ENDURANCE, CHANGE, HOPE, AND LIFE
- It is Who We Are!

FALL 2020
OCS ARTS DONATION

This summer while area resident Rob Longo was giving of his time working with the Hope Against Human Trafficking organization he met Diana Bochenek who had a room full of her father, Leo Bochenek’s, old violins that were not in use anymore. Rob offered to help find a way for them to bless others. His immediate thought was to donate them to the art and music programs at Oxford Community Schools. When asked why he chose our district to donate to, Rob simply replied, “It was the Holy Spirit talking to me to bless these children.”

Mr. Bochenek had played the violin his whole life and for his daughter from the time she was born. He served in Germany, France, and Italy during World War II and was awarded a medal of honor by General Patton. A few of his violins were in good enough shape that with some rehab they could be playable again. Longo took them to Detroit Violin Co. to be fixed along with three bows that he offered to them as a gift. Laura Schwartzenberger at Detroit Violin Co. was so touched by his story and who the refurbished violins would be benefitting, she offered to trade the bows for the repairs worth over $1,000. Our art students will be using some of the donations for still life drawings this year while the playable violins are being used by our orchestra students. We are very grateful for the thoughtful and generous donation so rich in history.

CTE ADDS EMT PROGRAM

On September 25, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Oxford Community Schools and the Oxford and Addison Fire Departments for a new Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Education program. Director of Career-Focused Education, Lisa Butts, began talks last December to develop this great new opportunity.

The new EMT program is an extension of the ever-so-popular Health Science CTE program at Oxford High School. It will greatly benefit our students who are looking to enter the Health Science field. The new program meets all of the state’s education requirements for EMTs and will allow students the chance to take the National Registry exam once they turn 18 years old. The successful completion of the National Registry exam along with the successful completion of a student’s twelfth grade year will potentially provide an early entrance into the workforce as a licensed EMT.

Currently, there are eleven Oxford students enrolled in the course which started at the beginning of the fall 2020 semester. The classes are held at the Oxford Fire Station #1, and are coordinated and taught by the Oxford and Addison Fire Departments. In addition to 270 hours of class time, students must complete 38 clinical hours, which include ambulance ride-alongs and time at the hospital. This new CTE offering is an excellent way for students to gain new skills, hands-on experience and knowledge in the medical field to help them discover their future career path.
REOPENING FACE-TO-FACE

Preparation for the 2020-2021 school year looked far different from any other school year. The summer was anything but restful as our team prepared to open buildings for face-to-face instruction. Oxford was one of only two school districts of the 28 Oakland County districts that began the school year face-to-face with in-person instruction. Oxford parents could choose either in-person, five days a week instruction with the possibility of moving to remote learning when necessary; or, 100% fully online instruction through our Oxford Virtual Academy (OVA).

At the end of July, the district sent out a survey to parents of our seated-students inquiring on their desires for their children’s fall instruction. At that time, 60.72% responded they would send their child(ren) back to school face-to-face, 10.15% would be transferring to OVA, and 26.80% were still unsure (survey data can be found on our website under the 2020 Return to School & COVID-19 Information tab). By the August 17 in-district transfer deadline, 1,160 seated Oxford students requested to transfer to OVA, leaving approximately 70% of the usual student count in brick and mortar classrooms. With the addition of 819 new OVA students enrolling into the district, the overall number of OVA’s student count has more than doubled since last year, making its enrollment larger than all of the district’s seated schools combined. The movement of seated students to OVA allowed for staffing transfers from our brick and mortar buildings to OVA for staff who desired to work virtually during the threat of COVID. After the staffing transfers, OVA hired dozens of additional new staff to meet the needs of our virtual students.

Thankfully, due to our proactive planning, additional online learning devices were ordered last spring in anticipation that every student would need to be equipped with access to one this year. The Oxford Schools technology department worked seven days a week through most of August and spilling into September unpacking, inventorying, applying network settings, and installing necessary software on new devices. Over 2,500 Chromebooks were signed out to secondary students this fall, more than doubling the amount that were distributed last spring. Although our elementary schools are well equipped with devices, the district has been fortunate enough to order 1,100 more devices, which should arrive before Christmas. This additional order will help the district to achieve the goal of being one-to-one with a computer for each student, greatly helping our students and families should we need to move to remote learning.

In the buildings, creativity was flowing as teachers rearranged their classrooms, rethought how they would teach lessons, and reexamined how students could safely interact yet be physically distant. When the weather allowed, classes moved outside. Curriculum changed for seated students to incorporate online aspects to ease the transition into any necessary moves to remote learning due to quarantines. Lunch looked different as the elementary lunch rooms sit empty, and kids eat in their classrooms to minimize risks. At the secondary level, students were given more locations in the building to spread out and eat to allow for more physical distancing. Athletics were allowed to return following MHSAA guidelines and many of the extracurricular activities were slowly reincorporated with well thought out safety protocols.

One example of a large group that managed its safety protocol impressively well is the 148 member marching band under the direction of Jim Gibbons. Students were conscientious about their mask wearing and incredibly cautious on their spacing during practicing. Students followed the safety protocol incredibly well, eliminating any spread of the coronavirus within the band.

This fall certainly has had its challenges; however, the hard work and diligence of our staff, students, and parents are evident. To this point, we have successfully mitigated the spread of the coronavirus by adapting to safety protocols allowing us to continue learning face-to-face. Only time will tell what the future holds. For now, we are incredibly proud of our school community and how it has met the challenges of today.
The tremendous to-do list for the Series II Bond work has been completed! To this point, all projects have been on or ahead of schedule and under budget. The installation of all new elementary playground equipment and mulch was ready for action when the students returned on August 31. The roof and long overdue interior updates for the Transportation building have been completed. All work on the pool HVAC system, the electrical gear and transformer box at Daniel Axford has been done and the server room air conditioner has been installed. The middle school received new water heaters and the fire alarm upgrades at OES, DA, and OMS were accomplished. The window blinds at OHS, OES and OMS are now installed. Parking lots at OHS, Clear Lake, and Daniel Axford have been repaved and sidewalks were replaced.

In the initial 2017 bond project planning Series III, work was set to begin in June of 2022. With the current economy we have been able to take advantage of the low interest rates to sell bonds sooner allowing us to start the next series of work this coming June of 2021. This series is the third and final series of work to be completed in fulfillment of the 2017 bond passage. Plans are in motion for the replacement of the remaining sidewalks, parking lots and exterior lighting in the district at OHS, OMS, Lakeville and Leonard. An additional parking lot will be added at Leonard as well to accommodate the schools needs. Schools across the district will receive needed door and hardware replacements and existing skylights will be improved.

As a reminder, all bond money may only be spent on school capital improvements. Thank you again for your support in voting for the passage of the 2017 bond. All bond information can be found on our website at https://www.oxfordschools.org/departments/business_operations/2017_bond_and_sinking_fund_information/bond__sinking_fund_progress_info__post-election.

USDA PROVIDES FREE MEALS

As so many families and businesses continue to be impacted financially by the pandemic, the USDA has extended the Free Summer Food program for children during the fall months. According to the Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, “This year we have an unprecedented situation. This extension of summer program authority will employ summer program sponsors to ensure meals are reaching all children – whether they are learning in the classroom or virtually – so they are fed and ready to learn, even in new and ever-changing learning environments.” Oxford has proudly been a USDA free summer food program sponsor for the past eight years.

For Oxford students, this program extension has allowed each student one free breakfast meal and one free lunch meal each day. Additional snacks, meals, or beverages may be purchased by students separately. Prepackaged lunches and breakfasts to accommodate our virtual learners are available for pick-up each Wednesday from 4:30 pm- 5:30 pm at the Oxford High School north entrance near the flag pole. According to the USDA website, “This unprecedented move will help ensure – no matter what the situation is on-the-ground – children have access to nutritious food as the country recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. USDA has been and continues to be committed to using the Congressionally appropriated funding that has been made available.”

KING HONORED AS DETROIT LIONS GAME DAY CHAMPION

Oxford High School Algebra and Geometry Teacher Sally King was recognized as the “Champion of the Game” during the pregame show of the October 4 Detroit Lions football game. Co-worker Pam Fine nominated King for the “Champions of Chunky” award sponsored by Campbell’s Chunky Soup and the NFL. The award celebrates unsung heroes for impacting their local communities and the people around them each day. King was interviewed by Lions reporter Tori Petry which aired before the game and was then broadcast on the Detroit Lions’ Twitter page. In the Champions for Chunky application, Fine shared how humble and unassuming King is as she goes above and beyond for students. She respects and she cares about each student believing in them and giving them support and encouragement to believe in themselves with her unconditional positive regard for all students.
$2.5K GRANTED TO BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

Last February, Superintendent Throne was approached with the opportunity to apply for a $2,500 grant from Wayne Haney of Farm Bureau Insurance to help end hunger in Michigan. Throne found this to be a great way to help fund the Blessings in a Backpack charity that provides weekend meals to our students in need. We were excited to be awarded the grant and Oxford's Blessings in a Backpack Chairperson, Cheryl Verbeke, graciously thanked Farm Bureau Insurance and accepted the funds at the August 18 virtual school board meeting.

Each year, Oxford’s Blessings in a Backpack volunteers seek donations to fund the program. To feed a child each weekend for an entire school year, it costs approximately $100. On average, Blessings in a Backpack volunteers assemble 150 bags each week to send home with district students. The organization is constantly seeking donations to support their efforts. They partner with Meijer, who provides discounted food supplies and bags, and JP's Piano Moving kindly offers their space to assemble the food each week. For more information on the Blessings in a Backpack program, see their website at http://www.blessingsinabackpackmi.org/monetary-donation/ or contact Cheryl Verbeke at cherphil@gmail.com.

2020 NHS INDUCTEES

The National Honor Society (NHS) recognizes outstanding high school students across the country who demonstrate excellence in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Students meeting criteria are invited to submit an application to be considered for membership. The Freda Quayle Chapter of the National Honor Society held its 2020 induction of new members virtually this year on October 21 in the Performing Arts Center of Oxford High School. The ceremony was live streamed on YouTube for family and friends to watch. The picture below is a Photoshop composite of individual pictures to abide by the safety guidelines as well as provide the traditional group picture.

In coordination with our Marketing & Communications Department a series of helpful and informative COVID-19 videos have been created with our nurses. The topics include:

- Slowing the Spread of COVID
- If I am not sick do I still need to wear a mask?
- Do I still need to wear a mask while...
- Is the face shield the same as wearing a mask?
- Keeping students home
- Where should I get a COVID test?

You can view all of the videos on the district's website under the 2020 Return to School & COVID-19 Information in the School Nurse Information Corner tab.

OCHD PARTNERS TO PROVIDE TWO DISTRICT NURSES

In partnership with the Oakland County Health Division (OCHD), Oxford Community School District currently has two school nurses Jeneifier Septer BSN, RN, and Brandee Powrie BSN, RN, to help ensure our safety protocols are in alignment with the Oakland County K-12 Toolkit and the MI Safe Start Plan. We are grateful to be working together with local health professionals to safely have our schools open.

OCS Director of Strategic Initiatives and Safety Operations, Jill Lemond, has been diligently handling the districts possible and positive COVID-19 cases and corresponding with the Oakland County Health Division and our school community. Our staff, students, and families have been incredibly conscientious in following safety protocols and reporting symptoms or concerns. Thus far, the district has had minimal cases and has kept the virus from spreading throughout our school community.
Homecoming 2020

This year, we were fortunate to be a district back to school face-to-face allowing us to still celebrate Homecoming week in person, in safe, modified ways. Spirit days were enjoyed throughout the district, there would be no floats or grand parade but seniors would decorate their cars and classroom doors. The high school assembly was filmed in separate segments and edited into three video montages for all to enjoy. The Homecoming game was blustery but was able to happen with 1,000 fans in the audience. The night was complete with performances by the cheerleaders, marching band, and the dance team and of course the crowning of our 2020 Homecoming King and Queen.

Theme: Under the Stars

Varsity Football: Oxford fell to Southfield A&T 0 - 21

Powder Puff: Sophomores defeated the Freshmen; Seniors defeated the Juniors
IN THE WORDS OF OUR WILDCATS!

Oxford Community Schools is proud to be the only International Baccalaureate (IB) school district in the state of Michigan. From elementary through high school, we are committed to the development of our students according to the IB learner profile. In this edition, we asked Lakeville Elementary second grade students to describe in their own words what it means to be PRINCIPLED:

“Being principled is wearing your mask, and not wearing your mask is not principled. Not littering is principled and cutting down trees is not principled.”
Justin Finseth

“Being principled is telling the truth. Not being principled is lying.”
Mack Marcus

“Eating your peas at dinner is being principled. Not eating your peas is not principled and feeding them to your dog.”
Jacob Fortin

“Brushing your teeth is being principled and not taking care of your teeth is not principled.”
Alma Nunez

“Being principled is not running in the hall. Not being principled is not staying 6 feet apart.”
Ella Schultz

BUTTERFLY MIGRATION HAS SO MUCH TO TEACH

The district's elementary Spanish program is working on a year-long project with K-5 students on the migration of butterflies. They have correlated the project with the IB theme, “Who We Are,” one of the six Primary Years Program themes. Around the world, people view the butterfly as representing endurance, change, hope, and life. It is WHO WE ARE!

The project focuses on the life cycle and annual migration of Monarch butterflies from North America into Mexico and back again. It also serves as an authentic lesson on conservation, cooperation, and ambassadorship. Some Oxford classes are also participating in the Journey North program through the University of Wisconsin. This program connects students throughout Canada, the United States, and Mexico who are studying the butterfly migration. Throughout the year, students will be learning about the importance of planting and preserving the Monarch’s habitat, learning the migration process, and tracking the butterfly’s journey through the Journey North website. Some classes have made symbolic butterflies and a Class Ambassador butterfly to send to other classrooms in Mexico, Canada, or North America in the Journey North program.

Additionally, as the students study the migration journey, they will also be comparing and contrasting the cultures between North America and Mexico. For example, the Monarchs make their way to the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve in Michocán, México around November 2, the holiday Day of the Dead (Día de Muertos). This is a Hispanic celebration of loved ones who have passed away. The butterflies are said to represent the souls of loved ones.

On a grander scale, each elementary school created a beautiful butterfly of self-portraits that kicked off the beginning of this all-encompassing WHO WE ARE project. The butterfly murals hang in each of the elementary buildings.
KATE MACINNIS EARNED PEOPLE CHOICE

This summer, Oxford senior Kate Macinnis submitted her stunningly crafted artwork, "The Beauty of Empowerment," to the Canvas Pontiac 2020 Outdoor Gallery Art Contest. Her piece was chosen as one of the top 25 Handcrafted submissions. On August 31, she also won the People's Choice Award above all other submissions. The contest's top 25 pieces in both Handcrafted and Photography categories are on display throughout Downtown Pontiac, bringing art and culture to the area with the support of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

SETH PALMER ACHIEVES MERIT SCHOLAR

Oxford High School senior Seth Palmer was named a Semi-finalist in the 66th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. He is a high honors student, last year Palmer was principal cellist for the Oxford High School Symphony Orchestra and played JV soccer for Oxford High School and Premier Club Soccer for Nationals Select Lapeer. He is an Eagle Scout, an NHS and HOSA member and is active in his church youth group.

Over 1.5 million juniors entered the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking a qualifying test. This year, the nationwide pool of semifinalists totaled 16,000 students representing less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors. Palmer will now have an opportunity to try and become a finalist and compete in the National Merit Scholarship program for thousands of scholarships worth more than $30 million. National Merit Scholarship winners of 2021 will be announced in four nationwide news releases beginning in April and concluding in July.

JOUL NAMED “VOTE LOUD” SPOKESPERSON

Oxford High School junior Ivy Joul was invited to be the student spokesperson for the Vote Loud Oakland County campaign. The initiative was created by Oakland County officials to encourage young people to vote as well as recruit teens 16 and older to work as election inspectors. "Young voters are some of the most influential people and we can make a huge difference. Voting is one way young people can enact changes in the United States," said Joul.

ATHLETICS BACK IN PLAY

The fall sports season began amid the constant unpredictability of the pandemic. Teams practiced and did their best to be safe and maintain social distance from one another to stay healthy. At the start of the season, audiences were limited to two spectators per participating athlete for both indoor and outdoor competitions. Swim meets were broadcast on Facebook Live, and the district would invest in a way to record and publish games on Youtube so our fans could keep up with their Wildcat teams. The football season was on, and then off, and then back on again. The Oxford Dance Team and Marching Band performed for their parents in a separate performance until the number of people allowed in the stadium was increased to 1,000 in mid-October.

There has been a continual fluidity where cancellations and rescheduled events have become commonplace. It is during these times that the support and true Oxford spirit has brightly shone as staff and volunteers have stepped up, going above and beyond to change plans on a moment’s notice. The most complicated rescheduled event, thus far, was the season’s first football game. Initially, it was scheduled for September 18 at Lake Orion, but due to multiple positive COVID-19 cases on the Lake Orion team, the game had to be canceled the night before. Athletics Director Jordan Ackerman did an incredible job pulling together all of his resources, and in less than 24 hours, the Wildcats, under new Varsity Coach Zach Line's lead, were celebrating their season's first victory against L’Anse Creuse North at Wildcat Stadium. “It was just a complete team effort and a great example of the Oxford community,” Ackerman said. “It was a crazy 24-hour period with a lot of work involved, but it showed what a great community we have to make it all happen.”

There is no doubt this year if you were able to be a spectator, you certainly felt privileged. There was a new level of gratitude amongst our students for the opportunity to participate.

Look in the next edition of the Wildcat Review for the Fall Sports Highlights.
# INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

**2020 NEW STAFF**

Oxford Community Schools seeks highly qualified staff who exemplify our organizational values of trust, integrity, commitment, collaboration, honesty, and accountability. Due to the large number of new team members, educational backgrounds are not noted for teaching staff in this edition. Look in the next edition for additional new team members.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ALICEN BURGESS</strong></td>
<td>Administration Support</td>
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<td><strong>PATRICIA BUSCH</strong></td>
<td>OVA Mentor Teacher</td>
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<td><strong>JULIE CARMAN</strong></td>
<td>OHS Teacher</td>
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<td><strong>JASON CHICKONOSKI</strong></td>
<td>OHS Auto Tech Assistant</td>
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<td><strong>ALEXANDRA CORRION</strong></td>
<td>Administration Support</td>
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<td><strong>ANN COWAN</strong></td>
<td>OELC Assistant Teacher</td>
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<td><strong>DEE CULLEN</strong></td>
<td>OVA Middle School Mentor</td>
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<td><strong>ALLISON CUMPER</strong></td>
<td>DA Family School Liaison</td>
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<td><strong>RACHELLE DAVIS</strong></td>
<td>OVA Elementary Mentor Teacher</td>
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<td><strong>LISA DRUMM</strong></td>
<td>OVA Admin. Support</td>
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<td><strong>JENNIFER FISHER-NINAN</strong></td>
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<td><strong>KELSEY GIRARDOT</strong></td>
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<td><strong>KATHRYN HARGER</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TINA HENKE</strong></td>
<td>Nutrition Services</td>
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<td><strong>SARAH HESKITT</strong></td>
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<td><strong>LISA HIATT</strong></td>
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<td><strong>LEO HUMBACH</strong></td>
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<td><strong>HILARY JACOBSEN</strong></td>
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<td><strong>KRISTY JACOBSEN</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SARAH JOHANSSON</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SAIRA KOLASA</strong></td>
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<td><strong>AMANDA KRAMER</strong></td>
<td>OVA Middle School Teacher</td>
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<td><strong>JULIE LEMOND</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BETH MAKAREWICZ</strong></td>
<td>Lakeville Paraprofessional</td>
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<td><strong>KATELYN MALBURG</strong></td>
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<td><strong>CAITLIN MARTIN</strong></td>
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<td><strong>MELISSA MATHIE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>HEIDI PAWLEY</strong></td>
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<td><strong>MARTENE PERAINO</strong></td>
<td>OVA Middle School Teacher</td>
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This edition's alumni spotlight is on Zach Throne ('12). After graduation, Throne went on to earn Bachelor's degrees in Dramatic Arts and Politics. He is currently the Co-owner and Financial Director of Just A Skosh Productions LLC, a film company based out of Columbus, Ohio. His company recently released a movie on Amazon Prime and Vudu. Enjoy his story and advice for current Wildcats.

“The education and experience I received as an Oxford Wildcat were the best, hands down! Oxford was where all of my passions were formed. I was heavily involved in the theatre program and choir, and I played football through my junior year. I was able to travel to NYC, Chicago, and all over the Mitten through the various programs and classes of which I was a part. What I cherish the most, though, are the relationships. I am so grateful for the friends and teachers that I had during my tenure at Oxford. I would not be where I am in my career without them.

After graduating, I attended Centre College in Danville, KY, where I double-majored in dramatic arts and politics. I promise, I have heard every punch line when I tell people what I majored in, and I still laugh. I digress. During my time at Centre, I focused on storytelling. I was involved in every show I could be, participated in the college choir, and even studied in England for six months at the Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance as an exchange student. When I wasn't focused on storytelling, I was volunteering with the college political groups and was actively involved in the Delta Kappa Epsilon Fraternity.

I am currently the Co-Owner and Financial Director for Just A Skosh Productions LLC. My focus is to ensure that the business aspect of ‘show business’ fully supports the creative endeavors that our team pursues. Most recently, our first feature film, *Cadia: The World Within*, was released to Amazon Prime and Vudu with other platforms coming soon. *Cadia: The World Within* is the story of three teenagers whose journey into a mystical realm teaches them about grace, love, doubt, and the nature of good versus evil. *Cadia: The World Within* features Corbin Bernsen (LA Law, Major League, Psych), and James Phelps (Fred Weasley of Harry Potter) alongside Tanner Sells, Keegan Sells, and Carly Sells.

When reflecting on what advice I would give, I remembered the words that my college president would always tell us: ‘Do your best. Be your best. No regrets.’ I think it shoots straight to the point. After all, we only have one story to tell: our own. Let’s make it the best we can, and enjoy it.

Thank you, Uncle Dave and Aunt Debby, Blaze, Smokey, Goetz, and all the teachers/coaches/staff that supported me every step of the way. It is a great day to be a Wildcat!”