

## Life-size Furniture Brings Tabernacle to Life



Life-size wooden tabernacle furniture at Spring Lake CRC.

This fall, adults and children of all ages at Spring Lake (Mich.) Christian Reformed Church experienced the Old Testament tabernacle as it might have been with life-size wooden furniture made by their own members.

"The furniture has been a nice visual reminder of what we're doing and has helped to capture people's interest," said Drew Sweetman, pastor of the church.

The church is using the WE curriculum created by Faith Alive, the publishing ministry of the Christian Reformed Church. The curriculum's "Enter the Tabernacle" series includes instructions to build tabernacle furniture out of cardboard boxes. "Since we would be using them on a Sunday, we

thought we could make something better than that so they wouldn't collapse," said George Suchecki, one of two men who built the six large pieces, including the altar of burnt offerings and the ark of the covenant out of wood.

Cheri Ter Haar and her three children under the age of 12 have especially enjoyed conversations that make connections between the lesson and their lives. "We love having hands-on activities to help us learn about the tabernacle," said Ter Haar.

The church hopes to pass on the furniture to another church that may want to use it.

—Daina Kraai



Officer James Herring

## Oregon Officer Creates Texting Program to Combat Bullying

Some middle school students are reluctant to report bullying to the school office for fear of becoming the bully's next target. James Herring, a member of Sunnyslope Christian Reformed Church in Salem, Ore., has made it possible for students to report bullying with the touch of a button.

Herring, a Marion County sheriff's deputy and school resource officer, created "Bullies Beware," a texting program now in its second year.

Students may report a bullying incident by texting Herring or by sending him an email. Herring follows up on every report, notifies the parents of those involved, provides counseling, and holds the bully accountable. "The biggest reason for bullying is not because schools don't have systems. Schools have zero tolerance. Kids are afraid of being called a snitch," explained Herring.

Technology such as texting and Facebook has intensified bullying, making it a 24-hour-a-day occurrence.

"You can use bullying as a teaching moment and help [kids] understand how words can hurt and kill people," he said. "We have to work together as a community to keep one another safe."

—Amy Toornstra



## New Mexico Principal Receives National Education Award

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) honored John Hartog with the National Distinguished Principal of New Mexico award.

Hartog, a member of Bethany Christian Reformed Church in Gallup, N.M., has served the Gallup-McKinley County school district for 43 years—22 as a teacher and 21 as a principal. "I love kids," he said. "I really want to see kids do well in the next stages of life."

Ron Donkersloot, director of human resources for Gallup-McKinley County Schools, nominated Hartog for this award. Donkersloot, also a member of Bethany CRC, said, "I nominated John because he is a well-respected member of the community and is a successful principal. This recognition is well deserved for the work he has done for over 43 years."

—Shashi DeHaan

**John Hartog receives the National Distinguished Principal of New Mexico award in Washington, DC.**