

VOL. 1, ISSUE 3 · SUMMER 2024

Richmond Academy Alumni & Friends Newsletter

OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE RA ALUMNI & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION

Summer Kick-off Edition

REBECCA SAVOY ('22)

It's hard to believe that another school year is already over! Everyone is finally finished with class trips, spring concerts, and final exams. Now, the halls at Richmond Academy are empty, but we still want to keep in touch. In this newsletter, you'll meet alum Barry Wilhelm, whose granddaughters now attend RA. Enjoy reading about the Alumni Concert Bells Reunion, getting to know our seniors, and learning about what the Virginia Tax Credits Scholarships Program does for our school. In addition, make a note of our upcoming school and alumni events listed on the last page. We hope you have a fantastic summer and continue to stay connected with the Richmond Academy community.



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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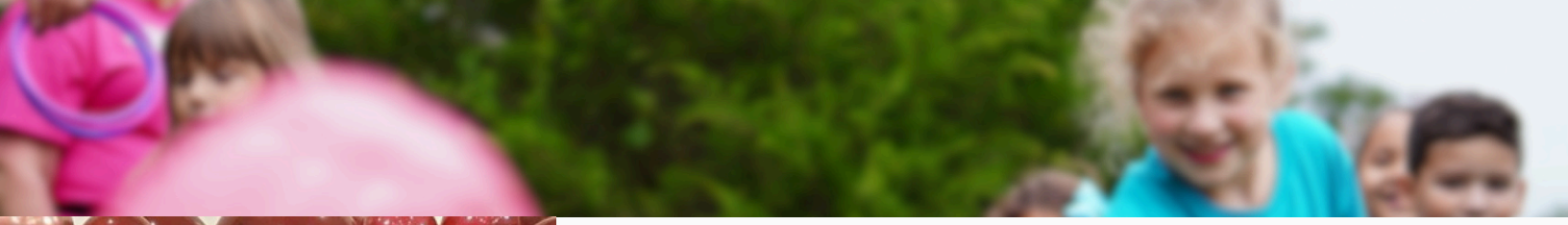
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"THE TEACHERS REALLY CARED ABOUT THEIR STUDENTS. THEY FORMED RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE KIDS AND THEIR PARENTS IN AND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL."

Alumni Spotlight

BARRY WILHELM ('80)

Q: When and how long did you attend Richmond Academy?
A: I attended what was at the time Richmond Junior Academy from 1972 to 1980, from first to eighth grade. I was the youngest of five children in my family that attended (oldest to youngest, it was Sonny, John, Elaine, Dale, and finally me).

Q: Did any teachers or experiences in particular help shape your academic journey and/or life in general?
A: There were several teachers that prepared me for the rest of my life. My first and second grade teacher, Mrs. Joyce Blosser, and my third and fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Anita Mayers, were both very kind but stern. They made sure we had the basic math skills and reading/phonics knowledge base necessary for the rest of our education. Rusty Litten, our principal, became a mentor and role model for the young men at RJA.

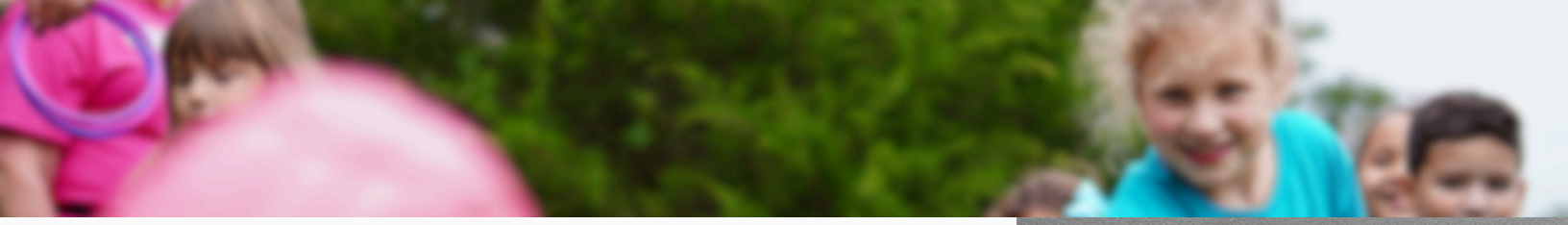
Q: How did the school's smaller environment impact your school experience?
A: It was great to be in a school where the classes were smaller and many of the students and teachers had the same morals, values, and beliefs as I did. I was encouraged to stay involved in beneficial activities such as Pathfinders and Outdoor Education. If I had gone to a bigger public school, I would not have done nearly as well in school as I did at RJA. I also probably would have been involved in activities that would have pulled me away from church.

Q: What extracurricular activities did you participate in?
A: At that time, there were not as many extracurricular activities as there are now. However, I do remember being a part of the band under the direction of Mrs. Christine Mayers.

Q: Do you feel like your time at RA prepared you for the rest of your academic and professional life?
A: YES! I was very prepared for high school when I left Richmond Junior Academy and went to Shenandoah Valley Academy, especially due to RJA's small class sizes and individual attention. The teachers really cared about their students. They formed relationships with the kids and their parents in and outside of school.

Q: What career path did you choose, and what unexpected twists and turns came about?
A: After high school at Shenandoah Valley Academy, I went to Virginia Commonwealth University for a year and then chose to join the army for its adventure, structure, direction, and discipline. (No one, including my classmates and family, ever believed I would join the military). While I was in

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the Army, I learned about hydraulic systems on heavy and industrial equipment. After four years of service, I got out and started working for a hydraulic company. I worked at one company for 18 years until they were sold, and now I'm at my 18th year at AFP Industries, where I work to design, develop, and sell hydraulic components to the US Navy and many other large industrial customers.

Q: How are you still connected with the RA community?

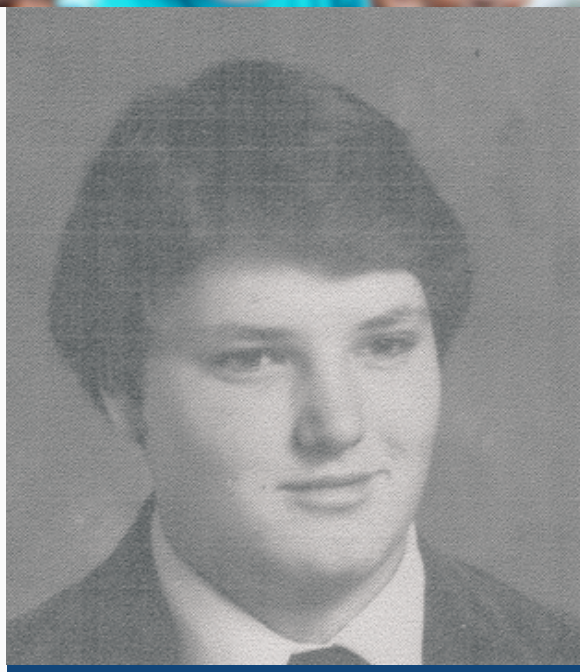
A: My daughter, Amber, attended Richmond Academy in the mid 90's, and two of her daughters attend RA currently. This year, Paisley was in fifth grade and Quinn was in first grade. I enjoy helping with any school function that needs volunteers, such as the Silent Auction and Family Fun Day, and I have become friends with many of the staff members. So many of the people in my life today are those who I attended RA with almost 50 years ago. My wife, Dorothy, attended third and fourth grade at RJA. Many lifelong friends — David Couch, Valerie, Terry, and Allen Reynolds, the Mayers family, Vonda Bareford, the Hegamyer family, and people I've met through connections like Seth Savoy as well as many others — are connected either directly or indirectly through my time at Richmond Academy.

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

A: Don't discount or take for granted the opportunities you have at RA. The connections you make, the education you receive, and the spiritual foundation you gain will be part of you all of your life. Seeing RA thrive 50 years later is a blessing.

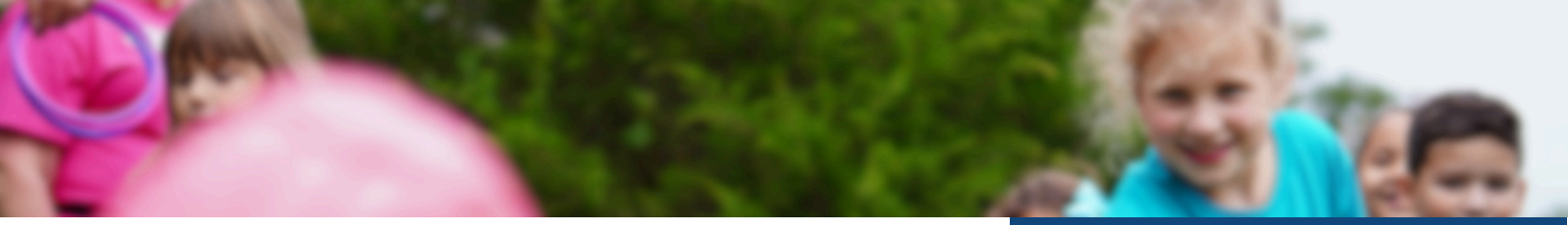


Barry's family includes three generations of Richmond Academy students!



Barry's 8th grade yearbook picture

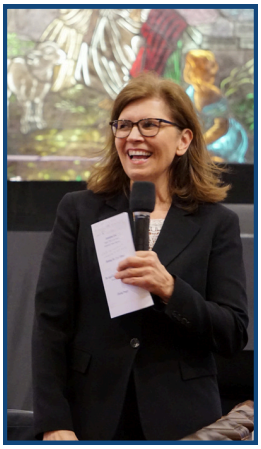
"THE CONNECTIONS YOU MAKE, THE EDUCATION YOU RECEIVE, AND THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION YOU GAIN WILL BE PART OF YOU ALL YOUR LIFE."



Alumni Concert Bells Reunion

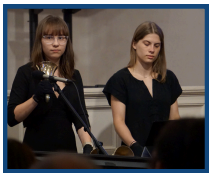
The sanctuary of the Patterson Avenue SDA Church was filled with the sweet sound of melodic handbells on Saturday, June 1st, as Richmond Academy alumni from the past nine years had the pleasure of ringing together. Many of the ringers had never been in Concert Bells at the same time, so the rehearsals consisted of learning to balance musically with one another, as well as learning the pieces after many years of not playing. Our once calloused hands blistered from the physical exertion to which we were at one time accustomed. We only had four practices before the day of the concert, but our muscle memory kicked in! Under the wonderful direction of Ms. Marly Aszalos, we were able to make music from the individual notes. We were united by a common bond of memories of our years at RA and grateful for the chance to play bells again. A small reception followed the concert, allowing the ringers and audience a chance to mingle and reminisce about Richmond Academy and the impact it has had on them since their time as students.

















SCHOOL YEAR STATS

For the upcoming 2024-25 school year

Enrollment: ~135

Class Size: 11-20

Faculty: 10 full time,
5 part time

AP Classes: 4

Dual Enrollment Classes: 2

Music Groups: 4

College Acceptance Rate for 2024 grads: 100%

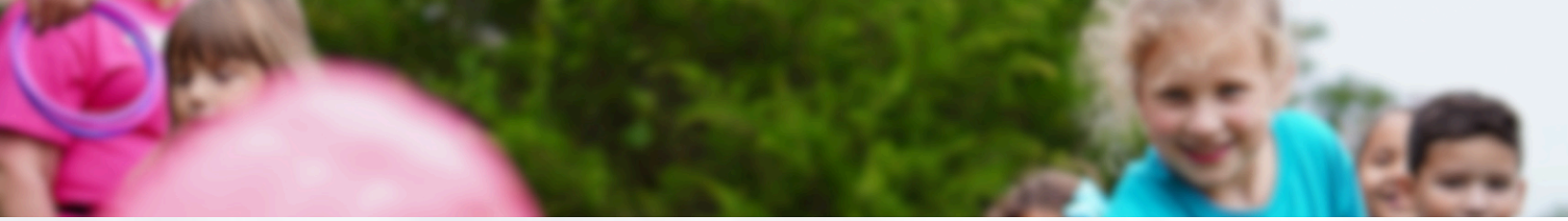


Photo Timeline

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



Prom

RA's Student Association hosted a beautiful banquet with the theme "Midnight Forest" at Oakdale RVA.





Fashion Show

Mrs. Palau's art class put on a spectacular show featuring outfits designed, made, and modeled by the students.





Field Trips

Our students have gone on fun and educational field trips to places like Jamestown and Lewis Ginter.



Fire Drill Surprise

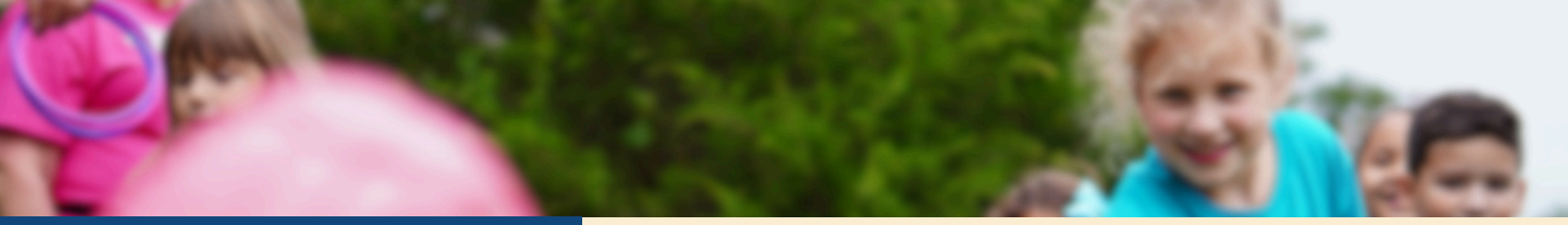
The students got a special treat when, during the last fire drill of the year, they were greeted by an ice cream truck!





Spring Concert

Our performance groups wowed the crowds with a demonstration of what they've been working on this year.



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT



KEVIN MARIANO

Years at RA: 12 years

Leadership Positions: Class Pastor (3 years)

Extracurricular Activities: Different music groups, volleyball, and basketball

Favorite Memories: The Horizons Trips and art class in elementary school

Favorite RA Tradition: The handshake at the beginning of the year

Most Impactful Classes: My precalculus class and art class have been impactful because they showed a side of myself I had never seen before.

Looking Forward: I am excited to go to Southern Adventist University and meet new people. I feel like it will be a refreshing change.

Advice for New Students: The advice I have is to just study hard and not procrastinate, otherwise you will get overrun by assignments.

Staying Involved: I will be involved and promote alumni events, and also visit the school and be open for questions.



DEVON LAPORRE

Years at RA: 13 years

Leadership Positions: SA President and Treasurer, Class President, Vice President, and Treasurer

Extracurricular Activities: Volleyball, basketball, soccer, ensemble, choir, bells, and videography/photography

Favorite Memories: All the music activities throughout the years

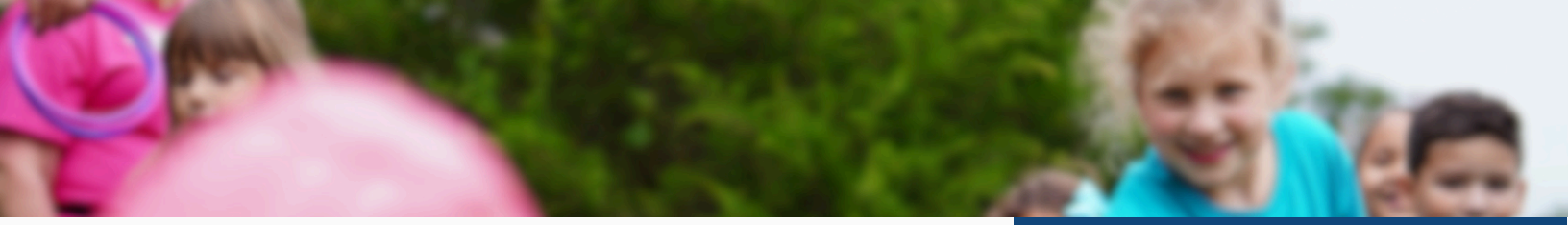
Favorite RA Tradition: The handshake at the beginning of the year

Most Impactful Teacher: Mr. Charles. He made the worst and most annoying concepts/topics just a little bit more bearable.

Looking Forward: I am excited/nervous about moving out of state to Andrews University.

Advice for New Students: Take a dual enrollment class, it will be worth it in the end.

Staying Involved: I can see myself coming back to help out with whatever alumni events happen.



VA Tax Credits Scholarship Program

SETH SAVOY, BUSINESS MANAGER

Attending Richmond Academy is an expensive investment, but historically, families needing some assistance are not turned away, even though the budget each year is based on receiving 100% of the tuition and fees for each student. How does Richmond Academy do this while still offering a high quality program? One of the most impactful answers to this question is the generosity of donors to the Virginia Tax Credits Scholarships Program.

This program has been an incredible blessing to our community since 2014. To be eligible for scholarships, students must be Virginia residents and meet family income requirements. Additionally, they must have attended a public school for at least one of the last two semesters, be entering kindergarten or first grade, or be a prior recipient of a Virginia Tax Credits Scholarship.

What makes this program truly unique are the tax benefits available to donors. The bottom-line cost to donate, after receiving the tax benefits, is incredibly low. Simply put, it costs the donor very little to contribute. Donors receive a tax credit against Virginia taxes equal to 65% of the amount of the donation and 35% of the donation may be considered a deductible charitable donation for federal and state tax purposes.

Donations need to flow through an approved foundation. Our donors use the Potomac Conference Education Foundation. Richmond Academy's administration first brought the Virginia Tax Credits Scholarships Program to the Potomac Conference, assisted with the Foundation's set-up, and has representation on the Foundation board.

The minimum donation amount is $500. The maximum donation amount for individuals is $125,000 per year, but there is no maximum limit for any business entity, including sole proprietorships. Donations can be made by check or stock transfer, and even distributions from IRAs for individuals ages 70+.

This program allows students needing financial assistance to attend Richmond Academy, enables RA to able to provide a high-quality education, and gives donors really valuable tax benefits. It is a true win, win, win.

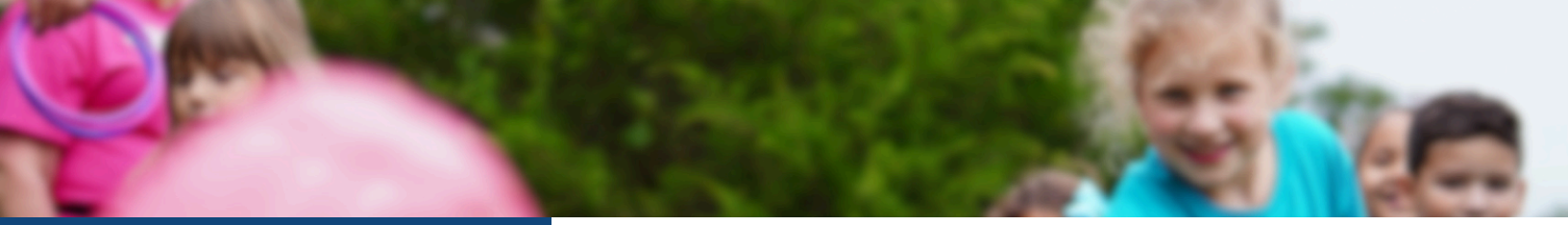
To learn more about the Virginia Tax Credits Scholarships Program & Potomac Conference Education Foundation, click here to view a brief video. If you are interested in participating or would like to hear more, email seth.savoy@rasda.org.

POTOMAC CONFERENCE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

"THE BOTTOM-LINE COST TO DONATE, AFTER RECEIVING THE TAX BENEFITS, IS INCREDIBLY LOW... IT IS A TRUE WIN, WIN, WIN."



For more information on how you can make a difference, check out https://potomacef.com/.



Upcoming Events:

August 18: Prayer Walk at RA

August 19: First Day of School

August 25: Family Fun Day

October 19: Alumni and Friends Sabbath Service

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



Alumni Sabbath

Mark your calendars for Richmond Academy's first annual Alumni & Friends Sabbath on Saturday, October 19th, 2024! Enjoy a special sacred service, a concert with current RA students and alumni, tours of the school property and classrooms, a dinner reception, and more! More information and RSVP details will be sent out soon.

Building Project Update

Progress is continuing to be made on the Richmond Academy Alumni & Friends Dining Area addition! Check out the updated rendering:



Leadership Changes

Congratulations to Principal Robin L. Banks on her new principal position at Loma Linda Academy in California! She will be missed.

We're excited to welcome Stephen Doss as Richmond Academy's new principal! Previously, he was the principal at our sister school in Lynchburg, VA. We are looking forward to seeing how God leads through Steve in the upcoming school years.

We Want to Hear From You!

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