

# Arbor Light

The Magazine of Concordia University Ann Arbor

## LIVE AMONG

A leader's decision  
to live on campus  
contributes to CUAA's  
Christian community



# Arbor Light *contents*

FALL/WINTER 2018



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Festive traditions, new and evergreen, make up Concordia's unique celebration of Christ's birth.

## “In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” Romans 8:37

Each year the students who serve in our Campus Ministry programs select a theme verse to give some direction for our collective reflection throughout the academic year. Each campus, Ann Arbor and Mequon, follows a similar practice, but the choice of verse and accompanying theme is selected independently based on what fits best for Michigan or Wisconsin. The decision is made without reference to the other campus. If Google can be trusted, there are 31,102 verses in the Bible. Even omitting the more obscure ones, the odds of both campuses selecting the same verse for the same year seem remote. Nevertheless, it happened (remarkably the second time since our merger in 2013)! This year across Concordia University we agree: We are more than conquerors through Jesus who loves us! Romans 8:37 will be our shared point of reference through all that awaits us at Concordia in 2018-2019.

In the pages of this issue of Arbor Light, you will glimpse women and men living uncommon lives of service to Christ in the Church and world.

A dean of students so devoted to students and their experience that he resides in campus housing, too. John Rathje and his wife, alumna Kristin, are always smack-dab in the middle of campus life. Together they literally live our mission—24/7. His uncommon commitment is more than a job because John understands what it means to be more than a conqueror in Christ.

A commitment to helping students be well prepared for professional life after Concordia inspired Professors Joey-Lynn Bialkowski and Lisa Johnson to establish Concordia’s Office of Career Engagement and Industry Relations. Their innovative approach aims to reach every Concordia student with a customized approach that will be a big win-win for graduates and employers alike.

A recognition of the enormous emotional toll experienced by first responders to crises and critical incidents motivated faculty in Concordia’s justice and public policy department to get involved. Professors Dan Chlebos and Frank Rubino are helping students like Mikaela Morgan to include healthful processing and coping strategies for those instances when service to others places them in situations and circumstances sometimes almost too difficult to imagine. To be “more than a conqueror” does not make a first responder invincible. Concordia helps those who so selflessly help others.

It is my great privilege to work each day alongside winsome people like these—folks who champion the needs and concerns of others. The fortuitous choice of the same theme verse for both campuses may be a coincidence. The assurance of the eternal and overwhelming victory that is ours in Christ, however, motivates our shared mission. In gratitude, Concordians are freed to pursue the uncommon path of dedicating their lives to make someone else’s better.

  
**REV. PATRICK T. FERRY, PHD**  
President



**ARBOR LIGHT** is the official magazine of Concordia University Ann Arbor. It shares the stories of exciting advancements on campus; notable accomplishments of our faculty, staff, students, and alumni; and the life-changing service Concordians undertake for Christ in the Church and world. The biannual publication is sent to tens of thousands of alumni, parents, and stakeholders each fall and spring.

The Office of Strategy and University Affairs is responsible for the production of *Arbor Light*. The magazine’s editorial team welcomes your feedback. Please send comments or queries to [Arborlight@cuaa.edu](mailto:Arborlight@cuaa.edu).

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**ON THE COVER:** CUAA Dean of Students Rev. John Rathje (second from right) makes time for students on campus, including, from left, Micah Penhallegon ('20), J'May Simmons ('22), and Angela Knickelbein ('20).

# social scene

## CONNECT WITH US

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### HITTING THE BOOKS

Rewind to 1966. Someone get this guy a cup of coffee! Check out more on Instagram or Facebook with #RedFeatherFlashback.



• **THE BALL'S IN A NEW COURT!** This past summer, our gym floor received quite the facelift. Come see for yourself, we're hosting CIT here in January!



### SINGING THE GOSPEL TRUTH "Oh, let it rise!"

Last year, Concordia launched the first gospel choir in university history under the direction of Dr. Geoffrey Stanton.

**"We can be assured that for the 2018 Final Four weekend, the City of Ann Arbor was well represented."**

There's more than one way to make it to the NCAA Final Four. Read about it at [blog.cuaa.edu/ncaa-final-four](http://blog.cuaa.edu/ncaa-final-four).



**CHRISTIAN EXCELLENCE NOTED** Our announcement that Concordia University was named a Christian College of Distinction was among our most “liked” Facebook posts of the summer.



**“You’ve already accomplished a lot, but you know there’s something new on the horizon.”**

For Concordia’s new pMBA program, we are looking for business executives who are eager to take that next step. Learn more at [cuaa.edu/pmba](http://cuaa.edu/pmba) and subscribe to our YouTube channel to catch all of the latest CUAA videos.



**This is to those who champion Concordia through social media.**

Every tweet, every post, every “like,” every comment, and every share—we notice you, and we appreciate you!



**FAVORITE REVIEW:  
JEREMIAH HOEHNER**

“Best 4 years of my life ... prior to marriage. This place of Christian learning changed my life in ways that I am still discovering. I cannot speak more highly of the time I spent here, the professors who challenged and changed me, and the friends I met here who have become my family. Go Cards!”

**FOLLOWERS FAR AND WIDE**

Social media keeps us connected even when we’re oceans apart. Thanks to our loyal followers abroad. Here’s just a taste of who “likes” us (we see you, too, Libya!).

<b>34</b> INDIA	<b>14</b> INDONESIA	<b>10</b> PAKISTAN
<b>18</b> NIGERIA	<b>13</b> BRAZIL	<b>2</b> LIBYA



## SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES DEAN ANNOUNCED

Photography by Allie Milot ('21)

**E**rin Laverick, PhD, has been named the new campus dean for the School of Arts and Sciences at Concordia University Ann Arbor. Laverick, who began her role on August 13, brings with her 16 years of experience in higher education. She succeeds Bob McCormick, PhD, who announced his retirement earlier this year after 21 years with CUAA.

With more than 40 degree programs offered, the School of Arts and Sciences is the largest of CUAA's four academic schools. It encompasses a broad range of disciplines and houses the campus' liberal arts core.

"A liberal arts education is still as vital as ever," Laverick says. "It enables students to excel in critical thinking and it introduces them to the skillset of being collaborative and collegial. My goal is to make sure we are effectively communicating the worth of that type of degree to students."

Read the full story at [blog.cuaa.edu/arts-sciences-dean](http://blog.cuaa.edu/arts-sciences-dean).

## NEW SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY FOR ALUMNI

**T**his fall Concordia University announced the first-ever scholarship offering for all Concordia University Ann Arbor alumni looking to return to their alma mater and take the next step in their educational journey.

The Alumni Scholarship program provides \$200 per any three-credit course in eligible adult accelerated undergraduate programs or \$500 per three-credit course in participating graduate programs.

While none of the eligible course offerings are currently available on the ground in Ann Arbor, a significant number of online offerings made the list, including Concordia's reputable MBA program and the recently launched Doctorate of Education of Leadership in Innovation and Continuous Improvement.

To view a full list of eligible programs and to learn more, visit [cuaa.edu/uncommon-scholarships](http://cuaa.edu/uncommon-scholarships).

## VOCATIONAL SUPPORT BY DESIGN

By **Kali Thiel**, *University Affairs*

Photography by Allie Milot ('21)

**T**he prime real estate and large viewing window of Concordia University Ann Arbor's new Career Engagement Studio make the space nearly impossible to miss for anyone taking a stroll through campus.

The view from the studio opens up onto the central courtyard, CUAA's main thoroughfare, and at any given point in the day passersby are likely to spot the room bustling with activity. Even the eye-catching décor contributes to the appeal: red IKEA chairs offer pops of color, and students peering in from outdoors will immediately spot a floor-to-ceiling photo mural of recent CUAA alumni living out their vocations.

All of this is by design—even the decision to call the room a studio. Last fall when Dr. Joey-Lynn Bialkowski, former Haab School of Business professor and director of Concordia's sport and entertainment business program, took charge of what was previously called the Office of Career Services she knew she'd need a space and resources that would meet the rhythm of how Concordia students prepare themselves for lives after college.

Bialkowski officially stepped into her new role in June 2017 and brought with her fellow Haab School of Business faculty member Lisa Johnson, who now serves as director of the Career Engagement Studio. Together with a team of career ambassadors, Concordia's revamped Office of Career Engagement and Industry Relations (CEIR) put out promising results at the close of its inaugural academic year, having multiple graduate placements with nationally recognized companies, including the Detroit Tigers, Enterprise Holdings, and the Michigan Medicine health care system.

"If you look at universities across the nation, career services has typically been that department that gets tucked away somewhere in the basement where it's difficult for students to get to," says Bialkowski, executive director of CEIR. "When Lisa and I stepped in, our charge was to flip career services on its head and to fit it into the 21st century, and so we wanted our space to be a fishbowl as much



The career engagement team includes, from left, Kenton Smith, Joey-Lynn Bialkowski, Lisa Johnson, and Alisha Anderson.



CEIR Executive Director Dr. Joey-Lynn Bialkowski (front left) and Director of Career Engagement Studio Lisa Johnson (back left) meet with students in Concordia's recently refurbished Career Engagement Studio.

as possible. We want students to constantly be seeing what's taking place and think, 'What's happening in there?'"

What's happening "in there" is also a shift from the traditional.

An early student focus group helped Bialkowski and Johnson quickly realize that CUAA students equated "career services" with more work. So in the past year the CEIR team members have aimed to keep their efforts relevant, purposeful, and engaging with high energy, short meetings, and fun incentives.

They began last year to host "Take 20s," for example, which offer 20 minutes of hard and fast professional development insights that students can simply drop in on instead of scheduling an appointment to attend. They also began to invite students to stop into the studio to publicly celebrate their personal milestones by picking up a novelty horn and literally tooting their own horn. And they laid the groundwork of infusing themselves into each academic school's curriculum to ensure they consistently hit their student touch-point benchmarks.

Their ultimate goal is to connect with 100 percent of the CUAA student body each year. They made progress toward that end last school year with a 154 percent increase in their student touch-point rate from the fall 2017 to spring 2018 semester.

Each student requires a personalized approach, says Johnson. Oftentimes students come in unaware of the gifts and skills they already possess. The CEIR staff's role is to draw out students' stories, help them recognize what's already there, and make the connection between their gifts and a possible career path.

"That's our mission, to help students discover how to use their gifts for service to Christ in the Church and world," says Johnson. "It is literally an exploration. We're here to help them take note of their God-given gifts and to recognize what it looks like to serve within their vocations."

**324**



Studio visits

**133**



Take 20 attendees

**270**



Attendance at industry-related events

Figures are from CEIR's inaugural academic year, September 2017 to May 2018.

**CAREER ENGAGEMENT AND INDUSTRY RELATIONS** is eager to partner with alumni and industry professionals to provide more opportunities for CUAA students. Learn more at [cuaa.edu/career-engagement](http://cuaa.edu/career-engagement).

## Concordia to launch physician assistant program



Concordia University Ann Arbor is proud to announce a new physician assistant studies program, Michigan's only Christian-based PA program, to build on its existing strength in the health professions and help meet the growing need for health care providers. The master's-level program is slated to begin classes in August 2019.

The program will include both classroom and hands-on experience, along with 11 months of clinical training. The PAs will be housed in the North Building with other health science programs, including nursing, athletic training, and health and human performance. This facility allows opportunity for collaborative research and shared learning spaces.

Concordia's Master of Science in physician assistant studies will be led by Christine Oldenburg-McGee, MAEd, MS PA-C, who joins the CUAA faculty from what is now called the University of Michigan Health System Trauma/Burn Intensive Care Unit.

"Concordia is making bold strides in health care education", says Oldenburg-McGee. "I'm pleased to work alongside my talented colleagues to prepare our students to provide a better patient experience that will have significant impact in their lives and the overall health of our community."

While the overarching theme of the program is preventative medicine and primary care, students will have to demonstrate understanding in topics such as pharmacology, physiology/pathophysiology, clinical skills, and issues in health care.



## FAITH-INSPIRED GIVING

An enduring friendship brings blessings to Concordia

By **Lisa Liljegren**, *University Affairs*

**R**on and Marvel Jones had a pretty good idea they were going to support Concordia University Ann Arbor before they ever visited campus. In their 59 years of marriage, the Jackson, Michigan, couple keeps two things at the center of their busy, abundant lives: their Lutheran faith and their Redeemer Lutheran Church community. When longtime friend and church member Rev. John Rathje, dean of students at CUAA, invited them to visit Concordia and witness a campus with a mission so closely tied to their own, they were eager to extend their blessings.

“We’ve received great joy in our relationship with John and his family,” says Marvel. “We’ve always supported John and his efforts to grow our ministry, so when he invited us to visit campus we knew he was going to show us something special.”

John and his wife, Kristin, had recently returned to Ann Arbor from St. Louis, Missouri. After mission planting in inner-city St. Louis for nearly 10 years, the Rathjes were excited to come back to their home state of Michigan and their alma mater. John accepted a call to be the dean of students at CUAA, where they both studied toward degrees in education. Among the first to welcome them home were

Redeemer Lutheran Church friends Ron and Marvel Jones.

The Jones family is a Michigan State University family. Ron and Marvel met on that campus as undergraduates and married just before their senior year. Upon graduation, Ron entered the family business, Dawn Food Products, Inc., and became the company’s second-generation owner.

While Ron was growing the family business, Marvel focused on raising their three children, Carrie, Chris, and Connie, and serving at Redeemer. At that time, John, a trained counselor and teacher, was a called worker at Redeemer and had many opportunities to collaborate with Marvel. The two of them became particularly close when they started a Stephen Ministry program there and traveled together to their training.

When the Joneses’ youngest daughter, Connie, was diagnosed with juvenile diabetes at the age of 9, Marvel turned to her church family, including her friend and trained caring minister John for support.

Connie’s condition required daily care and monitoring, a responsibility Marvel was more than proud to undertake. As their roles as caretakers expanded, Ron and Marvel

developed close bonds with the care providers, particularly nurses, who treated their daughter and supported the family.

Years later when they toured CUAA, they were most interested in learning about the School of Nursing. After meeting Dr. Cindy Fenske, dean of the School of Nursing, and learning how dedicated she is to the students and to Christ’s teachings, the Joneses knew exactly where to direct their support.

With the help of the Office of University Advancement, the Joneses established the Ronald L. and Marvel C. Jones Nursing Scholarship Endowment to provide financial support to students already enrolled in the nursing program.

The couple created a second endowment that will provide access to a CUAA education for students who could otherwise not attend the university. According to Marvel, “Regardless of what they are studying, we value the ethics that are instilled at Concordia and are pleased to support them.” Adds Ron, “We’ve been blessed, and we pray to be a blessing to others.”

Your giving makes a difference. Learn more about the ways you can financially support Concordia at [cuaa.edu/giving](http://cuaa.edu/giving).



Chief Campus Executive Curt Gielow (center) and School of Nursing Campus Dean Cindy Fenske, DNP, RN, CNE, talk with Bill Burmeister, gift planning counselor for Church Extension Fund of the LCMS Michigan District, during the summertime Michigan District Convention on CUAA's campus.

## ZERO TO 20 IN A FLASH

This year the Ann Arbor campus will celebrate its first December commencement and with it our inaugural class of nursing students, known as the Alpha class, will graduate. Having entered the new program in August 2016, this class marks the start of a sequence of nursing students completing their studies at CUAA every semester. The nursing cycle necessitated the creation of an additional graduation ceremony to match the traditional ceremonies held in May.

The CUAA School of Nursing has grown quickly since its founding in 2016. Students who have declared nursing as their academic major now represent more than 20 percent of the total campus enrollment. It's gone from non-existent to the single largest academic major in two years! We thank God for blessing this program, its faculty, and the leadership in achieving this significant milestone.

The 40 graduates of the Alpha class hail from six different countries and represent four different ethnicities; consequently, many are bilingual. Twenty-two percent are older than 27 years of age, and eight of the graduates navigated the complexities of being student-athletes during their rigorous program.

Unique to our program is the required international clinical rotations that allow our nursing students to experience health care delivery in foreign countries. Several of the Alpha class graduates intend to either work in



School of Nursing Alpha class members Turome Chandler and Alexandria Carr will graduate on December 9, 2018.

domestic inner-city clinical environments or foreign countries. Our School of Nursing is truly an opportunity to witness our Christian faith and Lutheran values to caregivers who will be practicing across the globe.

In addition to the nursing program, the North Building of the CUAA campus houses the athletic training, and health and human performance programs, both growing in student enrollment and academic reputation. The newest academic health care initiative under development is the physician assistant program, which will also be housed in the North Building. That program will begin in August 2019, and construction on facilities renovation will begin during the winter.

**CURT GIELOW**  
*Chief Campus Executive*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

For more events and full information, visit [cuaa.edu/events](http://cuaa.edu/events).

### October

- 11-14—"Fools" Fall Play
- 13—Homecoming
- 18-19—Fall Break
- 21—Band/Choir Concert
- 23—"Clearly Christian" by A. Trevor Sutton ('04) Book Release
- 25—Thunder Sports Complex Dedication Ceremony
- 26—Alumni and friends Oktoberfest in Cleveland
- 26-28—Senior High School Tool Time Retreat

### November

- 03—Admissions Visit Day
- 11—Trumpet and Organ Duo Veteran's Day Concert
- 15—Marching Band Year in Review Concert
- 21-23—Thanksgiving Break
- 28—Health Care Visit Day
- 30—A Manor Christmas and 41st Annual Boar's Head Festival

### December

- 01-02—A Manor Christmas and 41st Annual Boar's Head Festival
- 03—Gospel Choir and Guitar Ensemble Concert
- 06—Band/Strings Concert
- 09—Baccalaureate and December Commencement

### January

- 19—Musical Theater Day
- 26-27—Concordia Invitational Tournament at Ann Arbor

### February

- 13—Haab School of Business Visit Day
- 28—Music Festival for Lutheran Schools

### March

- 14—Wind/String Ensembles Concert
- 30-31—Junior High School Tool Time Retreat

### April

- 05—Transfer Student Open House
- 11-14—Spring Musical
- 13—Junior Visit Day
- 16—A Night of Singing

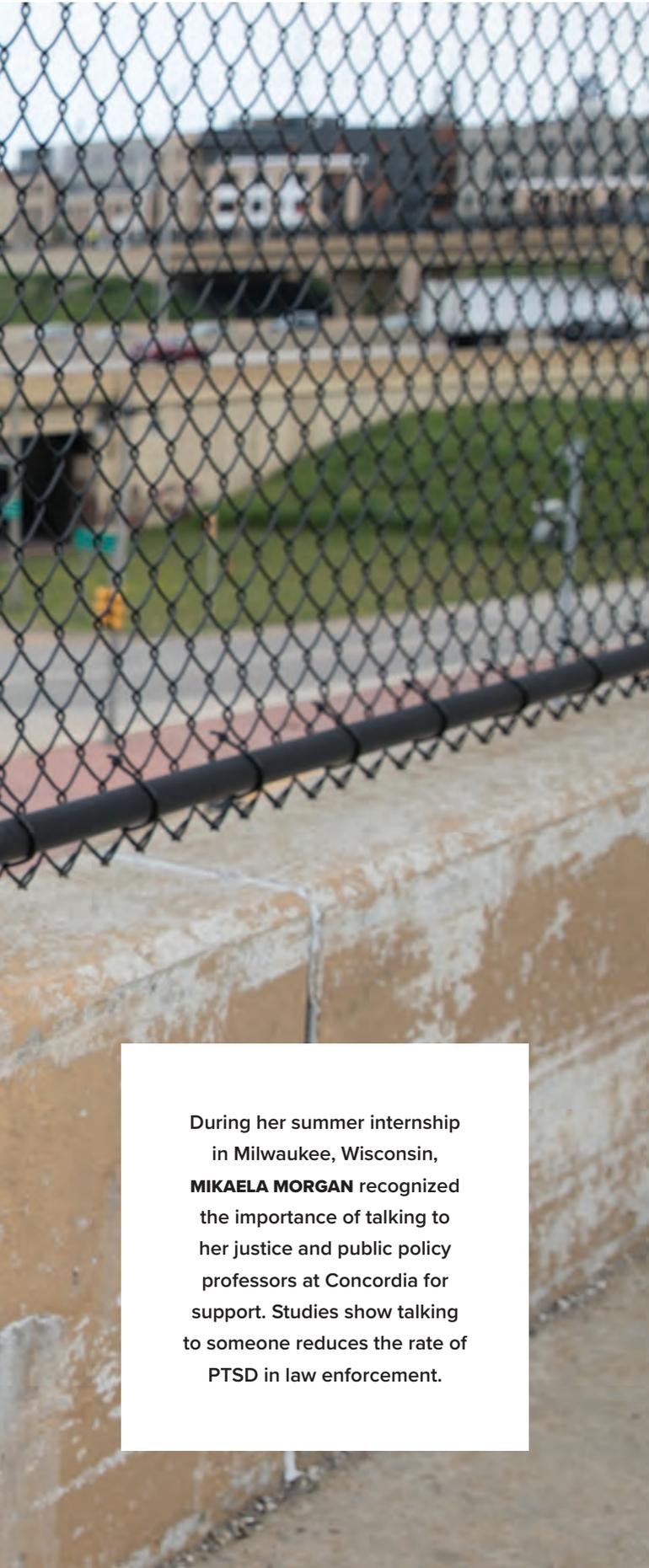


# Breaking the chain

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**CONCORDIA'S JUSTICE AND PUBLIC  
POLICY DEPARTMENT IS WORKING  
TO INSTILL POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH  
HABITS AMONG THE NEXT GENERATION  
OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

By **Kali Thiel**, *University Affairs*  
Photography by *Andrea Adams*



During her summer internship in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, **MIKAELA MORGAN** recognized the importance of talking to her justice and public policy professors at Concordia for support. Studies show talking to someone reduces the rate of PTSD in law enforcement.

**M**ikaela Morgan isn't one to shy away from hairy situations. This past summer the Concordia University Ann Arbor justice and public policy (JPP) major chose to intern with the Milwaukee-based nonprofit Exploit No More, whose mission is to turn the tide of sex trafficking in the Greater Milwaukee area. She first learned of the organization through her pastor, who serves on the Board of Directors, and was impressed with how Exploit No More was able to leverage faith, family, the community, and those who protect it to tackle the dire concern.

Morgan never met with any of the victims she devoted her summer to helping, but she heard plenty of stories. Especially weighing on her were the stories of a girl enslaved in a trafficking ring at the age of 6 and the 11-year-old taken from her drug-dealing parents as a form of punishment to the adults.

Morgan admits the summer work at times took a tremendous emotional toll, but it didn't deter her from wanting to continue. Following her graduation this coming spring, she plans to pursue a career in law enforcement that will allow her to continue to help victims of sex trafficking. The summer did, however, reinforce a vital lesson learned through her classes at CUAA.

"One of the main things I've learned at Concordia is that it's always good to speak to someone about a traumatic situation after it happens," Morgan says. "I really plan on taking that lesson to heart in my career and having it be a consistent thing that I do to ensure that I'm not keeping it all bottled inside."

## *The silence killer*

History and statistics show that first responders who do not make a habit of talking to someone about the trauma they experience can face harmful, sometimes even deadly, consequences.

In April 2018, the Ruderman Family Foundation—a philanthropic organization that works for more inclusion and rights for the disabled—released a white paper that articulates the concern. The study looked at depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other issues affecting first responders and the rates of suicide in departments nationwide.

According to the study, first responders (police officers and firefighters) are more likely to die by suicide than in the line of duty. In 2017, 243 firefighter and police officer deaths were attributed to suicide compared to 222 in the line of duty. More than half of those suicides—140—were police officer suicides, which was more than triple the number of officers who were fatally shot last year.

The study also found that on average police officers witness 188 "critical incidents" during their careers and that this exposure to trauma can lead ▶



“It was typical of the day and era that I grew up in to ‘suck it up’ and move on,” Chlebos says. “Today, I would tell someone with that mentality that they’re living in a dream world. There’s too much evidence out there for us to justify continuing in that manner, and it’s really our responsibility as a Christian university to make sure our students are cared for in a manner that they can then fully serve others.”

## Practicing healthy

One of the ways Concordia’s justice and public policy department is working to turn the tide for future first responders is to require “debriefs” for every JPP student on internship.

Debriefs are not therapy sessions, and Rubino says he’s careful to articulate the difference between the two to students. Rather, debriefs are approximately 15-minute check-ins that students have periodically with a JPP professor. It’s a way for the students to decompress and process what they’ve seen and experienced while observing the same potentially traumatizing events as first responders do.

It’s also a way to get students accustomed to talking to someone—professional or not—so that hopefully they’ll continue when they graduate, says Rubino.

Chlebos acknowledges the debriefs are an added commitment for the department, one that doesn’t fulfill any accreditation standards, but Concordia’s low student-to-teacher ratio makes it manageable. The university’s distinctive approach to education that develops students holistically and from a Christ-centered perspective makes it necessary.

“It’s an enhancement to the curriculum that has to be done,” Chlebos says. “If we’re going to do the job of training future law enforcement, let’s do it right. We’ve found this to be an integral part of the process for the overall health and well-being of our students, and those they’ll eventually serve, and we’re not going to avoid it.”

About halfway into Morgan’s internship, around the time she learned about the 6-year-old, she had her first debrief with Rubino, and she says the conversation helped her get through it.

“I was super drained by it; it was super heavy,” says Morgan. “It was just nice to have someone to talk to.”

Morgan said she anticipated these types of days would come when she decided to major in justice and public policy. She’s dealt with some heavy things of her own in the past and has experienced bouts of depression as a result. Through the help of a counselor at one point, and friends and family throughout, she was able to emerge emotionally and mentally healthy.

“I think there was a point where I was concerned about the stigma against mental health, but now I’m to the point where I’m going to do what’s best for me, and what’s going to keep me safe and healthy in the long run,” she says. “For me, it was a lot of I was just a kid stuck in the cross fire of my mom and dad. It was a heavy burden and weight to carry, and I don’t want another kid to have to go through that if I can play a part in helping.” ■

to several forms of mental illness. PTSD and depression rates among firefighters and police officers have been found to be as much as five times higher than the rates within the civilian population, which causes these first responders to commit suicide at a considerably higher rate.

“There are untold numbers of people who are suffering from a whole spectrum of problems,” says Frank Rubino, MA, TLLP, a clinical psychologist and adjunct instructor for CUAA’s justice and public policy program. “It’s something that isn’t talked about in police departments or fire departments because people are ashamed of it, or there’s a fear that people will judge you as unfit for the job.”

Rubino would know. He served 19 years as a police officer before he retired from law enforcement in 2015. In 2012, spurred by a desire to make a difference among his colleagues, Rubino became a licensed clinical psychologist and continued to work for two more years on the force in an unofficial counselor capacity, giving his coworkers a much-needed non-threatening outlet to process the weightiness of the job.

When he joined Concordia in 2017 as an adjunct instructor and part-time counselor, he found a kindred spirit in Concordia’s justice and public policy head Dan Chlebos, as well as support from university leaders who saw the value in preparing students in “mind, body, and spirit” so that they can better serve others.

Like Rubino, Chlebos has experienced firsthand the dynamics between law enforcement and mental health. With more than 45 years of law enforcement experience, Chlebos worked the streets in Twin Lakes, Wisconsin, for nearly two decades as an officer and, eventually, chief of police. After leaving the department, he founded Criminal Justice Solutions International, where he has become a highly regarded police trainer and consultant.

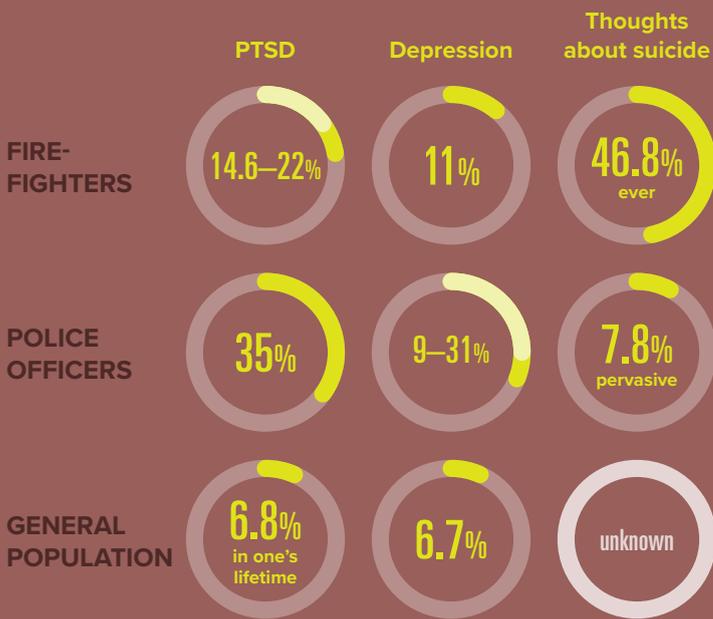
LEARN MORE ABOUT CONCORDIA'S  
JUSTICE AND PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAM  
AT [CUAA.EDU/JUSTICE-PUBLIC-POLICY](http://CUAA.EDU/JUSTICE-PUBLIC-POLICY).



**STATISTICS BASED ON 2017 DATA  
REPORTED BY THE RUDERMAN  
FAMILY FOUNDATION**



MENTAL ILLNESS IS MORE COMMON AMONG FIRST RESPONDERS THAN AMONG CIVILIANS.



**<5%** OF THE 18,000 LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES NATIONWIDE HAVE SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAMS.

FIRST RESPONDERS DIE BY SUICIDE AT A CONSIDERABLY HIGHER RATE THAN CIVILIANS.



**THE CONVERSATION CONTINUED**

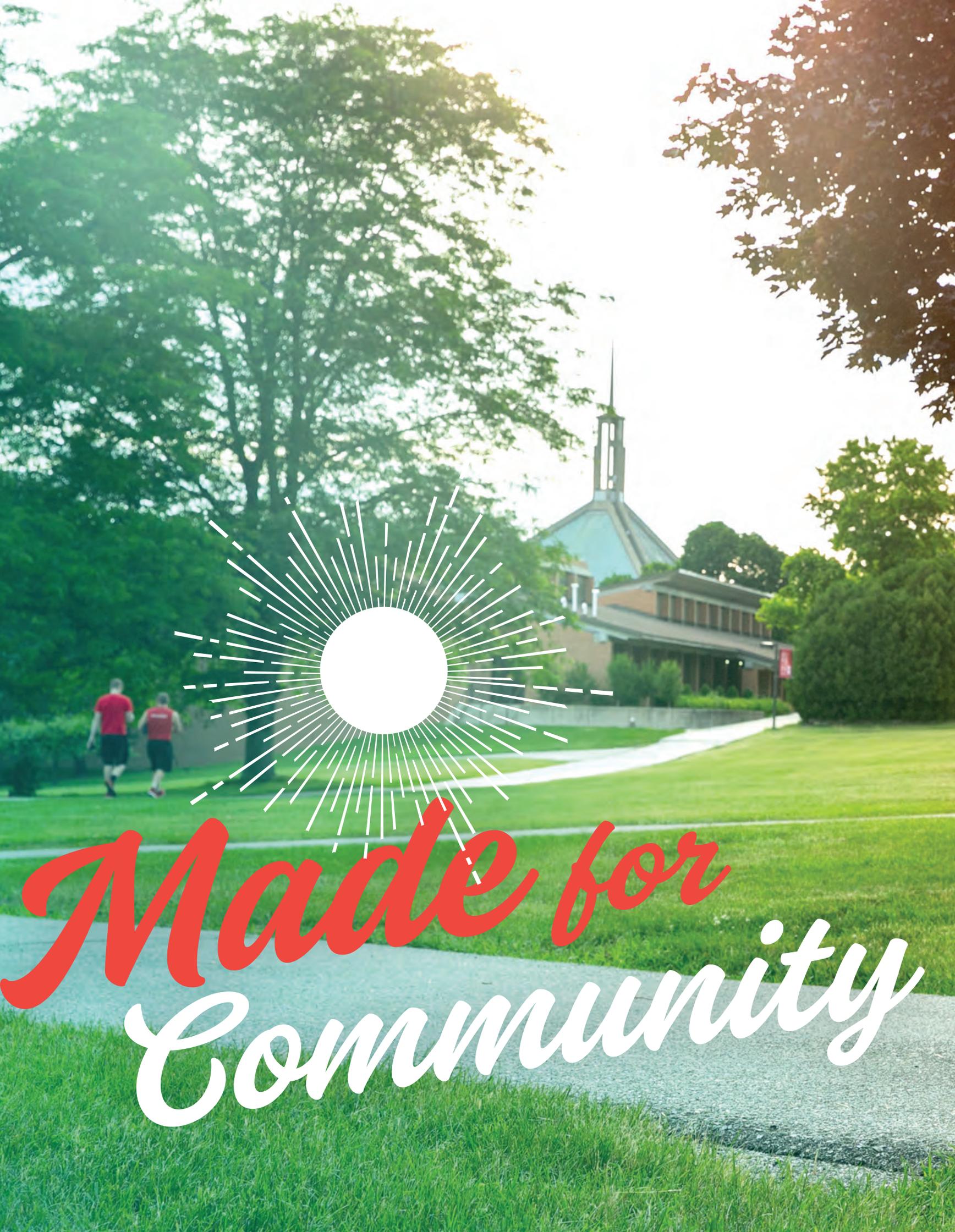
Rubino and Chlebos have taken steps in the past several months to extend the mental health discussion and learning opportunities beyond the Concordia community. This year the pair began to host a series of seminars on various iterations of the topic, and how concerns with unaddressed trauma or other issues manifest themselves in our society today.

In February, Rubino and Chlebos hosted “The Man Up Problem: A Harmful Approach to Raising Young Men,” which was so well attended that the duo decided to hold an encore seminar about a month later. The seminars, which each drew several dozen members of the Ann Arbor community, explored the concern of how young boys in America are being raised to trade empathy, respect, and humility for aggression, machismo, and bravado.

In June, the two targeted first responders and veterans as their audience for “The Silent Partner: Identifying and Coping with Post-Traumatic Stress,” and in August they invited school officials and parents to their final seminar “Signs of the Times: Recognizing Indicators of Violence in School.”



Justice and Public Policy Department Chair Dan Chlebos, left, and Frank Rubino, adjunct instructor, have welcomed community members to a series of seminars focused on mental health-related topics. *Photography by Allie Milot (21)*



*Made for  
Community*



**God tells us in His Word that it is good for Christians to live in community with one another. But how do we as believers live in community with those who are different from us, with those who openly oppose us even?**

As CUAAs enrollment continues its celebrated climb, the campus, too, continues to grow more and more diverse—in thought, background, and every sense of the word. Yet Concordia remains steadfast to its Lutheran foundation, and campus leaders, more than ever, are looked upon to winsomely bridge the gap through their faithful witness. What does this look like? You'll find an excellent example in Concordia's Dean of Students Rev. John Rathje.

By **Rachel Thoms** and **Kali Thiel**, *University Affairs*



Campus Dean Rev. John Rathje and wife Kristin Rathje are at home on Concordia's campus.



When sitting on their front porch, the Rathjes have a prime view of John Mark hall.

**R**ev. John Rathje ('88) need look no further than his own backyard to find a mission field ripe for the harvest. As dean of students for one of the fastest-growing college campuses in the Midwest, each day is a new opportunity for Christian witness. Rathje is charged with ensuring a safe, healthy, and positive overall experience for Concordia students, which means that in any given day his responsibilities might run the gamut from consoling a homesick freshman to mediating a conduct violation.

In short, Rathje's charge is to foster a sense of community among CUAA's more than 1,000-person (and growing) student body.

Rathje eagerly responds to campus changes and Concordia's growing student population with openness, flexibility, and a willingness to communicate, especially as diversity of the student body expands across societal, subcultural, and economic spectrums. With the tangles of growth come an opportunity to expose each student to Christ, says Rathje—and to do so in an environment where students are known by name.

"Concordia's mission is fulfilled when students are out serving Christ in the Church and the world," says Rathje. "We want them to be uncommon servants of Christ who listen to each other, 'live among' one another in community, and extend dignity to everyone they meet—and that starts with us modeling it to them during their time here at Concordia."

To do this, Rathje has made the deliberate—albeit unconventional—decision to make his home on Concordia's campus.

Since stepping into his position in 2013, Rathje and wife Kristin ('88) have hung their hats among the campus residential housing. Their home is located on the southeast portion of campus, and sandwiched between John Mark and Luke halls.

"Being right in the middle gives me the chance to listen and 'live among' in order to really love our students the best way I can," Rathje says. "Part of that love is actually not just being compassionate but speaking truth to these students. Anything is fair game to talk about, and then we take it back to God's Word."

Rathje's humble abode has afforded him various opportunities to "speak truth" to students, sometimes at unexpected times thanks to the open-door policy he keeps for both his office and his home.

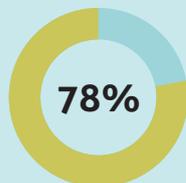
No matter the topic, Rathje's focus is to model health—in mind, body, and spirit—and to offer dignity to every student he encounters.

"It's not by accident that we were born. Every person created is a part of God's gift to this world," Rathje says. "As the dean of students, I have the unique role to demonstrate how we can offer dignity to each created child of God. Because He created us, we have value."

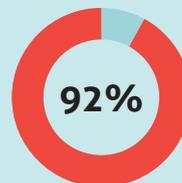
DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS MADE FOR COMMUNITY? LEARN HOW TO BECOME A CONCORDIAN BY VISITING [CUAA.EDU/ADMISSIONS](http://CUAA.EDU/ADMISSIONS).



**Record high** 2018–19 total enrollment



78% of 2018 graduates agreed that Concordia helped them better understand their **calling and purpose in life**



92% of 2018 graduates agreed that Concordia provided a **positive environment for learning, living, and personal growth**

# At home at work

Meet two more Concordians who have decided to “live among.” Julia Cassell ('17) is the new director of residence life at Concordia and Luke Diekevers ('18) is CUAA's new resident director. The two moved into their on-campus homes over the summer. Under Rathje's leadership, Cassell and Diekevers oversee the approximately 400 students who live in Concordia's 16 residence halls, and together with graduate assistant Kenton Smith they direct a group of 18 student resident assistants.



## Built for Belonging

Ask Concordians to define the winning formula for their thriving Christian community, and they'll offer a multitude of answers—the people, ample opportunities for spiritual growth, and professors who teach from a Christian worldview, to name a few.

Even Concordia's residence halls are made for community. In fact, the unique design of students' on-campus living quarters was what sealed the deal for twin sisters Esther and Emmi Schulze ('20).

During their college search process three years ago, the Brooklyn natives placed a high priority on finding a university that would allow them to feel a sense of belonging. The twins set out on a four-stop college tour through the Midwest to finalize their top picks, and as soon as they saw Concordia's res hall setup, they knew they'd found their place.

I walked in and immediately thought, 'I feel like I'm home,'" Esther recalls. "With most dorms, you feel somewhat restricted to your roommate, but at Concordia, I feel like I'm in a community of girls who all live together."

Concordia's inventive layout positions rooms around a central two-story common space with vaulted ceilings. When residents step out of their rooms, they look out onto the shared space, which is furnished with a kitchenette, fireplace, couches, and a coffee table.

Esther says it's not uncommon for a Saturday morning pancake breakfast between roommates to turn into a building-wide event, and the common area (or "CA" as it's called) has been known to host a game or two of dodgeball with inflatable beach balls.

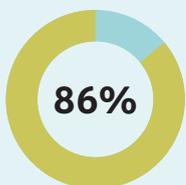
"It's hard to live in the dorms and not be a part of whatever is taking place in the CA," says Esther. "It makes it easy to connect with people."

Learn more about life on CUAA's campus at [cuaa.edu/residence-life](http://cuaa.edu/residence-life).

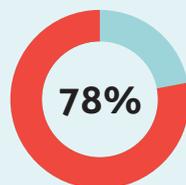
Photography by Allie Milot ('21)



CUAA students hang out in the Silas Common Area (CA) to take a break during an eventful fall orientation weekend. Pictured left to right: Ashely Lupinski ('20), Esther Schulze ('20), Conner Forbes ('19), Emmi Schulze ('20)



86% of 2018 graduates feel better prepared both to serve and to lead by **putting the needs of others first**



78% of 2018 graduates indicated they **grew in their Christian faith** during their time at CUAA



90% of 2018 graduates felt that **faculty and staff demonstrated they personally cared**



# A MANOR CHRISTMAS

*Concordia hosts a new Ann Arbor tradition*

By Lisa Liljegren, *University Affairs*

Concordia’s treasured Earhart Manor will once again be gloriously decorated for the season by local designers as the main feature of A Manor Christmas, a three-day celebration on the Concordia University Ann Arbor campus, Nov. 30–Dec. 2. Hosted by the Concordia Guild, this community event offers unique shopping in a European-styled market, carolers, refreshments, and guided tours of the Manor. All proceeds benefit the Concordia Guild Scholarship Fund.

“Concordia is home to one of the most beloved historic gems in the area, the Earhart Manor,” said Joan Koerschen, chair of the event committee. “This event allows us to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas together with

our community while sharing the rich history that is a part of the Earhart Manor.”

For more information, visit [cuua.edu/manorchristmas](http://cuua.edu/manorchristmas).

## About the Earhart Manor

Once a historic 400-acre dairy farm on Geddes Road along the Huron River, the property, known as “the Meadows,” was purchased by Carrie and Harry Boyd (H.B.) Earhart in 1916. H.B. Earhart made his fortune in the gasoline business in Detroit. They moved their family of four children to Ann Arbor to enjoy the “small town living” that the community offered at the time.



Last year President Patrick Ferry and wife Tamara Ferry enjoyed the festivities of the inaugural A Manor Christmas event.

In the early 1960s, The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod purchased the land from the Earhart family to establish Concordia Lutheran Junior College. The institution changed its name to Concordia College when it began offering four-year degree programs in 1976 and ultimately became Concordia University Ann Arbor in 2001.

# Scenes from the inaugural A Manor Christmas in 2017



## BOAR'S HEAD FESTIVAL

*November 30–December 2*



Elegant dining décor reflected the splendor of the original era.



Concordia decked out the campus greenhouse and filled it with greenery for purchase.



Traditional carolers welcomed guests to the Earhart Manor and roamed the European-style market.



From top to bottom, the Manor was filled with Christmas cheer.



Festive red balls accented trees throughout campus.

For more than 40 years, Concordia University Ann Arbor students, faculty, and staff have come together to host the Boar's Head Festival in the Chapel of the Holy Trinity on the university's campus.

While the tradition of the Boar's Head Festival dates back to the 14th century in England, the actual symbol of serving boar can be traced to ancient Roman times when boar was the preferred dish at great feasts. In medieval England, Christians considered the wild boar to be a ferocious beast and a symbol for evil. They adapted the Roman feast custom of serving a boar's head on a platter to represent the triumph of the Christ child over evil.

The Boar's Head Festival of music and drama has had several adaptations throughout the centuries, but remains a treasured Christmastime celebration throughout the world.

For more information about CUAA's Boar's Head Festival, please call 734-995-7537.



# take five



**Get to know one of our Uncommon Concordians on campus,  
Dr. Sara Rokicki, coordinator of secondary education.**

By Rachel Thoms, *University Affairs*

It was a journey she thought at one time she would never be able to take. But in fall 2017, Concordia's Coordinator of Secondary Education Dr. Sara Rokicki completed her doctoral program and dissertation in less than four years. A three-time Fulbright Scholar, Rokicki cares most about making classroom concepts second nature to her education students so that they can teach with confidence, connect with their students, and better prepare the next generation for lives of impact and service.

**1 What led you to Concordia?**

God pushes us when we need it. I was very comfortable teaching high school Spanish, and I had been doing that for 13 years before I came to CUAA in 2014. I needed a new challenge. I was also at a public high school at the time and really wanted to work in a Christ-centered environment. It felt like a piece of me was missing. My colleagues now are all mission-minded people, and it makes me excited to come to work every day.

**2 What do you love about your job?**

I love the energy and enthusiasm of our students, and the joy they have for wanting to become teachers. I get to be a part of a positive group of people who are excited about teaching and are committed to spreading God's love.

**3 What are some of the classes you teach?**

I teach a range of students from freshmen to seniors. I teach foundations of education, which is the first class that students take in the School of Education, as well as content

area reading, which is the last class our students take before their student teaching semesters. It's fun to see how much they've learned and grown throughout the program. They're so much more confident and ready to lead their classrooms.

**4 How do you plan on incorporating your doctoral learning into the classroom?**

Last year I completed my dissertation on dispositional transference in teacher preparation candidates. It's critical for students to practice what they're learning so that they don't just know the information, but they can actually do it. If there's a concept my students don't understand, I try to find a way to make it practical for them.

For instance, if we're talking about a forward-thinking idea like alternative seating and the impact that can have on a learning environment, then guess what—we're going to try alternative seating in our CUAA classroom so that they can experience the concept themselves.

**5 How do you encourage students to Live Uncommon?**

Studying and living abroad is an experience I think every student should try. I grew up on a pickle farm in Michigan, and I wanted to be able to communicate with the workers, so I learned Spanish. I studied abroad in high school and college, and fell in love with it. Since then I've taken students on 12 different trips abroad in 22 different countries. Go and see the world so that you can bring what you've experienced back to the classroom and share it with your students.

# alumni notes

**10s** **Tiffany Heinz ('18)**, who is slated to graduate in December with a degree in family life, was among the first selected to receive a diversity scholarship from the Association of Child Life Professionals. The monetary award covers the cost of her required internship.

**Darricle Jones ('18)** was accepted into the Master of Management program at the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. He anticipates specializing in human resources. Jones is also completing a communications internship for a local candidate for state senate. ▼



**Stephanie Johnston ('18)** became Concordia University Ann Arbor's first-ever national champion after winning the women's marathon (26.2 miles) at the 2018 NAIA Outdoor Track and Field National Championships. Johnston's first place time of 3:00:47.44 also gave the senior standout her 8th NAIA All-American honor. ▼



**Leah (Werner) Tweedale ('18)** and **Tyler Tweedale ('19)** celebrated their wedding on January 13, 2018 at University Lutheran Chapel in Ann Arbor,

Michigan. The two remain in Ann Arbor as Tyler completes his degree at CUAA and Leah is a part of the CUAA School of Nursing staff. ▼



**Emily (Racey) Wright ('18)** and **Blake Wright ('17)** were married on May 26, 2018 in Bruce Township, Michigan. The Wrights are currently living in Mount Dora, Florida where Blake is serving his first call as Youth Director at the Cross Mount Dora while Emily interns at the church. ▼



**Sidney (Bosley) Christensen ('17)** and **Collin Christensen ('17)** celebrated their wedding on July 28, 2018 in Cedartown, Georgia. Sidney and Collin reside in Cincinnati, where Sidney works for MedSpace and Collin is pursuing his PhD in Molecular Genetics at the University of Cincinnati. ▼



**Michael Adeyoju ('11)** recently graduated with his Ph.D. in organizational leadership administration from the Chicago

School of Professional Psychology. He now owns a consulting firm that through coaching focuses on helping organizations, employees, and individuals reach their higher side of living a fulfilled and rewarding life. ▼



**Zachary Johnston ('10)** ranks in the top 5 in 15 single-season and career records, including first all-time in career singles (165) and outfield assists (42). He was recently inducted into the Cardinal Hall of Fame. ▼



## Announcements

### ALUMNI EVENTS

**Class of 1969 50th Reunion**  
**May 18–19, 2019**

Contact Director of Alumni Relations  
 Laura Thomas for details at  
[laura.thomas@cuaa.edu](mailto:laura.thomas@cuaa.edu).

**Alumni Boar's Head Performance**  
**November 30**

Call 734-995-7537 for tickets.

Accreditation. Concordia University Ann Arbor is currently accredited with the HLC.

Comments must be in writing, and must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs.

Submit comments to HLC at [hlcommission.org/comment](http://hlcommission.org/comment) or mail them to the address below. All comments must be received by February 25, 2019.

Public Comment on Concordia University Ann Arbor  
 Higher Learning Commission  
 230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500  
 Chicago, IL 60604-1411

### #REDFEATHER FLASHBACK

We want to see your blasts from the past! Share photos from your time as a student at Concordia by emailing them to us at [arbortlight@cuaa.edu](mailto:arbortlight@cuaa.edu) or posting them to your social media accounts using **#RedFeatherFlashback**.

### FEEDBACK WELCOME

Concordia University Ann Arbor seeks comments from the public about the university in preparation for its periodic evaluation by its regional accrediting agency.

The university will host a visit on March 25–26, 2019 from a team of peer reviewers representing the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The team will review the institution's ongoing ability to meet HLC's Criteria for

### STAY CONNECTED

By taking a moment to update your preferred email address, current address, and phone number(s), we can keep you informed of your alumni benefits and news pertaining to you. Update your information at [cuaa.edu/alumniupdates](http://cuaa.edu/alumniupdates).

Once you share your information, you'll receive our alumni e-newsletter that is brimming with opportunities for you to connect with alumni, mentor students, network, be a classroom presenter, volunteer to help others, and live out the CUAA mission.

Many thanks, and blessings to you and your family.

—CUAA Alumni Relations



The Kreps family (back, left to right): Trevin, Erik, Sandy, Rhiana, Alex, Madeline; (front, left to right): Cierrah, Darren, Henry, Bryan, Jason.  
Photo courtesy of Lake Effect Exposures

By Rachel Thoms, *University Affairs*

Erik Kreps ('95) grew up in a military family, and, like most military children, his childhood was filled with multiple moves. By the age of 14, he had hung his hat in six different states and attended nine different schools. When he attended Concordia for the second half of his college career, it was the first place that felt like home.

“In retrospect, I didn’t have much of a faith life when I was in college, but I know that my feeling of home and sense of security was having a community around me that, for the first time, prayed for me and witnessed to me,” said Kreps.

Kreps, a financial specialist senior at the University of Michigan, originally chose to attend Concordia because of his two loves: the opportunity to play basketball and the ability to be near to his then girlfriend, now wife, Sandy. In 1996, a year after graduating from Concordia, Kreps and his wife welcomed their first child into the world.

What they didn’t know at the time was that the Lord would continue to bless them with children.

“Over time, my wife and I realized that one of the biggest blessings in our lives was our family. Through our blessings, God gives us opportunities to bless others,” said Kreps. “We thought about all of the kids out there who didn’t have families, so we started looking into adoption.”

Since then, the couple grew to a family of 11, with four biological children and five adopted children from California, Florida, and China—plus three dogs. Now it’s under Kreps’ roof that his children first experience home and a sense of belonging, just as he felt in his years as a student at Concordia.

Read more of Erik Kreps’ story at [blog.cuaa.edu/alumni](http://blog.cuaa.edu/alumni).



**Kyle Barlow ('10)** married Sierra (Peoples) Barlow on August 24, 2018. The two reside in Toldeo, Ohio with Kyle coaching for the University of Toledo men's basketball team and Sierra working for Arkadin unified communications and conferencing services.

**Rev. Curtis Stephens ('10)** and **Naomi (Fenker) Stephens ('10)** will celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary on December 27, 2018.

**'00s** **Christie Lypka ('09, '11)** was recently published in "Chicken Soup for the Soul—My Crazy Family." The short story is about Lypka's life growing up in Louisiana and showcases some of the colorful characters who helped foster her ability to tell funny, engaging stories. The book is scheduled to be in bookstores and on Amazon in September. ▼



**Mandy (Stoll) Roggow ('05)** and **Aaron Roggow ('05)** welcomed their fourth son on April 16, 2018. Ian David Roggow was baptised into Christ on April 22, 2018 at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan where Aaron serves as associate pastor. ▼



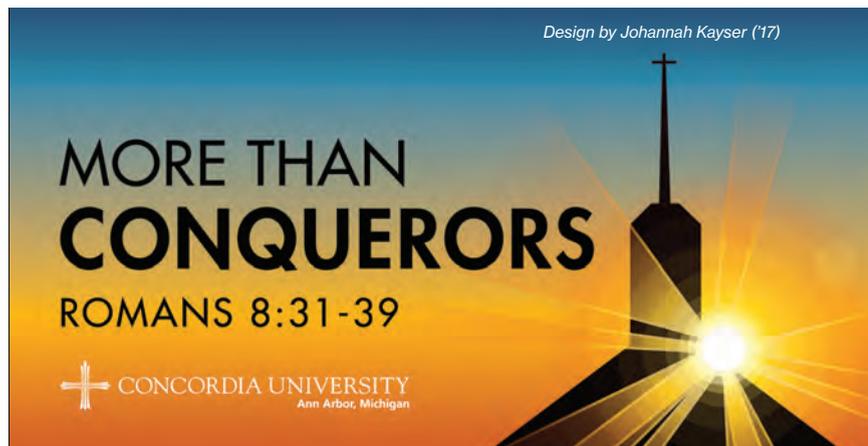
**Michael Ellsworth ('05)** was recently assigned to instruct at the Weapons School at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas, Nevada. His wife, **Erika Ellsworth ('08)**, works as a child life specialist and recently accepted a position at Summerlin Hospital in Las Vegas. ▼



**'90s** **Stephanie Malik ('99)** was a two-sport athlete (soccer/softball) and excelled at both. Malik ranks in the top 5 in nine single-season and career records for soccer and one for softball. She was recently inducted into the Cardinal Hall of Fame. ▼



We are the Church's school! In June 2018, CUAU served as host to three LCMS district conventions. Pastors and lay delegates from the English, Michigan, and Ohio districts gathered on campus for a time of business, worship, and fellowship. Photo by Elisa Schulz/Michigan District, LCMS



## CAMPUS MINISTRY UPDATE

**A**s a teacher, one of the techniques that I have found to be effective at times is to ask a rhetorical question. It primes the pump, causes students to think, and begins to engage them in learning.

The Apostle Paul employs this strategy in Romans 8:31-39, the passage from which we drew inspiration for our 2018-19 school theme, "More Than Conquerors":

What then shall we say to these things?

If God is for us, who can be against us?

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

With CUAU's 56th academic year underway, we are not simply hoping the year is smooth. We are confident in God's Word that we are "More Than Conquerors" through Him who loved us. We live, learn, and teach as ones who have victory solely because of the victory Jesus won for us.

We can't promise students that this year will be struggle-free. Nor does Paul assure the Romans that trouble, hardship, or persecution won't happen. Rather than being overcome by those struggles, Paul acknowledges that they (and we) are "More Than Conquerors." Throughout this year, students will be pointed back to this truth and reminded of it often.

When the unexpected happens ...

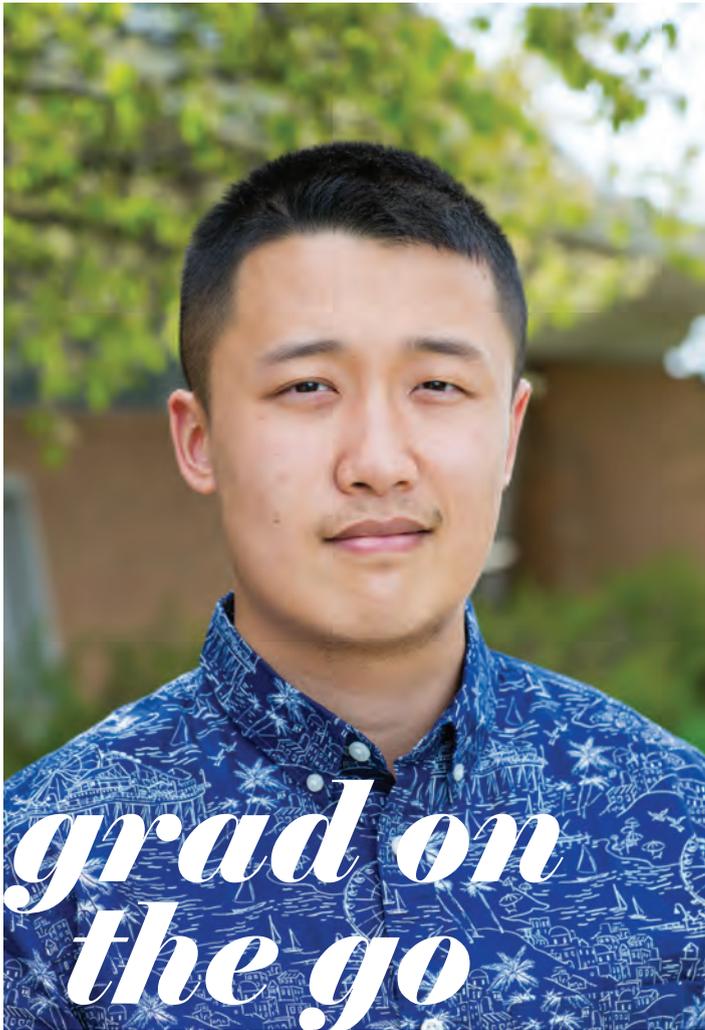
When the relationship fails ...

When the injury occurs ...

We are "More Than Conquerors" through Him who loved us.

Over these past years, we have seen students experience that love and know this truth through the waters of Holy Baptism, through the study of Scripture in theology classes, and through serving on mission trips. This year, we pray for more students to know Jesus, as well. Would you join us in that same prayer?

**REV. DR. RYAN PETERSON**  
Assistant to the President/Campus Pastor



By Rachel Thoms, *University Affairs*

**G**e Zhu ('17) struck up an interest in research during Dr. Bill McMillan's artificial intelligence class and Dr. Elizabeth Peckham's pharmacology class while working toward his bachelor's degree in computer science at CUA. Now Zhu is taking the next step in his educational journey and has his sights set on a career in biomedical engineering.

Zhu, who is currently studying biomedical informatics at Stanford School of Medicine in California, is combining the foundation he acquired from Concordia, the intellectually challenging environment of Stanford, and the entrepreneurial spirit of Silicon Valley to catapult himself toward his goals.

Through the Stanford program, Zhu is working on a data science project in lung cancer care delivery, and has daily interactions with faculty and scholars around the world as he learns from experts in the field. He will complete his graduate degree in August 2019 and hopes to continue his education in a medical scientist training program, where he'll apply computational sciences to clinical medicine. Ultimately, Zhu says he sees himself serving as a diagnostic radiologist in a university hospital, running a research lab in biomedical engineering.

"I appreciated my Concordia experience so much because it truly prepared me on all fronts," Zhu says. "From connecting with faculty who had such impressive, technical knowledge to learning more about the Bible during classes, I feel Concordia provided the well-rounded education that I needed to get me to where I am today."

**Linda Sproul ('92)** accepted a position as director of donor relations at Concordia University Ann Arbor. Her husband, **Rev. Dr. John Sproul ('84)**, is currently serving as intentional interim pastor at Cross of Christ in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Daughter Alison Rein is currently a junior at CUA in the Haab School of Business.

**'80s Jay Biesenthal ('87)** played baseball for 2017 inductee Chuck Boerger and ranks among the top 5 in several single-season and career records. Jay currently holds the single-season on-base percentage of .545. He was recently inducted into the Cardinal Hall of Fame. ▼



**Jayne (Kregel) Diroff ('85)** was a three-sport athlete competing in track and basketball all four years, and volleyball for three, and currently holds the fastest time in two women's outdoor track events. She was recently inducted into the Cardinal Hall of Fame. ▼



**'70s Shirley Fenker ('75) and Rev. William Fenker** celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on July 22, 2018. The pair would like to

recognize the following couples who were also married in 1978:

- **Rev. Jon Trinklein ('75) and Sue (Blattner) Trinklein ('75)**
- **Rev. John Fair ('75) and Chris (Ruehrdanz) Fair**
- **Ron Schuchard ('75) and Doris (Israel) Schuchard ('76)**
- **Rev. George Hansell and Krista (Herr) Hansell ('75)**
- **Rev. Bruce Lucas ('76) and Krista (Kuhl) Lucas ('75)**
- **Chris Gieschen and Leann (Millerwise) Gieschen ('76)**
- **Rev. Jeff Mortenson and Phyllis (Weise) Mortenson ('75)**

**Tom Chopps ('72)** and his wife, Cindy, moved to Mankato, Minnesota this past July following Tom's retirement. Tom worked as a Board Certified Clinical Chaplain for Avera Marshall Regional Medical Center for five years. In retirement, he'll continue to use his palliative and hospice clinical training to work as a volunteer chaplain in the Mankato area.

**Janet (Kaminske) Stechholz ('73)** retired in June of 2018 after over 43 years of teaching in Lutheran schools across the United States. Last summer, Janet and her husband hosted a Reformation Highlights tour in Germany. ▼





Photo courtesy of Tim Sheldon

By **Lisa Liljegren**, *University Affairs*

**A**s the president of Marriott International, Caribbean and Latin America, Tim Sheldon ('82) has a lot on his plate.

Within the span of two hours on a not-so-unusual morning this past July, Sheldon checked in on the well-being of his guests and associates in Haiti after Hurricane Beryl roared through the island; made celebratory calls to associates in Latin America, who were cheering World Cup victories; and brushed up on the day's economic and political news to anticipate any impact in his region.

While there are many variables Sheldon navigates every day as the leader of nearly 50,000 associates at over 240 properties in 34 countries, his foundation and values are rock solid, due, in part, to his time at Concordia University Ann Arbor.

"Concordia was a great foundational time for me," says Sheldon. "The faith-first filter I developed as a student still guides me today in how I treat others and how I make decisions."

A lifelong Lutheran school kid from Detroit, Sheldon enrolled at CUAA in 1978 with plans to continue his family's tradition in Lutheran

education. Following in his older brother's footsteps, Sheldon enrolled as a religion major with plans to attend Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, upon graduation.

"What stands out most in my mind is the campus, itself," remembers Sheldon. "Concordia was the perfect choice for me because it allowed me to make 'the big move' away from home, and it provided me with a wonderful, supportive environment to work through choices and decisions."

Sheldon admits his best decision was to marry fellow CUAA student Janet Liske ('80), who shared his passion for Lutheran education and supported his intention to attend seminary upon graduation.

In Fort Wayne, it was seminary by day and bussing tables at a nearby hotel restaurant at night. Sheldon was surprised to discover how much he enjoyed the hospitality industry. Management took notice of his hard work and offered him a corporate sales position, an opportunity that would change the course of his career.

Sheldon learned to recognize that there are many ways to serve God and the Church. He left seminary for the hospitality industry, and directed his gifts and talents to the service of his associates and guests around the world—a value he's still committed to today.

At 59 years old, Sheldon says he's enjoying the most exciting time in his 30-year career. Over the years, he and Janet, along with their four children, relocated several times to accommodate the opportunities that Marriott International provided. Now that all of the children are married with families of their own, the Sheldon family enjoys reconnecting at their family farm in West Virginia.

He notes that he's grateful to his employer for allowing him to put faith first, and to focus on his family and friends scattered throughout the world.

"Throughout my career," concludes Sheldon, "I was able to live out and reflect the values and the foundation that were defined at Concordia so many years ago."

**'60s** Gary Byers ('68) retired from pastoral ministry at Zion Lutheran Church in Belleville, Illinois in 2014. Gary and his wife, Kathy, love to go on short term missions and host travel groups to international destinations. ▼



On July 25, 2018, Concordia hosted a joint CUAU/CUW alumni outing at the West Michigan Whitecaps baseball game. Dozens of CUAU alumni and their families attended, including, from left, Sam Samsell ('67), Deb Krueger, Susan (Geiger) Samsell ('67), and Richard Krueger ('89). ▼



Michael Kasting ('66) retired from active ministry in 2015. He and his wife, Sue, moved to Oregon City, Oregon, where he is now her fulltime caregiver. They celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in June 2018. Mike continues to volunteer as editor for Living Way Bible Study.

Dex ('67) and Connie ('67) Hoyer celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with Concordia on

August 30 during the joint CUAU/CUW alumni event at the Fort Wayne TinCaps baseball game. The couple is picture below on their wedding day in 1968. ▼



## Krieger Society Members

Concordia University Ann Arbor would like to recognize its January through June 2018 new Krieger Society members. Members of this society are donors with a deferred gift or named endowment to the university.

- Rev. Dr. Jakob and Mrs. Ilona Heckert
- Mr. Ralph and Mrs. Diane Gibeau, Jr.
- Ms. Myrtle Schafer
- Mr. Edwin and Mrs. Ruth Shoemaker

For more information on how to include CUAU in your estate and gift planning, call 734-995-7317.

# Advancing the Mission



If you drove past the campus of Concordia University Ann Arbor this summer, you couldn't help but notice the construction that has been taking place. In addition to a variety of smaller projects, large earthmoving machines were preparing the area across the street from the main campus for the new Thunder Sports Complex. This high-quality athletic facility will serve our CUAU students, as well as younger students from our neighboring St. Paul Lutheran School. Community access will also be available as we extend our reach into the surrounding area. This beautiful complex is an important part of fulfilling our mission as we help students develop in mind, body, and spirit, for service to Christ in the Church and the world.

As exciting as the sight of a new facility might be, it would not be possible without the generous support of so many of our alumni, friends, and community supporters. At Concordia, we like to use the expression that projects like this are examples of "Philanthropy in Action!" Those three words serve as an important reminder to all of us that this project, a vital project for our students, would not be possible without philanthropy.

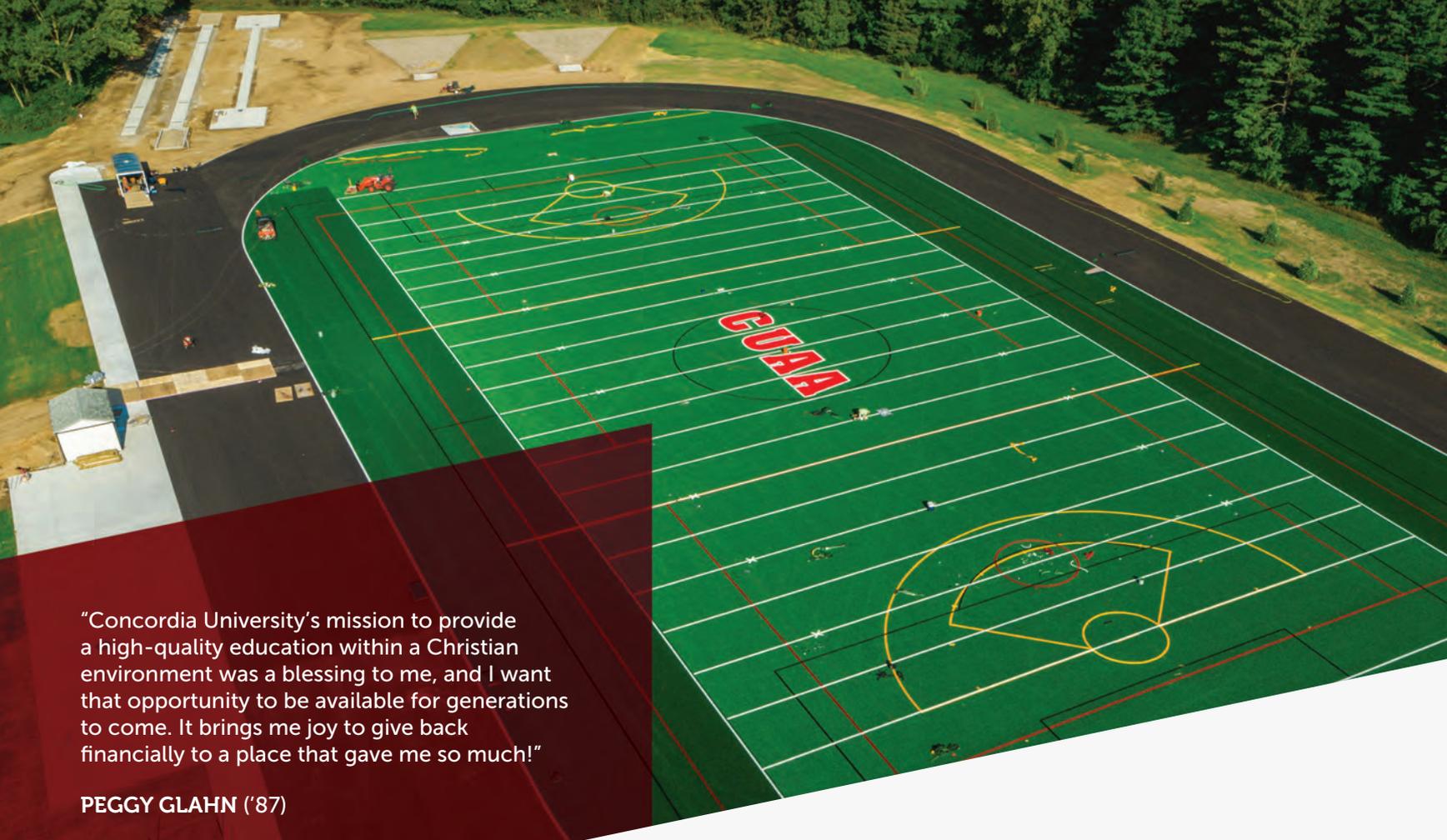
The heart of philanthropy is love—love for others. Demonstrating philanthropy, we reflect in a small way the incredible love that God has first shown us through His Son. For many of our donors, it is this love of God that they have experienced that inspires them to love others, to be philanthropic and generous. When completed, this sports complex will serve many practical functions, but perhaps more importantly it will remind us of God's love and our mission to serve our students so that they may serve many more.

Our heartfelt thanks to all who have already given so generously and demonstrated philanthropy to support this project. The complex is not fully completed yet, and additional funding is still needed. If your heart is filled with love for our students and the mission that God is setting before them, please give me a call at 262-243-4533. I would love to show you how Concordia continues to build on generosity.

**REV. DR. ROY PETERSON**  
Senior Vice President of Advancement

HAVE YOU HAD A SIGNIFICANT LIFE EVENT OR EXCITING ACHIEVEMENT THAT YOU WANT US TO INCLUDE IN THE NEXT ARBOR LIGHT? PLEASE EMAIL YOUR NOTE TO [ALUMNI@CUAA.EDU](mailto:ALUMNI@CUAA.EDU). PHOTOS MAY BE SHARED AS WELL. PLEASE SEND A HIGH-RESOLUTION IMAGE, IF POSSIBLE. VIEW ALL OF THESE ALUMNI UPDATES AND MORE AT [CUAA.EDU/ALUMNI](http://CUAA.EDU/ALUMNI).





"Concordia University's mission to provide a high-quality education within a Christian environment was a blessing to me, and I want that opportunity to be available for generations to come. It brings me joy to give back financially to a place that gave me so much!"

PEGGY GLAHN ('87)



# Building on GENEROSITY

**THANKS TO THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT** of generous alumni and friends, Concordia University Ann Arbor student-athletes are now competing and training on a significantly upgraded track and turf field. Aptly named the Thunder Sports Complex after Keturah (Kay) Thunder-Haab, a treasured CUAA supporter, this project is one of the priorities identified in A Heart for Concordia, the most significant comprehensive campaign in the history of CUAA.

Other campaign priorities include The Maier Center for Evangelism and Apologetics, and significant financial support for CUAA students. For more information about A Heart for Concordia, contact [roy.peterson@cuw.edu](mailto:roy.peterson@cuw.edu).

## Why support CUAA?

- Largest incoming freshmen class ever
- Highest enrollment in the history of CUAA
- 2018 Christian College of Distinction
- More than 50 undergraduate degrees
- One of the fastest growing universities in the Midwest

## Other Unique Gifting Opportunities:

- Support CUAA's greatest needs through the Concordia Fund
- Create an endowment that supports students for years to come
- Directly support a student through the Adopt-A-Student program
- Remember CUAA in your estate plans
- Jump in on a crowdfunding project

For these and more giving opportunities at CUAA, visit [www.cuaa.edu/give](http://www.cuaa.edu/give).



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# Live UNCOMMON

Spend a day on our campus, and you'll quickly recognize there's something quite different about Concordia University. It's the promise of God's grace at work in our everyday lives. Trust us, it's worth experiencing in person.

Reserve your spot and stop by for one of our scheduled Visit Days to see for yourself.  
Or find a visit option that works best for you. Learn more at [cuaa.edu/visit](http://cuaa.edu/visit).

**3**  
NOVEMBER Admissions  
Visit Day

**28**  
NOVEMBER Health Care  
Visit Day

**13**  
FEBRUARY Business  
Visit Day

**5**  
APRIL Transfer  
Open House

**13**  
APRIL Junior  
Visit Day

**3**  
MAY Junior  
Visit Day