

COVENANT COLLEGE ■ AUTUMN 2009

THE VIEW

COVENANT IN Chattanooga

- New Career Center
- Homecoming
- Alumni of the Year Awards

One very important aspect of Covenant's biblically grounded approach to education is the focus on engaging and serving our communities and cultures for the praise and glory of Jesus Christ. From the College's founding, students have been encouraged to seek how to put their gifts and passions into the hands of God for the welfare of neighborhoods, cities, countries, and the entire world, and our institutional history includes hundreds of glorious stories of how Covenant alumni have carried out this purpose.



This issue of *The View* focuses in large part on how this has occurred, and continues to occur, in the Chattanooga area. Whether in business or education or the arts or ministry, these local Covenant alumni provide a remarkable array of examples of seeking the welfare of this city in which they are blessed to live – and such stories could be told of alumni all around the world.

You will also read about an important new initiative – or actually the dramatic expansion of a long-standing focus: the launching of our Center for Vocational Exploration and Career Services. A prominent item in our Strategic Plan, the Center exists for the purpose of enabling Covenant students, throughout their college years, to discover their gifts, explore possible pathways of God's calling, and get ready for the exciting process of putting their Covenant education to gospel use in the communities where they will live for the rest of their lives.

As almost everyone realizes, planning for this academic year began last winter in the midst of severe uncertainty regarding both the general economy and the effects of the struggling economy on college enrollments and budgets. During the spring and early summer, we at Covenant made some very difficult and necessary decisions in order, Lord willing, to establish a sustainable and healthy financial framework for this and future years. How wonderful to witness God's blessing this fall in student enrollment well above our budgeted expectation! And how grateful we are for God's mercy in the unified sense of mission and purpose which permeates the campus! God has indeed shown himself to be strong in our weakness.

I trust that you will be encouraged in God's strength and mercy as well as you read this issue of *The View* and as you see him at work in your own lives!

Niel Nielson, Ph.D.
President

View President Nielson's blog at president.blogs.covenant.edu.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The View's purpose is to: Encourage alumni, parents and friends to keep Christ preeminent in all areas of their lives • Give alumni, parents and friends—our most important ambassadors—stories and information about the College, its students, alumni, faculty, and staff • Provide alumni with an ongoing connection to the Covenant community • Give God's people news about Covenant that will encourage them to praise, thank, and petition our Heavenly Father.

COVENANT
COLLEGE

IN ALL THINGS CHRIST PREEMINENT



ON THE COVER

Chattanooga offers a wider classroom for Covenant students to explore their callings—and an opportunity for Covenant alumni to make an extraordinary impact!

Read about how Covenant has helped to shape this unique city ever since the College moved to the Chattanooga area in 1964.

4 ScotStuff

A roundup of recent Covenant news and events.

8 Covenant in Chattanooga

Whether they serve the city in business, education, or ministry, Covenant alumni are changing the face of Chattanooga in extraordinary ways.

13 Gospel-Infused Education

Chad Dirkse '89 has hit the ground running this year as the new president of Chattanooga Christian School.

14 Five Alumni Take a Stand at CreateHere

Read how these young alumni are spearheading a grassroots campaign to cast a vision for Chattanooga's future and implement initiatives to make that vision a reality.

16 Putting Down Roots

Trip Farmer '96, partner at a CPA firm, made a deliberate choice to make Chattanooga his home and invests time and energy in a variety of local initiatives and relationships.

17 Home Field Advantage

Running a championship high school soccer program, coach Jimmy Weekley '92 strives to elevate the level of soccer in the city and inspire his students.

18 Homecoming

A collage of pictures from Homecoming 2009.

20 Alumni of the Year Awards

Meet Covenant's 2009 Alumni of the Year, Young Alumnus of the Year, and Volunteer of the Year.

21 Alumni News

Updates and pictures contributed by alumni.



Two new professors were officially installed as members of Covenant's faculty during convocation. From left, Vice President of Academic Affairs Jeff Hall, Professor Elaine Tinholt, Professor Amy Bagby, and President Niel Nielson.

New Faculty Appointments

Covenant College is pleased to welcome to its faculty for the 2009-2010 academic year two professors who had been serving at Covenant in other capacities.

Professor Amy Bagby is director of the Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education program, and Professor Elaine Tinholt is an assistant professor of education. Both faculty members had been employed at Covenant previously—Professor Bagby in an administrative capacity as coordinator of the B.S.E.C.E. program and Professor Tinholt as a visiting instructor of education.

In addition, several Covenant College faculty members have received promotions.

From associate professor to full professor:

- » Dr. Phillip Broussard, physics
- » Dr. Brian Crossman, physical education
- » Prof. Camille Hallstrom, theatre & film studies
- » Dr. Kelly Kapic, theological studies

From administrative faculty to associate professor:

- » Dr. Kevin Eames, psychology and institutional research

Alumni Giving Percentage Reaches 30%

We are grateful to report that the percentage of alumni who give to Covenant rose to 30% for the 2008-2009 year.

Every gift makes a difference, and the support of alumni and friends allows Covenant to continue offering a first-rate education.

In addition, the alumni giving percentage is an important factor for foundations that consider awarding grants to the College.

We invite you to join us in achieving our goal of 32% alumni giving for the 2009-2010 year by giving at **covenant.edu/giving** or calling 800.574.6063.

New Career Center Launches

Covenant has opened a new Center for Vocational Exploration & Career Services, and Anthony Tucker '99 has been hired to direct it.

"Our primary goal is to allow the students and alumni to identify their skills and interests and then help them connect those to a need in our world," says Tucker.

"Chattanooga and North Georgia have been blessed by Covenant College students that decided to stay in the area. We want to continue partnering with these local organizations to see how God can use our students and alumni to be change agents in the region."

But Tucker is also thinking of a worldwide network. "We have alumni scat-

tered across this globe," he says. "Our alumni would bend over backwards to help students and young alumni figure out where they can meet a need in our world, and we have a network of churches across the world that want nothing more than to connect young people to needs in society."



Anthony Tucker '99

One of the ways Tucker aims to build up this network is by creating "pipelines" of internships for students, such as has already begun in Washington, D.C. "Each year, Covenant grads take a leap into public service in Washington, D.C. Because of this pipeline of talent filling needs there, Covenant students continue moving to and serving in D.C. We want to duplicate that in other places, and we want to build as many pipelines as we can fill," he says.

"Under Anthony Tucker's leadership," says Vice President for Advancement Troy Duble, "we are looking forward to increasing Covenant College's presence in Chattanooga and North Georgia. We have, over the years, enjoyed a great partnership with significant Chattanooga businesses, such as Chattem, who have welcomed our students into their ranks as interns. This relationship has brought some of the freshest and most creative students into the lab of the marketplace. And the benefit to our students is important as they consider their careers and callings."



The Manhattan Piano Trio

Fifth Season of Covenant Arts Celebrates American Music

The fall semester brought the Boston Brass and the Alison Brown Quartet to the Dora Maclellan Brown Memorial Chapel.

In the spring, Teresa Walters (January 29) and the Manhattan Piano Trio (April 9) will continue a season focused on the musical accomplishments of American composers and performers.

Visit covenant.edu/covenantarts for reservations.

U.S. News Again Ranks Covenant #4 in South

In its 2010 edition of America's Best Colleges, *U.S. News & World Report* once again ranks Covenant fourth among baccalaureate colleges in the South.

U.S. News ranked Covenant #8 in the "Best Values" category in its field. It announced that Covenant has the 2nd highest graduation rate and 8th highest freshman retention rate among baccalaureate colleges in the South. Covenant was ranked #6 in the "Economic Diversity Among Top-Ranked Schools" category.

This marks Covenant's second consecutive year being ranked #4 among baccalaureate colleges in the South, having risen steadily within the top ten over the past seven years.

Campus Preview Weekend April 15-17

Do you know a high school student who might be a good fit for Covenant?

Tell them about Campus Preview Weekend! It's a time specifically designed for students and their parents to experience Covenant firsthand and receive answers to their questions.

The spring CPW is April 15-17. Learn more at covenant.edu/cpw.

Professors Corbett and Fikkert Co-Author Book on Helping the Poor

Community development professors Steve Corbett and Dr. Brian Fikkert have co-authored *When Helping Hurts: How To Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself*.

Released by Moody Publishers in July 2009, the book is already in its third printing.

"Jesus came declaring the good news of the kingdom of God in both word and deed to the poor," says Fikkert. As his body, the church must do the same. It's not something that we should just do if we can get around to it."



But, as Fikkert and Corbett point out, good intentions are not enough. Effective strategies for ministry require knowledge about the causes of poverty, and the book addresses these.

"Readers are challenged to consider that they are suffering from the same fundamental problems that ensnare poor people," says Fikkert. "In fact, un-

til readers embrace their own brokenness, their ministry efforts are likely to do considerable damage to poor people and to themselves."

When Helping Hurts captures many of the concepts that Corbett and Fikkert team-teach in the course "Theory of Community Development," as well as the concepts that provide the foundation of the Chalmers Center's training of churches and missionaries.

Covenant Accepted as Provisional Member of NCAA D-III

This summer the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III accepted Covenant College into provisional membership beginning in the 2009-2010 academic year.

"Division III offers a profile of the student-athlete which corresponds well with both the tradition of Covenant athletics and our aspirations for the future: an academically motivated, multi-talented, highly purposeful Christian student for whom the opportunity to get a great education is complemented by the opportunity to participate in a first-rate college sport," said President Nielson. "Given Covenant's outstanding track record of scholastic achievement and graduation rate among our student-athletes, our affiliation with the NCAA Division III promises to enhance even further the unique combination of learning, playing, and living that Covenant offers."

The NCAA Division III places the principal priority on academics, and understands the integrated, supportive role of intercollegiate athletics under that principal priority. Division III holds an explicit expectation that the academic performance of student-athletes will be similar to that of non-athletes. Compared to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), from which Covenant is transitioning, the NCAA Division III has shorter practice and playing seasons, as well as fewer games per season, which means that student-athletes will miss fewer classes.

In addition, the elimination of athletic financial aid puts all students,

goFigure

259

Current students receiving a Church Scholarship Promise grant

117

Vegetables and herbs grown in the Growers Club garden

1,128

Mailboxes on campus

21

Orientation groups

1115

Basketballs in Ashe and Barnes gymnasiums

94

Tables in the Great Hall

67,500

Apples supplied in the Great Hall each year

235

Prospective students who attended the fall 2009 Campus Preview Weekend

93

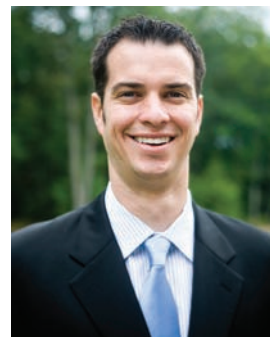
Photo albums on Covenant's Facebook page



Tami Smialek



Nathan Pifer



Kyle Taylor

regardless of athletic participation, on equal footing for financial aid. Covenant stopped awarding athletic aid to new students last year, and has seen a favorable transition since the College's student-athletes have traditionally demonstrated similar academic success as non-athletes.

Because Covenant is not eligible for postseason competition within the NCAA or the NAIA during the four-year provisional membership phase, Covenant has also joined the National Christian College Athletic Association (NCCAA), with which the College will compete in postseason tournament play.

New Coaching Staff

We welcome three new or returning head coaches to our athletics program this year.

Tami Smialek '81, who is by no means new to Covenant, has assumed the role of director of athletics and has returned to the position of head women's basketball coach, which she previously held for eighteen seasons before taking on an administrative role at the College.

Former Scot Nathan Pifer '84 has returned to his alma mater to lead the men's soccer program. Pifer has earned championship success as a head coach at both the intercollegiate and interscholastic levels, including most recently amassing an impressive 64-6-3 record coaching the state champion girls' soccer team at Christian Academy of Knoxville. Pifer is

married to fellow Covenant graduate Angela Graziano Pifer '86.

Kyle Taylor, former top assistant coach and recruiting coordinator at Minnesota State-Moorhead, is the new men's basketball coach. Taylor previously gained experience assisting legendary NAIA coach Larry Holley at William Jewell College, where his team advanced to the conference tournament championship.

Each of these coaches brings a wonderful combination of coaching experience, commitment to the importance of academics in college athletics, clear Christian testimony, and a desire to thoughtfully and effectively coach and mentor the students in their programs.

Follow their seasons at **athletics.covenant.edu**.

Covenant Addresses Challenging Economic Times

In the summer of 2008, as the economic downturn was evident, the College preemptively implemented strong, decisive, and thorough cost-cutting measures to focus resources strategically on core student programs.

While increasing the funding of financial aid for deserving students, Covenant withheld employee raises and matching contributions to employees' retirement accounts.

By early 2009, it was evident that additional cost-cutting measures would be necessary in response to the economic conditions. The College im-

plemented a reduction in force in May, which was as distressing as it was necessary. It is the people of Covenant that make it the unique, vibrant community that we love, and only with much prayer and study was the decision made to eliminate several positions.

The reduction in force included: 1 visiting instructor; 1 teaching faculty member; and 1 administrative faculty member with expiring 1-year contracts did not return; 3 full-time and 2 part-time staff layoffs; reduction in hours for 5 staff members; 10 currently vacant staff positions not filled; and voluntary retirement packages offered to 4 faculty members and 3 staff members, all of whom accepted.

We are grateful for the service of those who left employment with the College and have sought to care for them during their time of transition through prayer and tangible means of support.

God has blessed Covenant with greater than expected enrollment this fall and faithful giving by donors. The Lord's strength is obvious amid our weakness, and we give all praise to Him as we carry forward Covenant's long-standing mission.

Families Helping Families

An anonymous donor, the grandmother of a Covenant student, made a \$250,000 matching grant last year for scholarships for Covenant College students.

Recognizing both the value of a Covenant education and the financial struggles many families are facing, this friend of the College wanted to help other families pay for their children's educations.

Many other generous families responded, and in October the match was completed, having raised \$500,000 for student scholarships.

Current Covenant students and their families are now being helped with these funds.

If you would like to make a gift to student scholarships, you may visit covenant.edu/giving or call 800.574.6063.

Covenant Alumna Receives Fulbright Award To Make Art in Iceland

Covenant College alumna Elizabeth Tubergen '08 was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student Scholarship to make art in Iceland during the 2009-2010 year.

She arrived in Iceland in July and is spending her time making sculptures and videos, as well as doing independent research. Tubergen has also received a fellowship from the American-Scandinavian Foundation.

"Iceland is a place that fascinates me," she says, "and I've been wanting to make work there for years. I'm so excited that I get a chance to do so!"



Fulbright scholar Elizabeth Tubergen '08

Covenant art professors Jeffrey Morton and Kayb Carpenter worked closely with Tubergen during her years at Covenant. "Liz did what all art students should be doing, but not all do—she was very proactive about making her own work outside of class, getting shows and securing galleries," says Carpenter. "She was interested in the community as well. The Fulbright is very interested in community building, so that made Liz a good fit."

Tubergen plans to stay in Iceland until July 2010. Her current projects in-

clude spinning and knitting Icelandic wool, creating a wax chandelier, and some projects for a show in March at the Association of Visual Arts in Chattanooga. "I have also been working on photos and videos related to the weather, a dominant factor in Icelandic life," she says, and "I am designing a clock based on the footstep instead of the second."

Currently living in an artist residency in Reykjavik, Iceland's largest city, Tubergen will also spend time in the northern towns of Skagaströnd, Akureyri, and Siglufjörður.

After Iceland, Tubergen hopes to attend graduate school and eventually to return to New York City, where she lived after graduating from Covenant in 2008. Tubergen says of her time at Covenant, "It deepened my understanding of grace. I walked away from Covenant having experienced true friendship with my peers and teachers. . . . Covenant also gave me room to take action and structure my time, which is what you have to do as an artist outside of school."

Tubergen "has incredible initiative to move forward with her ideas and art," Morton says.

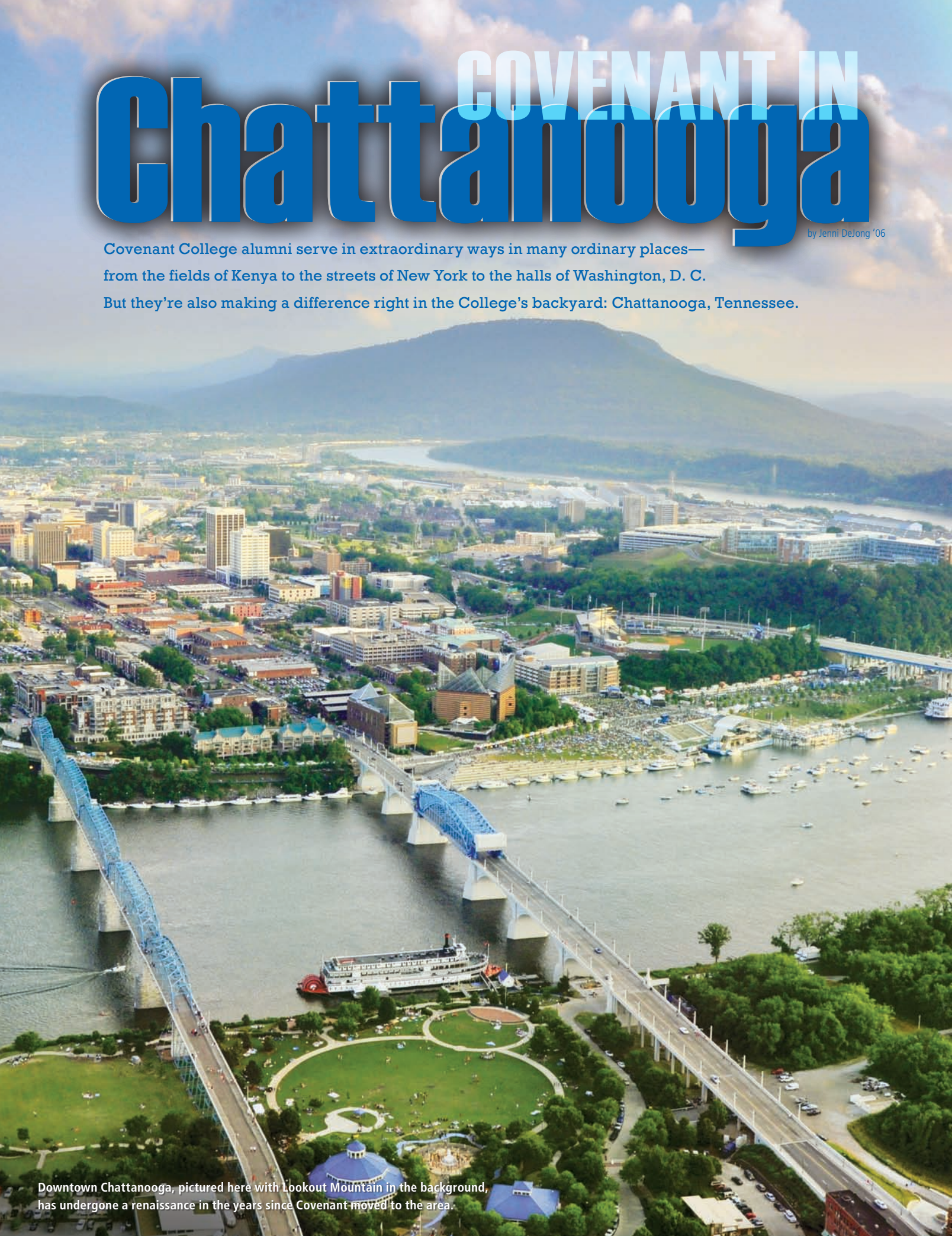
According to Tubergen's artist statement, her "artistic endeavors explore the space between nostalgia and cynicism. . . . Tubergen's objects, videos and actions incite curiosity and suggest a reconsideration of space and locational identity." Her artwork has been shown at such locations as the Urban Institute for Contemporary Arts in Michigan, the Queens Museum in New York City, and the Harrison Center for the Arts in Indianapolis.

She is the third Covenant College graduate in recent years and the first Covenant College art major to receive a Fulbright. Ben Borger '04 and Gabi Van Schoyck '08 are also Fulbright recipients.

COVENANT IN Chattanooga

by Jenni DeJong '06

Covenant College alumni serve in extraordinary ways in many ordinary places—
from the fields of Kenya to the streets of New York to the halls of Washington, D. C.
But they're also making a difference right in the College's backyard: Chattanooga, Tennessee.



Downtown Chattanooga, pictured here with Lookout Mountain in the background, has undergone a renaissance in the years since Covenant moved to the area.

Extraordinary Callings in Chattanooga

"Covenant grads are bringing lots of creativity, innovation, and energy to Chattanooga," says Paul Brock, former head of the River City Company, a leading force in Chattanooga's revitalization. "They have great entrepreneurial spirit, they're quality people, their values are in the right place, and they believe in giving back and being part of the community. If we could bottle what they're doing up at Covenant, it'd be great to capture that and spread it around to other places! I'm thankful for Covenant—they're a piece of the Chattanooga success story."

The beginnings of change

Once proclaimed by Walter Cronkite in 1969 as the most polluted city in the United States, Chattanooga has since taken tremendous strides toward a cleaner environment and a revitalization of the riverfront, downtown, and local businesses.

Allen Duble '58 recalls the changes that took place in Chattanooga when Covenant College moved to Lookout Mountain in 1964. The new president, Dr. Marion Barnes, had just left a job as a research chemist in St. Louis to begin the challenge of shepherding the fledgling institution.

But his new presidency wasn't the only challenge he tackled. Once Dr. Barnes became known in the community, he was asked to be the chair of the Air Pollution Control Board, as its members confronted the huge environmental challenges of the city.

"Chattanooga was a manufacturing town with all these foundries where they made parts for heavy steel equipment," Allen Duble remembers. "They billowed smoke all the time, and the pollution just hung in the air, trapped in the valley between the mountains. Dr. Barnes was really instrumental in getting regulations passed and environmental issues carefully looked at. He was a man who—by virtue of his training and his testimony—was able to change things. He took a polluted city and a hotel that had a terrible reputation, and God just used him in an extraordinary way."

"Nothing would have happened in Chattanooga if it hadn't been cleaned up environmentally," says Dr. Frank Brock, College president from 1987-2002 and long-time



Chattanooga in 1965.

"Former Covenant president Dr. Marion Barnes was a man who—by virtue of his training and his testimony—was able to change things. He took a polluted city and a hotel that had a terrible reputation, and God just used him in an extraordinary way." -Allen Duble '58

Chattanooga area resident. "Instead of coming in with a heavy-handed approach that would have closed industries down, Dr. Barnes was able to show industries how they could comply without shutting down. He wanted to invest in the business community and show how to preserve business through protecting the environment."



“Covenant alumni are having a tremendous influence in Chattanooga because Covenant’s teaching and philosophy support the concept that if we’re going to be out there doing something, then we have the responsibility to make sure we’re doing it as well as we can.”

Andy Gienapp '94
Paramedic Supervisor

Today, Chattanooga is praised as a city whose citizens brought about a drastic environmental and economic renaissance. And Covenant College alumni are still spread throughout the city, shaping local communities and working in a variety of fields.

Seeking spiritual transformation

“There’s no question that Chattanooga became our city,” says Allen Duble. “For example, in the early years, we went down into some really bad areas of the city, did survey work, and cleaned up a building for the first Sunday school that eventually became New City Fellowship.”

Randy Nabors '72 began living in downtown Chattanooga during his junior year at Covenant, and now serves as the senior pastor of New City Fellowship, a vibrant PCA church in Chattanooga with a heart for racial reconciliation and local outreach. Randy has helped to create Inner City Mission, Inc; Hope for Chattanooga (now Hope for the Inner City); Chattanooga Sports Ministry; and Chattanooga Prison Ministries. Randy also has served as an Army Reserve Chaplain in several units in Chattanooga for many years and was a mayoral appointee to the Human Rights Commission. In 1972, Randy and Dr. Nick Barker, then a professor of English, helped to get a city ordinance passed for open housing, the first local non-discrimination housing law in Chattanooga.

“I have tried never to be political but to stand up for issues that I felt were biblical,” says Randy. “I find that when you are an advocate for justice and mercy, people give you political clout, but I have never tried to do anything but speak the truth to the situation as to what I knew best.”

New City Fellowship is well-attended by Covenant students and alumni who are involved in various mercy and development programs, but it is only one of a number of churches in the area that are heavily populated by active

Covenant alumni church members, leaders, and pastors. And it’s not only church leaders making a difference in the city’s spiritual landscape—many others serve as concerned citizens and ongoing advocates for social and spiritual change.

After moving back to Chattanooga with her husband, Gary '72, in 1980, **Pat Lindley '73** served for many years on the board of Chattanooga’s fledgling AAA Women’s Services, a local pregnancy resource center, one of 3,000 similar centers nationwide. In 2000, she became executive director, casting the vision for a center that provides holistic care to women, offering ultrasounds, childbirth and childcare classes, counseling, and information about options—all in the same building that was formerly used as an abortion clinic until AAA bought it in 1993. She praises the Covenant students and alumni volunteers she has worked with over the years, and tells wonderful stories of God paving the way for the ministry of AAA.

“The whole pro-life coalition was influenced by people who had ties to Covenant,” says Pat. “We’re glad to have Covenant students do practicums here, and we’ve had nothing but positive experiences with all of them. Several Covenant alumni have volunteered or been hired on as staff. One great example is Olivia Oster '00, who wrote her senior integration paper (SIP) on curriculum writing, and now she’s writing a curriculum for us on the ABCs of childcare.”

Providing Quality Care

During his first years at Covenant, **Andy Gienapp '94** became involved as a student volunteer with the Lookout Mountain (now West Brow) fire department, and started emergency medical technician (EMT) school in 1987. After leaving Covenant for his initial enlistment with the Army, Andy came back to Chattanooga in 1993 and was hired at

“At Covenant we dreamed about being transformational agents. That’s really unfolding in a beautiful way in education, in business, in the not-for-profit world. There’s a phenomenal cross-section of Covenant alumni in almost every sector.”

Krue Brock '92

Hamilton County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) while he finished his degree at Covenant and went on to paramedic school. He has served as an EMS paramedic supervisor for the past 16 years and earned a master’s in emergency health services management. One of nine other supervisors, Andy and his team of paramedics cover all 911 calls for the city of Chattanooga and Hamilton County except East Ridge. He has also served for 19 years in the Army Medical Department. After many years in the medical field, Andy focuses on working for more effective and efficient care.

“People are always going to die, get sick, get hurt, and that can’t always be prevented or reversed,” he points out. “But I’m here because there are situations where we can reverse that, and we can be effective. My role is managing and trying to develop better systems to help our medics deliver that care at the point that it’s needed.”

Andy and his wife, Jenny '92, live in the St. Elmo neighborhood with their five young children.

“Covenant alumni are having a tremendous influence in Chattanooga because Covenant’s teaching and philosophy support the concept that if we’re going to be out there doing something, then we have a responsibility to make sure we’re doing it as well as we can,” says Andy. “There’s certainly a biblical basis for that type of thinking. As you spend time in any career field, you begin to see flaws within any system, any process. You can accept it and say, ‘This is all we can do,’ or you can find ways to be better stewards of everything—finances, resources, personnel, business, and ultimately of life.”

Robbie Donaldson '69 has spent 25 years as a nurse at Memorial Hospital, and currently works in radiation oncology.

“Why Chattanooga?” she says. “It’s an opportunity to serve the citizens of this community, to grow where you’re planted, work where you live. This is where I’ve lived my whole married life, and it’s a good place to be. I wanted to work with cancer patients because my mother and my husband both died of cancer. It’s a great opportunity to care for people who are in great need, and it’s a privilege to walk with them through these hard times. I can identify with them and try to encourage them.”



**“Why Chattanooga?
It’s an opportunity to
serve the citizens of this
community, to grow
where you’re planted,
work where you live.”**

**Robbie Donaldson '69
Registered Nurse**

Entrepreneurial Flair

"At Covenant we dreamed about being transformational agents," says **Krue Brock '92**, owner of Market Street Tire Company and co-founder of the Chattanooga Football Club, Chattanooga's popular new semi-professional soccer team. "That's really unfolding in a beautiful way in education, in business, in the not-for-profit world. There's a phenomenal cross-section of Covenant alumni in almost every sector."

From Clumpies Ice Cream Co., Greyfriar's Coffee, and Niedlov's Breadworks, to the Chattanooga.com, Three HD, and Tricycle, Inc., Covenant alumni are shaping the face of the city with their entrepreneurial spirit.

Ed Sunder '92 partnered with Damon Crumley '95, Trip Farmer '96, and David Peterson '94 in 1996 to found Three HD, a design and technology firm in downtown Chattanooga. Beginning as a multimedia company developing CD-ROM software, Three HD's work quickly expanded to a much wider range, and they now develop web site technologies for a wide range of applications—from site and content management to carpet simulation to room scene rendering to e-commerce and more.

"What I get excited about in our work is the opportunity to help companies be more efficient," says Ed. "I like the idea of streamlining operations through a smart use of technology. In our work in Chattanooga, we have been involved with city government, local campaigns, local and regional economic development initiatives as well as private foundations who have a huge impact on our city and region."

John Sweet '00 opened Niedlov's Breadworks as the realization of a business plan that he built for his senior integration paper at Covenant. Now Niedlov's supplies a number of restaurants around Chattanooga and is known for its inviting atmosphere and artisan breads.

"Getting involved in the local food community was really a big deal for us," says John. "We're in the right place at the right time for being part of what's happening on Main Street. The Lyndhurst Foundation wanted to invest in that neighborhood, and sparked a whole new movement here—artists, young families, businesses. We were lucky enough to be the first retail business here on the first few blocks of Main Street, helping to set the stage and make Main Street more inviting."

"What is it that Covenant is doing up on the mountain that's producing such quality individuals with entrepreneurial flair?" remarks Paul Brock. "I'm not sure what it is, but I could sure sell it! Small businesses are a significant contributor to a community's economic vitality and we are really fortunate that a number of Covenant grads have chosen to put their entrepreneurial and business talents to work in Chattanooga."

Only a smattering

Covenant alumni's full impact in Chattanooga has yet to be told, as hundreds serve in insurance, computer networking, accounting, law, civil engineering, community programs, social services, and other successful small businesses. A



"In our work in Chattanooga, we have been involved with city government, local campaigns, local and regional economic development initiatives, as well as private foundations who have a huge impact on our city and region."

Ed Sunder '92

Founder and President, Three HD

significant number of Covenant-trained teachers serve in Chattanooga area schools in a variety of subjects and grade levels. And Covenant's new Center of Vocational Exploration and Career Services promises to connect even more students with local internships in the city for future involvement, investment, and employment.

Krue Brock pleads with current students and Chattanooga alumni to continue the good work that's begun.

"I'd love it if Covenant people continued to help cast the vision for the city. Let's jump in with both feet and go for it, and really apply some of these things we learned in the classroom. Put feet to things you talked about with your professors. Chattanooga is very receptive, and it's just big enough and small enough that you can really make a difference."

"I sincerely believe that there are two things about Covenant alumni that are absolutely distinctive and valuable," says Dr. Frank Brock, who served as a founding member of the Chattanooga Resource Foundation (now Chattanooga Matters) and on the board of the Maclellan Foundation. "First, they have the ability to draw from disparate areas to create things that are absolutely unique. That's what you have to do in reimagining Chattanooga, in finding a cure for AIDS, in anything—you have to see the problem in the first place, and create solutions, making connections, not compartmentalizing. Most schools are blind to that opportunity, but Covenant thrives on it."

"Second, Covenant turns out graduates who consider integrity important, who value respect of authority, service to others, and being members of a body who can communicate well—there have never been enough people like that in the world, or in any business."

"As Os Guinness once said, 'The only problem with the Scots is that there aren't enough of them!'"



“Chad’s eagerness to see the truth of the gospel infused into every dimension of the CCS community is evident & infectious.”

Gospel-Infused Education

by Sara Drexler '78

When the Chattanooga Christian School Presidential Search

Committee finished their interview with Chad Dirkse '89, they wondered if it could really be so easy to find such a solid match. The candidate was well-qualified—since graduating from Covenant with a B.A. in education, he had served as teacher, coach, principal, board member, parent, community partner, church elder, and school superintendent. He was articulate, bold, and very interested in returning to Chattanooga.

But a conversation with CCS' new school president these days doesn't often touch on either experience or expertise. Rather, Chad's eagerness to see the truth of the gospel infused into every dimension of the CCS community is evident and infectious. "We keep discovering the far-reaching implications of living by grace, living repentantly—to discover all that means in life, in leadership, in organizational success," he says. "It's transforming to us, and thus to the community, to trust that God is making us more like him, and better at what we do."

Chad came to Covenant in 1984 steeped in rich church tradition. "My years at Covenant were pivotal—

they made my relationship with Jesus Christ real. I came with the 'faith stuff' in my head, and left with an understanding of faith and relationships." Chad has been reunited here in Chattanooga both with mentors—he played basketball for Coach Gene Fitzgerald for two years—and with classmates, now CCS parents.

Shortly before graduating from Covenant, Chad headed home to Oostburg, Wisconsin, stopping overnight to attend an engagement party in Elgin, Illinois. When a guest

“It's transforming to us, and thus to the community, to trust that God is making us more like him, and better at what we do.”

spilled water on him, she made the encounter less awkward by inviting him to apply for a job at Elgin's Westminster Christian School. Thus began a long relationship with both the school and Westminster Presbyterian Church.

In 1992 a student suggested Chad might like to meet his sister, Heather Van Eck '93, also an education major at Covenant. They married and now have three children, Clara, Coleman,

and Kate, all CCS students.

Chad received a challenging offer in 1996 to assume leadership of a local business, "a unique opportunity to lead in a different realm with a diverse group of employees," he says. Those exceptional years provided a new window on school life from the perspective of the community.

After receiving an MBA from LeTourneau University, Chad returned to Westminster as superintendent in 2004. Chattanooga Christian School offered the job early in 2009, and in July he hit the ground running, well-equipped to lead the thriving school, now serving over 1100 students K-12.

The Apostle Paul's testimony—"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost"—hangs in Chad Dirkse's office, a reminder both to himself and the community of the radical vision he claims for CCS. "I'm OK that I am the foremost of sinners!" Chad says. "This is transforming in all that we do here at school, and it circles back to the preeminence of Christ—Covenant taught us that—and of course, that comes right back to the fact that it's not about me anyway. It's freeing!" 



Five Alumni take a Stand at CreateHere

by Vincent Howard '05

If you frequented any of downtown Chattanooga's big outdoor events this summer, you probably got used to this scene: two young people in bright yellow t-shirts seated behind a table topped with clipboards and hung with a sign, yellow with bold black print, that read, "FOUR QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE."

Had you asked, you would have learned that these four questions comprised a short survey—part of a community-visioning campaign called Stand. Stand's goal, in short, is to unify Chattanooga residents around common ideas for city-wide cultural and economic revitalization. In September, Stand became the world's largest survey-based visioning process, collecting over 25,000 surveys.

Covenant alumni Sarah Lester '07, Chris Nystrom '09, and Grant Withington '08 spent the summer handing out surveys, answering questions, and strategizing for Stand. They are fellows, along with Ashley Leinbach '04 and Sheldon Grizzle '03, at

CreateHere, a new nonprofit working to develop Chattanooga's cultural capital, and a key supporter of the Stand campaign.

"Strengthening community is central to the mission of Stand," says Ashley. "Ultimately the best thing for the community will in turn build the Kingdom through both overt and

"Ultimately the best thing for the community will in turn build the Kingdom through both overt and subtle expressions of God's redemptive truth."

- Ashley Leinbach '04

subtle expressions of God's redemptive truth."

With their burgeoning interest in Chattanooga's cultural health, it's easy to see why CreateHere is committed to

the kind of work envisioned by Stand. Since opening its Main Street office in July of 2007, thanks to a Lyndhurst Foundation grant won by co-founders Helen Johnson and Josh McManus, CreateHere has quickly become a leading resource for Chattanooga's emergent artists and entrepreneurs. It's a resource that Chattanooga, a city with a dubious economic history, could use right now.

"In this economy," says Sheldon, "a few entrepreneurs are doing really well, some are doing alright, but most are hanging on for dear life."

Sheldon is the director of SpringBoard, a CreateHere program offering practical business solutions to local entrepreneurs at an affordable cost. Participants meet for moderated round-table discussions with other business owners on strategies for creative growth, and attend panel talks led by industry experts. For upstarts, there is an eight-week business planning course instructed by local professionals such as Covenant alumni

“I believe that living in community means living in the context of others, and the way I interact with others through Stand and CreateHere opens the door for God’s love to shine quietly but boldly. Stand presents a tangible way for me to spread the ‘one-anothering’ love of God and engage in community around me.” -Sarah Lester ’07

Anthony Tucker ’99 and Brent Jackson ’99.

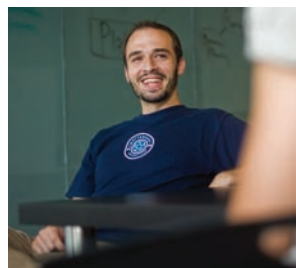
“I see CreateHere as a vital resource for small businesses and entrepreneurs in the Chattanooga community,” says Anthony. “SpringBoard offers ways for young entrepreneurs to get involved in the city . . . and events that connect people who would not otherwise cross paths.”

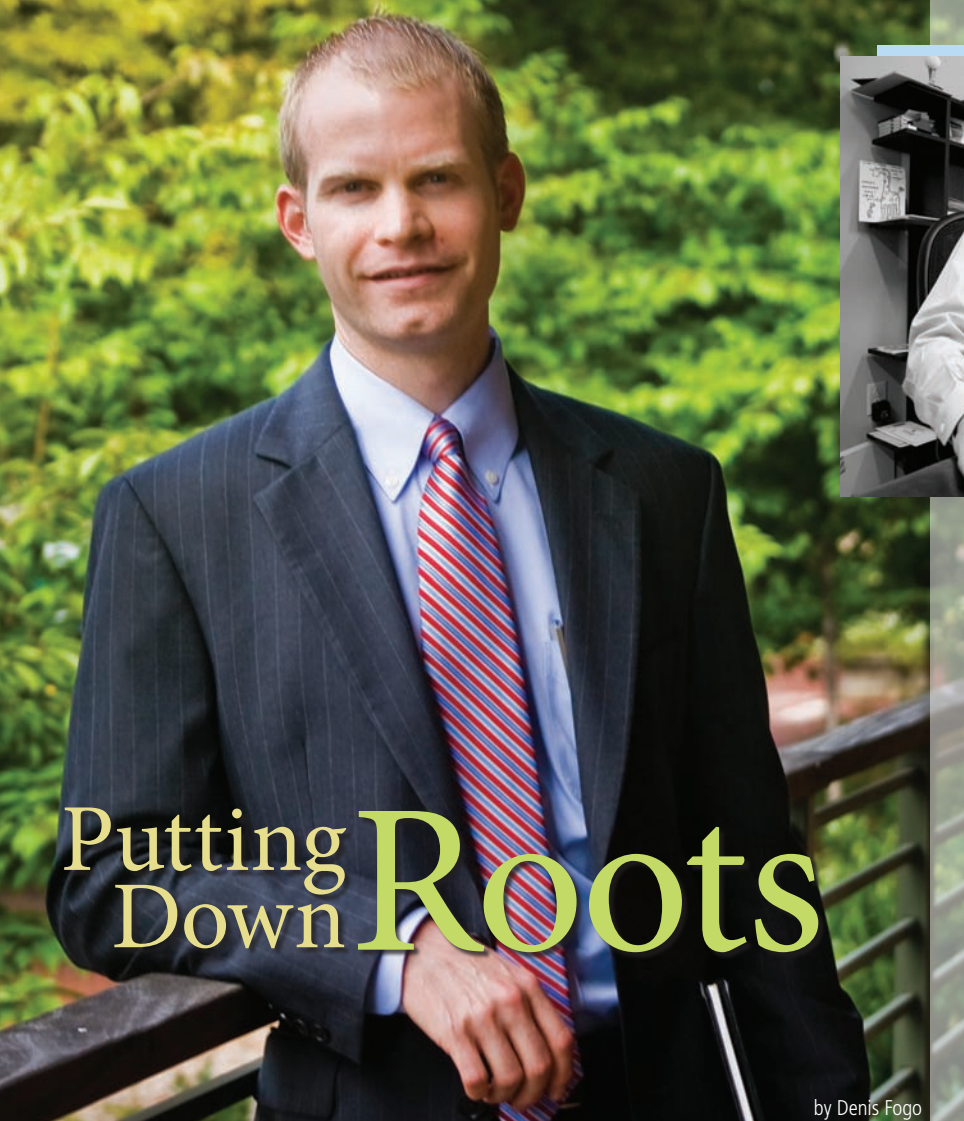
PlugIn, a program launched in part by Chris, offers a similar

professional bridging service to recent college graduates and interns. “It’s a residency program,” says Chris, “which provides the opportunity . . . to better know and connect to the city, and to meet other interns across disciplines.”

CreateHere brings an entrepreneurial spirit to the arts as well. ArtsMove, a program with which Sarah has been active, has helped two dozen practicing artists relocate to

downtown Chattanooga. Each artist commits to “enthusiastically contribute to the city’s cultural tapestry and economic vitality,” an endeavor for which CreateHere’s fellows have continually set the example, one program—or one survey—at a time. 





Putting Down Roots

by Denis Fogo

Settling down in Chattanooga after graduation was an easy choice for Trip Farmer '96.

Growing up as an army brat, he and his family lived in eight different cities before he came to Covenant. While he was in college, his parents moved three more times!

"I wanted to figure out how to stay in one place, one church, one community, and develop long-term friendships," he says. Trip turned down a promising position in Atlanta after graduation so he could keep growing roots in his chosen hometown. His life, worship, work, and community involvement all reflect a long-term commitment to effecting change in Chattanooga that brings God glory.

Trip passed his CPA exam on his first attempt in 1999 and started working at Henderson, Hutcherson & McCullough, one of the area's largest accounting firms, in 2001. He became a partner last year.

Christopher Dodson, associate professor of accounting, says that as

a student Trip had a gift for working with numbers and "pursuing the interpersonal aspect of business."

His work serves many local businesses, especially in real estate, construction, and health care. The success of these businesses, in turn, provides Chattanooga with more jobs, a robust tax base, and a growing reputation as a good place to do business.

Trip's position at a respected accounting firm and his many connections within the business community bring him opportunities to work with local organizations that focus on making Chattanooga a better place.

"I really wanted to be part of the community that I was in. That's why I participate in many monthly civic association meetings and am involved on non-profit boards," Trip says.

He serves as treasurer on the board of Chattanooga Matters (formerly the Chattanooga Resource Foundation), an organization focused on bringing the influence of Christ to bear on

"Covenant prepared me to be in tune with my community."

Chattanooga through partnerships and initiatives. He is also on the board of Cornerstones, Inc., Chattanooga's non-profit historic preservation organization, and for three years was a board member of Hope for the Inner City.

Trip was recently asked to join the community program InnovateHere, the latest initiative of the Lyndhurst Foundation to reinvigorate Chattanooga's Southside along Main Street. He also offers assistance with various fundraising events as time permits, currently serving on a planning committee for the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera's 2010 gala.

Regularly meeting with fellow believing financial professionals, Trip belongs to Kingdom Advisors, a national organization focused on ministering, serving, equipping, and energizing Christian financial professionals to realize their spiritual calling in their vocations.

Trip, his wife of three years, Lisa, and their one-year-old son, Miles, are members of North Shore Fellowship, PCA. Lisa, who has a master's degree in special education, worked at Orange Grove Center serving people with developmental disabilities before Miles was born. She now teaches children's art classes part-time.

"I try to view people in terms of relationships even in business—not just as numbers or as a means to an end," Trip says. "Covenant prepared me to be in tune with the community that I'm in—relationships are very important." 



Home Field Advantage

by Denis Fogo

Two interwoven passions drive Jimmy Weekley '92 to make his community a better place—developing young people and a lifelong love of soccer.

This autumn is his fourteenth season as head coach for Baylor School's high school girls' varsity soccer team. He has also been the head or assistant coach for the high school boys' varsity team each spring for fourteen years. The girls have been state champions or in second place for nine of the last ten seasons. The boys won state in 2000 and 2007.

"I was attracted to Baylor because of its mission statement, 'To make a difference in the world,'" Jimmy says. "I've seen players'

lives change," he adds, explaining that the intense interaction between a coach and his players provides opportunities for him to live and speak about his faith.

"I love being at Baylor. I love my work and the kids I teach and coach. I know I'm here for a reason," Jimmy says.

Last summer, Jimmy stayed involved with soccer as the assistant coach of the new semi-professional team, the Chattanooga Football Club. "I wanted to bring a higher level of soccer to Chattanooga for younger players to watch and emulate. I wanted to continue to grow soccer in our community," he says.

The local community received another boost when the Chattanooga Football Club chose Finley Stadium as its home pitch. It keeps the facility from being dormant all summer, and provides work for several food vendors, Jimmy explains. In its first season, the club had the best

attendance in its league. At their Fourth of July home game, the team played for more than 3,000 fans.

Jimmy says he has come "full circle" in his soccer career as he shares club coaching duties with Brian Crossman, the CFC's head coach and a physical education professor at Covenant. Crossman was Jimmy's coach when he played soccer at Covenant.

Speaking of Jimmy, Crossman says that "Covenant made a significant impact on his life as a man of God both on the field and in the classroom."

As he prepared at Covenant for a career as a teacher,

Jimmy was influenced by the daily examples of his professors. "Seeing Christian men with a love for what they do and the people they are working with made a

profound impact on me." He particularly recalls professors such as Don Graham, Tim Ewearitt, Mike Rulon, and Robert Ashlock as men he emulated.

Jimmy also learned from his peers. "The guys I played soccer with and lived with were Christian men whose impact on me can be seen in what I do today," he says. He adds that at Covenant the emphasis "wasn't just about getting a win or an 'A,' but about the person Christ was leading you to become."

Jimmy and his wife, Cayce, have four sons, Keegan, Jake, Anthony, and Carter—and they are expecting again in the spring. The family belongs to Covenant Presbyterian Church in Chattanooga. 🙏

"...it wasn't just about getting a win or an 'A,' but about the person Christ was leading you to become."





HOMECOMING 2009

A little rain couldn't drown out the excitement of Homecoming weekend this October. Alumni enjoyed annual favorites such as Jazz on the Overlook and soccer games—and a special appearance by alumni band Diamond Dan and the Cut Gems. See more pictures and a short video at covenant.edu/facebook. Then mark your calendars for Homecoming 2010—October 8-9.

[Alumni of the Year]



Steve '85 and Mary Lutz Smallman '85 *Alumni of the Year*

He used to travel the country. Now he travels the globe. Still, some of his most important work is done in the poorer areas of his hometown Baltimore.

After finishing seminary, Steve Smallman joined New Song Community Church in inner-city Baltimore as a pastor and music director. He toured the states with their choir and cut several CDs showcasing their energetic music. His ministry included producing cutting-edge music and video presentations that kept kids enthused and engaged in the church—and off the streets.

In addition to teaching neighborhood Bible studies, Mary has been instrumental in the development of

New Song's extensive ministry to neighborhood children. In her role at New Song Community Church, she created and maintains a daily volunteer chapel program for the church's public school, New Song Academy. She has also served the school as its state testing coordinator and has managed scores of volunteer groups from all over the country.

Steve continues to serve as an associate pastor at New Song in addition to operating 15four Integrated Media, where he and his staff produce films for various for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. They have documented stories in locations from Chicago and Atlanta to Mozambique and Haiti.

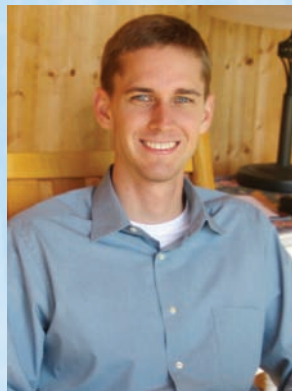
Mary and Steve have two sons, Isaiah '11 and Paul '13.

Peter Brinkerhoff '04

Young Alumnus of the Year

Upon graduation from Covenant, Peter Brinkerhoff joined the staff of Hope International to oversee a microfinance institution (MFI) in Congo. As the only American expatriate in the city of Kisangani, he was asked to provide savings and loan services for at least 800 clients within the first six months. And he did.

Although scheduled to be in the country for only two years, Peter stayed for five. In 2006 he moved to the city of Kinshasa, where he spent the next three years growing that city's MFI from 2,500 to 12,000 clients and from 18 to 60 staff, as well as adding a new branch office. Peter's gentle spirit, cultural sensitivity, and humility reflect a strong character and a real faith as he sees his efforts as God's grace in action. This summer he worked for Hope in Afghanistan. He returned to Congo in the fall.

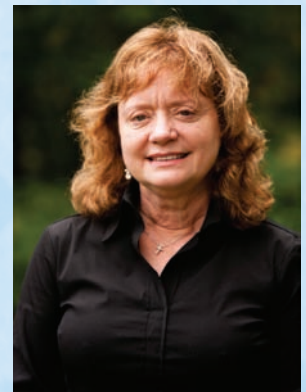


Kathy Neal Harris '71

Volunteer of the Year

Kathy Harris has devoted a significant amount of her time, money, and energy to the planning, implementation, and overall success of the Covenant College Wilberforce Scholarship program in Memphis. The Wilberforce Scholarship is a \$15,000 competitive scholarship available to students in five regions: Memphis, TN; Gainesville, GA; Dalton, GA; Baltimore/Annapolis, MD; and Birmingham, AL.

Kathy and her husband, Brad, are co-chairs of the Wilberforce Scholarship committee in Memphis. Kathy has done everything from giving toward the scholarship to evaluating prospective students' scholarship applications to planning and hosting events to mentoring students who are interested in Covenant. Her efforts embody a giving spirit and a genuine belief in the transformational education that Covenant provides for its students.





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“Maximal” *by* Nathan Foxton '10

“I want painting to be as much a part of real life as possible,” says Nathan Foxton '10.

Upon transferring to Covenant in the fall of 2008, Nathan spent a good portion of his first semester capturing the campus on canvas. Painting for about ninety hours—two hours at a time, three times a week—from a location next to the library peering north toward Carter Hall, Nathan says he “met about half the college, which was really exciting.”

“The whole painting is like a page of a journal,” he says. “It’s a marker in time back to this location.

“Art has been my mode of transportation, in a way. I think I will always use art as a way of communicating with people.”