

CMU Becomes New Charter School “Authorizer”

Every charter school in the state of Michigan has an “authorizer,” the entity responsible for granting the school official permission to operate in the state, and then monitoring it and working with its school board to ensure its success.

Since its 2013 opening, Lakeside Charter School has been authorized by Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency, or KRESA, which provides an array of educational support services and programs to public school districts across Kalamazoo County.

But KRESA doesn’t provide programs and services in Calhoun County, home of Starr Albion Prep, the charter school on the campus of Starr Commonwealth, a century-old residential treatment facility for at-risk children near Albion, Mich., about 50 miles east of Kalamazoo.

In 2018, Calhoun Intermediate School District informed Starr Albion Prep that it could no longer serve as its authorizer. Starr Albion officials approached the Lakeside Charter School board and asked whether the two schools might be allowed to operate under KRESA’s authorization. Because KRESA had no jurisdiction in Calhoun County, however, it had to decline.

Enter Central Michigan University, in Mt. Pleasant. In 1994, CMU became the first charter school authorizer in Michigan and the first university authorizer in the nation.

Today, through its Governor John Engler Center for Charter Schools, CMU works with 58 authorized charter schools across the state to prepare approximately 24,000 students academically for success in college, work, and life.

Since the beginning of the current school year, CMU has been the authorizer for Lakeside Charter School, with 124 students, and Starr Albion Prep Charter School, with about 150 students.

One independent five-member Lakeside Charter School board of directors sets policy and oversees activities for both schools. CMU provides the board with resources and expertise in academics, finance, state and federal accountability, facility regulations, staff certification, board governance, program and curriculum development, data analysis, compliance requirements, and other areas.

“We are grateful to KRESA for our successful five-year partnership and look forward to continued success with our new educational partners at Starr Albion Prep and CMU,” said School Board President **Rob Pennock**. ”

Rob and his board hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony in the Lakeside for Children Health & Wellness Center to celebrate the new authorizing agreement with teachers, administrators, and board members from the Kalamazoo and Albion campuses, as well as representatives from CMU in Mount Pleasant.



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Lines from Lakeside

LAKESIDE FOR CHILDREN • SPRING 2019

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Lakeside for Children

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

Lakeside Wrestling, Basketball Teams Complete Successful Seasons

*Legendary Green Bay Packers football coach **Vince Lombardi** famously summed up success by saying “Winning isn’t everything; It’s the only thing.” With respect to Coach Lombardi, the coaches, players, and fans of Lakeside Charter School athletic teams know that success is measured by far more than wins and losses.*

Grapplers Pin Down Success

The Titan wrestlers began their second season as a Michigan High School Athletic Association (Division 4) sanctioned team in November last year when 47 boys tried out for the team. Yes, 47 – from a school with only 124 students.

“That number tells you that our students are eager to get involved and test themselves,” Titan Wrestling Coach **Kyle Belanger** said. “We obviously couldn’t keep that many wrestlers, but many boys had a chance to compete throughout the season.” *Continued on page 2*

Hoopsters Net Wins, Lessons

The Titan basketball team finished its third season with an impressive 10-6 record. What impresses Athletic Director and Head Basketball Coach **Michael McKinley**, however, is how his team overcame obstacles few opposing teams face.

“Our roster changes a lot from year to year and during the season,” McKinley said. “And few players have experience with coaches, organized practices, and discipline needed to play as a team every game. But we never gave up on ourselves.” *Continued on page 2*

Lakeside Boards Elect New Officers

The Lakeside for Children board of directors elected new officers at its annual meeting in February: (l-r) **Jeff Palmer** (chair), **Dannie Alexander**, (secretary), **David Furgason** (treasurer), and **Kate Gadbois** (vice-chair). Jeff replaces **Rick Wordell** who was board chair for two years and continues his board service. Thank you, Rick!

The Lakeside for Children Foundation board also elected new officers: **Amy Upjohn** (chair), **Bob Ezelle** (vice-chair), **Carlene Korchak** (treasurer), and **Joseph Brogger II** (secretary). Amy replaces longtime chair **Joel Orosz** who continues his board service. Thank you, Joel! **Raven Britt** has also joined the Foundation board.

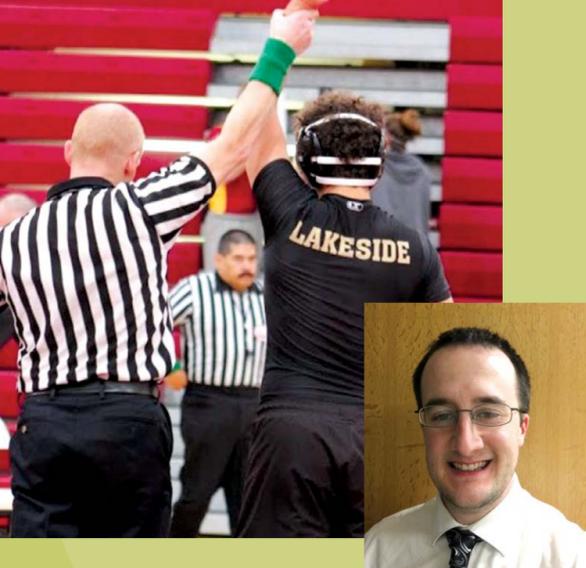
Lakeside for Children Board

Dannie Alexander, Secretary
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Rick Wordell
Sandra “Sam” Lealofi, CEO

Lakeside for Children Foundation Board

Raven Britt
Joseph Brogger II, Secretary
John Cooper
Robert Ezelle, Vice-Chair
Carlene Korchak, Treasurer
Joel J. Orosz
Amy Upjohn, Chair





Basketball continued from page one.

According to McKinley, the average stay for a boy at Lakeside is about six months, so adjusting to a changing lineup and learning to play together are challenges for him and his players. "But it's fun to bring them along and help them play as a team throughout the season."

McKinley lauds several players for their standout seasons. "Jaheim P. and Xavier J. were co-captains and the hardest working duo that I've coached here. Their work ethic in practice pushed the other players to reach their potential and helped us progress as a team all season."

Jaheim lead the team in rebounds, averaging a whopping 13.4 per game. Xavier lead in steals (2.7). Yes, that's the same Xavier who was on the wrestling team! Other standouts include **Anthony C.** (10.3 points per game), **Brandon S.** (4.2 assists), and **Kalvin D.**

"Our young men played with sportsmanship and enthusiasm," McKinley says. "The experiences they had and the lessons they learned will stay with them long after they leave us."

On Feb. 20, Lakeside hosted its first tournament in Burt's Gym inside the Lakeside Health & Wellness Center and featured teams from four schools representing many area at-risk youths. In the first game, Lakeside defeated Phoenix, the Kalamazoo Public Schools alternative high school. In game two, Starr Albion Prep defeated a team from Kalamazoo County Juvenile Home.

In the championship game, the visiting Wildcats scratched out a two-point win over the host Titans. After the event, players and supporters from the schools celebrated and socialized on the court. Two players from each team were named to an all-tournament team and received trophies.

"This was a truly great event for our players and the students cheering in the stands," McKinley says. "We hope to make it an annual event."

We do, too, Coach McKinley. Congrats to you and your team!



Wrestling continued from page one.

The Titans competed in 10 multi-team matches and tournaments from early December through late February. Their win-loss record was not among the best, but Belanger says his team members succeeded throughout the season by demonstrating sportsmanship, improving their wrestling skills, and learning some valuable life lessons.

"Wrestling is a sport that teaches perseverance, which is a great skill for our particular students to have," he said. "It's just you on the mat, unlike a team sport where you rely on others. It's a sport where your effort and work ethic are what determine the outcome. There will be some teammates, coaches, cheerleaders, and rivals along the way, but wrestling success depends ultimately on your choices alone."

"I think that's true in life, as well, and I hope that's what some of my guys learned this year. We had kids who really responded, made themselves better, and learned how to build relationships that make the grind of practice or life so much more enjoyable."

One student in particular distinguished himself along the way. Xavier J. competed in the 160-pound weight class, finishing second at the district tournament and fourth at regionals, earning a spot in the state finals at Ford Field in Detroit on March 1. This allows him to say that he is one of the top 16 wrestlers in the state in the Division 4 weight class.

Xavier lost his first match to the eventual state champion. "But he had a great experience," said Belanger. "He told me he had a lot of fun this year and was able to learn a lot of new things. He would like to continue wrestling and is eager for a chance to place higher next year."

Thank you, Coach Belanger. Congrats to Xavier and all Titan wrestlers.

Dear Friends,

I have just passed the one-year mark as the CEO of Lakeside for Children and it has been an extraordinary 365 days! Why? Because every day I've seen how hard our students work to be successful and every day I've heard them say how their lives have been changed by being at Lakeside.

Poet E. E. Cummings wrote, "It takes a lot of courage to become the person you were meant to be." That is so true here at Lakeside. I see the courage that leads to hope in youth who never expected to get their high school diploma or GED and now have earned it and are flying high. I see how hard students work to learn the skills needed to play soccer, track, basketball, and wrestling – as well as being a member of a team – when they have never played an organized sport before coming to Lakeside. I talk to students who have earned leadership roles in their dorms and on campus among their peers. They are proud to be called Titans!

Of course, they are not alone on their journey. They have the support of caring and committed staff members and teachers who support them in reaching their goals. They also have a board of directors committed to providing the best possible environment and quality of life that Lakeside for Children can provide. And because board members and staff know that even more is possible, they keep reaching out to engage our community to help our students.

I invite you to contact me to visit our campus and meet our students. Come see and hear for yourself how lives are changing at Lakeside for Children.

Aloha...

Sandra "Sam" Lealofi, CEO, Lakeside for Children



"The Sky is the Limit" for Lakeside Graduates

It was standing room only in the Todd Cultural Center recently during the graduation ceremony for three students who earned their high school diplomas through Lakeside Charter School. All three plan to continue their education.

Vernon M. plans to complete his Job Corps posting in Grand Rapids, then enroll in Western Michigan University to pursue a nursing degree.

Trenton G. enrolled in Kalamazoo Valley Community College. After completing requirements there, he plans to enroll in either WMU or Grand Valley State University (he's been accepted by both) to study mechanical engineering.

Dawson V. enrolled in Grand Rapids Community College to study business and music. While there, he will also work on a nearby family farm.

All the grads thanked Lakeside teachers, staff members, and family members, who helped them reach this day.

"These three young men earned their diplomas through hard work and belief in themselves," said Lakeside Principal **John Thompson.** "The sky is the limit for them now."

Congratulations to our newest graduates!



Lakeside Academy Names New Executive Director

Kelly Stone is the new executive director of Lakeside Academy, the staff-secure residential treatment program on the Lakeside campus. She takes over from longtime executive director, **Steve Laidacker**, who accepted the position of vice president of operations for the child welfare division of Sequel Youth and Family Services, our professional services partner at Lakeside.

Kelly first joined Lakeside and Sequel as a youth counselor in 2007. Promoted to treatment coordinator in 2008 and director of admissions and student services in 2011, she was named executive director of Sequel's Lexington (Indiana) Academy in 2013 and executive director of its Mountain Home (Idaho) Academy in 2014. In 2016, she received Sequel's All-Around HIPP (Humility. Integrity. Passion. Performance.) award for her efforts and dedication to provide world-class service to its clients and employees.

Kelly earned a M.S. degree in criminal justice from Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids and a M.B.A. degree from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.

Steve started at Lakeside Academy as executive director in 2010. Since then, he's helped lead the organization through a period of sustained growth and into a nationally recognized model for care and education of children with behavioral health problems in a residential setting. Through his training initiatives, numerous employees such as Kelly have taken on significant leadership roles at Lakeside and other Sequel programs. Steve has also helped implement

increased supply chain management efforts across Sequel.

In his new role, Steve will oversee several Sequel campuses, including Lakeside, so he will visit our campus frequently.

"I have had a blessed experience while at Lakeside," Steve says. "While I am excited for new experiences, I am equally excited for Kelly. Lakeside Academy will flourish under her leadership."

Welcome back, Kelly! Best wishes, Steve! Congrats to you both on your new assignments.



Students Learn Financial Skills Courtesy of Chemical Bank

A classful of Lakeside for Children students improved their financial literacy skills recently thanks to Chemical Bank of Kalamazoo. Chemical Bank Assistant Vice President **Tasha Fey** led a two-hour "Financial Literacy Workshop" for students who were close to earning their GED or high school diploma through Lakeside Charter School.

Ms. Fey (see photo), assisted by Lakeside teacher **Michael McKinley**, led students in a discussion about the basics of banking, budgeting, checkbook management, credit, and other financial matters.

Students, who admitted to knowing little about financial matters before the workshop, asked a lot of questions of Ms. Fey, who donated her time and expertise during Chemical Bank's annual Community Service Day.

Thank you, Mr. McKinley, for arranging this opportunity for your students, and thank you, Ms. Fey and Chemical Bank, for sharing critical life skills with Lakeside students.

