



HOUGHTON ACADEMY

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## NEWS & UPDATES

### Recent News / HA Updates

Houghton Academy New Beginnings: August 2025

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"Whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord." Colossians 3:23

Live, Learn, Love, & Lead at Houghton Academy!

## Note from the Houghton Academy Board of Trustees

In his famous 15th-century Christian classic, "The Imitation of Christ," Thomas à Kempis coined this phrase: "Man proposes, God disposes," reflecting the truth of Proverbs 16:9 that we humans make plans, but God determines the outcome. This is a lesson that the Houghton Academy Board of Trustees has learned this summer.



We began the summer looking forward to another year of Dr. Toby Travis' leadership of Houghton Academy; however, that is not to be. On July 2nd, the entire Houghton Academy family received the news from Dr. Travis that he and his wife Tannia would step

down as Head of School (Toby) and as Spanish teacher (Tannia). After receiving this sad news, we wish the Travis family the very best for the future as we thank them for their service to Houghton Academy.

The Academy Board of Trustees is taking Toby's resignation as a call to prayer, reflection, and deliberation as we attempt to plan the way-ahead for our beloved school. We will be seeking God's guidance before making any snap decisions.

We are thankful for the generosity of Mr. Philip G. Stockin, Head of School Emeritus, for once again stepping up to be the interim leader of Houghton Academy. His selfless and big-hearted offer will allow the members of the Academy family: faculty, staff, parents, students, volunteers, and other stakeholders the luxury of spending the up-coming year reevaluating our priorities, our curriculum, and of course our finances as we seek God's will for the school without having to seek far and wide for immediate leadership.

In light of this opportunity, we ask for your prayers, your financial support, and your continued engagement during the up-coming year, to help ensure that Willard Houghton's vision for Christ-centered secondary education in Houghton continue in the future.

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## Update from the Principal

It is with great excitement and deep gratitude that I step into the role of Principal this year at Houghton Academy. It is an incredible privilege to serve in this capacity, and I am truly honored to work alongside such a dedicated team of educators, staff, and families.

I am especially grateful for the opportunity to learn under the leadership of our Interim Head of School, Mr. Philip G. Stockin. His wisdom, steady presence, and long-standing commitment to Christian education are well known. I look forward to learning from his experience and partnering with him to help Houghton Academy build a fulfilling future.



Most of all, I cannot wait to see the students! I look forward to seeing those returning and those stepping onto campus for the first time. Each student brings unique gifts, stories, and potential. It's my joy to help nurture their growth, cheer on their successes, and walk with them through their educational journeys. My heart is to serve them well, encourage them daily, and continue building a school culture where every student is known, valued, and equipped to lead boldly in today's world.

Principal David Pritchard

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## Update from Coach Prentice



Preseason sports at Houghton Academy: Volleyball and Soccer will be August 18th-29th. Volleyball and Soccer Teams will be practicing from 3:30-5:30pm every weekday (in case of rain then soccer practice will be indoor, time is TBA). All practices are considered mandatory and all exceptions should be communicated to the proper coach.

All of our games are listed on the Section V website and can be accessed by this link:

<https://www.sectionvny.org/public/genie/783/school/6076/>

An important reminder that every athlete will need an updated physical to play. All Physicals are good for one calendar year. Here is a link to the physical form that needs to be filled out by the physician:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R6CbADobWCThLGEsjWV13wrODcWQTjLt/view?usp=sharing>

All student athletes should show up to the first practice in athletic wear. For soccer this means cleats, shin guards, athletic shorts and t-shirts. Volleyball players need to have rubber soled shoes, knee pads, athletic shorts and t-shirts. I hope you all enjoy the rest of your summer and we'll see you soon on the court and fields.

Sincerely,

Coach Prentice

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Houghton Academy is pleased to announce that **Greg  
Gidman** will be assuming the role of Head Men's Soccer  
Coach this fall. Coach Gidman is a graduate of Houghton





University where he led the soccer team to an NCCAA National Championship and was named National Tournament MVP and Defensive Player. He continued his career post-college, playing in the Canadian Professional Soccer League. His coaching experience is extensive. In 1988, he led the high school team at Wesleyan Academy in Puerto Rico to the National Championship. He was the director of coaching for both the Junior Irish Soccer Club and Michiana Soccer Association and has run three indoor facilities in three different states. From 1994-2005, he was the head coach for Roberts Wesleyan University and, later, Bethel University (2005-2009). Aside from his BS in Physical Education, Coach Gidman has an MA in Athletic Administration, a Brazilian Professional Coaching License, an NSCAA Goalkeeping Certificate, a CSA Level 1 coaching license (obtained at age 14), and was named the NCCAA National Coach of the Year in 1998.

While we appreciate Coach Gidman's impressive resume, we are even more excited about his passion for sharing his faith in Christ with his players. He was the chaplain of his team at Houghton University, he led a soccer ministry trip to Senegal, West Africa, and he developed a soccer academy for local youth this summer that emphasized the areas of skill development, tactical understanding, and Christian faith. He strives to help young athletes find the balance between a competitive mindset and faith-based integrity on and off the field.

Currently, Coach Gidman teaches Sports, Recreation, and Wellness Management at Houghton University where two of his daughters attend. Please be sure to welcome Greg and his wife, Julia, to the Houghton Academy team!

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## Updated Academy Housing on Main Street in Houghton

Houghton Academy owns several homes in Houghton, which are used for faculty and student housing. We often refer to these homes by the names of their former residents, for example, Shea House, Montanye House, or Roth House.

However, the Academy-owned home, located next to the former firehall on Route 19 in downtown Houghton is just called the house on Route 19. Perhaps this is because the house was once the home of many well-known Houghton families: the Kreckmans, the Cooks, the Basneys, and the Pollocks.

Houghton Academy alumna, Mrs. Carolyn Pain Miller, class of 1956, remembers when Houghton College professor Alfred Kreckman (Academy class of 1927) lived in the Route 19 house with his family. At that time, Professor Kreckman's wife, Merrill Lindquist Kreckman, (Houghton Academy class of 1927) had a side business of sewing and selling corsets to Houghton woman. Times have changed!

In recent years the house on Route 19 has fallen into disrepair. However, thanks to the effort of Mr. Jon Keith, Houghton Academy self-defense teacher, Rebekah Gena, and a team of mostly international willing student helpers, AKA the Houghton Academy Carpentry Club, the house has been completely renovated and is now almost ready to be occupied. At the time of this writing, work continues on the outside of the house, for example, the front porch. The Route 19 house has two separate apartments. Currently, it is still unclear who the lucky new occupants will be. What is clear is that the Academy has an improved real estate asset, our students have learned practical skills, and our community has gained new housing. Thank you to Mr. Keith and his team.

### Renovations underway on State Route 19 in Houghton



There is still some outside work to do, but the inside is looking good!



The work in progress.



The Houghton Academy Carpentry Club at work.



- Tuesdays will now be an early dismissal day.
- 7th period Thursday will be Chapel and small groups.

-We will no longer have home room. Students will be expected to be in 1st period classes by no later than 7:55, at which point announcements will air and teachers will take attendance before class begins. This will allow faculty, staff, parents, and other stakeholders to join a corporate prayer time from 7:30 to 7:45 AM each morning prior to the start of classes.

- Juniors and seniors who wish to be a teacher's aide or to take Houghton University classes



this fall, and have not already signed up to do so, should contact Dean Pennington at [karen.pennington@houghton.academy](mailto:karen.pennington@houghton.academy).

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## **Update from Shawn Currier Head of Facilities and Maintenance**

A deep cleaning of all facilities has been underway this summer. We have completed a major overhaul of the Main Campus and both the girls' and boys' dorms. The deep cleaning includes, but is not limited to: changing bulbs, washing walls, tables, chairs, and desks as well as polishing wooden and stainless-steel surfaces. It also includes washing floors and extracting carpets or steam cleaning carpets. Some additional work included a deep clean of the auditorium stage floor, waxing of floors and some painting in all facilities and the resurfacing of the gym floor.

This summer has been a challenging one for all of us, but in the Facilities and Maintenance Department we still strive to be better and to bring out the best of Houghton Academy. Everyone has taken instruction and put their nose to the grindstone.

A big shout out goes to the whole Facilities and Maintenance Team: Derek, Eric, and Dylan, and to our helper James Adenuga (class of 2024.) James is a hard worker who has been a critical helper during our summer deep-clean!



Sometimes you have to make a mess on the way to a clean-up!

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## Update from our Visual Arts Teacher

Joel Mulindwa recently joined Houghton Academy and will be teaching middle and high school courses in art, personal finance, and yearbook publication. Originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Joel is a proud alumnus of Houghton University and holds an MFA from the University at Buffalo. He brings a global perspective and a heart for education, aiming to integrate faith, creativity, and practical life skills into the classroom. Joel lives in Caneadea with his wife, Emmy, and their two sons, James and Nuru, and they are excited to be part of the Houghton Academy community.



Visual Arts Teacher Joel Mulindwa

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## Volunteers

We are looking for volunteers in many areas, including but not limited to: substitute teaching, English language training, evening or weekend club leadership (do you love to hike? knit? fish? play chess? Chances are there are students who would love to join you once a month for a special activity.)

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# Your giving matters!

Dear Houghton Academy Community,

We are deeply grateful to the Lord who, through all of your generous support, allowed us to surpass our \$250,000 annual goal. Every gift received has been a tangible expression of your belief in the mission of Houghton Academy.

Now, however, we are in a time of transition with special financial challenges. Due to delays in the issuance of student visas, our population of international boarding students for 2025-26 school is lower than anticipated. Fewer students mean less income and unanticipated budget shortfalls.

Although we have been working hard to renovate and spruce-up Academy owned buildings, it remains a fact that our infrastructure (roofs, HVAC, foundations, and more) needs replacements, upgrades, and repairs. Even if our anticipated student population were at full strength, tuition will not pay for major infrastructure upgrades.

Your support directly sustains our Christ-centered programs, strengthens our faculty, enhances student learning experiences, and ensures that we can continue to provide a safe and nurturing environment for every learner.

In 1885, our founder, Willard Houghton wrote about his new school: “We know of no place where we can do more to mold the [characters] of our boys and girls, shape the future of the world, than in these strictly guarded Christian schools.” Help us to continue in the path set out by Willard Houghton.

Your participation—no matter the size of the gift— will help us to continue the mission of the school. Please click on the button below to make your gift today via our secure online system - or mail your donation directly to:

Houghton Academy Annual Fund  
9790 Thayer Street  
Houghton, NY 14744

Thank you for standing with us. Together, we are shaping lives for Christ and for the world.

~ Mark Getzin, on behalf of the Board of Trustees

[Donate Today!](#)

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## Alumni News



Recently, a group of alumni (centered around the class of 1985) gathered for a trip down memory lane. These photos are just a teaser, plan to read all the fun details in our next newsletter!



Found our class of '85 ribbon from the shovel!



Friends back together.



So much fun!



Gary King (teacher), Phil Stockin ('63), Keith Greer ('63), and another friend gathered in central Pennsylvania in order to celebrate their 80th birthdays. They enjoyed reminiscing about their time at the Academy and commiserating about the challenges of aging.



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