

## Thank You!

Golfers, business sponsors, volunteers, students, and staff raised more than **\$41,000** on April 28 for student financial aid and our athletics program. Plan to join us May 3, 2024 for the next golf tournament!

121 donors gave \$54,905 through the April 14 **Great Community Give**, bolstered by generous matching gifts. The gifts will help build the indoor-outdoor learning and community Gathering Space for our elementary school!

## Gift Honors June Weaver '48

The Kenneth Weaver estate shared a gift bequest of **\$37,345 for the Alumni Endowment Fund** in honor of Kenneth's wife, June. June was a member of the class of '48, which established a Golden Anniversary Fund to support the endowment through gifts given by and in honor of members of the class of '48.

The alumni endowment fund supports need-based student financial aid. These gifts make a significant impact! Students will benefit long into the future.

To make a gift in honor of someone or to start an endowed fund, contact Trisha Blosser, [blossert@easternmennonite.org](mailto:blossert@easternmennonite.org) or 540-236-6024.



Photo courtesy of Weaver family



### CLASS GIFTS KEEP GIVING

The blue Adirondack chairs that the class of '17 funded have been moved to the front of the school. Study hall students can now check out to use them, with front office staff monitoring.

The class of '23 provided funds for new library furniture and a heavy duty chess set.

Thank you young alumni! See a history of class gifts at [easternmennonite.org/class-gifts](https://easternmennonite.org/class-gifts).

Today is written by Andrea Wenger, director of advancement, and designed by Lindsey Kolb. Editorial support from Trisha Blosser, development officer, and Paul Leaman, head of school. Golf photo page 5 by Sabrina Forbes '25. Other photos by staff unless otherwise noted.

Send feedback to [today@easternmennonite.org](mailto:today@easternmennonite.org)

Find past issues at [easternmennonite.org/today](https://easternmennonite.org/today)

*In admissions processes, Eastern Mennonite School does not discriminate on the basis of any race, color, handicap, national or ethnic origin, or religion, and admits students to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.*

*The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the school's non-discrimination policies, including its Title IX policy: Debbie Katz, high school counselor, 540-236-6022. For assistance related to Title IX or other civil rights laws, please contact OCR at [OCR@ed.gov](mailto:OCR@ed.gov) or 800-421-3481, TDD 800-877-8339.*



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# TODAY

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## Apply Now!

Applications are still welcome for limited space in some middle and high school grades!

We want to tell you about **curriculum**, **school culture**, and **affordability**. Several area Mennonite churches offer aid plans; EMS offers middle school scholarships to students from churches that provide aid for high school only.

Contact **Marsha Thomas**, admissions counselor, 540-236-6021 about admissions and a tour. Contact **Mike Stoltzfus**, director of business affairs, about your family's financial situation and how investing in an EMS education might fit your budget. [easternmennonite.org/admissions](https://easternmennonite.org/admissions)

## Class of '23: Diversely Cohesive

Emily Hess and Andrew Lantz described their class as "diversely cohesive" in the final chapel of the year. Covid-19 shaped their class of 33, which spent much of their high school career online, masked, and socially distanced.

"We had to rely entirely on each of our own personal wills to interact and socialize with each other," Hess and Lantz noted. "These losses of activities and social opportunities caused our class structure to be somewhat divided..."

The group began to bond, however, in the fall of '22 with their time in Washington, DC. Many listed "senior trip" as a



Seniors decorated (and cleaned up!) the auditorium for the final chapel of the year.

favorite memory during end-of-year presentations.

With this issue of *Today*, we celebrate the class of '23 and other milestones marked this spring at EMS, thankful for graduates who are ready to go into the world and be part of God's work.



More than \$886,000 toward a \$1 million challenge match has been pledged and donated toward the \$2.5 million stretch goal to add an indoor-outdoor learning area and endowed building fund to the elementary school.

The Gathering Space will be the "heart" of EMES. It will enhance learning, foster connection, and support emotional and social well-being. We hope to begin construction in summer of '24.



Elementary students are outside daily for PE and recess, creating fun in the woods and on structures built of found and recycled materials.



## HOMECOMING • Come to Connect!

Oct. 20 and 21, 2023

**Reunions for classes ending in 3 and 8;** details coming from class reunion coordinators.

### Friday:

- Picnic supper. Reserve a table for class meet-ups. Former faculty/staff will have a table reserved.
- Homecoming Concert

Register at [easternmennonite.org/homecoming](https://easternmennonite.org/homecoming)

### MISSION:

Eastern Mennonite School joins home and church in calling students to faith in Jesus Christ, academic excellence, personal integrity, and compassionate service in the world.

### VISION:

Eastern Mennonite School aspires to reflect Christ's light as a learning community where every student belongs, thrives, and lives God's call.

### FOLLOW US:



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

FAITH COMMUNITY

THE ARTS

[easternmennonite.org](https://easternmennonite.org)





Photos by Tiffany Showalter

## CONGRATULATIONS class of 2023

The school's 105th commencement ceremony celebrating 33 graduating seniors took place Saturday, June 3 at Eastern Mennonite University's Lehman Auditorium. Kevin King, executive director of Mennonite Disaster Service, brought the address. He is pictured below right with his son Justin King, high school principal, and Paul Leaman, head of school. See a photo gallery and video link at [easternmennonite.org/commencement](https://easternmennonite.org/commencement)



## MDS Partnership

Students in this spring's Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) class constructed 10 exterior and 18 interior walls that will be transported to Hurley, Virginia, for a new home in a community still recovering from an August 2021 flood.

Some of those students also participated in an April MDS E-term to Hurley, the second year EMS has taken a group.

Fourteen students joined the MDS class, most of whom had no construction experience when they registered for the new elective.

Before the students used nail guns and other power tools to construct the frames, they practiced measuring, sawing, hammering, and other skills on projects such as a cutting board, a birdhouse, a folding table, and building a shed on school grounds.



The practice projects, except for the shed, were created using reclaimed pallets.

The MDS-EMS partnership brings new life to the former "shop" area, teaches practical skills, and is nurturing a young constituency of skilled and passionate MDS supporters. "It's a win-win-win," says Justin King, high school principal who had a vision for the new elective along with his father Kevin King, executive director of MDS.

EMS plans to send an E-term with MDS every year.

See more images and the full story at [easternmennonite.org/mds-class](https://easternmennonite.org/mds-class)

## Flames News

### NEW SCHOOL RECORD

Our 4x800 relay team won the state championship this spring for the second time. Earlier in the season at the Dogwood Track Classic, hosted at UVA, the four ran a 8:11.12 to top the 48-year-old record by 13 seconds! EMS runners from L-R are Jakob Gerlach '23, Adam Rhodes '25, Luga Samson '25, and Jedrek Sneary '25. The 1975 team included Darrell Zook '76, pictured with the team as coach for Broadway High School runners. Zook's teammates in 1975 were Kenny Layman '76, Byron Brennehan '76, and Don Martin '75.

Ryan Slonaker '24, was the individual VISAA DIII state golf champion for the third consecutive year.

Sarah Drooger '24 was named Blue Ridge Area Conference Player of the Year and First Team All VISAA state team.



4x800 relay team



Sarah Drooger



Ryan Slonaker

## EMS News



Fifth graders choose a cooperative project as part of the peacebuilding curriculum to leave for the school. The class of '30 worked with each other, other grade levels, teachers, and parents to purchase, install, and dedicate a volleyball and Newcomb net, a cooperative catch and throw game.



Erika Gascho was named middle school principal and will also work with EMS' growing Learning Support Services program.

She taught 5th grade at EMS since 2018 and special education for Harrisonburg City Schools earlier.



Maria Archer added principalship for grades 6-8 for the past five years. Next year, she will return to focus on K-5 exclusively, which she has led since '05. Seventh grade students thanked her during the last chapel. Left to right: Simon Blosser, Ila Hackman, Eve Bixler, and Teo Diener.

## 5th Grade Graduation

Nineteen 5th graders were recognized in a graduation ceremony; each student shared memories and appreciations after their teacher named attributes each student brought to the school.



Fifth grade graduates share handshakes and fist bumps with students in grades K-4 following their ceremony.



Fifth graders strike a celebratory pose with teacher Erika Gascho near the EMES playground.



Hazel Peachey looks over the EMES Yearbook with her parents Elliott and Jessica.



Drayden Wood celebrates with his little brother.



Hillandale Park provided a relaxing atmosphere to celebrate and play.



Martin Trotter celebrates with parents Travis and Gini, who is our middle school counselor.

## 8th Grade Graduation

During the 8th grade graduation at Hillandale Park, 39 students heard words of affirmation from teachers and Principal Maria Archer, and a welcome to high school from Principal Justin King.