



State Champion Varsity Girls Soccer team warming up for a game.

First Day of School Thurs., Aug. 14, 2025
Fan the Flames Auction Sat., Sept. 13, 2025
Homecoming October 17-18, 2025

**JOIN US FOR FAMILY
VISIT DAYS 2025–2026**

Kindergarten Open House

Monday, September 22
 Tuesday, October 14
 Tuesday, October 28



Middle and High School

Friday, October 24
 Tuesday, November 4
 Friday, December 5
 Tuesday, January 20
 Friday, February 20
 Thursday, March 12
 Thursday, April 16



INTERESTED IN EMS?

- Enrollment is filling up quickly with limited spots!
- Complete an inquiry form today.
- Plan ahead for the Kindergarten 26-27 school year!



Scan the QR code to get started!

we are going to **LOVE YOU** *through the learning*



Andrew Gascho, athletic director, strides purposefully through the hallways, his demeanor reflecting a quiet confidence. Not one for overtures, his face lights up when asked about his approach to athletics at Eastern Mennonite School.

"At EMS, joining a team is about more than just learning a sport. The team stands by you, ensuring that there are no failures, only learning experiences. This support creates genuine personal growth and skill development," Andrew explains. ***"Being part of a team means understanding what it feels like to be involved***

in something greater than yourself," he adds, recalling how his own journey as a student athlete profoundly shaped his life. At the heart of this philosophy is community. EMS holds high aspirations for its athletes, believing that success is a natural outcome of a strong team culture.

Joy, passion, and personal transformation for the real world are emphasized over the final score. The athletics programs K-12 aim to prepare students to thrive in team settings. In line with the Eastern Mennonite tradition, EMS takes a

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2024-25 Athletic Highlights

"Reliability is a transferable skill, these are the life lessons learned from sports; a commitment to something, a stick-to-it-ness, and being trusted. Soccer is one way to be inspired on the field and in your life. Today, Alex is the inspiration."

- Coach Eshleman-Robles



Alex Cline '25 - 376 career saves
Varsity boys soccer goalkeeper broke the school record, surpassing the 2002 record of 311 held by Tim Koehn '02.

JV Volleyball - BRAC Champions



Photo Credit Daniel Lin



V Girls Soccer: VISAA DIII State Champions
Martha Wyse '26, State Player of the Year.

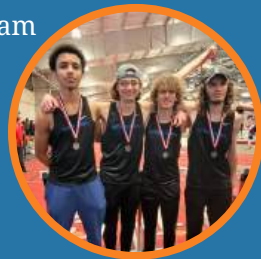
Indoor-track State Champions:

4x800m relay team: Luga Samson, Adam Rhodes, Jedrek Sneary, Calvin Bixler.

4x400m relay team: Calvin Bixler, Luga Samson, Jedrek Sneary, Joseph Yutzy.

Track State Champions:

4x800m relay state champions: Calvin Bixler, Adam Rhodes, Jedrek Sneary, Daniel Castenada.



Building Bonds and Breaking Boundaries:

Alumni Reflections on Sports and Life

For alumni Halie Mast and Karla Hostetter, sports have been more than just an activity—they have shaped their personal and professional journeys at EMS and beyond.

Halie Mast: A Journey of Teamwork and Faith

Mast recalls how integral sports were to her EMS experience. Participating in volleyball, cross country, soccer, and basketball, she found them to be an outlet for connection, teamwork, and spiritual growth. Her love for soccer took root unexpectedly her senior year, inspired by the camaraderie and support fostered by coach Andrew Gascho.

At EMU, Halie faced new challenges as the competition intensified, but the lessons from EMS—particularly the emphasis on teamwork and glorifying God—remained central. "Glorifying my creator is something I have carried with me from EMS," she reflects.

Now a nurse, Halie credits sports for teaching her time management and balance. Her career has taken her around the world, including to Indonesia, where she found sports



to be a universal language that built trust across cultures.

Karla Hostetter: Embracing Challenges to Build Community

Karla, a recent EMU graduate, reflects fondly on her volleyball and soccer experiences at EMS. Initially shuffled among volleyball positions, she became the sole setter by sophomore year thanks to the vision and patience of coaches like Jonathan Williams pictured above. Karla, emphasizes the power of community in sports: "You're never on an island by yourself. When it doesn't go well, you take that together. When it does, you celebrate together too." Inspired by her EMS English teachers and the stories explored in Bible class and chapel, Karla plans to become a middle school English teacher. She believes everyone has a story worth hearing and aims to help students find theirs.



Beyond the Field, Pitch, Court, Track

Halie and Karla learned resilience, leadership, and the value of community. Their stories show that sports are not just about competition—they're about building character and relationships that last. As they embrace what's next, they continue to inspire others with their perseverance, faith, and commitment to others.



Class of 2032

Celebrating Student Voice: An EMES Journey

The spotlight shines on the spirited fifth-grade students of Eastern Mennonite Elementary School (EMES). Dressed in a unique blend of styles—from full suits and sneakers to gym shorts—these young leaders are fully themselves eagerly awaiting their turn at

the podium. They are ready to share their personal stories and reflections, marking another milestone at EMES. These particular students are well known across our K-12 community as avid sports fans and players, creative and talented performers. They have loads of personality and are eager to continue their journey to middle school and beyond. All twenty students will attend EMMS in the fall where they will continue their journey as Flames.

Maria Archer, principal of EMES, reflects on the school's commitment to nurturing student voice. "When EMES first began, we were searching for ways to create leadership opportunities," she recalls. "Initially, our fourth and fifth graders took on many responsibilities out of necessity, but we soon realized how beneficial it was for them. Many of our cherished traditions have been born from student ideas, and it felt only natural to celebrate student voice at our fifth-grade graduation. This ceremony, attended by grades K-4, sets a positive tone and culture for the younger students."

"I would like to thank Ms. Archer, she always understands what I am going through, she has aided me, and helped to make me who I am today..." Jude

At the heart of this tradition is the idea of giving and receiving. Teachers share direct, specific comments about each students. As the fifth graders prepare their speeches, they're encouraged to reflect on all they have appreciated about their school experience.

As the fifth graders prepare their speeches, they're encouraged to reflect on all they have appreciated about their school experience. Through their words, the fifth graders demonstrate the profound impact their school years have had on them, offering insight and inspiration to their younger peers. The ceremony is more than just a graduation; it's a celebration of growth, community, and the powerful voices of the students who are the heart of EMES.



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Andrew Gascho

counter-cultural stance in a world where money, time, and winning often overshadow other values. Instead, students are encouraged to embrace multiple and emerging identities. They can excel in several sports, participate in musicals, sing, play instruments,

spend time with family and friends, and engage in experiential learning. All contribute to their well-being and character development, skills we all hope to achieve to live a balanced life.

Many coaches are alumni of EMS, deeply understanding and embodying the values that are difficult to teach but vital to instill. "Alumni coaches who have been impacted

by positive team experiences they had at EMS who are now coming back to coach so current students can have those life-changing experiences."

In this intentional, mature, and team-focused environment, EMS cultivates student athletes who succeed both on and off the field. As Andrew says to athletes, "We are going to love you through the learning." The lessons they learn here—about resilience, leadership, joy, and collective success—prepare them for a future where they can excel in any endeavor they choose.





Transitions & Growth: EMMS Graduation

During the 8th grade celebration, middle school principal Gascho addressed the students, acknowledging their journey from learning the basics to mastering complex subjects—and participating in all the activities EMS has to offer. The younger students praised the 8th graders for their humor, kindness, and inclusivity; they were not only academically accomplished but also admired by their peers.



The highlight was the presentation of certificates, each paired with affirmations crafted by the teachers to honor the uniqueness of every student.



Class of 2029

“Aubrey, you hold a genuine concern for how those around you experience the world. You work hard without complaint and have a love of learning that is to be admired.”

“Nina, you care about social justice in the world, seeing a perspective beyond your own. You hold close to what truly matters.”

“Fionn, you are funny, creative, and willing to be independent. Your comforting presence in a room is like a ‘blue canary in the outlet by the light switch.’”

To be a middle school student at EMS is to be known and loved, here growth is what we expect. As Justin King, high school principal, told parents and students, “You are ready!”

Portrait of a GRADUATE

To be a graduate of EMS is to know the inherent worth and dignity of all. During our 107th commencement ceremony, Valedictorian Pranav Menon shared a memorable chapel by principal King his freshman year, ***I am somebody***. “While we may joke about it, the message is powerful—a testament to our worth and our capacity to uplift others. It’s a belief I hope remains with us throughout our lives.”



Pranav transitioned from public school to EMS in 9th grade and was struck by the radical acceptance found among peers, particularly the soccer team. “Each of you welcomed me... this was a gift that no other place could replicate...the small size of our school is our greatest strength.”

A graduate of EMS holds an ethic of care where everyone is encouraged to grow and thrive.

Amy Maumbaur, devoted alumni parent and outgoing board chair with a decade of service on the board, delivered a truly inspirational speech. She said this graduating class will leave future professors and bosses in



Class of 2029

awe. “You have everything you need to be successful.” She urged graduates to approach life as they do experiential learning trips EMS is known for, asking, “What if all this learning is actually the recipe for building a fulfilling life?”

A graduate of EMS holds an E-term state of mind. They approach every new season of life as an ongoing journey of discovery. They live each day with the excitement of a new adventure and hold gratitude for the experiences they encounter. Their enthusiasm can inspire others to explore interesting stories, celebrate nature, and connect with the divine.

A graduate of EMS is radically curious and inclusive, “Let’s be attentive to the birdsong on our way to physics and work. Let’s show eagerness to invite and listen to the stories of those we meet. Let’s be curious about what lies beyond our geographical and social borders. Through discussion and conflict resolution, let’s consider that everyone we encounter is a part of our community. ‘Do we have everyone?’ What if we asked ourselves this question daily? If we achieve nothing else, let’s

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Advancement Update

We love to celebrate at EMS—and this year, thanks to our community's generosity, we had much to celebrate!

Celebrating Firsts:

This year we launched the Flames Fund, allowing donors to give to what inspires them: our students, educators, campus, core values, or overall mission. The *Virginia Education Scholarship Tax Credit Program* continued to benefit students receiving aid and donors receiving a 65% tax credit with a record number of contributions! *Christmas Fund Drive* exceeded its \$150,000 goal, ending with a joyful student-led Beach Day celebration.

Events That Brought Us Together:

We hosted our fall auction at The Loft for the first time, planned our first annual elementary *Color Run*, and welcomed the largest number of volunteers ever (including students!) to our *For the Flames Golf Tournament*.

Special Fundraisers:

Supporters helped the athletics program purchase a new mower and irrigation equipment for our fields and resurface the tennis courts used by our varsity teams. (pictured right) Your generosity keeps our programs strong and student-athletes thriving. The *Great Community Give* helped launch a mini-campaign to **Light the Way** and upgrade our 20-year-old auditorium lighting.

With your help, we'll complete this campaign by December 31, 2025—enhancing performances for years to come.

Planned Giving:

This year, planned gifts through wills and estates totaled \$170,000—supporting long-term endowment growth. We are deeply honored to be included in these lasting legacies.

Thank you for helping us grow, thrive, and live out our mission. And thank you for sharing EMS with families who may be seeking a community like ours—word of mouth remains our most powerful outreach.

With deep gratitude,

Trisha Maust '95 Blosser,
director of advancement



Join us!

Tuesday, July 15, 3-5 PM
Summer Donor Appreciation

Did you make a gift in 2024-2025 to EMS? Then please join us! Enjoy refreshing tea and summer treats in our new EMES Gathering space.

Saturday, September 13
Fan the Flame Auction

At *The Loft at Liberty St.*, owned by Kirsten Nafziger '89 Moore.

Homecoming 2025 - Come to Connect!
October 17 & 18

Come build on life-long connections that gain value with each passing year. *Registration Opens August 1, 2025.*

Schedule and info at
easternmennonite.org/homecoming

Today is written by Abigail Cook, communication specialist, and designed by Christine Coddington. All photos by EMS staff unless otherwise noted. Editorial support from Trisha Blosser, director of advancement, and Paul Leaman, head of school.

Send feedback to
today@easternmennonite.org

Find past issues at
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 or 800-421-3481, TDD 800-877-8339.



graduation photos by Tiffany Showalter

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cultivate a sense of community. The importance of our connections is immense; they are life-giving and transformative.

A graduate of EMS is a builder and "knows the power of community, understands that they matter; and realizes that success depends not on individuals, but on our collective strength together." We couldn't be more proud of the class of 2025.

VISION

Eastern Mennonite School aspires to embody the love of Jesus as a learning community where every student belongs, thrives, and joins God's work in the world.

MISSION

Eastern Mennonite School, with home and church, invites students to faith in Jesus Christ, academic excellence, personal integrity, and compassionate service.

STAY CONNECTED!

If you don't already receive our monthly Flames Report, go to easternmennonite.org/news to sign up for e-news.

FOLLOW US:



Paul Leaman, head of school shares blessing at ribbon cutting ceremony

Welcome Home, The Gathering Space

A New Chapter for EMES

The excitement is palpable as we celebrate the completion of The Gathering Space - it's filled with student laughter and learning. We're grateful for the generosity of the contributors who made it possible.

This dedicated area will enhance learning, foster connections, and support the well-being of our K-5 students. It also includes a stained glass piece by Zachary Nafziger '94. Welcome home to The Gathering Space!

Summer Music Jams

Tuesdays @ 7 PM

June 24 • July 1 • July 8 • July 15

All ages & levels, acoustic.
Play a tune, lead a song, and sing along!
EMS - The Gathering Space.

