

SMALL CLOUD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL PRESENTS . . . *SMALL CLOUD CHRONICLES*

"With God all things are possible." Mark 10:27

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GRADUATION 2010

Graduation is always an exciting time at Small Cloud, and this year was no exception. Dressed in red gowns, Andriana Seely and Andrew Petrovich graduated from eighth grade. Alyssa Seely, dressed in a white gown, was promoted from kindergarten to first grade. We also celebrated the graduation of Anne Marie Petrovich (mother of the Petrovich children and a volunteer at Small Cloud) from the University of Phoenix.

Walking in to the music of "Pomp and Circumstance," the students and Mrs. Petrovich took their places in the front row. Mrs. Margie Seely welcomed everyone to the 2010 Graduation and Awards ceremony and asked Mr. Mike Alford to offer the opening prayer. Mr. Shawn Seely then blessed everyone with a piano solo entitled "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

"The way a mother eagle prepares her chicks to leave the nest," said Mrs. Seely, "is to make things as uncomfortable at home as possible. She begins by removing a large portion of the soft lining she had previously covered the inside of the nest with. She'll go on to pull out various sticks from the nest walls so that they poke into the nest, making it nearly impossible to settle down. The eagle chicks are forced to hop from one side of the nest to the other, finally resting on the edge. The eagle mother isn't trying to be unkind to her babies. She simply knows that by doing this she is helping them to become independent and ready to handle the outside world.

"Over the last few months, the graduates we have here today have undergone a similar process. Their assignments have gotten progressively more difficult. They have been challenged with new concepts and faced with greater opportunities for growth. They have had to stretch their wings a little so that they can soar with the eagles.

"And this is what I'd like to talk to the graduates about today. So many times we complain when life is not easier for us. 'Oh, if only things were a little less complicated,' we mutter. 'If only I didn't have to work so hard!' we mumble. We're tired. We're stressed. We have no time to do the things we want to do and barely enough time to do the things we have to do. But do we

really want our struggles to go away? Do we really want to stay in a nest and never venture out to soar above the clouds?

"In Deuteronomy 32:11-12, God likens His care for us to a mother eagle caring for her little ones. He says, 'As an eagle [stirs] up her nest, [flutters] over her young, [spreads] abroad her wings, [takes] them, [and bears] them on her wings: so the Lord alone [does] lead [us].' Sometimes God allows us to go through hard times and experience great difficulties so that we can grow. No bird flies higher than the eagle. Likewise, no human attains greatness like one who has dedicated himself or herself to God.

"This year in Bible class we studied about a true eagle of God. Joseph nose-dived from the position of favored son to a slave in Egypt, but he refused to complain about it. Instead he worked hard. He was responsible. He did the best job he possibly could. The Bible tells us that whatever he did prospered and that his master didn't even know exactly what he owned because he trusted Joseph so completely. You see, when life got difficult, Joseph soared. He did this time after time after time.

The more difficult life became for Joseph, the more he grew. His obstacles became his stepping stones. And we all know where Joseph ended up. In thirteen years, Joseph went from unknown slave to second-in-command of Egypt.

"Today, God is asking for us to place our hand in His. He is asking to lead us on a path that will be both difficult and rewarding. He wants to take us from the slavery we have gotten ourselves into, from the prisons we have made of our lives, to live in a palace with Him forever! He doesn't promise that life will be easy. He just promises that it will all be worth it someday.

"Graduates, today your future is beginning. Don't expect anything to be easy for you. Just ask what you can learn from it. Go forward. Don't look back. You will not do everything perfectly. But in everything, with God's help, you will be made to perfectly reflect God's own image. And that, graduates, is **SUCCESS!**"

Alyssa Seely then sang a solo entitled "He Is King." This was followed by the presentation of awards by Mrs. Seely, who said, "I might be a little biased, but I think we have some great kids here at Small Cloud Christian School. They are polite,



Graduates: back (L to R) Andrew Petrovich, Andriana Seely, & Anne Marie Petrovich; front: Alyssa Seely

respectful, and caring. They are smart and fun to teach. They are not perfect, but they are all growing and developing their own unique talents at their own unique pace. God has a plan for each child here. We don't know what it is right now, but if the children are faithful to God, in time He will show them which path He wants them to follow."

Attendance: "We cannot stress enough the importance of regular school attendance to our students here at Small Cloud. This year we have one student whom we'd like to honor who has a nearly perfect attendance record. **Davey Petrovich** missed only one day out of the entire school year."

Character Growth: "The most important part of people is not how they look or how much they achieve, but what they are like inside. At Small Cloud, we consider character growth just as important as, if not more important than, academic growth. This year we'd like to honor a student who continues to grow and blossom at a very rapid rate. It is our privilege to present **Veronica Seely** with an award for character growth."

Citizenship: "All the students here have had their wonderful moments and their not-so-wonderful moments as well. However, in order to qualify for the Citizenship Award, students must maintain good grades, turn their homework in on time daily, obey all the rules on a consistent basis, and keep good peer and teacher relationships. You see, the whole idea is to do well consistently, not in spurts. This year our Citizenship Award goes to a young lady who not only took care of her own responsibilities, but looked around to see how she could help out in other ways as well. **Viviana Martinez**, would you please come forward and accept your award."

Honor Roll: "In order to qualify for Honor Roll, our students must not receive any C's, D's, or F's on their report cards. They must consistently work hard and aim high. This year we are pleased to have had four students attain this goal for at least one out of the four quarters: **Andrew Petrovich, Davey Petrovich, Megan Petrovich, and Viviana Martinez.**"

(**Megan Petrovich** received an honorable mention for attaining honor roll grades for three out of four quarters. **Viviana Martinez** and **Davey Petrovich** received honor roll grades for the entire year.)

"It takes a lot of work to run a school, especially one on a shoestring budget. That's a big reason we are so grateful for our wonderful volunteers who have given of their time and energy to make this year run well. Today we'd like to say thank you to ten very special people!

"Along with his regular job, **Mike Alford** manages our finances and billing, fixes broken items, and does whatever needs to be done around here. Most importantly, he takes the time to pray for each student by name and us teachers as well. Thank you, Mike.

"**Anne Petrovich** is a full-time mother of four kids, with a full-time job. This year she also completed her master's degree at the University of Phoenix. Each week she faithfully gave of her remaining time to help tutor our students. She especially helped in our reading program. Thank you, Anne!

"**Gretchen Schendel**, the mother of Mrs. Nelson, has spent much time helping out with the Nelsons' twins this year, but she has continued her work on *Small Cloud Chronicles*, our quarterly newsletter. In addition, she has looked for other ways to help out—like shopping and doing some much-needed cleaning and organizing. Thank you so much!

"**Megan Poole** is our youngest volunteer this year. She came to our school because she needed volunteering credits for her high school. She was required to complete only ten hours. Instead she gave a little over twenty-five hours here. The kids love her and, obviously, she loves the kids too. Thank you, Megan!

"**Lachi Richards** is in England right now and cannot be here to accept our gift during this program, but we'd like to give her a mention anyway. She is not a local. Each time she came to volunteer, she had to drive over an hour each way. A civil engineer herself, she is a natural for helping out in our math program. The kids love her care, sense of humor, and assistance. Her professional advice has been invaluable. Thank you, Lachi, and we hope you are having a well-deserved vacation.

"**Officer Lynch** is a favorite around here. He showed up one day, introduced himself, and walked right into the hearts of the kids. He organized a safety event for our students that acquainted them with the police department, the fire department, and a K-9 unit. He has answered a multiplicity of questions from our students. Thank you, Officer Lynch, for your service to our community in general and our school in particular.

"**Evelyn and Henry Holmstroem** are my parents. They have been an integral part of my life for nearly forty years, and I am so grateful for their help and guidance. Whatever I do, they are involved with it, and this includes Small Cloud as well. Each week they drive over an hour each way to come down and help out in the classroom.

"**Mom** has a talent for seeing what needs to be done and just doing it. Whatever she is asked to do, she does with enthusiasm. This year she has taught most of the kids crocheting and the primary Bible class once a week. She has edited our school newsletter, helped the kids with reading, spelling, math, and history. She also pitches in with keeping our ever-present weed population under control and the flowers looking their best.

"**Dad** is an extremely dependable person. He promises no more than what he can accomplish. He completes whatever tasks he is asked to do, and he does his work well. He has taught me so many life lessons, and I feel privileged to hear them again as he works with the students. As a former logistics engineer, he constantly looks for ways to help Small Cloud run more smoothly and more efficiently. This year he has corrected papers, listened to the kids read, helped them with math problems, and supervised the younger ones as they play. Mom and Dad, I don't know how I can thank you enough for all you've done, but I am so thankful for everything.



“Being married is difficult enough, but being married to a Small Cloud teacher is a whole other story! **Christian Nelson and Shawn Seely** have kept up with their double duties for over eight years now and, we must say, they continue to improve and win our hearts on a daily basis.

“**Christian** maintains the landscaping and does innumerable repairs along with keeping up his hours at work. He does all this on a remarkable small amount of sleep since he and Sandy have welcomed a brand-new set of twin boys into their home.

“**Shawn** has been my right arm during this last year. He has, without complaint, helped however and whenever I have asked. He’s brought a much-needed smile on the days that were hard and prayed with me on the days that seemed impossible. Thank you, Shawn and Christian, for giving of yourselves so unconditionally.”

A poem was then read by Andriana Seely:

BE THE BEST IN LIFE

If you can't be a pine on the top of a hill
Be a shrub in the valley—but be
The best little shrub by the side of the hill.
Be a bush if you can't be a tree.

If you can't be a bush, be a bit of grass
And some highway happier make;
If you can't be a muskie, then just be a bass
But the liveliest bass in the lake!

We can't all be captains; we've got to be crew.
There's something for all of us here.
There's big work to do and there's lesser to do,
And the task we must do in the Here.

If you can't be a highway, then just be a trail,
If you can't be the sun, be a star;
It isn't by size that you win or you fail
But the best of whatever you are.

“Now it’s time to focus our attention on our graduates.

Alyssa Seely couldn’t wait to start school this year. She was so excited about learning new things. And learn she did! Not only did she learn to read well and complete all her required kindergarten work, she has already begun some of her first-grade assignments. She is well on her way to academic excellence.

“**Andrew Petrovich** has a naturally inquisitive mind and loves to think outside the box. His favorite questions usually begin with, ‘What if?’ It should come as no surprise, then, that his favorite subjects are math, science, gardening, P.E., and Bible. When he puts his mind to it, he can do some amazing things. Andrew, God has a special plan for you. Take some time to listen to Him, and He will guide you as you move forward as a high school student.

“If there is one word that best describes **Andriana Seely**, it is friendly. She absolutely loves people! Academically, that can be both a help and a hindrance. These past few years she has struggled with balancing her desire to do well in school with her talent for socializing. These next four years will be tough, but Andriana is setting her sights high, and God is helping her. Andriana, don’t take your eyes off Jesus. He will help you make all your goals happen as you move forward into high school.

“To clear up any confusion about this next graduate, we need

to offer a small disclaimer: Small Cloud does NOT issue college degrees. However, we do like to honor those who put in the innumerable hours required to obtain one. And that is the case with **Anne Petrovich**.

“Many years ago she completed her bachelor’s degree in chemistry from the California State University in Sacramento. She worked for a while as a chemist, then went on to use that experience and knowledge when she entered the world of education. For several years she worked as a teacher at Whispering Pines Christian School before taking time off to be a full-time mother to four beautiful children.

“Two years ago her employers presented her with the opportunity of continuing her education. This she chose to do and plunged into the demanding task of juggling home, church, career, school, and volunteer work. It wasn’t easy, but she hung on and plowed forward. You see, quitting is not part of her vocabulary, partly because she knows her life is an example for her four children, who will walk behind her. Her standards for them are high, and so it goes without saying that her standards for herself are even higher.

“Andrew, Mikey, Davey, and Megan, you should be very proud of your mom. We certainly are!”

“When We All Get to Heaven” was the song chosen for the conclusion of the graduation ceremony. The audience joined in singing “When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be! When we all see Jesus, we’ll sing and shout the victory!”

Mrs. Seely offered a closing prayer. Then, as the recessional music played, helium balloons ascended into the air as they were released from the fence surrounding the playground.

Refreshments followed. ■

THE NELSON TWINS

Jonathan and Jeremiah Nelson are growing rapidly and learning to do many new things. They may be identical twins, but they are anything but identical in their personalities. Jonathan is his mommy’s little cuddle bug, while Jeremiah appears to be more independent. It is such a joy to hear their giggles, especially when big brother Stephen entertains them.

Weight is one of the major differences between the boys, with Jonathan outweighing Jeremiah by about two pounds now. Most of the time it is not so difficult to tell them apart, although there has been a time or two, when the babies are not side by side, that even Mom and Dad have mixed them up! ■

