Seven days a week

Jamie Balcom, class of 2011, grew up on a horse farm in Conklin, Michigan. Half a mile down the road was the family dairy farm—where he and all his cousins worked. Recalling those early days, he said that farming is hard work. “Snow days for us weren’t snow days; we had to do work around the farm,” he said. “We were allowed to be kids too. But we had to work, because farming is a seven day a week kind of job.”

According to Balcom, his mother, Susan, was the spiritual head of their home. His father, an over-the-road truck driver, was seldom home. “My mother was Jesus to my brother Jason and me,” he said. “She took us to church, Conklin Reformed, from the time we were born.” Although the church was small, with an average attendance of 60 to 80 people on any given Sunday, Balcom said that it was the influence of the church family, especially that of Celeste VanZyl, the pastor’s wife, which made him decide to follow God’s call to go into ministry.

As a 10-year-old, Balcom’s parents divorced. “The blessing of having a family farm is just that—family,” he said. “My Uncle Jeff did not skip a beat and stepped up to the plate for my brother and me.”

Evan Heerema

Reverend Evan Heerema, or “Rev. Ev,” rejoins the Kuyper community as the Kuyper Cougars’ sports chaplain. Student athletes are overjoyed to have him as their spiritual mentor and look forward to the work he will do among them.

This is not Heerema’s first position at Kuyper College. From 2001-2010, he was director of career development and service learning at the College. In that position, he taught incoming freshmen the basics of college life and developed the program that would eventually become Merge.

As sports chaplain, Heerema looks after the spiritual health of both individual student athletes and the teams as a whole. In addition, he works to instill in them a sense of responsibility and helps them in their walk as they develop a Christian lifestyle. He also leads team devotions as often as possible and equips team captains with the tools to do the same.

Under his leadership the athletic department has established a policy that calls for each sports team to do one service project per season. Heerema recently led the fall sports teams on a service project to help repair tornado damage in Wyoming, MI.

In addition to his work at Kuyper, Heerema is a full-time pastor at Ideal Park Christian Reformed Church and a co-teacher for Kuyper’s Israel trip.

As the Kuyper community joyfully welcomed Rev. Ev back on campus, he said the feeling is mutual. “I am grateful to God for bringing me back to Kuyper, and I look forward to continuing the development of student athletes and the athletic department,” he said.

New sports chaplain is no stranger

ABHE meeting

Seventeen presidents of member colleges of the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) gathered this past fall in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for two days of meetings. The sessions were hosted by Kuyper College and Grace Bible College. ABHE’s president, Dr. Ralph Enlow, also attended. At Grace, the group focused on the issue of college athletics. While at Kuyper, Nick Kroeze, the College’s president, and student life director, Curt Essenburg, made a presentation on LGBT issues and policies. During later open discussions, the group shared updates, opportunities and concerns centered on the state of higher education in general and on their own campuses in particular. In a thank you note sent by Dr. Enlow to Nick Kroeze, he said, “Thank you for the superb way you and your team hosted the ABHE Midwest Presidents Gathering. Everything about Kuyper speaks of Godly excellence.”
Letter from the president

Which way do you count? Generally, a North American will begin with a closed hand and extend the index finger as “number one” and then proceed down the fingers to the pinky before returning to the thumb as “number five.” Other cultures begin with an open hand and close each finger as it is counted. Still others begin with the pinky as “number one” and end at the thumb as “number five.” Interestingly, in many Asian cultures, a person can count to 12 on one hand and, by using both hands, count to 144. At the gym, I can set my treadmill time to either count up to 30 minutes or to count down from 30 to zero. I think when I do it the first way, I’ve entered the exercise routine with a mindset of “Let’s accomplish something!” and when I do it the second way, I think I’m feeling “Let’s get this over with!”

This whole thing about counting figures pretty big into our lives. Whether as evidenced by the Old Testament book of Numbers, or the way we count down rocket launches from ten to zero, or the use of construction paper chains to help kids mark the days until some special event—the way we count helps us manage the anticipation we feel about something or gives us a sense of accomplishment over goals attained. And so it is with Christmas. From November 30 through December 24 of 2014 we celebrated the season of Advent—the period of anticipation or waiting symbolizing the coming of our Lord. In my family, we lit candles on an Advent Log and counted up to Christmas Day, building anticipation all along the way. However, in popular culture, we tended to count down to Christmas: How many shopping days…

For many Christians, Advent is all about Christmas and, also for many, it is about the anticipation of His second coming. This makes me curious again about the question of which way I’m counting. How long before Christ returns? Mentally and spiritually, I’m thinking I’m counting down, kind of with a feeling of “Let’s get this over with!” However, I think that God is counting up, having more of a “Let’s accomplish something!” approach to The Day (Romans 11:25). So, I have to pause and consider that all of history is pointing toward a “fullness of time” when all things will be complete in Him. My attitude should be one of eager engagement with this time, making the most of each day, doing my part to grow and strengthen the body of Christ on this Earth. My thanks to each of you for helping us do this at Kuyper College!

Blessings and gratitude

Each fall, Kuyper College holds the annual Scholarship Dinner to celebrate the generosity of scholarship donors and the hard work of scholarship recipient students. This year, 289 family and endowed scholarships were awarded to Kuyper students, totaling well over $500,000—$50,000 more than last year. The Dinner provides an opportunity for scholarship recipients to meet those who have made it possible for them to attend Kuyper. In return, donors are encouraged and uplifted by being able to meet with students and learn firsthand about their studies and plans for the future.

Nearly 200 people were in attendance, including donors, students, faculty and staff. For the first time, the celebration included an award ceremony for donors. Frank and Bernice Deppe, who have been friends of the College for over 50 years, were recognized for their generous investment in Kuyper’s business leadership program. Robert R. Israels, also a long-time friend of Kuyper and former member of Kuyper’s Investment Committee, was also recognized for his work in skillfully redesigning Kuyper’s dining hall and student center, and for his future plans to continue redesigning other facilities at Kuyper. It seemed only fitting to honor him at the Scholarship Dinner—this being the first event held in Kuyper’s newly renovated dining facilities.

Kuyper students Jae Won Park (pre-seminary), Jeremy Jensema (youth ministry), and Taylor Ezikian (social work) inspired attendees by sharing how God has moved in their lives, calling and equipping them for His service. Video of the student speakers can be seen at http://youtu.be/YaI0GUJ65oA.

Nick Kroeze with Frank and Bernice Deppe and Robert Israels
We often hear from friends of Kuyper who tell us they’ve included a gift to the College as part of their estate plan. While we are always humbled and pleased, we also affirm them, because leaving an up-to-date estate plan is one of the best things they can do for their family and ministry organizations which are close to their heart. Doing so ensures an effective and orderly transfer of their God-given assets to others. To help you judge the importance of this issue, below is an overview of some of the most common estate planning pitfalls, and how you can avoid them:

1. Simply not doing it. The most common mistake is not doing any estate planning at all, or not updating an existing but out-of-date plan.
2. Thinking it’s just for the wealthy. Most people are surprised to learn that their estate is larger than they thought it was—taking into account their home, retirement savings, life insurance, etc.
3. Failing to update your will. Life is full of changes—children, grandchildren, marriage, death and finances to name just a few. Changes in your family or even in tax law are all reasons to update your will.
4. Paying too much in taxes and probate costs. Estate planning is an opportunity for you to reduce unnecessary taxes and court costs and maximize the resources the Lord has entrusted to you.
5. Leaving your important documents in hard-to-find places. Going through an estate planning process is of little value if no one can find your documents. Communicating with your heirs or a trusted representative about the location of your assets and important documents is essential.
6. Leaving your entire estate to your spouse. The government provides estate tax credits, but you may forfeit the benefits if you simply leave all of your assets to your spouse. You may consult with Kuyper’s gift planning partner Barnabas Foundation (www.barnabasfoundation.org) or a trusted Christian attorney to discuss how best to allocate your resources.
7. Inadequate provision for children. In addition to determining how your assets should be transferred, guardianship of minor children is also a very important issue requiring prayerful consideration. Be sure to discuss your desires with potential guardians to confirm their willingness and availability.

For information on estate planning, contact Ken Capisciolt at kcapisciolt@kuyper.edu or at 616-988-3676.

In My Words: Finding an Idea

In January 2006, my plane descended onto a Grand Rapids airport runway, on a flight from Logan Airport in Boston, Massachusetts. It took only a moment to collect my things. I had brought a few items of clothing, some supplies, and a coffee mug. These things were stuffed into a green surplus Navy sea bag, with my last name written on the side in large black letters.

To me, Kuyper College was the place I would start over. At home, I left or sold everything. Most notably, I left my livelihood behind—a collection of tools, neatly tucked away in a red mechanic’s box. I was trading the feel of steel wrenches for the new experience of computer keyboards, pencils and blue books. I knew no one, and that was ok. This was all part of starting over.

When I arrived on campus, I listened carefully for clues as to what this new place was about. In my mind, I had always drawn a connection between the old place back home and my old ways of thinking. I hoped the new environment, with new people, would help me to think a new way and to speak and act differently. After a couple of weeks, I began to realize that while Kuyper was indeed providing what I had hoped, it was giving me something even better, things I had not known or hoped for.

As I reflect now, several years later, I realize that I found something far more important than a new place. I found an idea. The idea was fresh, simple, yet dynamic—the world, the place I had run from, is the place where God is doing a remarkable work of redemption. I learned Kuyper was not the end in itself, but a means to an end—God’s invitation to come alongside as He redeems the world I had tried to leave behind. This is to me, in essence, what is special about Kuyper College. While we are blessed with a beautiful place, what makes Kuyper is the idea. The world needs a place like Kuyper to help connect people with ideas.

I graduated years ago, and am so proud of the work my classmates are doing. They have embraced Kuyper the idea, even as they have graduated from Kuyper the place. They are pastors, social workers, missionaries, writers and business people. Perhaps some of them have red mechanic’s tool boxes. However, they are all ministers. I am still at Kuyper the place, serving in my fifth year, and nothing is more fulfilling to me than sharing Kuyper the place, where I know people will encounter Kuyper the idea.

“In My Words” is a feature of The Kuyper College News highlighting first-person stories by Kuyper College faculty and staff.

Stewardship: How to Avoid 7 Estate Planning Mistakes

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For information on estate planning, contact Ken Capisciolt at kcapisciolt@kuyper.edu or at 616-988-3676.
We became his kids.” According to Balcom, his uncle was the greatest person in his life. He explained: “He was Dad and Superman. Everything I have ever learned I learned from him—from how to treat people to playing sports, to the importance of working hard and doing it successfully. He was the hands and feet of Christ to my brother and me.”

Balcom said that by the time he entered Coopersville High School, he had his life planned out. “I was going to be a farmer, so I took classes in high school to prepare me for that profession. I was also a three-sport athlete, a band geek, and a farm kid who sometimes would smell like the barn because we had to do chores before school. I loved life and I loved people,” he said. This all changed quickly the day news came that Balcom’s Uncle Jeff had been killed in a farm accident. Balcom said he went into a deep depression, which he admits to hiding very well. “On the outside I was fine, but on the inside, I could not understand how a God who loved me would give me another crushing blow. But then,” he added, “slowly God began to teach me more about Himself through the life of my Uncle Jeff, and that my Uncle Jeff was who he was because of his faith in God.”

As the years went by, Balcom was involved in construction when the farm was slow. “I was 25 years old and didn’t know where I was going in life, but I did know one thing—I loved being able to help people in their deepest needs. So I went to school and became an EMT and worked for eight years for Rockford Ambulance,” he said. However, as he worked as an EMT, Balcom said God’s tapping on his shoulder was constant: “Hello! I am calling you to do greater work! You are not listening.” He stated, “This constant calling from God had been there since I was in sixth grade; it would take a few more years for me to listen.”

Fast forward a few years. Balcom, a Conklin Reformed youth group leader since his 20s, is taking the youth group to Genesis, an RCA sponsored retreat in Traverse City, Michigan, the same place where, as a sixth-grader, he first heard God’s voice calling him to ministry. “I am there praying that God would reach one of my kids,” he said. “Who does He talk to? Me. I could clearly hear Him say: ‘Stop ignoring me and do what I have called you to do.’ So I finally said, ‘Okay, I give up,’ because You don’t give up.”

This is where Balcom says his journey at Kuyper College began. “I was 30 years old and working full time at Rockford Ambulance—10 days of 24-hour shifts per month,” he said. “So, I asked myself, ‘How am I going to be able to work full time and be a student full time?’ Well,” he added, “that is where God and Kuyper came in. They helped me schedule my classes around my work.” And those classes helped him discern very quickly that youth ministry was what God had chosen for him. “During those class days I also met my mentor and, to this day, one of my most cherished friends, Professor Brian Telzerow. Anything Brian threw at us I soaked up like a sponge, so I quickly understood why God had me here—youth. And while I was known as ‘Grandpa’ to some of the student body, I always felt loved and part of the school family from day one,” he said.

It was at Kuyper that Balcom went on a blind date and met 2005 Kuyper grad Stacy Brouwer. They began to date and married in 2012. Today, Stacy is a member of the staff at Harbor House Ministries in Jenison, Michigan, a long-term care facility for adults with severe multiple impairments. Balcom is youth and sports ministry director of Spring Valley Church in Allendale, Michigan, ministry director of Moriah Ministries, and chaplain of Grand Valley State University’s track and field teams.

“I am always asked how all of this came to pass,” said Balcom. “I always respond, ‘How much time do you have?’”

After graduating from Kuyper, Balcom joined the staff of 3 Mile Project. Set in a 34,000 square foot former warehouse, the ministry encourages youth in their physical, emotional and spiritual development by sharing God’s love without pressure or intimidation. It was there that Balcom met Allyssa DeHaan, an All-American basketball player for Michigan State University. “Allyssa introduced me to Andy McDaniel, the sports chaplain at Grand Valley State University. He told me all about Moriah Ministries and how it serves the coaches and athletes at GVSU,” said Balcom. “I loved that Moriah Ministries combined two of the things I am passionate about—ministry and sports.
I wanted to know more. Then I found out that I had to raise all my own funds to be a missionary in Allendale, Michigan.

According to Balcom, he began to think, “How am I going to explain that to people? Here we are smack dab in the middle of Bible Belt West Michigan, and I am going to be a missionary in the center of it. Yet, Stacy and I began to pray about it and took a step of faith.” Although it has been a financial rocky road, “raising support is not my strength,” said Balcom, he serves today as Moriah’s ministry director and chaplain to the largest team at Grand Valley State University—the Lakers’ track and field team—under the invitation and direction of Head Coach Jerry Baltes. He holds Bible studies with coaches and team members, spends an average of 10 hours a week of one-on-one counseling with athletes, and travels with the team to track meets all over the country.

During this time Balcom had been serving on a volunteer basis as youth and sports ministry director under the leadership of Kuyper graduate Pastor Rob Wondergem at Spring Valley Community Church in Allendale. “Income was really tight,” said Balcom. “We’d only been able to raise $500 a month of support for our Moriah Ministries service. The hardest part was trying to figure out how we were going to pay our bills each month,” said Balcom. “During that time, Stacy and I continued to pray to God and struggle with His plans for us. We clearly heard God saying: ‘Continue what you are doing; don’t you trust me?’”

In the midst of all of this, Balcom got a call from Pastor Rob who wanted to meet. “As we talked I could feel God’s presence in the room,” said Balcom. According to him, Pastor Rob told him he believed it was God’s plan for Stacy and him to come to Spring Valley as volunteers and that their passion for the church was rubbing off on others. “Then he finally said, ‘I know you are struggling financially, so would you consider taking on the role of youth and sports ministry director here at church on a paid half-time basis while continuing to do your ministry at Grand Valley?’”

Balcom says that this fall as they transition into this new ministry, Stacy and he are excited to take on and mentor two new interns from Kuyper—Aleesha Denbraven will be a youth ministry intern at Spring Valley, while Jonathan Dyer will be a sports ministry intern, splitting his time between GVSU and Spring Valley. “I am also blessed by the GVSU track and field teams with whom I get to live life during their ups and downs of competing and life in general,” said Balcom. “All of this makes us very excited for the opportunity to give back and share our many years and stories of ministry that will help train the future leaders of the church,” he added. “God brought Stacy and me together to further His kingdom and the lives of many others. He’s allowed us to be in ministry for a lot of years. During this time we’ve learned many lessons—a very important one is that just like farming, ministry is a seven days a week kind of job! We thank God for that,” he said.
“The Pond” by Kroeze-Krew—a Top 5 ArtPrize entry

Among the works of 1,536 artists and 398,000 public votes cast in three different categories, “The Pond,” an entry by Kuyper President Nicholas Kroeze with help from his sons and son-in-law—“the Krew,” garnered Top 5 Public Selection in the 3D category of Grand Rapids’ ArtPrize.

“The Pond” is a wood carving of a rainstorm and the ever enlarging circles which the raindrops create on the pond’s surface—a symbol of the ever giving and expanding grace of God. The wood carving made out of pine is composed of 2,000 pieces, including 500 raindrops. It is eight feet in diameter and is suspended from a 10-foot-tall frame. Kroeze and “the Krew” worked on the piece for nine months, putting approximately 500 hours of work into it. “I enjoy rain and I enjoy storms,” said Kroeze. “Both are comforting, cozy events for me that help me think of God’s grace and how He sends rain on all alike.”

Many comments on the sense of serenity they felt when seeing the exhibit are represented by those of one man, who after viewing the piece described it as “An incredible representation of humanity: every piece is unique. But they all come together to form a beautiful whole, much like each member of the body of Christ is unique, yet God brings us together in the same beautiful way.”

According to Kroeze, the idea of the pond came from a picture of a raindrop carving his son sent to him last year. “I began thinking about rain and the concept of God’s common grace that ties in with that symbolism,” he said. “As the family and I continued discussion of the theme, we liked the idea of a ‘still shot’ which captured a moment in time when rain was falling upon a pond. We also liked the sense of tranquility and space for reflection and meditation ‘The Pond’ could provide to the viewer.”

“The Pond” is just one of dozens of sculptures in wood that Kroeze has created over the years. “I have enjoyed woodworking since childhood, developing skills under my father’s direction at home (he was an engineer), in high school and through summer work in a cabinet shop,” he said. “The more artistic, interpretive art I have been creating over the past twenty years or so began with an idea for a 28-day Advent Log carved to represent the Old Testament promises of a coming Savior. We would light a candle each evening and use a devotional I wrote around the theme for that day.”

Other ArtPrize entries by Kroeze include “Psalm 23”; “How Long” inspired by Revelation 6:9-11; and “Lifted,” an expression of Psalm 40 for which, just as he did for “The Pond,” Kroeze developed a companion devotional.

Fall sports recap

“The Kuyper Cougars competed with courage both on and off the court during this past fall season,” said Christine Moran, Kuyper’s athletic Director. According to her, although the Women’s Volleyball team was small in numbers, and with only one senior, they almost accomplished a split with an 11/12 record. Moran said that she has seen tremendous growth in the team members both as players and leaders—with Taylor Way, Emily Hart, and Sarah Longo receiving 2014 Division II Women’s Volleyball Awards.

Four members of the Cross Country team—Kaytlynn Kerwin, Kevin Kruizinga, Sarah Harvey and Grant Schlinz, competed in nationals, held in Houghton, NY. “Kerwin blew everyone away by qualifying for the finals in her first race,” said Moran. “And although the team is only in its second year, they have grown and show great promise for next year’s season”

Moran also said that this year’s Men Soccer team fielded its largest number of players. “Coach Matthews has done an excellent job of unifying the team into one cohesive unit,” she said. “This bodes well for the future.” The team made it to the Midwest Region semifinals, where they ended their season with a loss to Moody Bible Institute. Luke Carrig, a mid-fielder, was selected for the 2014 Men’s Soccer Midwest Region All Region Team. “Off the court the teams did phenomenally well,” said Moran. “Eight out of a total of 15 qualifying athletes involved in Kuyper fall sports, earned the Scholar-Athlete award—given to juniors and seniors athletes with a 3.4 GPA or higher.”

This year’s recipients representing Soccer include—Jacob Morse Andrew Zokoe, Luke Carrig, Derek DeRuiter and Jeremy Jensema; representing Cross Country—Kevin Kruizinga and Kaytlynn Kerwin, and representing Volleyball—Chelsea Reits.

Moran said that Sports Team Chaplain, Evan Heerema has been an integral part of the athletic program, mentoring players and praying with teams, arranging service projects, and “teaching players what it means to be a Christian Athlete.” This season’s team verse was 2 Timothy 4:2 “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season.”
Class Notes

Marriages:
Kyle Christie and Emily Wittenbach (2010) were married on July 19, 2014.
Josh Rumbarger (2012) and Sara Hoogeboom (2014) were married on August 16, 2014.
Christopher McIntosh-Lopez (2009) and Stephanie Richards were married on October 12, 2014.
Daniel Tredway and Amy Bronsink (2009) were married on October 18, 2014.
Dan Failing and Jessica Cook (2013) were married on October 25, 2014.
Tyler Cook (2009) and Joni Dykema (2008) were married on November 7, 2014.

Births:
Andrew (2009) and Christy (Hochhalter) Johnson (2010), along with big brother Aaron, welcomed baby Eastleigh Marie on October 7, 2014.

Professional Developments:
Emily (Wittenbach) Christie (2010) was appointed to the position of preschool teacher assistant at Head Start for Kent County in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Cory Hendrickson (2014) was appointed to the position of assistant director of student ministries at Glenkirk Church in Glendore, California.
Catie Jasperse (2010) was appointed to the position of paraprofessional to young 5s at Knapp Charter Academy in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Kyle Los (2009) was appointed to the position of managing director of Actors’ Theatre in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Amy (Bronsink) Tredway (2009) is volunteering in Haiti with Mission Aviation Fellowship.
Shelby Wellman (2014) was appointed to the position of resident advocate at Hope Network in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Karen Wiersma (2010) is working as a missionary at Love’s Door for All Nations in Livingstone, Zambia.

Events

Spring Break
Monday, March 2 – Friday, March 6

Variety Show
Friday, March 27 at 7:00 p.m. in the Vos Chapel

Honors Convocation
and Student Scholar Day
Friday, April 10 at 9:30 a.m. in the Vos Chapel

Spring Choir and Ensemble Concert
Friday, April 10 at 3:00 p.m. in the Vos Chapel

Spring Recitals
Monday, April 13 at 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. and Tuesday, April 14 at 7:00 p.m. in the Vos Chapel

Commencement
Friday, April 24 at 7:30 p.m.

Kuyper College Experience Days.
Schedule can be found at www.kuyper.edu/visit

Chapel
Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10:10 a.m.
in the Vos Chapel.

Sport Schedules:
Women’s basketball schedule:
www.kuyper.edu/womens_basketball
Men’s basketball schedule:
www.kuyper.edu/mens_basketball

News

• Dr. Jeff Fisher, professor of theological studies, presented a paper—Early Foundations for Debated Doctrines: Melanchthon and Oecolampadius on the Extent of Christ’s Death—at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, in October 2014, and at the Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting in San Diego, California, in November 2014.

• Dr. Carol Hochhalter, professor of worship studies, made a presentation on The Priesthood and Worship at the Congregational Renewal Learning Laboratory (The Renewal Lab) at Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in October 2014.

• Professor Lisa Hoogeboom, professor of biblical Greek & intercultural studies, made a presentation on Muslim-Christian Dialogue on Campus: Equipping the Next Generation of Leaders for a World of Religious Pluralism at the West Michigan Academic Consortium Conference held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in October 2014.
Looking back on my growing up years, it’s like something from a book. My parents live in the country with our only neighbor being my grandma. We kids—my older brother Ethan and younger sister Hannah—would run from our house to my grandmother’s house every day. My parents have always been very invested in our lives and now in the life of our newly adopted little sister, British, who is 3 years old. There’s always been a subconscious understanding that family came first for everyone.

A big part of growing up was the fact that I was born with a heart defect. Many of my early years were spent in the hospital or at home. At age 5 I had a surgery that changed my life. Although I will never be normal, this surgery opened the door to a new kind of life, one that almost looks normal. I like to call it “my normal.”

If I came across a situation in which my heart defect would hold me back, my parents would encourage me and problem solve with me to find a way in which I could participate. Sometimes it resulted in me looking silly. I remember as a kid wanting to climb trees, but I couldn’t. So, instead I would get a step ladder and use it to reach the first branch. I would then spend the rest of the afternoon hanging out on the first branch, content as could be.

As a result of my health, my parents decided to home school me and my siblings. In my teenage years most of my schooling was done within a community of other home-school students. This type of schooling really helped me prepare for college.

In the fall of my sophomore year of high school, doctors told me that there was something wrong with my heart again, but that it would only take a simple procedure to fix it. This simple procedure turned out not to be simple at all, but a nine-month and seven-surgeries-long period of time. I was 15, and all I wanted was to be normal. I was mad and depressed. I yelled and cried. Then I turned to God and admitted that I couldn’t do this on my own anymore. I asked for Him to take over and give me peace. And He did. Since then He has become a bigger and bigger part of my life.

After graduating from high school I did not know what I wanted to do, but I knew that I wanted to help people. So, I decided to go into social work.

On my first visit to Kuyper, I fell in love with the school. At the time I could not put into words why, but now I know it was the community. At Kuyper, relationships and friendships come organically. I love knowing all the faces; it makes it feel like home.

During my junior year I had to take time off for health reasons. I left almost halfway through the first semester. I was blessed by my professors allowing me to finish the courses I could at home. During this time I could also see how much they cared and how hard they worked to help me finish my classes.

I am currently in my senior internship at Kuyper. I am interning at Baxter Community Center, working mostly in their Mizizi Maji Mentoring Program with students ages 8-18 helping them to experience different parts of culture and society. It also encourages students to finish high school and go on to college.

After graduation from Kuyper, I will be attending graduate school to obtain my master’s in social work with an emphasis in school social work. It is my goal to be a social worker in a public school.

There are many special events that take place at Kuyper College. There is also an e-Newsletter. If you would like to receive event information, notifications and the e-Newsletter online, please send your e-mail address and cell number to: advancement@kuyper.edu.