

Tulsa Adventist Academy

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Ms. Vicki's pre-K and kindergarten girls play "camp meeting" together.

TAA's early childhood teachers are Mrs. Victoria Toews and Mr. Jason Vargas, with Mrs. Kim Bokovoy serving as Elementary Vice Principal. Collectively, they have nearly 75 years of early childhood teaching experience. Early childhood is defined by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as "the period from birth to eight years old. A time of remarkable brain growth, these years lay the basis for subsequent development. Early childhood care and education ... places emphasis on developing the whole child - attending to his or her social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs - to establish a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing."

Oklahoma has one of the highest incarceration rates and grandparent households, as well as a high rate of single-parent homes. These factors lead to family stress that weighs on our children. They are suffering and having increasing

difficulties in coping. Students often have a difficult time in their education because they lack the emotional and mental stability to deal with home life, let alone educational demands.

Mr. Vargas helps his 1st-2nd graders learn effective interpersonal skills, building on UNESCO's goals. He shares that students are often faced with problem solving skills on the playground, a place where students are free to engage with each other without teacher direction. This high interpersonal play can be difficult to engage in. Recess time is often spent helping students deal with conflict resolution. "I often use phrases like, 'How could we solve this problem?' and 'Did that fix your problem?' I mediate conflict by helping each party come to an agreement."

One method of coping is using an effective apology. In the classroom, Mr. Vargas uses a four-step process that helps both parties effectively move on and become

friends again. There are four phrases a child uses: "I am sorry for..., This was wrong because..., Next time I will do..., Will you forgive me?" These phrases help bring resolution by helping a student recognize the problem, find a solution, and seek reconciliation. Since instituting this process, Mr. Vargas says, "My students reconcile on both sides and provide a more authentic resolution. When I see students use these skills on their own without me walking them through the steps, it reminds me why I teach and love teaching here at TAA." (Cont. on next page.)

WELCOME, KOREAN STUDENTS!

On January 2, 2017, 13 Korean students in grades 3-8 joined our ranks and will remain through the end of February. We look forward to their presence each year and will share their activities in the next issue of the TAA Newsletter.

Early Childhood, cont.

Mrs. Toews teaches Pre-K and Kindergarten following the Seventh-day Adventist church's North American Division educational standards. There are specific standards for reading, math, science, social studies and physical education. To help students meet these standards she uses *Stepping Stones: A Journey to Excellence through Discovery* curriculum, a faith-based kindergarten program that integrates all subject areas. The students learn through hands-on, developmentally-appropriate learning activities. Each child's individual needs are met through these learning activities.

Mrs. Toews taught for 29 years in one public school system, six years in a small church school and has taught for two years at Tulsa Adventist Academy. "I use the knowledge and insights gained from each of these experiences as I continue to guide and educate young children for the kingdom of Heaven and here on earth," she says.

Ms. Vicki, as her students call her, focuses on Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." She loves "teaching at a school where our main focus is Jesus and how much He loves and cares for each child. My favorite part of our day is worship. The children love to sing about Jesus and it is so heart warming to hear their prayer requests and listen to their prayers."

Mrs. Kim Bokovoy is the 3-4th grade teacher. She also has her Early Childhood Development certification and along with Ms. Vicki and Mr. Vargas, emphasizes the importance in laying a strong foundation for a child's academic growth. That foundation encompasses much more than socialization: "Children gain security in consistency and thrive when expectations are well understood. This allows a young child's mind to rest in the assurance of being well cared for and allows that child to focus on activities knowing he/she is safe in a nurturing environment," says Mrs. Bokovoy. "You cannot teach the mind when the heart is



Mr. Vargas's enthusiastic first and second graders.

unsure. A child must feel safe before learning can begin."

TAA Volunteers: The Heart of the School

TAA is blessed to have over-the-top volunteers, support staff, board members and faculty. Starting with this issue, our volunteers will be highlighted. TAA secretaries have a new title: Directors of First Impressions. You may have noticed they smile often.

Angela Moon is a Director of First Impressions and has volunteered at TAA for nearly nine years in various capacities: treasurer, home-room mom, secretary and more. She has a background in business and office management and attended TAA from 2nd-10th grades. Both of her daughters have attended TAA (Sarah is currently a junior). Angela enjoys TAA's family atmosphere and the students' positive attitude and behavior. When not working, she enjoys cooking and painting with oils. Her motto is to "Keep calm and carry on" and her favorite Bible verse is Romans 8:32: "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (NASB).

Deborah Zigo has volunteered for nearly two years and is TAA's office manager. She is a dental hygienist and her son, Noah, attends TAA. She loves being outside, visiting with friends, and really enjoys the hugs from TAA students. "TAA students remind me that with God, there are no limits," she says. Her favorite memory verse is Philippians 4:13, a reminder that she can "do all things through Him who strengthens me," (NASB).

Silvia Berumen is a Director of First Impressions and is the resident translator for Spanish-speaking students and families. She started in August 2016 and is also TAA's treasurer. Her son Brandon attends TAA. are well-behaved. "I love the high fives and hugs from students!"



TAA IN TOUCH



NOTES

Teachers send notes home with students; please ask your student daily if s/he brought home a note! Notes, "Remind" and "OneCall" are TAA's OFFICIAL methods of communication.

REMINDE

RECOMMENDED: Sign up with "Remind" for TAA alerts and messages about school closing, alerts and reminders. These texts are often grade specific and enhance your student's learning experience.

FACEBOOK

OPTIONAL: Our Facebook page contains all of TAA's school activities and is a place for families to share how their students are thriving.

ONECALL

REQUIRED: OneCall is used for global school events and emergencies and is sent to your cell phone. You are automatically signed up when you give TAA your telephone number at registration.

TAA has an online calendar on its website and a printed calendar in the main office.

Please call our office during school hours to leave a message for a teacher or if you have a question about school events. Personal texts to teachers should be reserved for emergencies only.

TAA Volunteers, Cont.

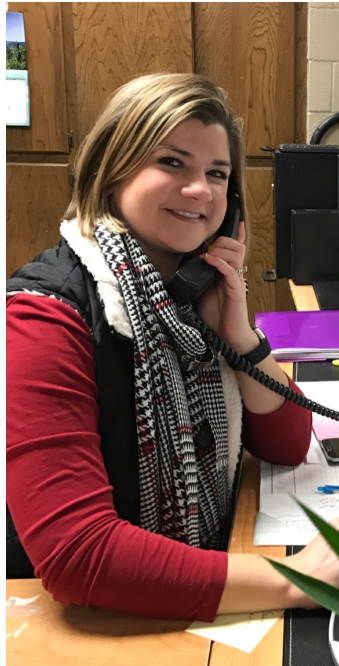
Silvia has a human resources background and finds every day at TAA is "extraordinary" but the best thing is that students Her treasured verse is John 16:33: "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," (NKJV). She has the talent of rarely being flustered and her motto is "glitter makes everything better!"

Heather Martinez started volunteering in the library in August 2016 and former TAA librarian Ms. Jane Brazell is assisting with preparing for TAA's accreditation in April. Heather was the 5th-6th grade teacher from 2013-2016 and her daughter attends TAA. "It's great to still interact with my former students," she says. And when she brings her toddler son, the students make him feel special. Mark 12:30 is the scripture she tries to live by: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment."

Jennifer Whittington is a Director of First Impressions and has volunteered at TAA for four years. She is also a classroom aid for both Mr. Vargas and Mrs. Vargas's classrooms. Her son Caleb graduated from TAA in May 2016 and

her daughter Amelia is in eighth grade. Jennifer loves being with TAA students, especially when they are excited to see her every day. She has learned that "better late than never" is helpful at certain times in life! She embraces the promise that she can do all things through Christ, who strengthens her (Phil. 4:13).

TAA also recognizes Alfreda Knight for her nearly 15 years of helping TAA by managing the health food store. She retired in December 2016. All of the profits from the sales benefit TAA, so all purchases make a huge impact on the school's success. Rowland Knight, TAA school board chairman, says that the profits from the health food store are approximately \$4,000 a year, and have contributed to many TAA projects, including new heaters, A/C, the roof, coat racks, polished floors, a laminator, and even school debt. Mrs. Elizabeth Hancock is currently volunteering until a regular replacement is found. The store hours are regular TAA school hours and Wednesdays from 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. More of TAA's fabulous volunteers will be highlighted in the next issue.



Mrs. Zigo is a pro at smiling!

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Academy.**

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Spring 2017

Notable Events

Registration activities will start soon!

Jan. 25-28: HOOPSfest at SWAU

Jan. 30-31: NO SCHOOL

Feb. 12: ACT

Feb. 19: OK Music Festival in Tulsa (req'd)

Feb. 20: NO SCHOOL

Mar. 1: PSAT for Freshmen/Sophomores

Mar. 3: TAA Elementary school visitation day

Mar. 6: TAA Academy visitation day

Mar. 13-17: SPRING BREAK

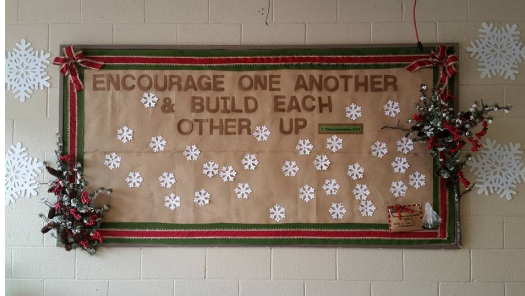
Mar. 27: NO SCHOOL/PT CONF.

Mar. 28: 1/2 day school/PT CONF.

PRINCIPALS' PRINCIPLES!

The results of the TAA school survey are in and the teachers and staff are thankful for your input. The good news is the school's strengths (4.5 or 90% or higher). Most families are assured that:

- At least one adult in my school really cares about my child; and
 - The school is helping my student grow in a relationship with Jesus. Furthermore,
 - Students, parents and school personnel share responsibility for the behavior at my child's school;
 - Students, parents and school personnel show pride in the school campus and help to keep it attractive; and
 - The school expects quality work of its students.
- TAA faculty and staff were pleased that most families:
- take responsibility for my child's learning at home
 - know their child is safe at school
 - respect the school's teachers and their efforts
 - respect the school's principal and his efforts
 - feel good about him/her self as a parent



- encourage their student(s) to be involved in the school's extra-curricular activities; and
- feel comfortable communicating with their child's teacher.

Of course, no school is perfect and this is reflected in school weaknesses (a score below 4 or 70% or lower). These concerns included not feeling informed about school policies and procedures or not being informed regularly about how a child is doing in school (phone calls, progress reports, emails).

Another concern was whether school personnel recognize students who have self-managing behavior and whether discipline is applied fairly and consistently for all students.

Last, but not least, some respondents were unsure of the grading practices for their students' levels, and some respondents were unsure how bullying is addressed by school staff and administrators.

TAA faculty and staff are buoyed by your positive remarks and committed to improving areas of weakness. Please pray for TAA leadership as we seek God's will to help students thrive.

Mr. Mark Griffin, Principal

HOME AND SCHOOL

2017 Talent Show & Auction

Join us in the TAA gym as we support our students and teachers at the annual talent show and auction on **January 21 at 6:30 p.m.** This is TAA's BIG event, where singing, oratory, acting and other talents are on display in-between bidding on baked goods, business services and more.

Auction items include: a Starbucks gift basket; a Mary Kay gift basket; a one-hour massage; a hand-knitted shawl; original artwork by 7th-8th graders; and two Tulsa Oilers hockey tickets (includes skating with the Oilers!). The monies raised will upgrade our playground equipment, a source of bliss for our students.

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TAA is fully accredited by the Oklahoma Private School Accreditation Commission and the State of Oklahoma Department of Education.