

# Alumni Newsletter

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF DAKOTA ADVENTIST ACADEMY,  
PLAINVIEW ACADEMY, AND SHEYENNE RIVER ACADEMY



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MESSAGE**

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**NEW STAFF &  
RETURNING STAFF**

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**ALUMNI WEEKEND**

## 2023 Alumni Weekend Schedule

\*Events and times are subject to change\*

### Friday, October 6

- 11:00a** Golf Scramble
- 2:00p** Registration
- 3:00-6:00** Car Show
- 5:30** Supper & Pioneer Reception
- 7:00** Vespers
- 8:00-9:00** Social Hour

### Sabbath, October 7

- 8:30-9:00a** Breakfast
- 10:00** Sabbath School
- 11:00** Worship Service
- 12:15p** Honor Class Photos
- 1:00** Lunch
- 2:30** Open Mic for Classes
- 5:30** Supper
- 7:15** Vespers
- 8:00** Business Meeting
- 8:30** Alumni Games

## Discovering Home and Faith

Ben Dossenko, alumni president



Dakota Adventist Academy is an important chapter in my life's history. As a child, I always enjoyed going to DAA for special events and visiting when my older sister attended. To my young eyes, the Academy was its own special world, insulated from the turmoil outside. Middle school and adolescence can be chaotic and life-changing for some young people, and by the time I was ready for ninth grade, I had dug my heels in and was adamant I was not going to attend the Academy after all. Going would mean leaving my public-school friends and activities behind—the very support system I had developed to get through my chaos. Because I know what I felt and experienced during this transition, I implore each of you to not be too quick to dismiss the feelings of our young people when faced with life's tough decisions.

Needless to say, my mother made the decision for me to attend, and eventually I overcame the negative feelings of moving. It wasn't long before I found a sense of belonging at DAA, and it became my home. During the four years I spent there, I received two things of great importance: the beginning of what is now a deep and meaningful relationship with Jesus and my wife, Jodi.

My time at DAA was peaceful. It seemed like God hushed the chaos around me for a few years, so I wouldn't mess up what was in store for my future. Like so many dedicated academy chaplains, Pastor Gary Burns introduced me to Jesus and helped me develop the tools needed to support that relationship. He taught me service, faith, and lessons in prayer that I still think about today. Both of the relationships I left DAA with have shaped and defined my life in an exponential way—both seemingly sweeter as time passes. I am abundantly blessed to have had an academy to go to, a parent who insisted I attend, and a God who directed it all.

As I approach my final Alumni Weekend serving as your president, I am filled with gratitude for every individual who has contributed to the growth and vitality of the Alumni Association throughout the years. That generosity has kept the Academy operating so that other young people have a chance to find the same relationships that I did. It takes many people working together to keep this dream going, and I appreciate all of your efforts. Be strong, keep the faith, and don't despair because God's got us!

## *The Need for Adventist Education*

Neil Biloff, alumni vice president



Pastoring a church in Palmer, Alaska, provided many opportunities to get involved in the community. One such possibility came in the form of an invitation to join the local Rotary Club. One hour a week over lunch seemed like a small price to pay for getting to know the local business leaders, so I accepted. It was not long before I was asked to present a Rotary program on self-worth to the seventh graders at the local public school. The presentation developed by Rotary International was based on what some would call Natural Law. Grades can be changed through hard work and study, but eye color cannot. Body weight can change, but one's gender cannot. Friends can change, but biological parents will always be yours forever. It was a positive program for the students, and they seemed to appreciate being able to discuss what it was like to be 13 in a big new world.

Today, 20 years later, the presentation is no longer listed on Rotary's website. The world has changed. Some school boards and teachers would push back at what was perfectly acceptable 20 years ago. Even many of the Laws of Nature as defined and supported by the philosophers like Plato and Aristotle have been relegated to the trash heap. Our current culture reminds me of how Adventist education is needed now more than ever. Children are growing up confused and angry looking for something solid to build their lives upon.

Some years ago, I came across a story by Fred Craddock, a religion professor at Emory University, which has helped me understand how important Christianity is when everything seems to be falling apart.

Craddock states that he and his wife were on vacation in Tennessee and found themselves in a Gatlinburg restaurant for breakfast. While eating they noticed an elderly man making the rounds talking with people and moving in their direction. Being on vacation, they wished that he would not stop and bother them; after all, they were on vacation and were tired of dealing with people. They just wanted a quiet meal together, but the elderly gentleman came anyway. As he stopped at the table, he said, "How ya aw doing?" "Where ya aw from?" "What do ya aw do for a livin'?" When the old man found out that Fred was a preacher and a teacher of preachers, he said, "Boy, da I have a story fer ya."

He grabbed a chair and invited himself to their table. "You see," he said, "I was not born far from here. Just over those hills. My mother wasn't married when I was born, so I had some hard times. When I started school, my classmates had a name for me, and it wasn't very nice. I used to go off at recess and lunchtime by myself because the taunts from my classmates cut so deeply. What was worse was going downtown and feeling every eye burning a hole through me. They were all wondering who my real father was. When I was about 12 years old, a new preacher came to town. I would always go late and slip out early, so no one would talk to me. But there was something about his stories that just kept me coming back. One day, the preacher said the benediction so fast that I got caught and had to walk out with the crowd. I could feel every eye in church on me. Just about the time I got to the door, I felt a big hand on my shoulder. I looked up, and the preacher was looking right at me. "What's your hurry son?" he said. "Who are you? Whose boy are you?" I felt the old weight come on me. It was like a big black cloud. I couldn't speak. Even the preacher was putting me down. But as he looked at me, studying my face, he began to smile a big smile of recognition, "Wait a minute," he said. "I know who you are. I see a family resemblance. You are a child of God," he said. And with that, he slapped me on the back and said, "Boy, you've got a great inheritance. Go claim it." And then the old gentleman added, "That was the most important single sentence ever said to me."

The gentleman got up and began to leave, and Craddock said, "Wait, don't leave now. Who are you?" The old man said, "Hopper. Ben Hopper." It was then that Craddock recognized him. Yes, the good folks of Tennessee had twice elected him to be their governor.

## **Alumni Weekend Dorm Room Reservations 2023**

Make checks payable to Dakota Adventist Academy

**Mail to:** Dakota Adventist Academy  
15905 Sheyenne Circle, Bismarck, ND 58503

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Dorm Room: \$25 x \_\_\_\_\_ rooms x \_\_\_\_\_ nights = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Arriving on: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Please bring your own linens for dorm rooms. Call 701.258.9000 for questions. Leaving on: \_\_\_\_\_

## *New Leadership at DAA*

Gary D. Wilson, DAA interim principal

The Dakota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has recently extended a call to Mr. Raman Sathiyaseelan (Mr. Sathiya—pronounced Saw-tee-yah). As he completes his visa papers, Pastor Gary D. Wilson, a retired Adventist educator, will be filling in to start the school year.

Raman Sathiyaseelan was born in Sri Lanka and finished high school at Lakphana Adventist College. He then went on to Spicer Adventist College in India and completed an undergraduate degree from Southern Adventist University as an accounting major. He stayed on and completed his master's degree in education and administration from Andrews University.

Sathiya moved back to Sri Lanka and served at Lakpahana Adventist College as a teacher and vice principal for seven years (2007-2013). He then taught at Adventist International School in Sri Lanka as an economic, business studies, and accounting teacher from 2013-2015. In 2015, Sathiya accepted a call to serve as a teacher at Chiang Mai Adventist Academy in Thailand (2015-2018). He has just finished five years in Guam Micronesia Mission of Seventh-day Adventists as principal of Ebeye Adventist K-12 School. In his own words, "I'm grateful that God is allowing me and my family to join Dakota Adventist Academy as principal."



"In my spare time, I enjoy outdoor activities such as sports (Sathiya is a very good cricket player), hiking, and swimming. I also enjoy reading. My vision for DAA is to make sure that every child who wants an Adventist Education can receive it. I desire for those students to draw closer to Jesus, have a strong relationship with Him, and know that He is always with them to have a wonderful life."

His wife, Naw Pa Saw Wah, was born in Myanmar and is also a graduate of Spicer Adventist College. She has a degree in elementary education. The couple has four children: Jonathan, David, Karen Jane, and Samuel Marshal.



Pastor Gary D. Wilson has served with his wife, Kathleen, as an Adventist educator for 52 years. Their most recent term was in Egypt. Wilson has served several schools in varied areas of North America, as principal and teacher, and overseas in Guam Micronesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. He has also done more than 25 Maranatha trips with his students and preached or directed ten Share Him evangelistic campaigns. God has allowed him to visit and work in more than 40 countries. "I believe God has directed Sathiya to the Dakotas, and I know God has great plans for DAA in the coming years!"

## *Returning DAA Employees*

The following staff members are returning for the 2023-2024 school year. Pictured left to right: Thomas Chapman, assistant boys' dean; Kisa de Bruin, Bible and chaplain; Pam Fenton, science and health; Eric Garrett, plant services; Ryan Peterson, vo-tech and maintenance; Gregory Ratter, social sciences; and Stephen Staff, boys' dean and athletic director.



## *Meet the New Staff Members at DAA*



### **Jacqueline Dolland - Assistant Girls' Dean**

Jacqueline Dolland is from the beautiful Caribbean Island of Trinidad in the West Indies. She has a master's in special education from Cheney University in Philadelphia, a bachelor's in mental health technology from Hahnemann University in Philadelphia, and an associate degree in general studies from Philadelphia Community College. She and her teenage daughter currently reside in Connecticut, but Jacqueline will arrive on DAA's campus in late September. Her hobbies include sketching, flying kites, writing poetry, gardening, cooking, and spending time in nature.

### **Elly Millirans - Food Services Director**

Elly grew up in Washington and Oregon and attended Upper Columbia Academy. She moved to North Dakota about 25 years ago and has experimented with different jobs. Before coming to DAA, she was the manager at Bowdon Community Grocery—this job was close to home and gave her the freedom to be a great mom to Ellisa and TJ. When she isn't creating amazing meals for her kids at home or at DAA, she enjoys sewing, knitting, reading, music, and the family dogs.



### **Karen Ratter - Spanish Teacher & Math Tutor**

Karen Ratter grew up in Costa Rica. Because her father is a pastor, she had the opportunity to live in different parts of the country. She has been blessed to attend Adventist schools through all levels of her education, which is why she believes and supports it—she sees the value and importance of it. Karen graduated from the Adventist University in Costa Rica with a bachelor's in math education. Following graduation, she served in the mission field for two years and met her husband. Greg and Karen have been married for two years, and she is happy to have the opportunity to share her language and culture with others.

### **Darla Reed - Marketing & Recruitment Director**

Darla and Trevor come to us from Chadron, Nebraska. She graduated from Platte Valley Academy, went on to University of Maryland for her undergraduate, and then finished her master's of business administration degree from Chadron State College. Darla has two children; Natalie is a junior at DAA, and Michael graduated last year. They are a cat family. Darla's goals for the school year are to communicate with parents, churches, and potential students about the benefits of attending DAA and to encourage growth of the school. She would like to see the school grow in both enrollment and spirituality. Her hobbies include baking, cake decorating, and photography.



### **Reese Saxon - Registrar & Photography Teacher**

Reese graduated from Loma Linda University with a degree in elementary education and secondary education. She has taught English and Algebra at the high-school level along with all elementary grade levels. Reese is married to the love of her life, David—an emergency room doctor and administrator at Sanford Heath in Bismarck. The couple have three grown children and one grandson. Reese is a talented photographer, owns her own photography business, and has agreed to teach a beginning photography class at DAA. She is a life-long learner and is currently working on a degree in art education at Bismarck State College.

### **Lewis Stanton - Math & Physics Teacher**

Lewis Stanton attended Monterey Bay Academy and after graduating decided to pursue a teaching degree from Pacific Union College. He will be teaching all math courses this year along with physics, as well as being the junior class sponsor. Lewis and his wife, Jessica, have two children: a daughter at DAA and a son at Brentwood. His hobbies include playing sports and reading about science, business, and economics. Lewis' goal and prayer is that the school as a whole draws closer as a community and nearer to Christ—he believes we can serve our Savior and others in unity.





### Dixie Thoman - Girls' Dean

Dixie Thoman graduated from DAA as a four-year senior. She grew up in the Bismarck/Mandan area and attended Brentwood Adventist Christian School for all eight of her elementary years. Dixie moved to Nebraska to attend Union College and stayed in Lincoln for ten years before moving back home. Her son, Levi, attends Brentwood, and Dixie has been very involved on the local school board and Home and School Association. She loves to spend time with family and friends, whether it is enjoying game and movie nights, going out to favorite restaurants or finding new ones, or visiting local parks and zoos. Dixie is looking forward to getting to know all the wonderful young people at DAA. She states, "I am sure there will be bumps in the road, but we will triumph with Christ."

### Aida Woodruff - English Teacher

Aida grew up in Los Angeles, California, and attended Southern Adventist University. She married her husband, Ernest, in 2020, and the couple recently welcomed their first child, Aidan. Aida brings a passion for books and writing into her classroom. She loves reading fiction and non-fiction, and hopes to one day add the title "Novelist" alongside "Teacher." Aida wants to share her love of reading with her students and help them to see the value of literature. Her goals also include bringing her students closer to Jesus and preparing them for college—helping them to learn to produce well-written essays and grow in their ability to express themselves. Outside of the classroom, travel is a priority. She has had the privilege to live and teach in five countries and travel to many more and hopes to someday plan a mission trip and share her passion for travel with students.



### Ernest Woodruff - Food Services Assistant

Ernest grew up in Portland, Oregon, and left home at an early age. He attended school for maintenance mechanics and, along life's path, worked in various occupations including maintenance management, small machine mechanic, and autistic student support. He has also owned and managed several restaurants. Not being one to sit still, Ernest brings with him a "can do" attitude, an intense love for Jesus, and a passion for Adventist Education. He is prepared to make a life here in the Dakotas and to make DAA the best it can be—a place where students are given the opportunity to learn and grow. When he isn't hanging out with his infant son, he enjoys music theater and tackling projects of any kind.

**IT MAY NOT BE A**  
*Little Deuce*  
*Coupe*

**BUT WE'D LOVE TO SEE IT AT THE  
 ALUMNI WEEKEND CAR SHOW!**

**Friday, October 6, 2023 at 3:00-6:00p  
 at Dakota Adventist Academy**

Visit our website for  
 more details and to  
 register your car:  
[dakota-alumni.org](http://dakota-alumni.org)  
 Click the "More" tab



# In Remembrance

**Don Klocko**  
5-14-2020  
SRA Class of 1968

**Lillian Haas Joneitz**  
3-7-2023  
SRA Class of 1946

**June Nick Nafziger**  
11-19-2020  
PVA Class of 1950

**Virginia Weisz Widicker**  
5-7-2023  
SRA Class of 1944

**Agnes Scheresky Dahl**  
5-5-2021  
SRA Class of 1954

**Cleo Beth Brandhagen Miller**  
5-8-2023  
SRA Class of 1952

**Evelyn Falsted Klocko**  
10-31-2021  
SRA Class of 1948

**Jana Kay Stillwell Hanna**  
6-5-2023  
SRA Class of 1970

**Joyce Hagele Heim**  
2-23-2022  
PVA Class of 1959

**Kathy Martineson Klocko**  
6-13-2023  
SRA Class of 1954

**Myrna Bachman Vert**  
3-2022  
PVA Class of 1963

**Jeanie Harchenko Kainer**  
6-16-2023  
SRA Class of 1955

**Darlene Teske**  
3-16-2022  
PVA Class of 1963

**Coleen Bieber Harner**  
6-17-2023  
PVA Class of 1959

**Delta Harvey Geier**  
12-3-2022  
SRA Class of 1952

**Lavone Dimond Steffenson**  
6-19-2023  
SRA Class of 1970

**Aloha Morgen Stern Wheeler**  
12-4-2022  
SRA Class of 1946

**Roger Heinrich**  
7-4-2023  
PVA Class of 1951

**Donna Gottfried Hibberd**  
2-27-2023  
SRA Class of 1946

**Betty Fischer Juhl**  
7-24-2023  
SRA Class of 1945

"And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

- Revelation 21:4



## Alumni Officers

### President

Benjamin Dossenko, DAA Class of 1997

### Vice President

Neil Biloff, SRA Class of 1968

### Treasurer

Brenda Rexin Klein, DAA Class of 1992

### Vice Treasurer

TBD

### Secretary

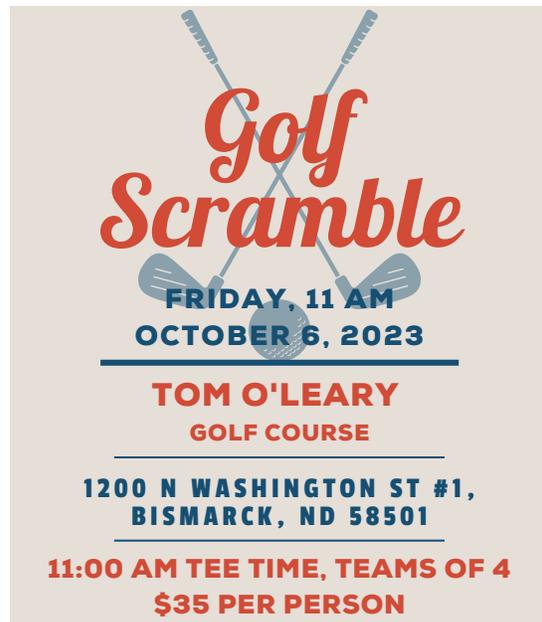
Jodi Gottfried Dossenko, DAA Class of 1997

### Vice Secretary

Jaelyn Pickett, DAA Class of 2020



Please send us your news, weddings, anniversaries, deaths, and births to include in our quarterly newsletter. Pictures are welcome and will be included as space allows. It's a great way to keep your classmates informed. We would love to hear from you! Very soon, the newsletter will have a digital option. To sign up, use the QR code above.



## *Giving to Dakota Adventist Academy*

Many who give to DAA, experience the satisfaction of knowing their gift makes a real difference in the life of a young person. You help in "Building Friendships for Eternity." Your gifts will help us serve this generation and beyond. Working together, we can help our youth build friendships for eternity and a home in Heaven.

### **Annual Fund Goal**

**\$275,000 / year**

Gifts to the Annual Fund are unrestricted donations that are valuable to the operation of the school. They contribute to the stability and security of the school program and are applied where the need is greatest.

### **Worthy Student Fund Goal**

**\$125,000 / year**

These gifts go to work immediately in assisting students with financial needs. Approximately half of our students currently receive assistance from this fund. Support is needed annually, especially in these financially difficult times.

### **Dorm Renovation Goal**

**\$80,000 / year**

Our students spend many hours in their dorm rooms throughout the school year. It is their home away from home. Here they study, sleep, relax, and spend personal time in worship. In addition, the dorms are used during Alumni Weekend, Campmeeting, and other special events.

### **Non-cash Gifts**

Donations of shares of stock, land, and crops are just a few ideas for non-cash donations.

### **Ways to Give**

As you consider what type of gift to give, we encourage you to consult your CPA or attorney. You may also want to speak with Conference or DAA administration to understand the areas of need. Undesignated gifts that are received through estates are unrestricted, and their use will be determined by the K-12 Board of Education.

Anyone wishing to make a donation to a scholarship fund should make their check out to Dakota Conference Corporation, mark it for the scholarship of their choice and mail it to Dakota Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 7200 N. Washington St., Bismarck, ND 58503-6301.

### **Apply for a Scholarship**

Call Lynette Miller at the Dakota Conference office: 701.751.6177.

### **Legacy Gifts**

Gifts left in the form of a legacy through your estate plans play a vital part in the operation of DAA. As you determine how your estate will be handled after your death, you can plan to give a portion to DAA. These gifts have tax implications and are often transmitted through a legal document such as a Will or Trust.

### **Gifts-in-Kind**

Gifts of a non-monetary nature will benefit the school. They enrich programs and capital improvement. Examples could include furniture, landscape materials, library books, or musical instruments.

### **Special Funds**

Donors may give to a variety of programs including music, mission trips, art, basketball, or special projects. These enrich the quality of the programs offered to our students.

### **Gifts of Time & Talent**

Do you have time or expertise in an area that might benefit DAA? Contact us to see what projects need assistance and how we might work together.

### **Memorial Gifts**

Gifts may be made in memory of a loved one or a classmate.

### **Endowment Gifts**

These gifts are a major contribution to the school's future stability and are often considered a legacy gift. These gifts, held by the Dakota Conference Corporation, include permanent funds that provide lasting financial resources to DAA and its programs. Invested in interest-earning accounts, the income is used annually for the designated purpose of the endowment.

### **Kungel Family Endowment Fund**

Established by Lenhardt & Darlene Kungel, this fund will provide two Dakota students a \$1,500 annual scholarship.

### **PVA-Ron Purkapile Student Scholarship Fund**

The purpose of this scholarship is to provide South Dakota students with supplemental funds to attend DAA. Recipients will need to meet scholarship requirements. Students will be selected on a yearly basis by the scholarship committee.

# Dakota Adventist Academy

Development Office  
15905 Sheyenne Circle  
Bismarck ND 58503-9228  
www.mydaa.org

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BISMARCK, ND  
ZIP CODE 58503

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## CALENDAR

### September

3 SA Fall Picnic/Adopt a Highway  
4 Community Service Project  
13-17 Home Leave

### October

2-5 MAPS Testing  
6-7 Alumni Weekend  
9-12 MAPS Testing  
14 Rapid City Regional  
18-22 Home Leave/UC Volleyball Tournament

### November

30-4 Fall Week of Prayer  
4 National Honor Society Induction  
4 SA Fall Festival  
6-10 Spirit Week  
11 Sioux Falls Regional  
22-26 Thanksgiving Home Leave

## STAY CONNECTED

We love to hear from you, and your classmates love to keep up with you. Please send us your news, photos, and changes of address, marriages, births, etc.

For those of you who spend the winter months away from home, send us your winter address and the time frame you will be gone, so you don't miss an issue of this newsletter. Thank you.

Email: [development@dakotasda.org](mailto:development@dakotasda.org)

Website: [dakota-alumni.org](http://dakota-alumni.org)

## APPLY TODAY

Apply to attend Dakota Adventist Academy today! Registration is still open for the 2023-2024 academic year. Visit [mydaa.org](http://mydaa.org) to apply online or call Darla Reed at: 701.258.9000.