

# THUNDERBIRD ADVENTIST ACADEMY



December 2024  
The Giving Edition





- 4 From the Director of Advancement and Engagement
- 4 Ways you can help TAA this giving season
- 6 Why I Give by Karen Mateo
- 8 Campus Updates
- 10 Alumni Updates
- 11 Invitation to Alumni Weekend

## ADMINISTRATION

Michael Tomas  
Principal

Kerysa Ford  
Registrar and Recruiter

Mikey Stewart-Tapasco  
Business Manager

Randall Harrison  
Director of Advancement  
and Engagement

Our mission is for each student to EXCEL:

- EXperience Jesus
- Communicate clearly and think critically
- Embrace service & citizenship
- Live healthfully in body and mind

Our vision is for our students to increase in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.”

Luke 5:52

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Ed Keyes  
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Reggie Leach  
Chris Juhl  
Michael Tomas  
Berit von Pohle  
Michael Soto

John Loor  
Margie Baumann  
Luis Saravia  
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Maria Shibalovich  
Calvin Miller  
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## DEAR ALUMNI & FRIENDS

This school year is off to a great start, and I am excited to see how God will lead our students as they continue to grow both academically and spiritually.

It is because of friends like you, that we can continue creating an environment where our students truly EXCEL: Experience Jesus, Communicate clearly and think critically, Embrace service and citizenship, and Live healthfully in body and mind. Your support has been instrumental in helping us nurture their growth and inspire them to become strong, compassionate cultural changers for Christ.

However, as our student body grows, so do our needs. TAA remains committed to providing quality Adventist Christian education, but we cannot do this alone. We rely on the support of alumni and friends like you to fulfill our mission. Your contributions are essential in maintaining the Worthy Student Fund, which provides financial assistance to students in need, as well as dorm scholarships and various special projects that enhance our campus and educational opportunities.

I encourage you to take a moment to review our areas of need and pray about how you can join us in supporting TAA. Whether through a one-time gift, ongoing support, or sharing our mission with others, every contribution makes a significant impact on our students and their experience at Thunderbird Adventist Academy.

As we move into the holiday season, I wish you joy, peace, and blessings. Thank you for being a part of our journey, and I look forward to seeing you at Alumni Weekend this April. Together, we can make a lasting difference in the lives of our students and ensure that TAA continues to be a place where young people thrive.

*Randall Harrison*

Director of Advancement & Engagement

## CONTACT US

### ADDRESS:

7410 E. Sutton Dr.  
Scottsdale, AZ 85233

(480) 948-3300  
[www.thunderbirdacademy.org](http://www.thunderbirdacademy.org)

### ADDRESS CHANGE & NEWS NOTES:

[rharrison@taaschool.org](mailto:rharrison@taaschool.org)



## THANKYOU:

To those who continue to give directly, or through their local church, anonymously or through a School Tuition Organization (STO). **Thank You** for your support of Thunderbird Adventist Academy. We appreciate all you are doing for the students of this school.

## Ways you can help TAA this giving season



### Give the Gift of Christian Education

We never want to turn away a well deserving student due to finances. Many of our TAA students would be unable to afford the cost of tuition if it weren't for the generous support of friends like you. Your gift of tuition through the Worthy Student Fund, helps our students achieve their academic goals and gives our kids access to an accredited, Adventist Christian education in a safe and nurturing environment.

### Give the Gift of a Dorm Scholarship

We are blessed to offer on site dormitories for students who live too far to commute daily. Our dorms provide a safe, nurturing environment where students can grow academically, spiritually, and socially. Your gift to the Dorm Scholarship Fund helps make it possible for more young people to experience the life-changing benefits of attending an accredited Adventist boarding school.



### Help with Urgent Needs

From maintaining our beautiful campus grounds to managing a fleet of vehicles, it takes a lot to keep TAA running smoothly. Your unrestricted gift, in any amount, is crucial in helping us address urgent needs as they arise. Whether it's repairing facilities, upgrading equipment, or covering unexpected expenses, your support plays a vital role in ensuring that TAA continues to operate efficiently and effectively.

**Give by December 31st to receive tax credit!**

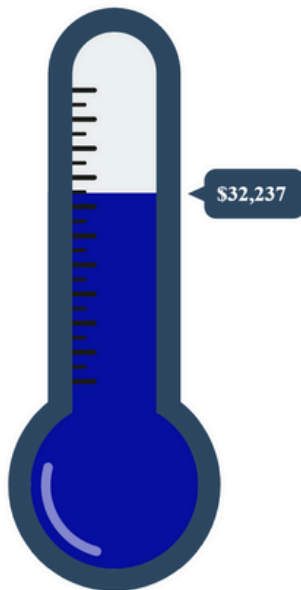
## Ways you can help TAA this giving season

### Campus Enhancement: Auditorium Stage

For decades, the TAA Auditorium has been the cornerstone of campus life, hosting countless worship services, music and drama performances, lessons, and assemblies. It has witnessed the growth and transformation of generations, serving as a backdrop for memories and milestones for both alumni and current students alike.

This building has so much potential to become even more! By investing in its renovation, we can transform it into a space that not only preserves its historical significance but also enhances its functionality and appeal for future generations.

**GOAL: \$50,000**



This renovation will include:

- Repairing and expanding the stage floor
- Replacing the temporary stage creating more usable space with great visibility
- Adding a curved sound wall, additional lighting and LED video panel on the back wall
- Installing a lighting gallery for better access to spotlights and update AV equipment
- Adding safety handrail for stage steps

Your gift of any amount to the Campus Enhancements Fund for the Auditorium will help ensure a safe and functional space for our students to worship, perform, and learn in for years to come.

All donors will be acknowledged on our wall of giving, and naming rights are available.

If you would like to make a special gift to the Auditorium Renovation Project or have additional questions please contact our office [rharrison@taaschool.org](mailto:rharrison@taaschool.org) or give us a call at (480) 948-3300.

**Give by December 31st to receive tax credit!**

# WHY I GIVE?

by Karen Mateo, BS, RN

When I was a child, my parents were committed to sending my sisters and me to Adventist schools. At that time, no scholarship programs or worthy student funds were available, which made it challenging for my parents—especially when my older sister and I were in academy and my youngest sister was still in elementary school.

I attended an Adventist academy in Iowa for three years, and to help with tuition, I worked a minimum of four hours a day. During my third year, I worked eight hours Monday through Thursday and all day on Sunday to cover my expenses. Despite my efforts, my parents still struggled to keep up with the payments, and every month I was called into the finance office to answer the same question: "When will your parents pay your bill?" At the end of my junior year, due to the financial strain and my experience in Iowa, my parents decided to transfer me to Wisconsin Academy for my senior year.

After graduating from Wisconsin Academy, I had ambitions of going to college to become a nurse. However, I encountered a major obstacle in the process of applying for the college of my choice.

I discovered that the Iowa academy would not release my transcripts until my bill was paid in full. Instead of going to college right after academy, I stayed home and worked in a factory to pay off my academy debt. Despite my dedication and having a well-paying job for someone without a college degree, it still took me a full year to pay off the bill, sending 80% of my paycheck each week.

Many of my classmates and advisors warned me that if I didn't go to college immediately after graduation, I might never go at all. Statistics show that fewer than 3% of students who take a gap year after high school ever enroll in college. But I was determined. After paying off my academy bill, I reached my goal of attending college. I graduated from Southern Missionary College—now Southern Adventist University—with a degree in nursing, one of the greatest achievements of my life!

**"Coming to TAA has given me the opportunity to study in a Christian environment, with teachers who care and challenge me to be my very best. I love being able to get involved with Storm Ministries and use my talents for Christ"**

**– TAA Senior**

Because of my challenging experience during academy, my husband, Randy, and I felt compelled to donate so that no student attending Thunderbird Academy would have to endure the same struggles I faced. I believe God allowed me to go through that experience and placed a burden on my heart to give as much as we could to prevent others from facing delays in graduating or attending college. Although we donate anonymously, we have received numerous thank-you notes from students (who didn't know who they were thanking), and it fills our hearts with joy to give and help where we can.

Randy and I see supporting the students at Thunderbird Academy as missionary work right here at home. We believe that every student who attends an Adventist college has tremendous potential to further the gospel and bring others to Jesus. I pray we will see these students—and those they have led to Christ—when Jesus returns to take us all home in the clouds of glory!



Karen and Randy Mateo - thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for TAA. We are beyond blessed to have your support.

**"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over . . . for with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."**

**Luke 6:38**

**Here are two ways you can donate:**



Online:

[www.thunderbirdacademy.org/donate](http://www.thunderbirdacademy.org/donate)

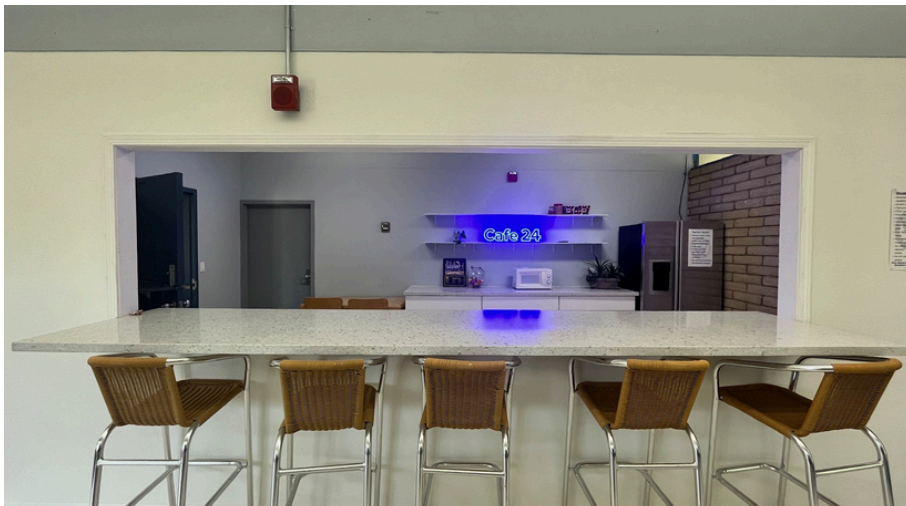


Mail Donations:

Thunderbird Adventist Academy  
ATTN: Office of Advancement  
7410 E. Sutton Drive  
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

If you have any questions or need assistance, please call our office (480) 948-3300 ext. 104 and a member of our staff will be happy to help.

# TAA CAMPUS UPDATES



## NEWEST ALUMNI GIVE BACK WITH CAFE 24'

The grand opening of Café 24 has quickly made it a popular hub for our students, offering a welcoming space where they can relax, connect, and recharge during busy school days. This transformation was made possible by the generous efforts of the Class of 2024, who saw potential in what was once a simple storage closet tucked away in a corner of the Student Center. The Class of 2024 reimagined the space, transforming it into a vibrant and functional café that will serve not only as a social hotspot but also as a valuable resource for future classes to raise funds for their own senior year projects.



High-quality food is essential for healthy growth and development—happy tummies, happy kids! This year, TAA is partnering with WC Catering to manage our cafeteria. WC Catering is dedicated to providing nutritious, clean, vegetarian meals for both our dorm and village students, and we are excited to see where this partnership leads.



The Class of 2024 has truly left a legacy that will benefit future generations. If in the area, be sure to stop by and check out Café 24! A visit not only provides a glimpse into what our students are up to but also supports the seniors in their fundraising efforts. For up-to-date Cafe 24' hours please give our office a call at (480) 948-3300.

## New Computers for TAA Aviation Program!

Thanks to a generous donation, the aviation department has purchased new computers. These new computers will allow our students to run the software needed for flight simulations and complete their flight training groundwork.



# TAA CAMPUS UPDATES

## The ACHIEVE Scholarship

Thanks to the generosity of a donor, we are excited to announce a new scholarship designed specifically for current juniors and seniors who are interested in taking dual credit classes. This scholarship will allow students to take college-level courses both on and off campus, helping them get a head start on their higher education journey. We are grateful for this support and the opportunities it provides our students to excel academically.

This is an ongoing scholarship offered three times per year to our students. It is open to juniors and seniors currently enrolled at TAA. If you would like additional information please contact the TAA office.



### AP & Dual College Credit

For students who wish to pursue AP and Dual Credit classes while attending TAA, we are now offering those opportunities!

#### AP & Dual Credit Classes Offered:

- AP Language & Composition
- AP Literature & Composition
- AP Precalculus
- Dual Credit Medical Terminology
- Dual Credit Music Appreciation

## CIRCUIT ELECTRIC SERVICES

TAA is making significant progress on the solar panel project and is currently awaiting final permits from the City of Scottsdale. Solar panels will be installed on shade structures around the cafeteria and carpools in the parking lots. Once completed, these panels are expected to reduce the campus's electricity bill to nearly, if not completely, net zero.

With the installation of these panels, TAA will be able to power all school facilities, including classrooms, administrative offices, dormitories, the cafeteria, and the gymnasium. This is an exciting time for our school as we take advantage of Arizona's abundant sunshine, paving the way for a more sustainable future on our campus.



## Alumni Updates: We love hearing from you!

Please send us updates about education accomplishments, new career opportunities, professional recognition, additions to your family (whether through marriage or birth), or any other news you would like to share to [rharrison@taaschool.org](mailto:rharrison@taaschool.org)

### 3 Sisters, 3 Weeks, 3 Countries (Still Talking) by Elizabeth Moore Kraus, class of 1971

Elizabeth Moore Kraus's *3 Sisters, 3 Weeks, 3 Countries (Still Talking)* is a captivating and heartfelt memoir that explores the complexities of sisterhood, travel, and the power of familial bonds.

The memoir takes readers along for the ride as Rie, Les, and Liz experience the highs and lows of international travel, all while navigating the nuances of their close-knit, yet sometimes challenging, sibling relationships. Kraus's keen observations, witty storytelling, and relatable approach makes this memoir a fun read. Each sister's distinct personality comes through, adding depth to the story.

Whether you're a fan of travel writing or looking for a heartfelt exploration of family bonds, this book will leave you both entertained and inspired. It's a celebration of sisterhood, adventure, and the enduring connection between loved ones and maybe this book will inspire others to create their own "sister tent."

The book is available in paperback, eBook, or audio book (narrated by author) on Amazon. (Book Club questions included.)

Elizabeth Moore Kraus  
*3 Sisters 3 Weeks 3 Countries (Still Talking)*  
<https://www.elizabethmoorekraus.com>



### Our TAA Family at Rest

Norman Severance - TAA faculty from 1958-1970  
August 7, 2024

Gilbert Hughes, Class of 1960  
April 2024

# Save the date!

Alumni Weekend  
April 4–6, 2025



## Friday, April 4

6:30 pm registration  
7:00 pm Vespers  
8:30 pm socializing and refreshments

## Sunday, April 6

7:00 am Golf Tournament at Orange Tree Golf Course, for more information please email [rharrison@taaschool.org](mailto:rharrison@taaschool.org) or call our office (480) 581-8474

## Sabbath, April 5th

10:00 am Registration  
10:45 am Church at TAA Chapel, Sabbath Speaker Pam Cress, Class of 1975  
12:30 pm Class Photos, Lunch for all and Class Reunions.  
7:30 pm Alumni Basketball Game

### Honor Classes:

1950	1975	2000
1955	1980	2005
1960	1985	2010
1965	1990	2015
1970	1995	2020

\*Please RSVP for lunch with [rharrison@taaschool.org](mailto:rharrison@taaschool.org)

If you attended TAA, graduated from TAA, were a staff or faculty at TAA, we consider you an alumni! Schedule subject to change, please visit our website for Alumni Weekend updates and additional information.



Thunderbird Adventist Academy  
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