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Ordinary Moments with Extraordinary Outcomes

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ORDINARY MOMENTS WITH EXTRAORDINARY OUTCOMES

Organizational Communication: Dr. Charles Veenstra. I don't remember what I was wearing. I don't remember the day or time. I don't even recall if it was in the spring or fall. I do remember where I sat—south side of the room, second row in, about half way back. And I can still see Dr. Veenstra, a fleeting look at the name on the graded test in front of him, a glance around the room, his eyes meeting mine. He walked slowly over and placed the test, clearly marked with a C, on my desk. With a twinkle in his eye, a smile in his voice, and more faith and confidence in me than I had ever had in myself, he said, "You can do better. Come see me." That moment changed my life. I spent the rest



of my time at Dordt cramming in every communication class my schedule would allow. And after a decade at home raising a family, that moment led me to pursue a graduate degree in communication. Today, I am a better wife, mother, daughter, friend, worship planner, teacher, and co-worker because of it.

A Dordt education is many things, not the least of which is academic excellence. I believe anyone who has a degree from Dordt has the theoretical and practical foundation to succeed. I also believe that the value of a Dordt education can be found in those ordinary moments where God humbles, challenges, and encourages us.

Here at Dordt, one of the greatest privileges I have is the opportunity to ask donors why they give. Let me

assure you that professional success and philanthropic responsibility rarely make the list. The most frequent responses I receive are the stories of everyday instances and conversations between friends, roommates, teachers, and students. Ordinary moments with extraordinary outcomes.

I still seek out Dr. Veenstra and relish his wit, his listening ear, and his poignant questions. He still challenges me. He still encourages me. He still believes in me. And although to this day he doesn't remember the moment he changed my life, I will never forget it.

KAREN VAN SCHOUWEN ('01)

ALUMNI NOTES

Please send news of your alumni gatherings, professional accomplishments, civic participation, and volunteer activities. We'd love to include them on our pages.

Brandalynn Barritt ('15) graduated from Dordt's psychology program and recently took a job as a therapist at Jackson Recovery Center. She is also able to give back to her community as a volunteer EMT. "It's really exciting to know it's possible to get a job in your field after you leave Dordt," says Barritt.

Herman Hofman ('13) won first prize in the Religious Liberty Student Writing Competition. Hofman is a graduate of Michigan State University College of Law. He also clerked for Bob Jonker, a federal judge in Michigan. Hofman is currently an attorney with Varnum Law in Grand Rapids.

Jon Vogel ('12) completed his Ph.D. in materials chemistry at the University of South Dakota. His dissertation was titled "Nonadiabatic Dynamics in Quantum Confined Semiconductors." His research focused on how electrical charge carriers migrate through quantum confined

semiconductor materials and can help increase efficiency in solar panels, lasers, television screens, and other renewable energy devices.

Emily Vande Griend ('10) received her SHRM-CP certification in human resources. Vande Griend currently works as a human resources assistant for the City of Wyoming, Michigan.

Nine-year-old Tyse Wagenaar, son of **Aaron Wagenaar** ('05) of Lynden, Washington, is already on track to become a future Defender. When his dad told him he had two options for college, one of which was Dordt, Tyse responded, "Why would you need an option other than Dordt?"



Chad Nibbelink ('07) is the volunteer manager at Brothers Redevelopment, an organization that organizes over 2,000 volunteers to paint and repair homes for low-income and elderly households. The Denver Channel, a news station in Colorado,

recently released a story in recognition of the impact Brothers Redevelopment has had on their surrounding community.

Karen Christians ('92) was one of 30 Bible teachers from around the world selected to participate in an all-expense-paid professional opportunity at the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C. Christians currently teaches Bible and serves as spiritual life coordinator at Western Christian High School in Hull, Iowa.

Debra Alons ('83) has decided to retire from the Houston Grand Opera Chorus where she has served as a chorus member for the past 30 years. She moved to Houston, Texas, in 1986 to pursue her goal of singing opera. Her last show with the company will be on May 11.

Joy Wierenga ('72) was one of 14 Albertans to win the Senate of Canada's 150th Commemorative Medal. This award recognizes the recipient's drive to contribute to his or her community. Wierenga received the award for her work in compiling and writing the history for her community of Neerlandia, Alberta.