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Richmond Academy Alumni & Friends Newsletter

OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE RA ALUMNI & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION

A New Season at RA

REBECCA SAVOY ('22)

Just like the leaves on the trees in front of Richmond Academy are starting to change into their beautiful autumn colors, the inside of the school has also been changing in exciting ways. In this newsletter, you'll catch up with Nina McCann ('15), and discover what she's been doing since graduation. You'll also hear from our new principal, Mr. Doss, and see the fun experiences our students have had since the first day of school. Take a step back in time by checking out a student-produced newspaper from 1970, and meet the newest additions to the RA team. Finally, make sure to check out our upcoming events and announcements on the last page, and take special note of the dining area addition Dedication Ceremony on Saturday, October 19, at 4 PM. As you read through this newsletter, we invite you to remember how each change brings new opportunities for growth. We look forward to sharing this journey with you!



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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Nina graduated with her EdS this past May!

"RA WENT ABOVE AND BEYOND TO MAKE US FEEL INCLUDED AND A PART OF THE CAMPUS, EVEN IF WE COULD NOT BE THERE PHYSICALLY ALL THE TIME."

Alumni Spotlight

ADONIJAH (NINA) MCCANN ('15)

Q: When and how long did you attend Richmond Academy?
A: I attended RA from 2012 to 2015, my sophomore to senior year. My three youngest siblings also attended from their freshman to junior years.

Q: Did any teachers or experiences in particular help shape your academic journey and/or life in general?
A: I loved all of my teachers. I still talk about Mr. Weidemann's physics class to this day. I quote Mr. Fetters often, and I loved his math class. Mrs. Simons was the sweetest, and I still have her gifts to us from our senior class trip. Mr. Suarez was also always kind and passionate about Bible class. Mrs. Johnson in particular was a huge blessing. I had a lot going on during those years in my personal life and didn't always have the best belief in myself. She always answered my phone calls, let me confide in her, gave great advice, recognized when I was having a tough time, and so much more. She also was the one who took us on class trips to visit Adventist colleges which led me to attend Southern Adventist University.

Q: What are some of your favorite memories from your time at RA?
A: My fondest memories will always be of Outdoor Education. That was a tradition I started while attending Desmond T. Doss and continued when attending Richmond Academy, and it was especially fun when we started combining schools to go together. I also loved our Student Association leadership trips, the class trips, and our skiing trips. It was a lot of fun to be able to enjoy the camaraderie of my peers outside of the building, especially as a connected student.

Q: What was your experience as a connected student like?
A: Being among the first connected students, it was a little difficult to adjust in the beginning. Of course, we had to face some technology hurdles at first. I am also a very extroverted person, so making friends with students two hours away was hard for me. However, RA went above and beyond to make us feel included and a part of the campus even if we could not be there physically all the time. They would bring students from Richmond to Lynchburg every so often, and we in Lynchburg would go to Richmond once a month or so. RA also tried to plan events around when we would visit so we would not miss out on those and could again feel truly a part of their campus. I also became the first "connected" SA president, so that also made me feel connected to the school as I was able to plan events that students could enjoy. I visited Richmond more often than our scheduled trips as well and stayed with friends or family because I enjoyed being there so much.

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Q: How did RA's smaller environment impact your school experience?

A: I have always loved smaller environments. In those spaces, the teachers can truly get to know you, are mindful of the areas you need help developing in, and are aware of the ways you shine and push you towards it. You make friends you keep for life, and it really does start to feel like a family. As an adult, you start to work in jobs that tell you they are like a family but don't even know your first name. It's sad! I loved being part of a school that was filled staff and students alike who looked out for each other, who cared for one another, and who truly wanted to see everyone succeed.

A: Do you feel like your time at RA prepared you for the rest of your academic and professional life?

Q: Yes! Being a "connected" student meant that there was more of a sense of responsibility on us. Because the teachers taught us virtually, there were things they could not always be aware of without being in person. This meant that we had to be especially on top of our school work. This prepared me for college and my professional life in staying organized and being responsible. Mrs. Johnson also taught a financial literacy class which helped me tremendously through my young adult years. I entered my higher education and professional life with a foundation built on faith, which I feel gave me a well-rounded perspective.

Q: What extracurricular activities did you participate in?

A: Although I wasn't in band or choir (which I regret now!), I was the SA President. Connected students were told that we may not be able to be in a role like that because the responsibilities may have been difficult to fulfill from a distance, but I really loved being a part of SA. My favorite event was changing our end-of-year banquet to a promenade, so people did promposals and dressed to match their date. It was cute!

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2015 Student Association Officers (L-R): Audrey (Treasurer), Vivian (Social V.P), Jasmine (Secretary), Mr. Suarez (Sponsor), Nina (President), Darren (Pastor)



Most Likely To Change The World

Nina's senior yearbook superlative is already coming true!

"I LOVED BEING PART OF A SCHOOL THAT WAS FILLED WITH STAFF AND STUDENTS...WHO TRULY WANTED TO SEE EVERYONE SUCCEED AND REACH THEIR POTENTIAL."



"SOMETIMES, WE HAVE THIS IDEA IN OUR HEADS ABOUT HOW THINGS SHOULD GO, AND WE TRY TO FORCE IT EVEN THOUGH IT IS NOT GOD'S PLAN FOR US."



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Q: What career path did you choose, and what unexpected twists and turns came about?

A: I am now a school counselor at an elementary school and love it! When I first went to college, I had planned to be an occupational therapist, but I took an Anatomy and Physiology class and the info went right over my head. I just so happened to go to a symposium where the lecturer was a school counselor and that's how I became informed of the profession. I will say God led me to exactly where I am supposed to be. I could not afford to go to Southern at all. Yet, I was able to attend for both my bachelor's and master's degrees. I did not plan to be in education. Yet, I was sitting in the right lecture at the right time. I even tried to not move to Georgia after certain plans did not play out the way I had hoped. Yet, I have been here for three years, own a house, and met the love of my life here!

Q: Are you still connected with the RA community?

A: Living in Georgia has made it hard for me to connect with RA as much as I would like. Thank goodness for modern technology, though! I am a part of the Friends and Alumni of Richmond Academy group on Facebook. I stay in touch with friends I made there on Instagram and X and try to make plans with people when I am in town. I also try to make time to see Mr. Doss when I am in town. Which reminds me, you guys have the best principal in the nation now! Take care of him!

Q: What is one piece of advice you want to share with current students?

A: My advice is to plan for the future, but don't stay attached to those plans. Sometimes, we have this idea in our heads about how things should go, and we try to force it even though it is not God's plan for us. If my life had gone the way I had planned as a senior, I would be wildly miserable right now. Plans change, and sometimes that change may come with hurt, but that pain only makes us grow and prepares us for what is to come. God has the door open for us and has paved the way! We just have to allow it to happen.



Nina and friends skiing at Massanutten in 2015 on RA's annual ski trip.



A New Chapter

STEPHEN M. DOSS, PRINCIPAL

I feel incredibly blessed to join the Richmond Academy community this year. From the moment I stepped through the doors, I have been welcomed with open arms by both the adults and students. It has truly been a heartwarming experience, affirming my belief that I am precisely where I am meant to be.

I received a BA in History in 1997, a Master's in Teaching & Learning in 2009, and an Ed.S. in Educational Leadership in 2023. In conjunction with my 25+ years of experience as the teaching principal at Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy, I have worn many hats throughout my career and learned the ins and outs of what makes a school thrive.

My history with Richmond Academy runs deep. During my tenure at Desmond T. Doss, I had the privilege of collaborating with Richmond Academy when we established the Connected School and when they purchased this current building. I taught 7/8 Social Studies to RA students and was delighted to discover a former student, Audrey Palau, has now become a staff member. Such connections affirm the cyclical nature of our educational community and the lasting impact we can have on our students.

I can't help but reflect on a particular moment in 2014, when I was sitting at the graduation ceremony for Richmond Academy at the Patterson Avenue Church. Nina McCann, one of our connected students, graduated that day. The integrity of the academic program at Richmond Academy was truly affirmed that day by the numerous academic scholarships awarded to graduates.

Richmond Academy boasts a wonderful school culture, and I love seeing the variety of faces in our building. I can genuinely feel Jesus among the student body as they interact with one another and their teachers. It fills my heart with joy to witness such a vibrant, Christ-centered environment. As I look to the future, my hope is to develop a strong sports program at R.A. This initiative is a stepping stone toward my ultimate vision—to see the expansion of our current building to accommodate one grade per classroom. I understand the significant role alumni play in the history and ongoing success of the school, and I wholeheartedly invite all alumni to stay connected, get involved, or even reconnect if you've lost touch.

As I settle into this new chapter, I am so excited to be part of the wonderfully Christ-based culture that exists at Richmond Academy. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the alumni for their continued support and invite you to visit Richmond Academy and see for yourself the joyful atmosphere we have cultivated here. My door is always open, and I would love to show you around our beautiful building and our thriving culture first hand. Thank you for being a part of this incredible community!



"I CAN GENUINELY FEEL JESUS AMONG THE STUDENT BODY AS THEY INTERACT WITH ONE ANOTHER AND THEIR TEACHERS."



Photo Timeline

See highlights of what Richmond Academy has been up to this quarter!



First Day of School

Everyone had fun making new friends through our traditional handshake and popsicle celebration!





Friday Chapels

Every Friday, grades Pre-K to 12 gather together to worship God and sing His praises.





Family Fun Day

Students and their families had a blast at RA's second annual Family Fun Day, complete with a water slide, fun games, and cotton candy!



Pastor's Breakfast

Many thanks to our area pastors who dedicated their morning to serving us a delicious breakfast spread, as well as a spiritual feast.





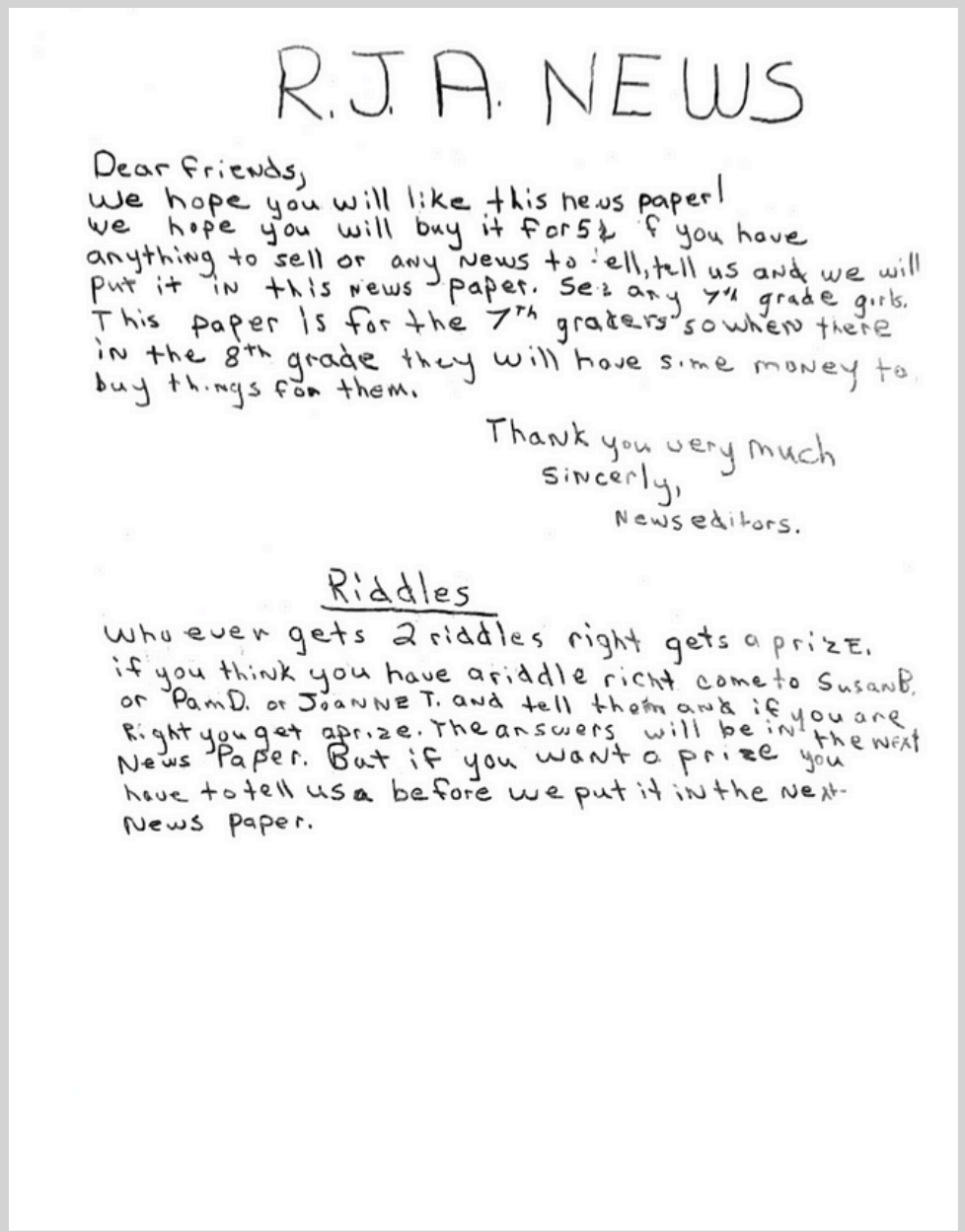
High School Lake Day

The high schoolers visited the Forbes' lake house for fun on the water and a special vespers service.



Back in Time

Ever wondered what Richmond Academy was like in 1970? Check out this edition of R.J.A. News, sold by the 7th graders for $0.05 a copy!



R.J.A. NEWS

Dear Friends,
We hope you will like this news paper!
We hope you will buy it for 5¢ If you have anything to sell or any news to tell, tell us and we will put it in this news paper. See any 7th grade girls. This paper is for the 7th graders so when there in the 8th grade they will have some money to buy things for them.

Thank you very much
Sincerly,
News editors.

Riddles

Who ever gets 2 riddles right gets a prize. if you think you have a riddle right come to Susan B. or Pam D. or Joanne T. and tell them and if you are Right you get a prize. The answers will be in the next News Paper. But if you want a prize you have to tell us a before we put it in the next News paper.

↑ Click the image to read the full newsletter ↑

Thank you to Ms. Terry Reynolds for providing this artifact!

MEET OUR NEW STAFF!



Mrs. Karinny de la Rosa-Grullon

2nd Grade

Mrs. Grullon attended Mercy College and has been teaching math for 26 years to grades 5 through 9. This is her first year as an elementary school teacher! She is married to Elvis Grullon and has two daughters, Karina and Evelis. As a family, they enjoy traveling and their goal is to travel to all 50 states before Evelis goes to college. Mrs. Grullon says, "I can't wait to see what God has planned for me at RA!"



Ms. Britani Fraiser

After-School Care

We are so excited to welcome Ms. Fraiser as our new after-school care supervisor! Ms. Frasier attends the Patterson Avenue SDA Church and is excited to be a part of the RA family. Her son, Jeremiah, is a future RA student!



Upcoming Events:

October 12: Choir and Bells at Meadowbridge SDA Church

October 19 (4 PM): Dining Area Groundbreaking Ceremony

October 27: Fall Festival

November 9: Choir and Bells at Patterson SDA Church

December 14: Christmas Concert

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



Dining Area Dedication Ceremony

Please join us on Saturday, October 19th at 4 PM for the dedication ceremony of Richmond Academy's dining area addition! This exciting event, hosted by the RA Alumni & Friends Association, is open to all supporters, students, and friends.

Enjoy an evening filled with property tours, a special groundbreaking ceremony, choir and bells performances, delicious refreshments, fun games, and more!

Come celebrate with us and be part of this significant moment in our school's growth.





We Want to Hear From You!

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