

# Fellowship of Christian Athletes

By Cali Leng

The first Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting took place on Friday, the 5th of October. It was held in its annual spot, Mrs. Alex Blewitt's preschool and kindergarten classroom. Most of the usual students were there (mainly kids who had been coming since the 5th grade). The meeting, like all the other times that they have happened took place from seven thirty to eight o'clock, just in time for school to start.

FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes) is a club that was started at St. John's Lutheran School in the year of 2015. It was originally started by basketball coach Don Mcclanen. His starting idea was that if athletes could endorse products such as cigarettes and razors, then surely they could endorse the Lord too. So, he sent letters to nineteen individuals, all with sports backgrounds. Fourteen of them responded to them with interest. Then, that summer, he drove and met up with those who had responded. He then scheduled a five minute meeting with the Pittsburgh Pirates manager, by the name of Branch Rickey. Well, their meeting ended up lasting five hours, and within that time the first FCA meeting was set up to happen in less three months! FCA was a way for athletes to meet and share God's word with others, and connect with others through the Spirit.

Since then, FCA has been going strong.

Ashlee Wilson, the athletic director at SJS, and one of the leaders of FCA, says "I was in FCA in high school, that's when I kind of jumped into it. And then, I kind of stuck with it through college, so then when Mrs. Alex asked me to kind of come on board with it, I was like, 'Um yes, of course! Count me in!' Anything, anyway you can kind of connect me with sports and Jesus; just all of those things kind of combined into one is right up my alley. And I love to be involved in that!";.

A typical FCA meeting at St. John's starts like this: whenever you arrive, you hang out with friends until about 7:40, when the food is all prepared. Then everyone gets in line and there is a variety of different breakfast foods. Students can then find places to sit with friends or students from fifth through eighth grade. After about 10 minutes of eating the devotion is started. Sometimes there is a speaker, or a video. Other times the leaders will come up with a presentation or a student will write a devotion. It's a great way to get creative through Christ. After a prayer the students are dismissed to their classes, and the great thing is, it's entirely free. Any students are allowed, as long as they are in the minimum or maximum grade. You don't have to be an athlete or participate in sports.

FCA currently is active in more than 60 countries such as Australia and Ghana, and at St. John's we have more than 20 people who come almost every Friday. A surplus of students have joined, since the start of the year brought more fifth grade students than ever. Still it continues to grow. Leaders and students both have big plans for the future. "There's a lot of good things about it, I think it'd be cool if we could start maybe earlier. Maybe start at 6:45. I know it's early, but start it then and do it till 8. Get more people to do devotions," says student, Leo Rausch from the seventh grade. And more plans are coming from the leaders; "I think it would be fun for us to do more events together other than just keep meeting on Fridays. I like that, so I want to keep that up. But then if we had different community things we could do, we're talking about getting shirts for everybody this year. Just ways to make it different in other ways," says Wilson.

If you aren't in FCA, it's a great way to connect with friends and Christ without the pressure of school on your back. This is a place where everyone is welcome. You don't have to be an athlete, because we are all champions in God's eyes.