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Richmond Academy Alumni & Friends Newsletter

OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE RA ALUMNI & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION



A Warm Winter Edition

REBECCA SAVOY ('22)

The weather outside might be chilly and bleak, but the halls of Richmond Academy are ablaze with activity! In our second issue of the Richmond Academy Alumni & Friends Newsletter, get to know Vonda Bareford, an alumna from the class of 1982. Read about the exciting trip our high schoolers took to Southern Adventist University for a choir festival. Look through the highlights of our year so far on our picture timeline. Learn about the Partnering for Eternity program, and take a sneak peek into the progress being made on our atrium building project. We hope this edition will warm your heart as you reminisce about your RA days while reconnecting with us through these pages.



Is there anyone you know who should be part of the RA Alumni & Friends Association? Send them this link: https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/PNo9W0x/alumniandfriends

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"I LOVED THE SMALLER SCHOOL EXPERIENCE. WE HAD A LOT OF ONE-ON-ONE TIME WITH OUR TEACHERS."

Alumni Spotlight

VONDA KAY BAREFORD ('82)

Q: When and how long did you attend Richmond Academy?
A: I attended what was then Richmond Junior Academy from 1972 to 1982. I would love to have gone all 12 years if it had been possible; I loved my time at RJA!

Q: Did any teachers or experiences in particular help shape your academic journey and/or life in general?
A: I would have to say that my favorite teacher and the one that made the best impression on me was my first and second grade teacher, Mrs. Blosser. I just loved her and she made learning so much fun. I learned so much from all of my teachers, from English class with Mr. Young and Mrs. Martin, to math with Mr. Martin, and science with Mr. Cornell. All of my classmates can attest, science class with Mr. Cornell was one we will never forget — it was quite electrifying! The techniques I learned at RJA helped me when I went to high school and college.

Q: How did the school's smaller environment impact your school experience?
A: I loved the smaller school experience. We had a lot of one-on-one time with our teachers. We got to go on a lot of field trips and great adventures such as camping for a week at Seashore State Park and skiing at Wintergreen.

Q: What extracurricular activities did you participate in?
A: I was in band, which was directed by Christine Mayers. I wanted to play the drums (as did most students), but I was told that since my sisters who had gone to RJA before me had a clarinet, that is what I would play! It still amazes me that Christine could take a bunch of students, who for the most part had no musical skills, and in a very short time, transform us into a band! She was truly amazing! In addition, I did some photography on the school paper staff, and was in choir with Mrs. Martin. Also under Mrs. Martin, we put on plays and had a fashion show to model the clothes we had made in Home Economics.

Q: What career path did you choose, and what unexpected twists and turns came about?
A: I have two degrees from Virginia Commonwealth University. I first got a degree in Political Science and worked some in local politics. Four years later, I went back and got a degree in Fashion Merchandising. Now I work in tourism for the state of Virginia, not really using either degree!

Q: Why did you choose to stay in the community where you grew up?
A: I love Richmond and always have. It has history, charm, and fabulous restaurants! I love to travel, but it is

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always nice to come home. Only the beach could pull me from Richmond!

Q: Your family has had a long relationship with Richmond Academy. Have you felt connected to the school since your graduation?

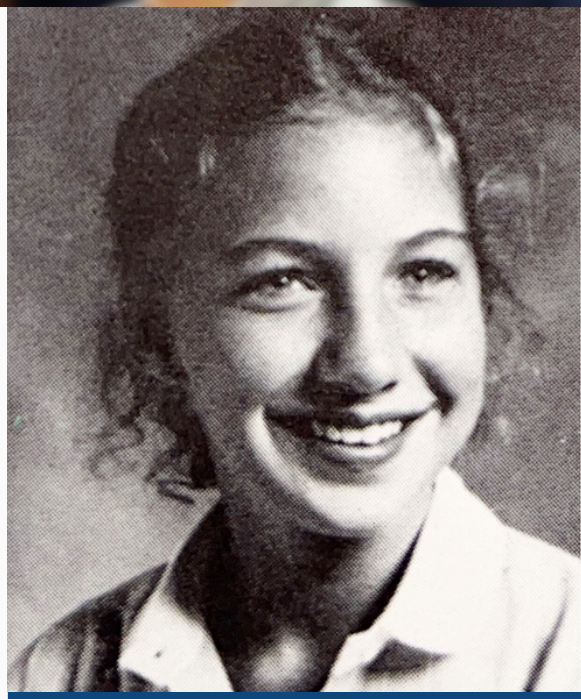
A: I am very proud to be a second generation RJA student. My mother and several of her siblings went to the school when it was still in the basement of the Patterson Avenue Seventh-day Adventist Church. My two older sisters (Jennie Huffman and Eddie Wheatley) also attended all 10 years, and four of my nieces (Tara Huffman, Haylee Dunn, Page Logan, and Sydney Huffman) graduated from RA. The friendships I made during my time at RJA have lasted a lifetime, which is kind of unique to Adventist schools. I also taught Government at RA in the 1990's for a year and worked in the office for several years.

Q: What is one piece of advice you would share with current Richmond Academy students?

A: For all current students, I would say to enjoy your time at RA. Savor all the experiences and adventures, because trust me, as you get older, you will look back and remember the good times and all the memories you made during your time in school. Cherish your friendships; they will last a lifetime! Be eager to learn. Your teachers will give you valuable wisdom that will help you in life and teach you about the Lord, and that is the most important thing you will ever learn! I guess you could say I'm very biased, but I loved my time at RJA. I wish I could have gone there for 12 years instead of only 10! I value my Christian education so much. Thank you to all the teachers, parents, and friends that influenced my life and time at RJA!



Richmond Junior Academy's choir (conducted by Mrs. Martin) performs at the Patterson Avenue SDA Church in 1982. Recognize anyone?



Vonda's 10th grade yearbook picture

"THE FRIENDSHIPS I MADE DURING MY TIME AT RJA HAVE LASTED A LIFETIME, WHICH IS KIND OF UNIQUE TO ADVENTIST SCHOOLS."





Meghan Young is a junior who participted in the Honor Choir Festival at Southern Adventist University from February 7-10, 2024. This was Southern's first choral fest since February 2020!



About 160 students from nine schools participated.



RA's choir poses with Conductor Carrie VanDenburgh.

SAU Honor Choir Festival

MEGHAN YOUNG ('25)

Every year, Southern Adventist University hosts either a choir or band music festival. This year was the Honor Choir Festival, and ten Richmond Academy students were chosen to go. The festival aimed to bring together Adventist high school students from all over the United States to create one big choir.

It was 6:00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 7th when our adventure to Southern began. Although it was a long eight-hour drive, we were excited thinking about the experience we would be participating in. When we finally arrived in Collegedale, TN, we checked in to the festival and went to our first practice, which was from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. We couldn't believe the practice lasted so long! However, it went by very quickly. Our first practice was mainly about getting to know each other and our director and performing as one large choir.

The following morning, we were ready for our second practice, which lasted basically all morning. We had a lunch break, and then continued to rehearse for most of the afternoon. The director, Mrs. Carrie VanDenburgh, helped us learn the music quickly by breaking everything down into manageable pieces. She taught us new things, such as how to breathe while singing and new vocal exercises. If we had any questions or needed help with the music, she was happy to assist us.

The days felt like weeks because we were practicing for so long, but we began to notice an obvious change as we went from singing the songs well to mastering them. Everything went smoothly until Friday afternoon, when we started having electrical problems with the van. Fortunately, we were able to join another school's bus and commute with them from the hotel to Southern's campus that night and the next day.

Our concert was on Saturday evening. We were very nervous, but also excited. Before our performance, we quickly ran through the songs. Once the concert started, we grew more confident as we sang. It was reassuring to see that the audience was moved by our singing. As our concert came to an end, we finally fully understood why we had worked so hard!

As we headed back to the hotel, we found out the van had been repaired and we could drive it back to Richmond Academy safely. Everyone was relieved, and we enjoyed our drive home stress-free. Overall, the SAU Honor Choir Festival was an excellent experience that taught us so much about singing and ourselves. The festival inspired me to think more seriously about pursuing voice lessons and also grew my relationship with God.



Photo Timeline

See highlights of what Richmond Academy has been up to since the last newsletter!



Nutcracker Field Trip

The elementary students traveled downtown to watch the first act of the Richmond Ballet's Nutcracker.



100th Day of School

Students celebrated 100 days of learning!







Latin Ballet Field Trip

Mrs. Palau took her Conversational Spanish class to see the Latin Ballet's Legend of the Poinsettia.





Christmas Concert

Our vocal and handbell choirs put on an amazing performance!



Winter Formal

The Student Association hosted RA's first ever winter formal.



"IN THE PROCESS, THEIR TIME TOGETHER HELPS FINANCE THE STUDENT'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS."



Partnering for Eternity

ROBIN BANKS, PRINCIPAL

It all started with a good deed – a continuing, consistent good deed. A student in an Adventist academy began visiting and caring for a homebound woman for a community service assignment, but after the assignment ended, the student kept coming. A friendship had been built that was beneficial to both. The woman's son pondered – What was good for the student and this elder would certainly be good for other students and other elders. What could be a means of encouraging more relationships like this, while granting a practical kind of "Thank You?"

Richmond Academy, in partnership with the SFFC Foundation's Partnering for Eternity (PFE) Program, is incredibly blessed to offer this opportunity to our students. Through this service-oriented scholarship program, our participating students are paired with elderly adults in our community in a mutually-beneficial way.

Elementary students (along with their parents) in the PFE program bring joy to the lives of senior citizens through fun activities such as visiting, reading, and playing games.

High school students in the program provide help to senior citizens by performing light cleaning, cooking, and/or yard work while improving communication, interpersonal skills, empathy, and collaboration.

As the young people in the program build generational bridges and learn the value of service, they also benefit from the wisdom and mentorship of the older adults. In the process, their time together helps finance the student's Christian education through scholarships. A portion of the scholarships are funded by Richmond Academy's annual silent auction. Currently, twenty Richmond Academy students earn scholarships through this program.

At this year's silent auction, approximately fifty five items were auctioned off. Some of the packages included stays at hotels, museum tickets, and restaurant vouchers for places in Richmond and as far away as Tennessee, Baltimore, and Myrtle Beach. Many thanks to Angela Wood, who is the parent volunteer in charge of procuring donations and gifts-in-kind.

To learn more about the Partnering for Eternity Program, click here to view a brief video.

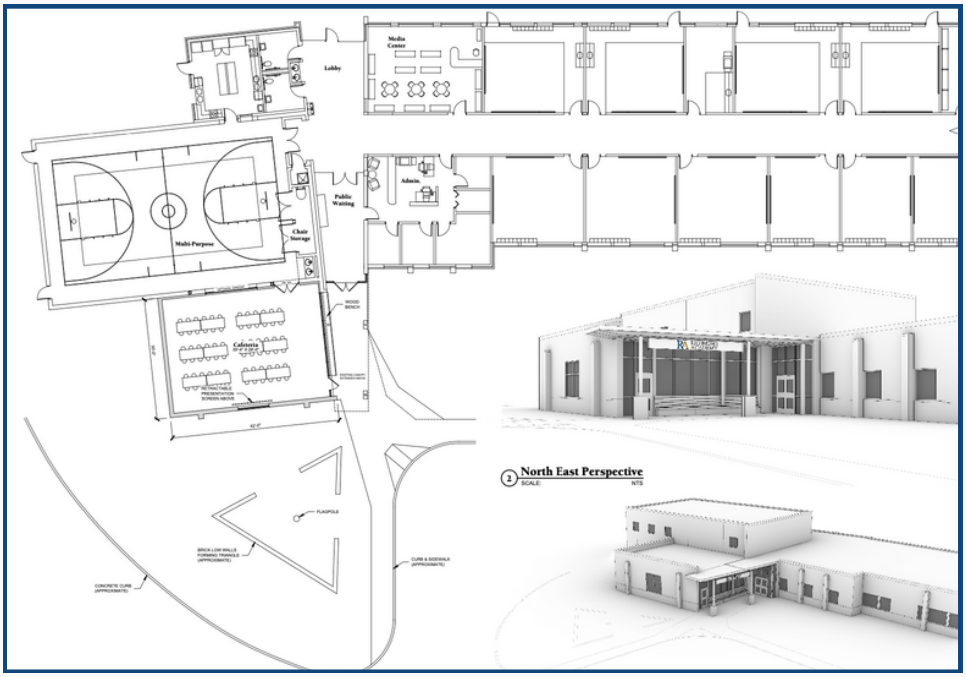
If you are interested in volunteering to be a PFE mentor or can recommend others who might enjoy being mentors, please email richmondacademy.pfe@rasda.org.



Building Project Update

SETH SAVOY, BUSINESS MANAGER

The dining area addition project is progressing. Richmond Academy's architect, utilizing input from the board and staff, has put together this rendering. There will likely be additional slight modifications. The next step is interviewing general contractors to manage the construction.





David ('25), Jaden ('25), Devon ('24), and Ben ('25) attempt to build a durable structure out of spaghetti and marshmallows for a leadership training exercise. Maybe we should hire them to build the atrium!

RICHMOND ACADEMY TRIVIA QUESTIONS

Test your knowledge!

1) In which school year did Richmond Junior Academy become Richmond Academy?

a) 2001/2002

b) 1987/1999

c) 1994/1995

2) How many buildings has Richmond Academy occupied since the school was formed?

a) 2

b) 4

c) 6

3) What year did RA move into its current building?

a) 2014

b) 2019

c) 2008

4) Approximately how many students are enrolled at RA?

a) 80

b) 130

c) 300

5) What is Richmond Academy's motto?

a) Striving, Serving, Succeeding in School

b) Focused, Fearless, French Fries

c) Loving, Learning, Living in Christ

Answers on page 8



Upcoming Events:

March 12: National Honor Society Induction

March 16: Red Cross Club Blood Drive at Patterson Avenue SDA Church

March 23: Choir/Bells at Courthouse Road SDA Church

April 14: STEM Fair

April 20: Bells/Choir at Richmond Brazilian Community Church

Dates are subject to change. Check out our live calendar at https://www.rasda.org/calendar/



Malcolm Hutchinson Obituary

APRIL 28, 1952 - JANUARY 25, 2024

Malcolm (Mick) Everett Hutchinson Jr. was the principal of Richmond Academy from 2011-2014. He was instrumental in implementing virtual technology-based educational platforms in grades seven to twelve. Hutchinson was born in Claremont, NH, and passed away in Wewoka, OK. He held a BA in Theology from Atlantic Union College and an EdD in Educational Instruction from Andrews University. He served as an educational administrator at Pine Tree Academy, Blue Mountain Academy, Bakersfield Adventist Academy, Richmond Academy, and Highland View Academy. He traveled extensively to lead mission trips. Hutchinson never stopped his involvement with youth even after retirement. His favorite things included traveling, gardening, cats, birds, and art. Hutchinson wanted to be remembered as a loving, God-fearing, husband, father, and grandfather, with his grandchildren being his pride and joy.

Alumni Sabbath

Save the date! SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2024 will be Richmond Academy's first Alumni & Friends Sabbath! More info to come.

We Want to Hear From You!

Have any alumni-related questions, comments, or updates? Contact us at alumni@rasda.org!

Trivia Answers:

1. c) 1994/1995
2. b) 4
3. a) 2014
4. b) 130
5. c) Loving, Learning, Living in Christ