

Aardvark Insight



New Staff Walk Our Halls!

Kaylani West

Mrs. Emily Grubbs joined the Atlanta Adventist Academy staff this year as facilitator for Peachtree Hills Campus, and although she is new staff, she is not a new Aardvark - she graduated from AAA class of 1998.

Mrs. Grubbs grew up in Palmetto GA. She is 43 years old, married with two boys. Luke is a 16 year-old senior at AAA and Cade is 10 years old. She loves to do lots of things, but one of her favorite things is to watch TV in bed. She loves shopping for super cheap deals and relaxing by the pool. Her dream vacation is to go to Bora Bora. However, her favorite thing is spending time with her kids, whom she loves unconditionally.

One reason she loves AAA is that teachers and staff treat her kids like family and they teach about Jesus. She also loves the fact that she has the same schedule as her children.

Mrs. Grubbs loves the students and staff of AAA and looks forward to work each day. She hopes to remain part of the Aardvark family as staff for years to come!!!



Mrs. Stacy Guevera-Jackson is a new facilitator on Duluth campus this year. She is 24 years old and married to our new chaplain for a little over a year. She loves reading, eating Thai and making art, but most of all she loves spending time with her husband. That's why her dream vacation is to go explore Europe with him. Mrs. Jackson grew up Adventist, but didn't always go to Adventist schools. She attended high school in North Carolina. Mrs. Jackson loves the Lord and is strong in her faith.

While Mrs. Jackson didn't have plans for a job at AAA, when Chaplain J was hired, Mr. Haley needed another facilitator and asked if she would join the AAA family as well. Of course she said yes. She is glad she can work with her husband and be on the same schedule.

She loves our school and getting acquainted with students. She appreciates how the staff treats the students and that everything AAA does is for the glory of God. She is excited to see where this journey leads her and Chaplain J. When you see her around be sure to give her a grand Aardvark welcome!

Have you met our Chaplain? Pastor Jelani Guevera-Jackson, known as Chaplain J, has moved here, with his wife Stacy, all the way from California, where he taught at two different schools.

Chaplain J is 26 years old and a lifelong Adventist. During high school he attended a military school in Louisiana. He likes to do lots of things in his free time: hang out with his five siblings, eat good food, spend time with his wife. His dream vacation is to go on a cruise with her for three weeks.

Chaplain J's first career dream was to become an attorney, not a chaplain, but he soon realized God had a different career in mind.

Even though he has been here only a few short weeks, he already has a list of things he likes about our school. He likes the use of technology. He loves the staff and that AAA focuses on community service.

Chaplain J's favorite Bible verse is 1 Corinthians 2:9 about the greatness of God's wisdom. Chaplain J is looking forward to a great school year at AAA. He enjoys interacting with kids. The one thing he looks forward to the most is helping young people strengthen their faith.



Scripture graphic created by YouVersion Bible App



New Staff, Part 2

Harmony Campbell



A new history teacher, Mr. Joe Mixon, recently arrived from the Southeast Asian island Palau. Mr. Mixon previously taught on this island for five years before returning to the United States. Mixon chose to work at AAA so he is closer to his parents in Tennessee and within the Georgia-Cumberland conference so he feels more at home. Mixon mentions his love for anime and is currently watching Jujutsu Kaisen and is interested in traveling to Japan.

AAA welcomes our new coach, Mr. Donald Thrower. Graduating from University of Maryland with numerous awards in varsity track and field, such as holding the school record for the 400m dash, Thrower currently teaches physical education and will coach basketball and track and field teams. His first look at AAA was seeing the chapel, main campus and students there and experiencing the overall environment. Thrower has three adult children. His current hobby is golf. He states that sport intrigued him because "you can't necessarily win the game." He concluded that is the reason he continues to play golf. Coach is energized to improve the athletics club of AAA.

Mr. Lancedale Calderon is AAA's financial assistant and PFE scholarship program advisor. He recently moved to Georgia from New York. Calderon participated in varsity high school and college volleyball. Calderon is amazed by the teacher-student relationship at AAA. Calderon chose AAA so he can get back on his spiritual journey with God. He currently has 3 children, all of whom attend Duluth Adventist Christian School (DACs). Calderon states that he "enjoys the environment and activities of AAA" in just the first few weeks of the school year.



What's Next?

Sept. 12: NHS Induction Chapel

Sept. 14-17: Leadership Conference

Sept. 18-22: Map testing- 9th & 10th

Sept. 21-22: View Southern- Seniors

Sept. 25-29: AAA Spirit Week

Sept. 30: AAA sabbath Duluth

Oct. 3: GAAA College Fair-Seniors

Oct. 5-8: Oakwood Live- tentative date

Oct. 8: SA Fall Festival

Oct. 9-11: Midterms

Oct. 12-15: Fall Break/Fall Mission Trip

Oct 16: Parent-Teacher conferences/Digital Learning Day for students

Retreat Bonds Us For New Beginnings

Javon Stewart

To jumpstart an eventful year, Atlanta Adventist Academy students and staff took a memorable spiritual retreat. Led by campus ministries, students participated in lively activities to get to know each other. AAA students from all over the United States met at Nosoca Pines Ranch, South Carolina. Our three worships blessed us with music from our talented praise team and words from Pastor Jelani Jackson about our theme for 2023-24 - New Beginnings.

At our first meeting Pastor Jackson led us in a "speed-faithing" icebreaker. Students took about three minutes to meet one-on-one, discussing religious questions about their faith. Afterwards the students moved into their cabins and relaxed in the gym until lights out.

Thursday morning started with an optional hike at 7 am with Mr Hamer. Breakfast over, students divided into groups led by campus ministries and scattered about the camp for games such as follow the leader and rock/paper/scissors. Two groups went horseback riding from the barn.

Following lunch, everyone enjoyed the afternoon activities: tubing, pool time, canoeing and open gym. After dinner we all met outside for worship, led by Nice. During that service she gave students opportunities to share how they have experienced new beginnings in their lives. Some students shared experiences like enrolling at a new school, making a lifestyle change, etc. The evening ended with a whole-school picture taken at the campfire bowl and more gym time.

Friday morning we ate breakfast and had a quick worship service before everyone departed. This retreat allowed all students to bond emotionally and spiritually, acting as a kickstart to an exciting new year.



Volleyball Season is Here!

Ana Larraga



This year's Lady Varks volleyball team is coached by Mr. Donald Thrower, our P.E. teacher, and Coach Bryan Ramirez. The team includes players from grades 7 - 12. Synea, Mia, Karen, and Camila are middle schoolers. Halle John-Lewis and Audrey Gennick are freshmen. Nadia Cleveland, Maia Mills, Emily Ortiz, Addison Burdin, and Morganne Thomas are sophomores. Harmony Campbell is our only senior on the team. The varsity players are Nadia, Maia, Camila, Audrey, Synea, Addison, Morganne, and Harmony. The junior varsity players are Mia, Emily, Karen, and Halle.

The first home game was played August 29 against Hearts Academy of Excellence. The captain of the varsity team, Nadia, said, "Maia had some really good digs and saves. She was really taking initiative. Addison and Morganne had very consistent serves. Camila had some really good sets and saves as the libero. Audrey had a really consistent spike." The scores for the varsity game were 14-25, 21-25, and 12-25. Another home game was played on September 7. The varsity team played against Promise Preparatory Academy. The scores for this game were 16-25, 20-25, and 10-25.

Although our Lady Varks did not win, they hustled and gave it their all. Most importantly, the girls had fun and made the effort to play united against the opposing team.

Future games are scheduled for September 14, 19, and on the 21st. Come out and cheer for our awesome Lady Varks!



New Electives Offered at AAA

Matthew Bekele

With the start of the 2023-24 school year, Atlanta Adventist Academy offers five new electives along with old standbys: teaching academy, intro to driving, public speaking, intro to psychology, and debate. What will students be learning in those classes and who teaches them? Read on!

Teaching Academy is taught by Mr. Rory Hamer. Students will learn how to be a teacher and how to control a class. They will learn how to plan out a school week and later actually teach middle or elementary students.

Intro to Driving, taught by Mr. Brent Mann, helps students prepare for driving. Students will learn how to control a vehicle and will learn all the signs and laws of the road.

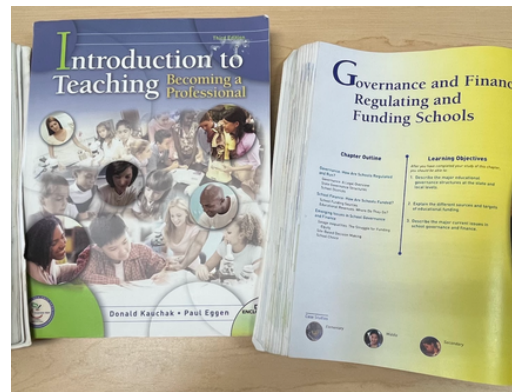
Public Speaking is the next elective, taught by Mr. Joe Mixon. Students will learn how to speak in front of an audience on different topics ranging from informative speech to impromptu speech. They will also learn how to create an explosive speech to keep listeners engaged.

Intro to Psychology, with Mrs. Angeline Davidsen, gives students new ideas about the brain and how emotions can

affect how the body reacts and feels. This class will teach how to communicate with people and how to analyze how they feel about a situation they are in.

Debate was a club last year. It is now being taught by Mr. Mixon as an elective. Students will debate many topics and learn different methods of debate. They will also learn how to collect data and use it on their side of a debate.

In conclusion, all these classes sound great; I hope you chose one for yourself!



Campus Ministries Leaders Weigh in on Spiritual Retreat

Brianna Lopez

For this article focusing on Campus Ministries I interviewed Pastor and Mrs. Guevara-Jackson and the Spiritual Vice of Atlanta Adventist Academy, Nice Brutus, to get an in-depth look at the planning for this year's Spiritual Retreat.

BL: What message did you hope to spread to students and staff at Spiritual Retreat?

Pastor. J: Our message was to remind AAA there is hope in Jesus and in the communities He has given us: our Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior class and AAA as a whole.

BL: I'm sure you collaborated with Mr. Jackson and campus ministries on the retreat. What were some things you prepared for?

Mrs. J: You point it out perfectly – I do collaborate a lot with Pastor J during these sort of events to support the load of work happening behind the scenes. Some things I helped with were organizing the students into cabins and purchasing materials for certain activities.

BL: How much planning went into spiritual retreat when it came to choosing the speaker, and how did you decide the Campus Ministries theme?

Nice: It was always going to be Pastor Jackson, but the day I spoke was planned only a week in advance! As a leader, I strive to make myself equal, not just an example. It's okay to get out of your comfort zone, like I did when I made new friends.

The theme was actually developed in April. I believe I came up with it. A new school year is a "New Beginning", but it can also be applied outside school settings.

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CM conclusion from p6

During Spiritual Retreat Pastor J's message was one of confiding in God whenever you start a new chapter in your life. It's great to hear how his words and personal testimony affected the students.



Meet the Aardvark Insight Team

Charlize Anderson

Aardvark Insight staff is 10 members this year: five 11th graders (Matthew Bekele, Alyssa West, Javon Stewart, Ana Larraga, and Annalyse Martin), three 10th graders (Ikenna Nwaojigba, Brianna Lopez and Charlize Anderson), a 9th grader (Kaylani West) and a 12th grader (Harmony Campbell). Javon, Ana, Annalyse, Charlize, Kaylani, and Harmony all said they joined the Insight staff because they wanted to improve their writing skills. Javon, Brianna, Charlize, Kaylani, Harmony, Ikenna, and Annalyse are first time staff members. Here are some more tidbits about each to get acquainted.

Matthew likes playing video games, cooking, and sleeping. His favorite subject is history. He joined newspaper again because he enjoyed it before..

Alyssa likes music, crystals and baking, but she dislikes cooking, waking up early and unnecessary loudness. Her favorite subject is history. Alyssa chose newspaper because she likes to write and this elective is easy.

Javon likes chicken, music, and sleep. He dislikes school, too much homework, and being in pain. His favorite subject is math.

Ana enjoys music, drawing, and trying different foods. She doesn't like to be disturbed while being focused on work, waking up early, or onions. Her favorite subject is math. This is her 3rd year on staff.

Annalyse likes to watch musicals, make art, and write. She dislikes math, public speaking, and bullying. Her favorite subject is art. Annalyse hopes being on staff helps her understand how to capture the public's eye.

Brianna Lopez, enjoys listening to music, building with legos, and flowers but dislikes noisy places, rocks, and hot weather. Her favorite subject is science. She joined newspaper staff because she loves writing.

Charlize likes dancing, watching movies, and eating food. She dislikes bullying, homework, and sickness. Her favorite subject is history.

Ikenna enjoys sports, music, and talking to friends. He dislikes sarcasm, being hungry, and rainy days.

Kaylani likes chickens, socks and playing the piano but dislikes shopping, dressing up, and reading. Her favorite subject is social studies. She wants to learn more about other people as a newspaper team member.

Harmony enjoys dogs, chocolate cake, and marvel movies. She dislikes loud individuals, Brussels, and the smell of Lysol. Her favorite subject is science. She chose newspaper to try something new.

We all hope you enjoy our work this year! We look forward to serving you in this way.



not pictured: Ikenna and Harmony

First Two Days of School Recap

Alyssa West

August 14 welcomed a new school year for AAA students. We began in the Chapel to meet returning and new teachers, sing songs to lift our spirit and bring us back from that summer mindset. Afterward 10th and 11th graders analyzed their MAP assessments before holding class meetings. Seniors had a lot to discuss for their busy year ahead. Freshmen held a short orientation and started getting their books and ipads.

Finally we all headed down to the gym for lunch and icebreaker games led by SA. We played the cup game, where an SA member sang "Head and shoulders. . ." then shouted "cup" to see who grabbed the cup first once they stopped singing. We had a rousing balloon game - we tried to pop other people's balloons tied on their ankle while protecting our own; played Two Truths and a Lie and the hula hoop game, where everyone in the group held hands and passed the hoop around the circle without letting hands go. It was a great beginning!

Although the second day of school wasn't as eventful, it was still interesting to meet and get to know all of our teachers. Students rotated through classes and learn what they could expect for the coming school year.



What Was Your Summer Like?

Ikenna Nwaojigba

Students at AAA like to have fun. Here are a few students who made good use of their summer months.

Alliyah Adams (12th Grade): "I worked at Camp Alamisco. It was a lot of fun! I made some new friends and gained some work experience."

Kaylani West (9th Grade): "I went to the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum in Kentucky. We spent a week there with some old church members. My family camped in our 43-foot camper. The campground where we stayed had bison."

Magno Acevedo (10th Grade): "One exciting thing I did over the summer was go to the beach with my family and friends."

Elizabeth Vanegas (11th grade): "I went to an Ed Sheeran concert. I had one of the best times of my life seeing my favorite artist play his music. It was just perfect!"

Nadia Cleveland (10th Grade): "I went to a musical at the Fox Theatre, spent a week at Camp Cohutta, and went to California."

Javon Stewart (11th Grade) - "I attended a 9-day medical training camp by Envision at Emory College. We were divided into 20 people groups and for most of the days, we were in a classroom talking about things like medical career paths. In the afternoon we attended a seminar/lecture by a doctor or medical student.

One day we rotated through different exercises (stitching, medical assessments, blood work, etc.). On a different day we worked on in-the-moment medical exercises which included applying natural splints, carrying wounded, doing a quick triage, etc. The biggest thing we did that week was mock situations (plane crashes, car crashes, flooded houses, train crashes) where we had to "rescue" people in trouble.

I feel the program was helpful for deciding what I actually want to do in a medical career. It showed me options I have. It was a great experience I would recommend to anyone aspiring to go into medicine."

It doesn't matter what grade you are in, you can still have all the fun in the world when you're on break. What did you do this summer?



That's All the News for This Issue!

Artwork by Annalyse Martin

done in Ibis Paint x!

