



Kyle Patterson <kylepatterson1@gmail.com>

Introducing our new Dean of Student Life

1 message

Maranatha High School <maranathahighschool@myschoolemails.com>

Mon, Aug 1, 2022 at 3:06 PM

Reply-To: info@mhs-hs.org

To: Connor Patterson <kylepatterson1@gmail.com>

Having trouble viewing this email? To view it as a web page, [please click here](#)[HOME](#) | [CALENDAR](#) | [LOGIN](#)

Monday, August 1, 2022

Welcoming our new Dean of Student Life, Dr. Joe Chai

Maranatha High School provides a college preparatory education, but its mission encompasses so much more than simply getting students into some of the finest universities. With today's teenagers grappling to understand their purpose and value in an increasingly complex world, Maranatha endeavors to come alongside its students with love, humility, and compassion to help them be known, challenged, and transformed. The school's incredibly talented faculty, advisors, and coaches are instrumental in helping achieve this mission, and to that end, Maranatha is proud to welcome Dr. Joe Chai as its new Dean of Student Life.



Dr. Chai comes to Maranatha with over 15 years of experience in schools. He began his career as a special education teacher in Philadelphia's inner-city, and most recently finished a 12-year term serving as a social studies teacher and Assistant Principal at another Christian school. Dr. Chai also comes with a myriad of creative arts experience, from serving his local church as its worship minister to recently starting his own visual storytelling business. In recent weeks, Dr. Chai successfully defended his dissertation and received his Doctor of Education from Vanderbilt University.

For the past 6+ years, Dr. Chai has lived in Pasadena and has always been a fan of how Maranatha put Jesus first. In March 2021, Dr. Chai got a chance to interact with Maranatha's faculty and students, when he assisted in the filming of the school's spring musical, Bye Bye Birdie. He came away from the

experience deeply impressed with the high caliber of Maranatha's students. Subsequently, Dr. Chai developed close friendships with MHS parents and former alumni, and when the Dean of Student Life position opened up, they encouraged him to apply.

In the end, it was Dr. Chai's deep appreciation of Maranatha's mission that compelled him to pursue the job. He shared, "The need for a school like Maranatha has never been greater with this epidemic of loneliness, anxiety, and confusion that we're all trying to navigate. Maranatha's mission and vision are mesmerizing: that because of who Jesus was and what He accomplished, we can find our hopes and dreams resolved in Him, and be transformed and enabled to do some pretty amazing things in the world."

A while back, Dr. Chai was blessed to journey with a student through a transformational experience. He was caught off-guard when he had to discipline a well-loved student who had done something irresponsible. He shared the story, "We had a lengthy chat in my office, and I learned that he (the student) had recently lost his father. I didn't know, and when I heard it, well, it gutted me. I prayed with him, but also let him know that there would be consequences for his actions, including spending 30 minutes each week with me. And I tell you what, those weekly 30-minute sessions were some really poignant times. We talked about life, faith, and hope. To this day, they're some of the most cherished memories that I have."

That experience led Dr. Chai to think more expansively about the purpose of student discipline in his work. He framed his work as "discipleship in disguise," and shared, "School discipline often gets a bad rep, but it's such a powerful and practical presentation of the gospel. To be able to tell a student: 'You didn't measure up. There will be a consequence. It will be painful. But I am never going to give up on you. I'm going to stay by your side until you are finally restored back to the community.'"

The story helps illustrate how strongly Dr. Chai feels that students need to be known. "That's really at the heart of everything, isn't it? A desire for belonging," he said. "To know that there is a community that not only wants, but actually needs you to be your authentic self in order to truly thrive. It dovetails with what educators have known for a long time from frameworks like Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Before you can get to a place of self-actualization and taking risks to become the very best version of yourself, you need to know that this place is safe and champions belonging as its central practice. Similarly, for students at Maranatha to be sufficiently challenged and transformed, they need to be known and honored for who they are."

Maranatha High School is blessed to have individuals like Dr. Joe Chai joining the school family to engage students with love, humility, and compassion, just as Christ loves us. If you would like to welcome Dr. Chai to the MHS community or ask him a question, please email him at j_chai@mhs-hs.org.

Maranatha High School | [169 S. Saint John Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91105](#) 626.817.4000

This e-mail was sent to kylepatterson1@gmail.com by maranathahighschool@myschoolemails.com. You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive e-mails sent to this recipient list.