

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



1. What projects are included in this campaign?

The projects will include the following (see individual project sections below):

- An addition to the Smithville school to accommodate growth in enrolment and programs
- Needed attention to the Stoney Creek school including roof repair, accessibility and outdoor playground and educational spaces
- Debt reduction

2. If I associate more specifically with Stoney Creek, why should I support this campaign when it is more focussed on Smithville?

This campaign has some very necessary projects that affect our Stoney Creek campus directly; namely repairs and enhancements to the property, as well as alleviation of debt. Further, our schools' story carries a history of full community support that saw a significant addition to the Stoney Creek facility in 2005 which was supported also by Smithville families.

3. How much capital will we need to raise before any of these projects move forward, and when will they begin?

The Board has mandated that the projects will commence only when 90% of the necessary funds have been pledged. With this goal in mind, it is anticipated that they will begin in 2021, however, it will depend on the pace of the campaign, the number of campaign volunteers and how quickly we can raise the necessary funds. The sooner people pray about and consider supporting these projects, the sooner we will be able to move forward to equip our schools to fulfill their mission.

4. Will this campaign benefit the busing situation?

Transportation is an operational expense, not a capital one. We have sufficient buses at this point.

5. I'm concerned this campaign will lead to increased tuition fees. Quality Christian education needs to be affordable so we can serve as many students as possible.

The Board of Directors is committed to keeping the cost of Christian education affordable. Funds for the renovation project will be raised through the campaign and will not become a burden to tuition paying families.

6. What is the policy on how the funds collected will be held or invested until needed for the various projects? How much will we need to fundraise before these projects can happen?

The Board has mandated that the building renovation will commence only when the majority (90%) of the necessary funds have been raised. With this goal in mind, it is anticipated that the projects will begin in 2021, however, it will depend on the pace of the campaign, the number of campaign volunteers and how quickly we can raise the necessary funds. All campaign funds will remain in a separate bank account and will collect interest until they are used for the stated intent. All interest earned on these capital donations will be applied back to the capital fund.

7. *Where will the financial support come from?*

Our schools have been in existence for more than 50 years and, with the Lord's blessing, will be around for many decades more. It is our intention through the campaign to include all of the generations involved at Covenant, John Knox and Wellandport - past, present, and future. All current and past parents, grandparents, alumni, staff, volunteers, and past donors will be approached, as well as appropriate businesses. Certain foundations will also be approached to increase the level of support for Cairn Christian School and our vision for the future. It is our intent to give everyone the opportunity to help build our legacy for the next 50+ years.

8. *How can Cairn Christian School engage and draw support from all of its supporting communities?*

It is important to the Campaign Cabinet to reach all Cairn Christian School supporting communities. Every effort is being made to ensure a generational and geographic cross section of each school's community is represented on the Cabinet and team of Canvassers. This will also include, where possible, representation from the key church communities that we serve.

9. *What if the campaign does not reach the \$3.2M campaign goal? Who will determine what projects are given priority?*

Under the leadership of The Dennis Group Inc., a Community Assessment was conducted earlier this year and it was established that the community is fully supportive of the projects represented in this campaign. However, if we are unable to reach our campaign goal, each of these projects will be reviewed by the Board and adjusted accordingly.

10. *What if the campaign exceeds its fundraising goal? Where will the surplus be designated?*

The Board will address potential opportunities once we understand where the campaign will finish. We cannot make a definitive decision until the funds have been raised and careful reviews are made. It is our top priority that we are good stewards of the funds our community has blessed us with and we commit to transparent and appropriate use of these funds.

11. *Why do you feel you can be successful at raising this kind of money when the past two campaigns have not reached goal?*

A Community Assessment, conducted by The Dennis Group Inc., a fundraising consulting firm who specialize in campaigns for Christian schools, has clearly indicated that our community is fully supportive of the projects within the campaign and that we have the capacity to raise \$3.2M. We are moving forward with The Dennis Group whose expertise and guidance will lead us through the campaign phase and to its successful completion.

12. *How will other campaigns within our catchment area affect support for the Building the Way Campaign?*

We have investigated other developments within our catchment area and have determined that the timing of this campaign is good. This does not mean that nothing else is happening; such is the challenge among a small supporting community. Included in our Community Assessment were conversations with supporters who are members of churches where other fundraising activity is occurring or is being planned. We will take these other initiatives into consideration as we meet with individuals to ensure our mutual success.

For those who wish to support the *Building the Way Campaign* but also are completing a pledge for another organization, a flexible pledge payment schedule is available that will allow donors to begin their commitment to Cairn Christian School once they have completed their other charitable obligation.

13. How is the campaign progressing? How much has been raised?

Campaign protocol dictates that the amount of committed pledges is not shared publicly until we have reached approximately the 70% mark. The Campaign Cabinet and Canvassers are working diligently to get us to this goal.

14. How will the progress of the projects and the campaign be communicated to the community?

The Campaign Cabinet has a detailed Communications Plan for the campaign. Overall, project communications will occur as follows:

- Regular monthly campaign newsletters will provide key updates regarding the campaign progress and the various projects.
- Strategic use of all Cairn Christian School's existing communication channels will be utilized on a regular basis, including quarterly Cairn newsletters, social media channels and website.
- Media releases will be issued to mark milestones of the campaign and the projects.
- The campaign will be profiled at certain school events held throughout the year.
- Targeted communications will be developed for specific divisions of supporters as required. For example, churches and alumni. A variety of communication methods will be employed to reach these important groups.

15. How will the annual fundraising initiatives be handled during the campaign?

Our annual fundraising initiatives will continue during the campaign as we feel these provide important social gathering opportunities for our supporting community, as well as support many important operational needs throughout the year.

During the Community Assessment, it was identified by the majority of interviewees that they would continue their annual support for the school, as well as provide a gift to the campaign. The campaign is in support of special projects that are separate from the annual funds, therefore it is our hope that our annual donors will continue their support while investing in the future of Cairn Christian School through the campaign.

All annual fundraising activities will be planned in collaboration with the campaign.

16. Why hire a consulting firm to help us with the campaign?

This practice is consistent with the approach taken by many other Christian schools in Ontario who, like Cairn Christian School, do not have the internal expertise to run a campaign of this size. Professional fundraisers provide extensive experience in conducting successful campaigns. They are instrumental in guiding organizations through the challenges of raising significant funds including volunteer recruitment and motivation, building and maintaining campaign momentum, and developing strong fundraising strategies to ensure the fundraising goal is met. Through their objectivity they are able to recommend the best course of action for the benefit of the organization and successful outcome of the campaign.

SMITHVILLE CAMPUS PROJECTS

1. Why are we expanding Smithville when Stoney Creek can accommodate more students?

Our Stoney Creek campus is currently at 80% capacity, and all classrooms are being used. Enrolment trends also point to capacity issues not too long in the future. Parents choose a school for their children based on a wide variety of factors including proximity, context, location of workplace of the parents, family, peers, and many, many more factors. While shifting students from one site to the other is a possible solution, it would only be short lived. Focussing on a more permanent solution will set us up for a longer term.

2. Does the Smithville campus have a contingency plan for finding classroom options while some classrooms are under construction? What will the disruption be to the school during the construction and renovation project?

Any school renovation project will involve the disruption of noise, dust, and inconvenience. Typically, school renovation projects see construction begin as soon as school is out in June and finished by the time the new school year commences in September. This renovation will take longer than the two months of summer holidays. If existing classroom or administrative space is affected, we will accommodate these with temporary measures. The school year will go on!

3. Do the projected enrolment figures justify the need for this renovation and expansion?

Enrolment growth is only a part of the reason we need to build. The first is to accommodate the fact that the Smithville school was built for only a single three-day kindergarten which has now grown to two full-time classes (JK and SK), and lacks space for performing arts (music, drama). Along with these program needs, our enrolment is increasing. Given these trends, as well as the urban development taking place across the region, we are confident that enrolment will continue to increase. There are also tangible rental opportunities for pre-school operations that would like to partner with us on our property.

STONEY CREEK CAMPUS PROJECTS

1. Shouldn't repairs be built into the annual operations that are covered by tuition?

Wherever possible, we attempt to shield our tuition rates from the burden of large capital expenditures, whether they are new construction or major repairs. It is our dream to have tuition fund annual operations and to raise funds for significant repair projects (as included in this campaign) with our entire supporting community.

2. I don't understand why Stoney Creek needs upgrades already when it was just a few years ago that they went through a major renovation.

While the addition to Stoney Creek seems as though it took place yesterday, it is already 15 years old. The roof of that addition is still in great shape; however, the roof of the original building is now in need of some care. Burst pipes and roof leaks have been some of the recent symptoms of this need. As our rental revenues and interest in the use of our building increase, the entrance also needs to be fitted for their continued benefit. Some playground structures in the primary end are also rotting and at the end of their useful life. Finally, the fire lane needs some repair. Each of these projects are an opportunity to ensure that the campus remains safe for use and beneficial for learning for years to come.

DEBT REDUCTION

1. How much is the current debt? What is it derived from?

The current debt is at \$636,000. The most recent peak of long-term debt of the association occurred in 2010 at \$1,687,000. Inherited debt, capital projects, decreased enrolment, and tight budgets all contributed. Since that time, through increased enrolment, responsible tuition rates, faithful giving from donors, responsible budgeting, and faithful repayment, the debt has decreased by more than \$1,000,000 to its current level. We would like to clear this last bit away and make it a part of our past, not a part of our future.

2. If the debt is eliminated, will we potentially be incurring more debt to achieve the goals of the campaign?

This campaign is planned to end with our schools enhanced, repaired, and debt-free. There is always the risk of unexpected costs associated with a building project, but we are doing our best to anticipate and plan for these with the help of professionals who are aware of these variables. We have also built in a contingency fund for the project to accommodate any unexpected costs.

3. What is the direct benefit to me as a tuition paying parent, and to the students, if we eliminate the debt?

Our current budget includes payment of a mortgage principal of \$48,000 a year plus accrued interest. With interest of approximately \$20,000 per year at current interest rates, this yearly expense approaches \$70,000 which is approximately the average salary of a full-time teacher. The relief from this regular expense would allow the schools to ensure they are well equipped with staff and allow for a budgeting process that could slow tuition increases. It would also protect the schools from possible future fluctuations in interest rates.

4. Isn't some debt good? Why is this a campaign focus especially since interest rates are so low?

While the current debt load is not a major concern, we still believe that no debt is better than some debt and while interest rates are low currently, an increase in the future would place an added burden on us.

GIFTS TO THE CAMPAIGN

1. I am still in the process of completing my pledge to the high school/church etc. and can't make a gift to this campaign until next year.

A flexible pledge payment schedule can be created to allow you to complete your other pledge commitment before commencing a pledge to the *Building the Way Campaign*. Your first pledge payment can begin next year to provide you with the opportunity to participate in supporting the future of Cairn Christian School. We ask, however, that you complete a pledge card now so that we can count your gift towards our funds raised to date.

2. What method of payment will be accepted for the campaign?

Gifts can be made in cash, by cheque, e-transfer, or online by credit card through Christian School Foundation (link provided on our website). Gifts can be made monthly, quarterly, annually or whatever payment schedule is most convenient for you. Gifts of securities is also another way that a gift can be made to the campaign.

3. How much of my gift is eligible for a charitable tax receipt?

All gifts to the campaign will be eligible for a 100% charitable tax receipt. This is totally unrelated to the cost of education deductions factored into tuition payments.

4. When will I receive my charitable tax receipt?

Charitable tax receipts will be issued in February of the following year. For multiple gifts or pledge payments made throughout the year, a cumulative tax receipt will be issued.

5. May we give different amounts in different years for our pledge payments?

Yes. A flexible payment plan on a pledge to the campaign can be created to best suit the financial situation of each donor. Therefore, each pledge payment can be of a different amount in any given month or year throughout the pledge payment period. The suggested pledge period is three years, but this can be adjusted to the financial situation of the donor.

6. Can I designate portions of my gift specifically to specific projects in the campaign?

As always, we will be attentive to the specific desires of our donors. While we hope that most supporters will allow the campaign leadership and the Board to allocate their donations according to the stated campaign goals, we will nevertheless honour the wishes of donors whose passions bend toward one project more than another. It is our goal to ensure that all projects are successful.

GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT CAIRN

1. Our schools are becoming more diversified than we once were. Are we losing sight of our mission to inspire students to love, learn, and lead together in God's world as a result?

In our strategic planning exercises, our diversity was listed as both a strength and as a challenge. The mission of our schools is actually what unifies us. The strength that our diversity is bringing, is a deeper understanding that the treasure of Christian education is not something to be 'hidden under a bushel' but shared as much as the good news of the gospel. We do that well in our central task: teaching students!

2. Why did you choose to launch a complete rebranding?

After a year-long process of developing a strategic plan, the Strategic Planning Task Force set the task of 'building clarity' as a number one challenge and opportunity that needed to be taken at this point. A new brand and identity together are one element, along with specific attention to the ways in which we tell our story to our internal and external communities.

3. What process was undertaken to identify the new name of Cairn Christian School? How will we refer to each school?

Once the brand audit was complete and we knew we were working with a trustworthy consultant, the leadership team worked closely to advise Compass Creative forward in their creative process. Input from annual parental satisfaction surveys, our strategic planning exercises, as well as a focussed brainstorming session with all staff were all used to direct and inform the creative team. The non-negotiable desire to honour our heritage and Christian foundation along with the need to be forward-looking, youthful and vibrant were beautifully captured in a single name and image that sets us apart from other school names as well as assumptions about who we are and what we do. The schools will be referred to as Cairn Christian School Smithville and Cairn Christian School Stoney Creek. This also keeps the door open to carrying a strong and trusted brand into new locales in the future, should the opportunity arise.

4. Why was this name selected and what is the meaning behind it?

As indicated above, we needed a name that reflected a strong Christian foundation and history as well as a journey forward. The image of the cairn arose out of prayer and devotionals the team were reading at the time on these topics, specifically from Joshua 4 where the nation of Israel crosses over into a bright and promised future and are reminded by God through the piling of stones about His power carrying them through the Jordan River. “When your children ask you, what do these stones mean... tell them [what the Lord did for you here] this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.” What a powerful image of God teaching His people.

At Cairn Christian School, we rest on the wisdom of Scripture and the faithful before us, and lead forward with courage as we have been commanded, seeking the best way, guiding students to do the same.