering spirit. What began as a simple idea sparked by a student’s curiosity has grown into a highly anticipated tradition, offering a unique, hands-on approach to learning that aligns with the school’s mission. Now in its 10th year, Prairie Days continues to inspire young learners, fostering a love for literature and an understanding of how history shapes the future. ■

School of the Ozarks Students Enjoy Sixth Annual Narnia Day



On March 3, 2025, School of the Ozarks students from kindergarten through 8th grade participated in Narnia Day, an interactive experience which aims to invoke awe and wonder in students by providing an experience of truth, beauty, and goodness in great literature. Decorations made by students transform the school to look like the mythical land of Narnia and focus on a different book from

“The Chronicles of Narnia” each year. This year, the day focused on “The Voyage of the Dawn Treader.”

While grades K-5 visited various learning stations throughout the day, students from grades 6-8 dressed up and memorized skits.

“While the lessons students participate in support our academic and Christian pillars, the preparation for Narnia Day supports our vocational

pillar,” Carey said. “The stories even support love of country and a willingness to defend it for our patriotic pillar. Finally, Narnia Day is a special opportunity for the School to support our cultural pillar.”

Narnia Day serves as a wonderful educational experience, encouraging students and families to contemplate wisdom and virtue as a Christian community.

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