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ALUMNI FOCUS

AUTUMN'S STORY

Students and staff at SFC were privileged, during a chapel in March, to share in the spiritual journey of a beautiful young lady, Autumn Dykshorn, from when she was in grade five to the present, her graduation year. Autumn's story began when her mom was diagnosed with cancer seven years ago and through the roller coaster ride of remissions and dashed hopes, God held Autumn close. Although not publicly displaying her sadness and fears, she cried herself to sleep many nights. There were times of deep despair when Autumn doubted God's presence, but there were also times when her faith triumphed. One of those pivotal, triumphant times came a couple months before her mom died when she realized *God had answered* her prayers for her mom's healing-Autumn's mom would be healed in Heaven.

Autumn Dykshorn speaking at chapel.

When her mom died in May of 2008, a Bible verse that had always comforted her in the past became a struggle for her as she tried to understand why this tragedy had happened to her family-that verse was Jeremiah 29:11, " 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' "Fears of facing the future without her mom began to surface. During Spiritual Emphasis Week, Dawn Geschiere, facilitator, helped Autumn recognize that the origination of her fear was from Satan. Now, as she faces the future, Autumn knows she can trust God to guide her. As Autumn brought her talk to a close she shared four lessons she learned during those seven years: 1) Many people are hurting, but they cover it up and only when you spend time with them will they open up and share their hurt. 2) God answers prayer-we don't always understand or like the way it is answered, but it is answered; Autumn's prayer for her mom's healing was answered when her mom was healed in Heaven. 3) When we are in our deepest despair, Satan will lie and deceive us if he can. 4) God can get you through anything; you don't always see the light at the end of the tunnel because you may have to take a few turns before you get to that point. A favorite verse that helped Autumn's mom as she fought cancer is Romans 12:12, which says, "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." Mrs. Dykshorn lived this verse and that is how Autumn will always remember her mom.

Autumn graduated from SFCS on May 15, and is now officially an alumna. The four lessons Autumn has already gleaned in her spiritual journey will surely be helpful as she attends college at South Dakota State University in their Nursing Program. May God bless you, Autumn, as you trust Him with your future plans!