

New Signs Point the Way to Lakeside Campus

All signs point to a good year ahead at Lakeside for Children – starting with our new signs!

Late in 2017, Kalamazoo-based SignArt, Inc., designed and installed a new entryway sign on Oakland Drive, new light poles, signs, and banners along the driveway leading to campus, and new building signs around campus.

The new signs include the new Lakeside for Children logo, designed by Kalamazoo graphic designer **Kathy Tyler**.

Lakeside CEO **Don Nitz** says reactions to the new signs are very positive.

“Lakeside students, teachers, and staff tell me they take great pride in the new look. Visitors to campus say they are especially grateful for the new sign on Oakland Drive that clearly marks our entrance, especially at night.”

Nitz says the colorful and engaging new signs along the driveway also remind visitors that the posted speed limit on campus is 10 miles per hour, Lakeside is a tobacco-free campus, weapons are prohibited, and all visitors must report to the office.

According to Nitz, the new signs were made possible, in part, by a generous donation from SignArt CEO **Mike Williams**.

“We’re very grateful to Mike Williams and his SignArt team,” Nitz says. “The new signage will serve the agency very well for many years.”

New landscaping and a few final cosmetic touches to the entryway sign will be added in the spring.



Website Facelift. Facebook Launch.

You are invited to visit our refurbished website at **www.LakesideForChildren.org**. And feel free to do so via your computer, smart phone, or tablet.

With help from our friends at Blue Fire Media, we’ve given the site a complete makeover with new photos, new layout, some new pages, and new information. We’ve also made it more responsive to smart phone and tablet users.

Hopefully, you’ll find it to be more attractive, user-friendly, informational, and intuitive. You can also make a safe, secure online donation to the Lakeside for Children Foundation via the website.

If you can’t find the information you seek or have additional questions, please send us an email via the website’s “Contact” page, or call **Don Nitz** or **Sam Lealofi** at (269) 381-4760.

And, while you’re online, please visit the new Lakeside Facebook page. We hope you’ll visit often to get our latest news and events info. And be sure to “Like” and “Share” us with others



3921 Oakland Drive
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

269.381.4760
lakesideforchildren.org

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Lines from Lakeside

LAKESIDE FOR CHILDREN • SPRING 2018

Lakeside for Children

Providing at-risk youth an opportunity to learn new skills and behaviors in a caring hope-filled and supportive environment.



Meet New Lakeside CEO "Sam" Lealofi

The Lakeside for Children board of directors has selected **Sandra "Sam" Lealofi** to be the next CEO of the 111-year-old residential treatment facility and school for abused and neglected boys and girls in Kalamazoo.

Lealofi will take over from **Don Nitz** who is retiring from the CEO post after 12 years.

“We picked a winner,” said **Joe Brogger**, longtime Lakeside board member who led the search process for the new CEO. “Sam is a natural leader with a deep commitment to helping vulnerable kids succeed. Her experience in teaching, working with diverse populations, and building partnerships, will combine well with her background in organizational, board, and fund development.

“She’s just the right person to lead Lakeside forward.”

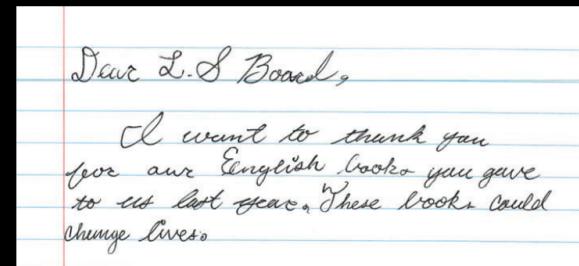
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A Big THANK YOU to:

• **Generous donors, who responded to our year-end fundraising appeal. Your donations help our students become successful members of their community. Our community.**

• **The knitting ladies at Comstock Community Center, led by Mary Gustas, who knitted dozens of winter hats for Lakeside students at Christmas (as they have for many years). You warmed a lot of heads. And hearts.**

• **The Lakeside board of directors who once again gave dozens of books to students as Christmas presents. Anthony H. was one of many grateful students: "Thank you for giving us books. It was very nice and thoughtful. Books keep me out of trouble. And to be honest, I love reading a good book."**



“We Celebrate Their Hard Work”

Congratulations to two of the newest Lakeside Charter School graduates, **MarQuon S.** and **DeAndre J.**

MarQuon completed all State of Michigan requirements for high school graduation and has received his diploma. DeAndre successfully completed all his General Equivalency Development (GED) exams and has received his High School Equivalency Certificate.

Both young men received a standing ovation from Lakeside teachers, staff members, administrator, fellow students, and family members at a ceremony in the Todd Cultural Center.

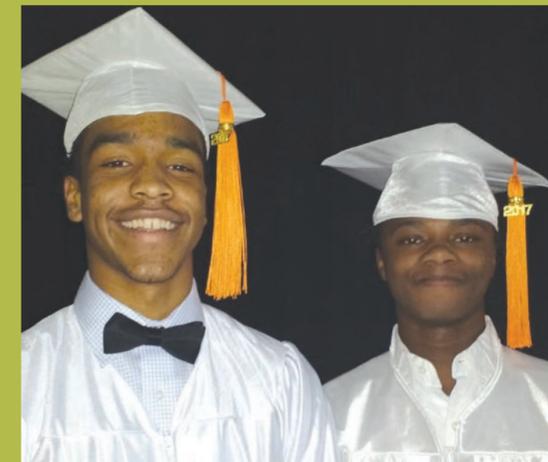
“This is a huge accomplishment, a huge milestone for these men,” said Lakeside Charter School Principal **John Thompson**. “They have grown, matured, and become leaders. We celebrate their hard work.”

DeAndre (at left in photo) plans to attend barber college and, one day, own his own barbershop. According to Principal Thompson, “He passed all four Michigan GED exams on the first try. Not many people can do that.”

His advice to younger Lakeside students: “Take advantage of the support you have here in your teachers, aids, and primaries. They want you to succeed.”

MarQuon hopes to attend college and become a mechanical engineer. His advice to other students trying to finish high school: “Stay focused. It seems like a long road, but it’s worth it.”

Congrats, MarQuon and DeAndre!



Titans Go To The Mat During First Season

With the addition of boys’ wrestling this winter, Lakeside Academy now offers four varsity athletics programs to male students. Wrestling joins boys’ basketball, soccer, and track and field in team competitions sanctioned by the Michigan High School Athletic Association. Each program also supports junior varsity athletes.

About 50 students tried out for the wrestling team – an impressive turnout for a school with an enrollment of about 109 boys (and 15 girls), ages 12 to 18. Twenty-eight students have competed regularly during the season. They practice Monday through Friday at 6:00 a.m., in Burt’s Gym inside the new Lakeside Health & Wellness Center, led by coaches (pictured l-r) **Gavin Snyder, Jared Nabors, Curtis Blackwell,** and **Travis Martin**.

According to Lakeside Academy Executive Director **Steve Laidacker**, wrestling is having a positive effect on participating Titans.

“We knew it would be helpful,” he says, “but for some students the experience has been significant. We’re seeing an increase in positive behaviors, and improved grades and ratings among team members.”

Laidacker says other schools are taking notice of the Titans on and off the mat. He shared a message from a competitor coach, as evidence:

“I am really impressed with your kids and your coaches. They care about each other, and each kid is giving his all. They are a class act. Very impressed!”

On Jan. 13, the Lakeside Titans traveled to Colon to compete in a tournament against four other teams. They defeated all four opponents and registered the first ever Lakeside wrestling tournament victory. About a week later, they won a three-team tourney. As we go to press, they remain undefeated.

The Titans will compete in about 12 dual meets and tournaments this season, including one or two home matches, which would also be a first for Lakeside.

Laidacker says that all the athletic programs are contributing to high spirits among staff and students.

“A new sense of pride is taking root. It’s a very good time to be a Lakeside Academy Titan.”



Titans, Burt’s Gym Are Winners During First Ever Home Game

The Lakeside Academy Boys Basketball program is having a successful year – its second. As our newsletter goes to press, the Titan varsity squad – under coach **Michael McKinley** – has a 5-1 win-loss record with several regular season games left to play before the “March Madness” state tournaments begin. The Titan junior varsity team under coach **Sam Campbell** is also undefeated.

On Dec. 12, the Titans played the very first MHSAA-sanctioned contest in Burt’s Gym inside the Health & Wellness Center that opened in April 2017. Burt’s Gym was given in loving memory of Kalamazoo businessman, philanthropist, and longtime Lakeside board member **Burton Upjohn** by his family for his dedication to the students of Lakeside.

Right on cue, the home team defeated Kalamazoo Public Schools Phoenix High School, 56-24.

“It was a great night for Lakeside,” said CEO **Don Nitz**. “Everyone had a great time cheering on the Titans, from the players and coaches on the court to the students, teachers, administrators, and other guests in the stands. I’m sure Burt had a big smile on his face.”

Thank you, Burt! Go Titans!



Meet New Lakeside for Children Board Members

Kate Tillotson is an award-winning journalist who anchors WWMT-TV Newschannel 3 broadcasts in Kalamazoo, weeknights at 5, 6, and 11 p.m.

Before joining the station in 2007, Kate worked at WRDW-TV in Augusta, Georgia, and KCFW-TV in Kalispell, Montana. While in Augusta, Kate received two Georgia Associated Press awards for Best Feature Reporting and Best Investigative Reporting.

A proud resident of the Kalamazoo community, Kate also serves on the Borgess Foundation board of trustees. In addition, she is a member of Next Gen, an extension of the Southwest Michigan First board of directors and she sits on the .1K Spool Run committee which raises funds for Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan.

In 2012, Kate was honored as one of West Michigan’s “Most Influential Women” by Inforum, a professional women’s alliance with more than 1,800 members throughout the state.

Kate is a western Massachusetts native and graduated cum laude with a degree in broadcast journalism from Emerson College, located in downtown Boston. During college, she served as an intern at WBZ-TV and New England Cable News.

“I am thrilled to join the board of directors of Lakeside for Children, a unique program that has been serving youth for over 100 years. I look forward to making a positive contribution and continuing our success.”



Chris Harris-Wimsatt is CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo. He previously served on the Club’s board of directors for seven years, including as past president.

A native of Raleigh, N.C., Chris joined his local Boys Club at the age of six. He was twice named the Club’s Youth of the Year and was inducted into its hall of fame in 2006.

Chris earned a bachelor’s degree in finance from East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C. and was a member of the ROTC program, which led to a nine-year career as an officer in the United States Air Force. During that time, he earned a master’s degree in human resource development from Webster (Missouri) University.

Following three years at Vanguard Mutual Fund Company and several years at Stryker Corp. (during which he became senior project manager of mergers and acquisitions for Stryker’s Medical Division), Chris became director of Western Michigan University’s Seita Scholars program that provides funding and resources for students coming out of the foster care system.

Chris has also served as a foster parent for more than 20 youths.

“I support Lakeside for Children because it’s a place that truly believes in some of our most challenged youth. Lakeside works to build them up and leverage their strengths to reach their goals while they work through difficult life challenges.”