

Toys for Tots

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FACULTY NOTES

Having completed her studies in Applied Behavioral Analysis and passed the national exam, **Dr. Kathleen VanTol**,



professor of education, is now a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst.

Dr. Debbie Bomgaars is one of 35 nursing faculty from across the nation selected to participate in the 2019 American Association of Colleges of Nursing's Digital Innovation Bootcamp: From Content to Action, held in June in Austin, Texas.

Dr. Tim Van Soelen,

professor of education and CACE director, was invited to present at the Christian Schools International Bible Symposium in Washington D.C., in February. His talk was titled "Teaching the World." Van Soelen also presented a talk titled "CACE Studies in Innovation" at the Global Christian School Leadership Symposium in February in San Antonio, Texas.



Dr. Valorie Zonnefeld, professor of mathematics, was elected to the board of the Association of Christians in the Mathematical Sciences. Zonnefeld recently presented "A Mindset for Learning STEM" at the 2018 Midwest Annual Robert Noyce Conference in St. Louis, Missouri. She also presented "Growth Mindset 2.0" at the Heartland Convention at Dordt.

Dr. Charles Veenstra,

professor emeritus of communication, received the Listening Hall of Fame Award from the International Listening Association. Selection to the Listening Hall of Fame is the highest award of the association.



Education Professor **Dr. Dave Mulder** led a series of five professional development workshops for faculty at Unity Christian High School in Orange City. The workshops were held throughout the year and focused on assessment practices and learning.

Marcus: Toys for Tots

TOYS FOR TOTS

Students partner with a not-for-profit organization to learn about market research.

A Dordt student stands in the lobby of a department store, scanning and meticulously cataloguing the toys that have been placed in a Toys for Tots collection box. She's not a store employee, nor is she a Toys for Tots employee—she's a third-party market researcher.

Courtney Bloemhof ('19), a senior majoring in marketing and Spanish, applied to be a market research assistant under Communication Professor Dr. Tom Prinsen after hearing about the opportunity in her market research course. Prinsen has co-led market research on behalf of Toys for Tots, a charity that distributes toys to children whose parents cannot afford Christmas gifts, for 12 years.



Tom Prinsen

"As a not-for-profit, Toys for Tots needs to know how much the toys they distribute are worth so they can tell the IRS how efficient they are," explains Prinsen. "Also, Toys for Tots is on a philanthropy top-400 list, and the dollar value of the toys is a big part of their ranking. It's hard to know how many dollars' worth they collect each year if they don't have any data on the average value of the toys they distribute."

This is where Prinsen and Dordt students like Bloemhof come in. Since coming to Dordt three years ago, Prinsen has hired more than a dozen students to conduct research for Toys for Tots.

"Doing this research gives students a chance to see how things really work,"

says Prinsen. "You can talk about data collection in a classroom, but the piece that is often missing from the course is realizing what it takes to collect the data."

Once she'd been hired, Bloemhof contacted a Toys for Tots representative in her region of California to determine the best stores and dates for data collection. Then, Bloemhof flew to California for a weekend and collected data on every donated toy in the selected stores. The data she collected was later analyzed by a statistician to determine the average price of toys donated to Toys for Tots that year.

"I learned the art of persistence and patience in communication and attention to detail when it comes to conducting research and getting accurate results," says Bloemhof. She also developed an understanding of what it takes to be a professional—a skill set that will be useful as she pursues marketing jobs that involve face-to-face interaction with clients.

"I love to have students working with me," says Prinsen. "Hiring a student allows me to develop a stronger relationship with them, and it makes it much easier to write reference letters and tell potential employers that, 'Yes, I would hire this student—in fact, I did, and I would definitely do so again.'"

LYDIA MARCUS ('17)

"What I appreciate most about Dordt is the community—there's nothing like it," says Ashley Bloemhof.

