The Uncommon Thread

Gifted by grace, Concordians are transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary.
An American Dream come true
Two young international alumni bring their home flavor to Milwaukee.

In the swing of victory
Women’s tennis serves up a winning streak.

Live Uncommon
God’s transformative grace brings meaning to the everyday and sets Concordians apart for life.

Hard work and help along the way
A class assignment propels an alumnus to his dream career in the NBA.

Minding the gap
Concordia closes in on Wisconsin’s academic achievement disparities.

There is something quite different about Concordia University. Of course, we are proud of our academic excellence, outstanding faculty, impressive array of co-curricular experiences, and our accomplished alumni who make meaningful contributions to the world. But other institutions do those things similarly well. In fact, to the casual observer, what we do seems fairly common in the field of higher education.

What sets us apart, what makes us uncommon, is that our ordinary university is attached to the Word of God and connected to His promises. Common that is uncommon. This is a theme the Church well understands.

While everyday onlookers may observe the gifts of Word and Sacrament and be very little impressed, to those who by faith believe, these means of grace convey something remarkable. For it is “by grace you have been saved through faith,” and the gift of God has been given to us in Christ Jesus. When the Promise, the Incarnate Word of God is attached, the common becomes uncommon. So, too, our good Father gives to us His grace through ordinary, down-to-earth means with transcendent and divine effect. Regular tap water splashed atop a forehead, a taste of common bread and a sip of common wine consumed in the usual way; there is nothing uncommon about those things. Yet when the Word is attached to these ordinary elements, the gift of grace given becomes, in a word, uncommon.

It is the promise of God in Jesus Christ, Himself the Word made flesh, that transforms each day into something special. What is true for us collectively at CUW is true for each student who walks through our doors. We are “gifted by grace and prepared for a purpose.” The promise of God’s grace in our lives brings hope for the ever after and meaning to the everyday. It is what makes Concordia University uncommon.

Concordia University. Live Uncommon.

REV. PATRICK T. FERRY, PhD
President
Campus News

Homegrown servant
Blessed by his own CUW experience, Doug Bender is now mentoring other Concordians
By Kali Thiel, University Affairs
Photography by Rachel Ferguson

As an undergraduate student at Concordia University Wisconsin, Doug Bender was no stranger to taking on leadership roles. Bender (’10) maintained a fairly packed schedule of campus ministry involvement and other extracurricular activities. However, as CUW’s new associate campus pastor, he’s now gladly taking a back seat to a new generation of CUW student leaders—and so far, he’s thoroughly enjoying the ride.

“It has been amazing to see the capacity for leadership that our students have,” says Bender. “Concordia blessed me so much as a student, and I’m excited now to be the person who affords that same opportunity to others.” Bender officially began his role on Oct. 30, 2017 and was installed just a few weeks later. In his new position, he oversees the efforts of Concordia’s praise band, The Haven; plays an integral role in B.U.L.L. D., a ministry for men at Concordia; and participates in planning and organizing CUW’s annual student mission trips. He also regularly preaches at the various worship opportunities Concordia offers students and mentors students as they stretch their leadership muscles.

Prior to Bender, Deaconess Kim Ruhlmann served as an integral part of the campus ministry staff at CUW. She accepted a call last summer as an LCMS career missionary. Prior to Concordia, Bender served for three years as associate pastor of youth and families at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Decatur, Illinois. He’s married to Michelle (Russell) Bender (’13), and they have a young daughter, Elinor.

The Concordia community welcomed Doug Bender last fall to his new role of associate campus pastor.

Campus News

In the swing of victory
CUW’s tennis programs continue to make school history
By Rachel Ferguson, University Affairs

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In the swing of victory
CUW’s tennis programs continue to make school history
By Rachel Ferguson, University Affairs

Twenty-eight might not seem to be a significant number. But for the Concordia University Wisconsin women’s tennis team, 28 marks an impressive accomplishment: the number of consecutive games the talented team has won against NACC opponents.

This winning streak has led the program’s 10 tennis aces to the three seasons of undefeated conference matches and three conference titles, and places them in the record books alongside the longstanding success of the CUW men’s tennis program.

Since the women’s last NACC loss more than three years ago, the Falcons have outscored NACC foes by 322-30. For the Falcon student-athletes, it has been both quite the journey and culmination of personal accomplishments.

Students, like senior Hannah Tresseder, have played an integral role in the team’s successes year after year. Tresseder has been named All-NACC in singles and doubles each year, and has accumulated over 100 career victories. In her third year, Bailey Kelly has also been a rising star for the Falcons. Kelly has not been beaten in singles play against NACC competitors for the past three seasons, resulting in a staggering 28-0 conference record. Teammates Ashley Solberg, Elizabeth Carroll, Emma Swierczen, and Rebekah Spiegelhoff have also played key roles as undefeated players in the 2017-18 season.

On May 6, the women will play for their third straight championship at the NACC Tournament. According to men’s and women’s head coach Steve Anschutz (’10), the tournament is a piece of a larger picture.

“The success of the tennis program over the past few years is because of the culture we have been able to build here,” Anschutz says. “We have the right student-athletes with the right attitudes and character that have allowed us, as coaches, to push our players and the program as a whole past all personal, school, and conference expectations.”

Over the past two decades, the men’s team has consistently been surpassing expectations, as well. Since 1998, they’ve won 15 conference titles, with an 11-year winning streak from 1998 to 2008. They also boast a 90.81 winning percentage (108-11) in conference play.

The CUW women’s tennis team remains undefeated after three seasons. Photography by Steve Schauer

The CUW men’s tennis team continues to make history. Photography by Steve Schauer

Throughout the title eluded them from 2014 to 2016, they tied for season champions last year.

In 2017, they became the first men’s tennis program in NACC history to place three doubles teams on the All-NACC list. They are again favored to win this spring season, thanks to standout like Brad Guendel, named to All-NACC Doubles Team in the 2017 season, as well as Gabe Bicenrete and Cezayt Schaffner, who were each named to the All-NACC Singles Team and Doubles Team in 2017.

“I am proud of our success,” says Anschutz.

“I’m even more proud of how far our student-athletes have come and how they continue to grow even after they leave our pastures.”
Engaged in Lutheran education

New heads of admissions remain steadfast to lifelong Lutheran learning

By Kali Thiel, University Affairs

Concordia University Wisconsin has put in place a new approach to admissions and with it, the university continues its commitment to its closest constituents: the students and families of the Lutheran Church.

Last November Concordia announced a change in leadership and reporting structure that takes a more cohesive approach to the spectrum of student success, from prospective to alumni. As part of the change—which took effect Jan. 1, 2018—longtime leader Dr. William Cario stepped into the newly created position of provost and chief academic officer, and Dr. Michael Uden went from dean of the School of Education to vice provost of student enrollment and engagement. Concordia also promoted Dr. Bernard Bull to vice provost of curriculum and academic innovation and Dr. Leah Dvorak to vice provost of faculty affairs.

Less than two months into the change, the new faces of Concordia’s Office of Admissions set out to demonstrate their commitment to Lutheran education in a visible way. Uden, along with newly appointed Assistant Vice President of Admissions Robert Nowak, struck out on a visiting tour of Lutheran high schools to affirm, in person, Concordia’s desire to partner with them for the sake of the Kingdom.

In its early stages, CUW’s physician assistant program sees great success

By Kali Thiel, University Affairs

Photography by Rachel Ferguson

Over the course of six weeks, the two visited nine Lutheran schools in the Milwaukee area, and they continue to fill their schedules with in-person visits.

“We’re committed to ensuring that Concordia not only survives, but thrives, and the high schools within our Lutheran system are the places we start.”

Concordia has demonstrated its commitment to Lutheran education in various ways over the years. The university continues to offer its Lutheran Promise initiative, an institutionally funded guarantee that provides qualifying undergraduate students up to $30,000 annually. All students who attend a Lutheran high school automatically qualify for the financial assistance.

Additionally, through its Concordia Promise initiative, Concordia partners with more than 35 Lutheran high schools nationwide to offer reduced-rate, dual-credit courses. Students who decide to enroll at CUW or CUAA are then eligible to receive an additional scholarship that could equal the amount they paid for their dual-credit classes.

Learn more about Concordia’s admissions efforts at cuw.edu/admissions.

Someone to call upon

New lab on CUW campus contributes to rural health care via telepharmacy

By Kali Thiel, University Affairs

Concordia University Wisconsin’s School of Pharmacy is helping students gain valuable experience in the rapidly advancing practice of telehealth—telepharmacy, in particular—in partnership with Marshfield Clinic Health System.

At the start of the semester, Concordia began its first telepharmacy rotation in a newly designated lab space on campus called the Concordia University School of Pharmacy and Marshfield Clinic Health System Center for Population Health. Fourth-year pharmacy students who select and match with the six-week rotation connect with MCHS patients via phone to collect patient health information. A CUW faculty member then works with the student to review and send physicians or providers recommendations on medication adjustments before the patient’s next appointment. Students also contribute to Marshfield’s drug information service by helping to research questions from prescribers and medical support staff in an effort to help serve patient care needs and promote population health.

The telepharmacy patient care services tend to focus on individuals in rural communities, says James Lokken, PharmD, MS, MEA, assistant professor of pharmacy practice at CUW.

“It’s an important population to support because there’s often limited access to the type of health care that will keep them safe and out of the hospital,” Lokken says. “I think that any time you have the opportunity to address a health disparity like this, it’s incredibly worthwhile venture.”
Difference maker

A Concordia professor gains recognition for his service and career accomplishments

By Kali Thiel, University Affairs

Dr. Kenneth Harris, Jr. will be the first to admit that a career in law enforcement isn’t for everyone.

In fact, Harris, who retired in May 2017 as lieutenant with the Milwaukee Police Department after 24 years on the force, resisted the profession for years, even though some of his most formative mentors growing up were law enforcement officers. Initially, the work never sparked his interest, says Harris.

Instead, he started out with a career in communications, working as an employee or freelancer for prominent media stations, including WGN Radio Chicago, Black Entertainment Television (BET), and Fox Sports, for more than 20 years before he felt the Lord’s call to step into law enforcement.

Decades later, he’s now chair of the justice and public policy department at Concordia, bringing a breadth of real-world experience to the classroom.

Harris will tell his students stories about the grit that’s required to make it in the law enforcement field—how he once responded to three infant deaths in one night, and how he’s witnessed in person or seen the aftermath of countless other violent and cruel acts.

“I tell my students, ‘You’re going to see the negative side of people every day,’” Harris says. “It doesn’t matter if their baby died, their husband died; your job is to make sure they’re as close to normal as possible. To do that, you have to suck up a lot of stuff.”

Harris has “sucked up” plenty in his life, but what makes him ready and willing to continue to face the daily battles is his faith in God and His care and gives you what you need,” Harris says. “Many times we mistakenly think we have to move an entire city or an entire population; but if 300,000 people in Milwaukee picked one person, next year, there would be a million successful people. That’s been my driver.”

He learned this mindset at a young age from the law enforcement officers who took him under their wing through the Boy Scouts of America, and Harris, in turn, has sought to pay their generosity forward.

Today, Harris is widely known and respected in Milwaukee-area circles for his volunteerism, which includes mentoring young men and serving in leadership capacities with the Three Harbors Council—Boy Scouts of America.

In October, Today’s TMJ4 honored him with the Community Hero award for his commitment to community service and for shaping young lives. The award was part of the inaugural Positively Milwaukee Awards, which honors everyday people who are making a difference in the Greater Milwaukee area.

Additionally, last November, Harris was chosen as a finalist for the interim Milwaukee Sheriff position—an acknowledgment many might consider a pinnacle career moment.

No matter the job position, Harris continually finds ways to shape the future leaders of the Church and world.

“Somebody gave me a chance when I was young, and so I think it’s incumbent upon me to give somebody else that same opportunity,” Harris says. “Usually we think about a movement as moving a whole group of people. I want to be able to have created a movement within an individual.”

Interested in enrolling in Concordia’s justice and public policy program? Visit cuw.edu/jpp for more information.
When Shitanshu Saini and Manisha Dhillon left their home in northern India to pursue an MBA degree in strategic marketing from Concordia University Wisconsin, friends told them they were crazy and urged them to change their major. A degree in computer science would be much more conducive to landing a job in America, their friends said. In a sense, their friends were right. Computer-related jobs consistently account for a large share of the work visa petitions that employers file on behalf of non-citizens each year.

But Saini and Dhillon decided to stick with what they knew and loved best, even if it ended up costing them their chance to live and work in the land of the free.

Two and a half years later, the pair’s gamble paid off when both Saini and Dhillon were chosen to receive their H-1Bs, the visas issued to foreign workers in specialty occupations. Each year, 85,000 H-1B visas are issued to foreign workers, and hundreds of thousands of people annually apply for them. The odds of one person being chosen were unlikely enough, but for both—it was an American Dream come true.

Prompted by a class requirement, Saini and Dhillon reached out to Milwaukee-area Indian cuisine restaurant owner Rakesh Rehan to request internships the year before they were scheduled to graduate from CUW. Once on board, they put their Concordia education to work, targeting their advertising to attract more foot traffic, experimenting with changes in service style, and adding fusion cuisine to modernize the buffet. Within weeks after the pair started, Rehan said he noticed the difference and was ready to keep the promising young workers on for the long haul.

Top left: Manisha Dhillon (left) and Shitanshu Saini have earned their place at Café India. Restaurant owner Rakesh Rehan says he plans to have the 2017 CUW graduates on board for the long haul. Top right: Manisha Dhillon discusses the Café India business with fiancé Shitanshu Saini. Right: Shitanshu Saini serves a customer at Café India Bar & Grill.

An American Dream come true
Two young international alumni are spicing up the Milwaukee dining scene

By Kali Thiel, University Affairs
Photography by Rachel Ferguson

restaurants have doubled their profits. “Shitanshu and Manisha have been a tremendous help to me,” Rehan says. “They came in wanting to work hard and quickly proved themselves. I’m excited to know that my business is in good hands with them.”

It’s not as if Rehan was failing without the two CUW grads, though. In fact, it was quite the opposite. In 2011, Rehan opened his first restaurant, Café India. The fast-food-style eatery, located near downtown Milwaukee, was met with much acclaim and success, which allowed him to expand to a second location. In 2014, he opened Café India Bar & Grill, a sit-down iteration of his original restaurant, located in Bay View.

With Saini and Dhillon on board, more commendations are rolling in. Facebook users have rated Café India’s curry No. 1 among Milwaukee-area restaurants. Rehan’s eatery also had won the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Top Choice Awards Best of Greater Milwaukee for “Best Curry Restaurant” in 2017. In 2016, OnMilwaukee readers voted it “Best of Milwaukee Dining,” and in 2017 OnMilwaukee’s editor named it “Best of Dining.”

Soon, with Saini and Dhillon’s help, Rehan will look to expand again. The entrepreneurs are scouting locations for a third restaurant, which they hope to open in 2018.

Saini and Dhillon say they couldn’t have done this without their Concordia education. “Practical knowledge is really important. Our professors were really good at providing that,” Saini says. “We were very attentive in all of our classes, and that helped us figure it all out.”

The pair says support from Rehan also was crucial (he hired the attorneys who helped them through the visa application process), as was the support they received from one another. The two were friends for several years before they started their Concordia education and had started casually dating just before they left for the States. Now they’re engaged to be married and have the promise of business ownership ahead of them.

“We’re really grateful for the support we’ve received along the way, and for this opportunity to study in America and do what we love,” Dhillon says. “I call this home now. We love it here.”
“When the ordinary is attached to the Word of God and connected to His promises, the common becomes uncommon.”

Rev. Patrick T. Ferry, PhD / President

Gifted by His grace, the students, alumni, and faculty of Concordia University approach each day with a sense of purpose. They don’t seek recognition for what they do, but, rather, are confident in who they are and who they were created to be. With hope in the ever-after, Concordians go outside of their comfort zones, and use their gifts and talents in service to others. They find meaning in the everyday and transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. It isn’t the easiest or the flashiest way, but at Concordia it’s the only way.

By Lisa Liljegren, University Affairs
Photography by Nick Collura/BVK
Wether they hail from rural Wisconsin, across the world, or any point in between, students from all walks of life make their way to Concordia University Wisconsin to grow in their faith and prepare to make an impact in the world. With all of the higher education choices available to them, it’s important to understand what led our students to choose CUW, and whether or not their expectations were met.

That desire for clarity guided the university through a comprehensive 18-month brand-discovery process, led by Gretchen Jameson, senior vice president of the Office of Strategy and University Affairs. The charge was to capture and share the distinct Concordia story: who we are and why our work matters. Earlier this year, the fruits of this effort were revealed. With support from Milwaukee-area marketing firm BVK, Concordia rolled out a new website, refreshed creative, and a bevy of print, outdoor, electronic, and broadcast media.

“In its essence, a brand is the concise distillation of the promise that an organization makes to its constituents consistently, dramatically, and repeatedly,” says Jameson. “When we began our process we didn’t set out to create a new Concordia catchphrase; instead, we initiated a process of discovery, a university-wide dialogue that will continue to unveil itself for years to come.”

While the CUW brand has been strong for well over 100 years, particularly within the Lutheran community, two factors propelled the university to take a thorough self-examination: the changing landscape of higher education and CUW’s merger with Concordia University Ann Arbor.

“These are challenging times for higher education in general and Christian universities in particular,” says Jameson. “It is imperative that we ask and answer the hard questions, to ensure clarity about our identity as a Christ-centered university, and bring that brand into the market in an authentic and accessible way.”

Because Concordia now represents two universities, multiple campus extensions, and a thriving online presence, Jameson and her team selected to implement an umbrella, or family brand, strategy to be able to focus on the combined strengths of the enterprise without compromising the distinctiveness of any endeavor.

“Research confirmed what we knew all along,” says Jameson. “Concordians share the same DNA—similar strengths, recognizable character, and shared values across our campuses. So this positioning strategy is in complete alignment with how the organization operates on a daily basis.”

After hundreds of interviews involving students, alumni, faculty, and staff, dozens of focus groups; and months of action and reaction sessions; Jameson crafted the brand promise—what Concordia delivers consistently, dramatically, and repeatedly—to every student—and engaged BVK to bring that promise to life.

So what did the research reveal? It led to clarity around the unique promise that CUW extends to students; that is, our vibrant promise to uniquely develop each student for a life of uncommon, Christ-led purpose. It reinforced that Concordia views every person as created remarkably and distinctively for many roles and vocations, and cherishes our mission to develop students in mind, body, and spirit to go forth, ready to live “a you-first life in a me-first world.”

THE ROAD TO “LIVE UNCOMMON”

Authenticity at every point of contact is the goal of successful, comprehensive brand work. Organizations can only fully achieve their missions when they are able to say and share exactly who they are and why they exist.

The following statements have been crafted and distilled from 18 months of research, conversations, focus groups, and testing to help our entire Concordia community clearly understand and articulate the Concordia University Wisconsin and Ann Arbor story.

Mission

Concordia University is a Lutheran higher education community committed to helping students develop in mind, body, and spirit for service to Christ in the Church and the world.

Brand promise

We are a learning community at the junction of knowledge and Christian faith, where students are developed to lead uncommon lives of higher professional purpose for the betterment of self and community.

Value proposition

We provide distinctive Christian higher education that develops the whole student, intentionally nurturing alignment of mind, body, and spirit in a vibrant, caring community. As a result our graduates are empowered to achieve their highest potentials: to think, communicate, lead, and serve with integrity and compassion, wherever their careers, vocations, and lives lead.

Position statement

For values-oriented, relationally driven students, Concordia University delivers a distinctive Christian higher education, where faith and knowledge intertwine, linking disciplinary content and liberal arts learning to faith and values in a supportive, friendly community that develops students holistically to achieve their God-given potentials.
It's my happy place. I want that to remind her students that she believes in them. "I love being in the classroom," says Alexia. "I thrive off of relationships. They're so important to me," Alexia says. "It was amazing how much these students respected their teachers and how deeply the teachers cared for them," says Alexia. "Personally, I do my best work for people who care about me." She has taught for the Cf UT every summer since. Her quiet energy keeps the classroom calm. Alexia gives detailed instructions so that there’s no wiggle room, and keeps the vibe positive by praising or keeping students on task rather than focusing the room’s attention on misbehavior. "I thrive off of relationships. They're so important to me," Alexia says. "Sometimes I might be the only stable relationship in a student’s life, and I get to tell them every day that I believe in them. That's pretty powerful."
S ixteen-year-old Zoe McDowell has a bright future ahead of him. The Milwaukee-area native maintains a respectable GPA, is a standout track and football athlete on his high school teams, and plays an active role in mentoring young black students, like himself, through a club he helped start at his school.

Now in his junior year, McDowell has his sights set on some of the top collegiate-level mechanical engineering programs in the nation. He also has aspirations to play football at the collegiate level. Either way, he’s college-bound. There’s never been a doubt in his mind about it.

Unfortunately, the same can’t be said for many teenagers in McDowell’s demographic. For decades, reports have surfaced about the abysmal achievement gap that exists between black and white students in Wisconsin schools. Today, multiple news sources will confirm that Wisconsin ranks worst in the nation when it comes to the difference between how well black and white students perform on national benchmark tests, and the difference between black and white student graduation rates.

“It’s definitely an issue, and it’s one that’s not easy to fix,” says Dr. Elliott Moeser, associate professor of education at Concordia. “It’s going to require continual cooperation among school districts, parents, legislators, and the like, and it’s going to require us to potentially fail. But if we don’t begin to take an honest look at the concern, we’re going to be doomed to continue to live with it.”

For the past several years, Moeser has played an integral role in fostering collaboration among Wisconsin schools in an effort to bring about change. He serves as executive director of the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium (CAGC), which aims to embrace and change school practices, instruction, and methodologies that perpetuate achievement gaps.

In 2012, when the consortium began, the CAGC had just four school district members. Today, the consortium has expanded to 26 public, private, parochial, voucher, and choice schools and school systems throughout Wisconsin. Concordia is its only higher education partner.

The group works to address Wisconsin’s achievement gap issue in a number of ways. It annually hosts a career fair to attract high-quality teachers to schools where achievement gaps are most prominent. It also offers Equity Institutes over the summer for CAGC members. Last year’s Equity Institutes alone had more than 300 Milwaukee-area educators poring over school data and wrestling with tough questions in order to put research-driven strategies into practice within their schools.

The CAGC is also responsible for hosting the annual African American Male Initiative (AAMI), a summertime initiative that encourages young African American men to succeed with the intent of pursuing higher education. During the four-day event, students stay overnight in CUW dorms, network with dozens of other black teens and young adult mentors, hear addresses from prominent and successful black men in the community, and participate in a variety of goal-setting and personal development exercises.

In its inaugural year three summers ago, AAMI drew a modest 37 students, including Zoe McDowell. Last year, more than 150 youth attended.

“I actually met some of my long-term friends at that camp,” McDowell says. “To be successful, you have to have a good circle, and you have to have people who are going to empower you, and that’s what I feel I gained through the AAMI.”

This summer, CAGC will host its first African American Female Initiative. The event is made possible by a gift from the Waukesha County Community Foundation, who learned of the success of AAMI last summer and wanted to replicate it with young women.

While there is more work to be done on the achievement gap front, Moeser says he’s thrilled with the progress that’s being made, and he’s taking advantage of opportunities to champion the group’s efforts. Most recently, he was invited to present at the 2018 American Association of School Administrators in Nashville, Tennessee, which drew approximately 5,000 educators.

“We determined that we could do more work together than apart as closing the achievement gap,” Moeser says. “We are a group of action. This is an example of doing something that is positive, something that will change the lives of students.”

Photography by Jeffrey Phelps

Right: Dr. Elliott Moeser attends an Equity Institute with Dr. Monica Kelsey-Brown, the chair of the inaugural AAFI committee. Photo by Rachel Ferguson. Bottom: A Milwaukee-area high school student arrives at Concordia University Wisconsin for the African American Male Initiative.
Friendships forged in service
Nursing alumnae drop everything to serve in Mexico

By Rachel Ferguson, University Affairs
Photography courtesy of Elida White

When Anaisa Nagy and Elida White graduated from Concordia University Wisconsin in 2016 with their degrees in nursing, their professional licensure completed, and job offers from Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center, they did the unexpected: They put their careers on pause; packed their bags; and flew to Ensenada, Mexico—again.

It may seem surprising that with a good job opportunity under their belts they would choose to forego it for a short-term service endeavor. But for these passionate caretakers, they couldn’t imagine doing anything else.

"Elida and I talked, and we decided that we may never get this chance again," Nagy says. "Our mindset was: Let’s do this—let’s go and give back."

The classmates’ desire to give back had started many months earlier when they signed up for a global education course at CUW. Although they initially joined the class so that they could travel, the two nursing students were surprised to leave with much more. The class changed their perspective on holistic nursing care, gave them friendships that extended beyond their time at Concordia, and helped them grow in their faith. The experience was so moving that Nagy and White couldn’t stay away.

"I loved seeing the way God was working there," Nagy recalls. "You benefit from the trip in ways you never thought you would. When people say I must have impacted them, I tell them it’s the opposite. They’ve impacted me."

Concordia began offering the global trip to nursing students nearly two decades ago, working with Agua Viva Ministries in Ensenada, Mexico. In recent years, the trip has been run by nursing professors and CUW alumnae Jill Krell (’94, ’10, ’14) and Giannina Vernon (’07, ’10, ’14). For a week each year, the duo takes undergraduate and graduate students to Mexico to set up free clinics. Once there, students provide wellness checkups; take vital signs; provide diagnoses; and hand out donations of hygiene items, clothing, and childcare items. Students then connect patients to a local physician for follow-up care.

For Krell, the trip is about much more than nursing education. “I hope that the students not only gain knowledge about nursing and working with a different culture, but also realize the impact that others have on them,” states Krell.

Countless students have experienced exactly that while on Krell’s trip. Some, like Brett Rasmussen (’17), have even gone back to Mexico—though it isn’t always the case that someone would sacrifice time and effort to do so after graduation. Yet, that’s precisely what Nagy and White did.

After returning from the global education course, it didn’t take long for them to know they wanted to go back to Mexico. After obtaining permission from St. Luke’s, where they would begin positions at the end of the summer, they accepted a six-week internship with Agua Viva Ministries. Once there, they worked with church groups to begin construction projects, open clinics, lead vacation Bible school, and provide much-needed supplies and services to the local community.

"It’s crazy how the Lord worked out things for Anaisa and me," White recalls. "He wanted us in Mexico, and now I know why. The whole experience helped me to more easily proclaim my faith, and I feel like I brought a little of that back with me."

Not only did time in Mexico help strengthen their faith, it also introduced them to lifelong friendships. More than a year after they completed their internship there, Nagy and White returned to Ensenada—this time, to reconnect with the workers of Agua Viva Ministries and the people in the community with whom they had forged relationships.

Nagy’s and White’s experience is exactly what their professor had hoped for when she began leading the trip five years ago. "It doesn’t always happen that students return to Ensenada after graduation, but I’m not surprised," Krell comments. "The trip impacted them in so many ways, and I’ve seen them grow from it. It’s why I love leading this trip, and why I can’t help but go back every year."
Dave Beyer ('01) transferred to Concordia to study mass communications and play baseball during his sophomore year. A class assignment led Beyer to land a coveted internship with the Milwaukee Bucks. Nearly 30 years, several promotions, and many connections later, Beyer is now the director of basketball operations with the Miami Heat and the assistant general manager for the Sioux Falls Skyforce.

Beyer, his wife, Sebrina, and their three sons (Bradly, Jordan, and Bryce) live in South Miami. When they’re not participating in school sports, the family cheers on the Miami Heat and the Miami Hurricanes, where Sebrina works as executive assistant to the head football coach. Beyer reflects on his career in sports, the people who helped him get there, and his time at CUW.

How did you get into professional sports?

I was always involved in sports and knew when I was done playing baseball at CUW that I wanted to continue to be around sports in some capacity. In one of my early communications classes, we were assigned to interview a professional in a field that we were interested in, and then write a paper about that person and their career. I reached out to Jim Paschke, the Miami Hurricanes’ TV play-by-play announcer and asked him for a meeting. Not only did he agree to meet with me, he helped me land an internship with the Milwaukee Bucks at CUW. When I was done playing baseball at CUW that I was an assistant coach at the time, and he took me under his wing. I would not be in my current professional career if it wasn’t for Coach Spo. Coach Paschke and eventually made my way to the Bucks’ video department, I worked directly for Paschke and eventually agree to meet with me, he helped me land an internship with the Milwaukee Bucks.

As a video intern for the Miami Heat, I was an executive assistant to the head football coach. Coach Spotsila was an assistant coach at the time, and he took me under his wing. I would not be in my current position without “Coach Spots” mentoring and teaching me the game of basketball at the highest level. I have been very blessed to be with the Heat organization and to be able to learn from a Hall-of-Famer in Pat Riley.

How did Concordia prepare you for success in your field?

As a student athlete, I had to learn time management and discipline because I was constantly juggling class work with improving my performance on the field. Also, I appreciated that my coaches and professors at CUW challenged me to step outside of my comfort zone and to learn how to effectively communicate in a variety of situations. I’m grateful to my coaches and professors at Concordia for supporting me and helping me become more confident in my faith, which remains an important part of my life today.

Describe your experience at CUW.

I transferred to CUW after attending a public university. I remember when I went to visit CUW with my parents, and it just felt right from the start. I was a commuter student, so I could have been considered a mal outsider, but it wasn’t like that. Everyone was very welcoming, and that made the school feel like home. Of course, it helped that I played on the baseball team, so there was a built-in community for me. I developed many strong relationships through CUW; many that are still strong today.

Describe your journey from intern to your role now in a sports franchise.

On my first day, Paschke gave me advice that has stuck with me to this day: “You have two ears and one mouth for a reason, to listen more than you talk.” He also taught me to say yes if someone asks me to do something and then assure them that if at first I didn’t know how to do something I’d eventually figure it out. As a video intern for the Miami Heat, I was considered a part of the coaching staff, and was responsible for anticipating and capturing the action on the court and then breaking down the footage for coaches that night or the next day. Through this opportunity, I learned valuable technical skills used in the sports industry and gained intense insight into the game of basketball because it was my job to recognize what coaches and scouts needed to do their job effectively.

What do you like best about your job?

I’m here in my dream job because so many professors, mentors, and coaches invested themselves in my growth and development. They truly modeled what strong, present leadership could look like. The best part of my job is when I’m able to follow their examples and mentor younger team members as they make their way on their own career paths. I’m in my 16th season with the Miami Heat and have been part of three NBA Championships and one D-League championship. I’ve been able to travel to different parts of the world (China, Brazil, Mexico, etc.) and experience their culture, as well as witness how big the game of basketball is worldwide.

What advice do you have for students who would like to pursue a career in professional sports?

Coach Riley has a quote framed in his office that states, “Hard work doesn’t guarantee you anything, but without it you don’t stand a chance.” This quote is true for anything that you may do in life. You have to visualize where you want to go in your career, and then be willing to put in the hours and do the things you may not want to do to get there. If you find a career you’re passionate about, that becomes a little easier.

“...”

—Dave Beyer

IN THE WORLD

IN THE WORLD

Alumni Chat

Hard work and help along the way

Class assignment leads to dream career

By Lisa Liljegren, University Affairs

Photography courtesy of Dave Beyer

Dave Beyer poses with the National Basketball Association championship trophy from 2013.

Top: Dave Beyer and Alonso Mourning, NBA hall-of-famer and co-president, player programs, with the Miami Heat. Bottom: Beyer’s personal NBA championship ring collection.

Stay connected with Concordia

In order for you to stay connected and be informed of your alumni benefits and news, please take a moment to update your preferred email address, current address, and phone numbers at cuw.edu/alumniregistration. By doing so, you will receive our alumni e-newsletter that is brimming with opportunities for you to connect with other alumni, mentor students, network, be a classroom presenter, volunteer to help others, and live out the Concordia mission.

In addition, if you do not have an active profile on CUWConnect.com, now is the time to create one. This platform was designed especially for you—and your alma mater. And make sure to include an email address you regularly check to keep your connections timely.

Many thanks, and blessings to you and your family.

—CUW Alumni Relations

IN THE WORLD

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Many thanks, and blessings to you and your family.

—CUW Alumni Relations
2000s

Achievements

Ashley Jensen ('97) is raising funds for a mission position where she will be serving youth in Milwaukee by creating a mentoring program. Support her at https://go.ctl/3DyDyP.

Eric Kittel ('97) signed to play professional basketball with the EJ Sligo All-Stars in Ireland.

Colin Berreute ('16) was named assistant general manager for the inaugural season of the Saginaw Sugar Beets baseball club, the newest member of the Great Lakes Summer Collegiate League.

Justin Dopierala ('04, '07) co-founded DOMO Capital Management, LLC. DOMO has an annualized net return of 13.94% from inception in 2008 to 2017. CUW is a client of DOMO.

Louis Clark III ('99) had University of Arkansas publish a chapbook of his musings in 2010. He won an Otsida National Arts Board Award and a Wisconsin Arts Board Award for it. His book “How to Be an Indian in the 21st Century” won the Midwest Independent Booksellers People’s Choice Award for 2017.

Steve Germer ('96) co-authored the book "Superhero Educator: How to Teach with Superior Skills and Success." Steve is currently dean of students at CUW.

Marriages

Paige (Steen) Reiskyl ('16) married Nate Reiskyl on Sept. 23, 2017 in Grafton, Wisconsin. The couple resides in Thiensville, Wisconsin.

Elizabeth (Podewils) Johnson ('14) was married to Trevor Mouw on Sept. 23, 2017 in Milwaukee. Their first child, Arden Grace, was born on Dec. 19, 2018.

Kevin Koch ('16) and his wife, Katlin Koch, welcomed a baby girl, Makenna Jean Koch, on Nov. 20, 2017.

1990s

Achievements

Ryan Rosenow ('97) was named the next Greendale Police Chief. Rosenow is a nearly 20-year police veteran and second in command of the department of 59. Most recently he spent time as the detective lieutenant in charge of the detective bureau.

1970s

Achievements

John Oberdeck ('74) took a call to serve as a short-term vacancy pastor for Trinity Lutheran Church in Frankfurt, Germany. Oberdeck, accompanied by his wife, Ginny ('74), served from February to the end of March 2018.

1960s

Achievements

Bruce Linderman ('68, '70) and his wife, Lois, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary by visiting Hawaii in 2018. They have four children and 12 grandchildren, and reside in Bozeman, Montana.

1950s

Achievements

David Young ('56) was presented with the Certificate of 50 Years in the Ministry in his capacity as Board Trinity Lutheran Church, Tonawanda, New York.
An uncommon and dangerous hope

"Let brotherly love continue ... remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them ... "
(Hebrews 13:1, 3a)

One of my favorite movies is "The Shawshank Redemption." More than 20 years old now, this well-known movie tells the story of two prisoners who befriend each other in the Shawshank Prison in Maine in the 1940s to the 1960s. Red, played by Morgan Freeman, has reconciled himself to a life in prison and, like many other prisoners, has given up hope. Andy, however, still holds out hope of being freed from prison—there can be a Shawshank redemption.

He speaks of this hope to Red, and Red responds, "Hope is a dangerous thing. Hope can drive a man insane. It's got no use on the inside."

That "dangerous" hope is something that's central to our campus ministry prison ministry. Several dozen Concordia students are "pen pals" with inmates in prison. Prison ministry gives students a chance to share faith and hope with those who may have little hope. There's a long story and history to how this was started some years back (too long for this little article), but it has its roots in a connection between a now sainted CUW staff member and a former high school student who found himself in prison.

In our ministry, we have safeguards of anonymity and pseudonyms as the students write. Within that framework, students have the chance to share faith and encouragement with those who so much need it.

It's pretty uncommon. First of all, writing letters the old-fashioned way. Then writing to someone, perhaps their own young age, whose life is very different from their own. Someone who's made some terrible decisions and is paying a great price. But it's a chance to share the love of the Savior who paid the ultimate price for all of our sins—the innocent who died for all of the guilty. They write of forgiveness and eternal life and freedom from the prison of sin which holds us all. It's just another opportunity for our students to live uncommon.

REV. STEVE SMITH
Campus Pastor
Join Concordia for a fun-filled night of baseball. Catch the Northwoods League Lakeshore Chinooks on their home field of Kapco Park, located on CUW’s campus. Special alumni ticketing is offered on the following dates:

- June 26 – School of Arts and Sciences
- July 12 – Batterman School of Business
- July 18 – School of Education
- July 21 – Hall of Fame and all CUW Alumni
- Aug. 3 – ’90s CUW Reunion
- Aug. 11 – Health Care Professionals

RESERVE YOUR TICKETS
cuw.edu/alumnichinooks

VIEW THE SEASON SCHEDULE
northwoodsleague.com/lakeshore-chinooks