



Early Childhood Program

MEETING THE NEEDS OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

by Julie Costakis

Enthusiasm and energy abound in the elementary school's early childhood hallway. Heritage's youngest students play and learn in the cheerful classrooms dedicated for preschool, prep-k and kindergarten. During the summer of 2017, a collaboration of teachers, maintenance and staff members worked tirelessly to create an inviting, safe, "littles-friendly" space. The addition of early childhood outdoor play equipment was made possible by a generous donation. Further planning and development is underway for the dedicated indoor play area.

While the new spaces are something to celebrate, the positive impact on the children and their families is a result of dedicated teachers and faculty. "These ladies are amazing in their commitment to the families of Heritage," says Brenda Klingerman, academic director and elementary and intermediate school principal. "They love the children unconditionally, day in and day out. They are professionals who work tirelessly to ensure the children under their care are loved, nurtured, and taught in a manner that honors the Lord and points each child to Jesus. They understand the developmental milestones necessary for a successful educational future for their students."

In 2017, Heritage launched Storytime as a free event to the community. The monthly program has been well-received and grown significantly. Each Storytime entails active songs, a craft,

and interactive Bible stories for infants through age five and their caregivers.

The early childhood program is expanding to meet the needs of current Heritage families and the community. The goal is to come alongside parents to help their children prepare developmentally. "Our program focuses on developmental milestones for preschool, prep-k, and kindergarten, but also begins the children on a journey that prepares them for a 21st century college-prep education," says Klingerman. "We believe that the foundation laid in these early formative years is vital to a long-term successful student."

The growth and momentum of this foundational early childhood program has a positive "trickle up" impact upon higher grade levels. "Our goals have not changed over the years, but our methods have evolved as we adjust to an ever-changing world in which our children must be equipped differently," explains Klingerman.

"And of course, central to Heritage and what makes us who we are, is the biblical foundation on which we build

our curriculum and on which we love and nurture these little ones and their families."

For in what may seem like the blink of an eye, these little ones will become the young adults of tomorrow, walking across the stage to receive their Heritage diploma, and into the world to impact God's Kingdom.

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