

*Growing Bright Futures*



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## From the Headmistress

### Happy New Year!

Happy New Year! This is an opportune time to pause and reflect on the past year. 2011 was a choice year for ACDS. In many areas, we reached beyond our expectations. As we look ahead to 2012, the prospect for a year of growth at Country Day holds great promise. We are committed to making the best even better. Very soon we will have a new mission statement for our school that focuses on 21st Century learning. The new mission statement will guide our ACDS family as we shine a light on the advanced academics, the exemplary fine arts, and the health and physical development provided for our students.

As 2012 begins, let's stop and visualize what's to come. I anticipate a cutting edge Science Lab, more advanced technology, stronger collaboration, Independent School Accreditation, just to name a few. None of our dreams ever become reality without the encouragement and support of those around us. It will take all of us to make the best better, but it will be beyond worth it! What we do for our children benefits everyone!

You are an amazing group of stakeholders. Your hard work and resolution pay off in more ways than you know. As we approach ACDS Spring Registration in February, please help us by spreading the word to your friends and acquaintances. The gift that is available for their children at Country Day is one that will foster their success through the rest of their lives.

Sincerely,  
Nancy Rials, Headmistress

### Welcome New ACDS Faculty Members



Although these are new members of the Country Day faculty and staff – they are not new to our Country Day family! Sheila McLain, who is the new receptionist, was formerly the Kindergarten paraprofessional. Gina Bollinger, a Country Day mom and devoted volunteer, is now one of our 4th grade teachers. A warm welcome to both - we're lucky to have them!

## Generous Spirit at ACDS



We are always proud of our students at Country Day, but sometimes one or more of them does something which really warms our hearts. This happened recently when 8th grade students Jaycee Gill and Kelly Robertson approached Mrs. Rials with an idea for a food drive, with donations being given to the Food Bank of Central Louisiana. The plan was to hold a "pajama

day" allowing those students whose families donated at least \$10 in cash, or the equivalent in non-perishable food items, to wear pajamas to school on January 6th. As usual, ACDS families responded in a big way. On January 5th we were able to deliver \$3,110 and 1,097 pounds of food to our local Food Bank!

When asked about their motivation for beginning the food drive, the girls stated the following, "Country Day gives a lot to those outside of our community, such as raising money for a mission trip to Africa, donating to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and sending care packages to our military abroad. We thought it would be a good idea to do something for our local community." Jaycee's former school often led food drives for the Food Bank of Central Louisiana, so the girls thought this would be the best way to reach out to those in need. They went on to say, "So many in our community are suffering and are unable to pay for the food they need each month. The Food Bank of Central Louisiana helps as many of these people as they can." Kudos to Kelly and Jaycee – what an outstanding job!

## From the Board President



As we ring in the New Year and bid farewell to 2011, we look back with a sense of pride at our many accomplishments and look forward to the numerous challenges that lie ahead. We thank each and every one of you for entrusting ACDS to provide a safe environment to ignite the intellectual curiosity of your children. Without your continued strong support, we couldn't carry out our goals.

Already this school year, we have seen numerous improvements to our campus ranging from painting, flooring, landscaping, security fencing, and cameras to a new baseball/softball practice field and the kiln room for our art center. In the classrooms, we have been introduced to Singapore Math, a new character curriculum, and added active response units to use in conjunction with the Promethean boards. On the courts and fields, we have seen the completion of another successful basketball season, soccer season, and the inaugural cross-country season with several of our teams and student athletes finishing with strong records and accomplishments.

Our administration, along with members of the faculty, have been busy developing our curriculum, selecting curriculum mapping software, and actively pursuing training to help our faculty and staff take advantage of the state of the art improvements being made to help keep our school strong.

As the board of directors, it is our job to provide fiscal oversight and long range planning. In addition to tuition dollars, it takes substantially more to operate our school and to fund all of these

improvements. We realize, and were nicely reminded by many of you, that you were all a little bombarded with requests during the first nine weeks of school.

We listened and have tasked our development committee with creating a fundraising plan that hopefully will eliminate some of the smaller fundraisers and spread out the others in a more manageable way. We are also aggressively seeking grant dollars to help fund some of these projects and stretch the dollars that we have a little farther.

While the school has made improvements already this year, we still have several more planned to finish out this year and lead into the next several years. These projects include adequate funding of teacher and professional training, ongoing funding of existing projects, and development of a new science lab. Speaking of the science lab, Mrs. Rials, along with our science teachers and several board members, are already deep into the planning stages of this exciting project. We hope to be able to share more about it soon.

As always, we thank you for your continued support and are grateful that you are part of the Country Day Family.

**Doug Godard**  
**Board President**



## Fourth Grade Field Trip Combines Fun and Philanthropy

The Country Day fourth graders, as part of a citizenship project, collected food for the Food Bank of Central Louisiana. On November 11th, the students, along with their teachers and parents, went on a field trip to deliver the food and to work at the Food Bank, putting together bags of food for the Backpack Program. This program provides food to hungry children on holidays and weekends when other resources are not available. The food is delivered to area schools and distributed to children in need.

Some of the students also worked pulling weeds in the Food Bank's Model Garden, part of the organization's Good Food Project.

The 4th graders thoroughly enjoyed helping out at the Food Bank of Central Louisiana and stated that they would like to volunteer more often!

# GO TIGERS!

## ACDS BASKETBALL

The 2011 Country Day Basketball Season was an exciting and successful one for all of our teams. All had winning seasons! The 7th/8th grade girls, led by Coach Ronnie Kaiser, were undefeated in their regular season and lost only one tournament game. The girls took first place in the following tournaments: The ACDS Jamboree, the Avoyelles Charter Tournament, the ACDS Tournament, and the Poland Tournament!

The 6th grade boys team and the 7th/8th grade boys team were led by Coach Lee Sanders. Both had outstanding seasons, with the 6th grade boys winning first place in the Ruby-Wise Tournament. The 7th/8th grades took second place in the Buckeye Tournament, the ACDS Tournament, and the Poland Tournament, and were the Avoyelles Charter Tournament Champions!

Congratulations to all of the players and coaches for a job well done! As always, Coach Sanders expresses his appreciation to the faculty and parent volunteers who helped to make the season run smoothly.



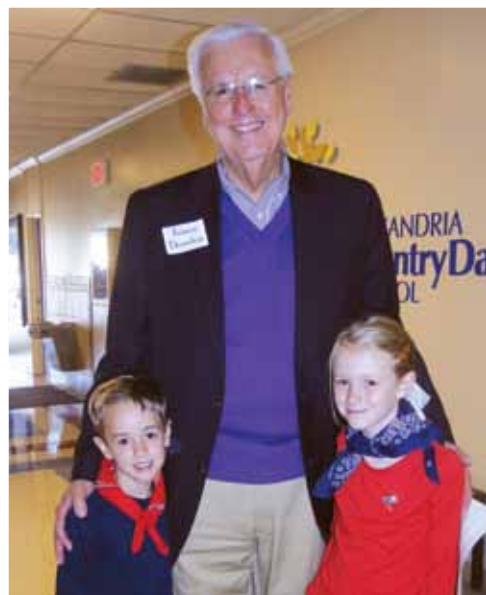
## ACDS SOCCER

Country Day Soccer had a superb second season, led by coaches Gary Arsenault and Stacey Auzenne. They tied for first place in the league with Brame Middle School! Go Tigers!

## Veterans Day

11-11-11 - What an eventful day for Alexandria Country Day School! We began the morning by honoring our United States Veterans at our ACDS Veterans Day Program.

Students escorted their dads, moms, grandparents, and friends, who are veterans and active military, into the gym where the entertainment was held. The drama students of Mrs. Laine Miller and the music students of Mrs. Cathy Spurlock provided a beautiful, inspiring program for our honorees. ACDS is proud to show our appreciation for our United States Military at this very special event each year!



# Featuring **DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS**

## Ajay Pillarisetti, 1995 ACDS Graduate



Alexandria Country Day School recognizes former ACDS student and 1995 ACDS Valedictorian, Ajay Pillarisetti, who has distinguished himself by outstanding achievement in his chosen field of endeavor and has been recognized locally, nationally and internationally for his work.

Notably, Ajay was recently the recipient of the “175 Emory History Makers Award” for his role in creating Campus MovieFest, the world’s largest student film festival which features the next generation of premier filmmakers. Since its creation, more than 350,000 students at colleges and universities around the world have received the necessary technology and training from Ajay and three other co-founders, with the help of Apple and Emory University, to tell their stories through film.

Additionally, Ajay was awarded the prestigious Fulbright Grant in 2007-2008 which enabled him to write and direct a documentary entitled, “Indoor Health Pollution – A Global Health Concern,” about indoor air quality in Nepal. This film is part of a larger media and advocacy campaign to raise awareness of indoor air pollution and its role in human health. These efforts distinguish Ajay as an esteemed Fulbright Scholar.

Ajay has participated in numerous humanitarian aid trips including one in Mumbai where he tirelessly worked to improve air quality within the slum environment through the YUVA and Himalayan Health Project. Ajay continues to work on global health and environmental projects in Guatemala, Grenada, and throughout India.

When Ajay is not working, he enjoys photography and travel. Remarkably, one of Ajay’s photographs earned him an Honorable Mention Award from UNICEF.

Ajay received a Masters Degree in Public Health from Emory University in 2007 and is currently a doctoral student in Environmental Health Sciences at the University of California, Berkely.



Honorable Mention UNICEF Award, Boy & Coke, Lingshed, Ladakh, India

## Outstanding **ACDS ALUMNI**

We at Country Day are honored to recognize the following alumni for achieving the status of **National Merit Scholar**:

**Laura Gauggel** *Pineville High School, National Merit Semi-Finalist*

**Rusty Potter** *Pineville High School, National Merit Semi-Finalist*

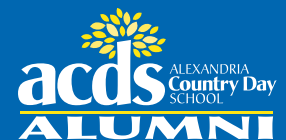
**Parker Texada** *Alexandria Senior High School, National Merit Semi-Finalist*

**Abraham Younes** *Bolton High School, National Merit Semi-Finalist*

**Grace Patton** *Bolton High School, National Merit Commended Scholar*

Several colleges and universities had not published their Fall 2011 Dean’s Lists at the time this newsletter went to print.

Therefore, we will include the names of the ACDS alumni who made the dean’s lists in our Summer 2012 edition.



**Share your Country Day alumni news with us!**

Please contact **Beth Arsenault** at (318)448-1475 or [barsenault@acdsonline.org](mailto:barsenault@acdsonline.org) with information. This may include, but is not limited to, engagements, marriages, births, accomplishments, graduations, and plans for college or career. We’d love to hear from you!



## Louisiana Artist Martin Laborde, Penny Abraham & the Artwork of Country Day Students -

# *A Winning Combination!*



For those of us at Country Day and the community beyond, a very special evening took place on November 29th at Weiss and Goldring. This much-anticipated art event exceeded our fundraising goal by raising over \$30,000! Of course, none of this would have been possible without our fabulous art teacher, Penny Abraham, and the many hours she spent with our students while they created their masterpieces! A very special thank you goes to Penny's parents, Jim and Mary Holmes, and to Erin Fontanille's grandmother, Mrs. Genny Murphy. Mr. Holmes created the beautiful bottle trees which were combined with the spectacular bottles painted by our 3rd graders. Mrs. Holmes spent MANY hours helping with all of the projects. Mrs. Murphy generously fired the tiles for the fourth grade project, concrete benches with tiles. We'd also like to thank Bayou Rapides Corporation (Chris Antoon) and Tarver Building Materials (Randy Tarver), whose donations made our beautiful art display boards a reality, as well as The Martin Foundation and Coughlin-Saunders Foundation.



The success of this event was due in large part to Martin LaBorde and B.E.E. Galleries of New Orleans. Mr. LaBorde generously donated a painting to our live auction. One hundred percent of those proceeds were given to Country Day along with 15% from the sales of his other paintings.

Thanks so much to the many parent volunteers who helped to make the evening such a success as well as to our generous sponsors.



Weiss·Goldring

**KINETIX**  
TECHNOLOGIES



# Freedom Fest at ACDS!

Congratulations to the ACDS Parent Club! This year's fall festival, the annual event which over the last four years has raised over \$120,000 for our school, was a resounding success.

Donna Andries, Parent Club Treasurer, did an outstanding job as the chair of "Freedom Fest at ACDS." Parent Club President Cynthia Meeker was instrumental in making the evening run smoothly. Other officers and volunteers who contributed a great deal were the subcommittee coordinators:

*Raffle Baskets* - **Celena Lewis**

*Ticket Sales* - **Angela Cook**

*Hot Air Balloon* - **Lori DeWitt**

*DJ, Karaoke and Entertainment* - **Cynthia Meeker**

*Decorations, Booth Set-up, Backdrop, Dance Floor, Lighting, and Clubs and Teams* - **Shelli McVay**

*Parking and Security* - **Jennifer Kinberger**

*Student Activity (Care packages to our military abroad)* - **Tara Cochran**

*Marketing, Signs, and Corporate Sponsors* - **Lynn Sanders and Marilyn Carlin**

These ladies (and their spouses in many cases) spent countless hours working to make our festival a fun, exciting, and profitable event! The fall festival is Parent Club's primary fundraising event and this year almost \$19,000 was raised, thanks to the generosity of the many parent volunteers and our corporate sponsors.

Activities included inflatables, a car smash, karaoke, refreshments, a pie toss, and many other exciting things to choose from. As an added event this year, Parent Club collected items for care packages to be sent to our military abroad and to some of our local veterans who are in need. Tara Cochran, former Parent Club President, coordinated this student activity. ACDS families donated generously and the packages were shipped shortly after Veteran's Day along with hand-made appreciation cards created by many of our students.

All parents of Country Day students are members of the ACDS Parent Club. The goal of this organization is "to enhance the academic and social environment of Alexandria Country Day School by supporting our children, our faculty and staff, and our school." One of the stated missions of the Parent Club is to "raise funds to address the needs of the students, teachers, and school." We deeply appreciate our corporate sponsors and our hard working volunteers for their help in fulfilling this mission at the 2011 Freedom Fest at ACDS.

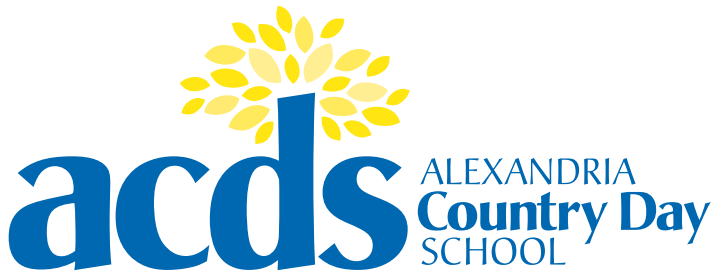


## ACDS Annual Fund UPDATE!

### Our Deepest Appreciation

Thanks so much to all of you who have contributed to the 2011-2012 ACDS Annual Fund Drive. We are well on our way to our goal - having now collected \$92,000 in donations and pledges. Exciting plans are underway to use these funds in the coming year for the expansion and renovation of the Country Day Science Lab! Kudos to our ACDS faculty and staff members who, for the third consecutive year have 100% participation in the annual fund drive - what a commitment to excellence!

**Correction to Donor Honor Roll:** Alexandria Country Day School wishes to express its sincerest regret for an error in the 2010-2011 Annual Fund Donor Honor Roll which was published in the Fall 2011 Country Day Connection. Mr. and Mrs. Perry Ducote were inadvertently left off the list, as donors in the Boosters category. We deeply apologize for this error. Our donors are very important to us and we appreciate their generosity toward Alexandria Country Day School.



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## Congratulations Alyssa Urbi!

ACDS 6th grade student Alyssa Urbi is the winner of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Writing Contest for the 5th/6th grade division. This contest is part of the VFW Americanism and Loyalty Day Program and Awards. Alyssa was competing against many other students across Rapides Parish. Her essay, entitled "What Does Veterans Day Mean to Me?," will now go on to compete on the state level. She will be recognized by the local VFW at an awards program in April.



*What Does Veterans Day Mean to Me? By Alyssa Urbi*

*Freedom is not free, how often do we hear people say it? If it was not free, why is it called freedom? Veterans Day is a day to honor the people who have bravely, and with great personal sacrifice, served our country. They risked their lives; there are some who have lost theirs, in order for us to be free.*

*Veterans Day is not only about the men and women who served, but their families as well. The parents of soldiers who are worrying about the safety of their son or daughter at war. The children who are left behind without mothers or fathers to take care of them. The wife or husband, sisters, and brothers who are waiting for their safe return.*

*I am forever grateful for the veterans who have helped my ancestors fight against the Japanese to free the Philippines during World War II. My grandfather remembers his older brother fighting alongside American soldiers during the war and died defending the country vividly. I remember my father telling stories about the heroics of his relatives and how they battled enemies using small weapons. They relied on their knowledge of the land to outsmart the Japanese. They stopped going to school because the schools were turned into barracks and teachers became soldiers. I owe to the veterans the freedom I have right now.*

*I celebrate Veterans Day by remembering and thanking them for their ultimate sacrifice. I say prayers for the ones who have died, served, and especially the ones who are serving now. Veterans Day is to be celebrated every single day. As we say our prayers every day, let us not forget to say one for the men and women who have offered themselves for our safety.*



Thanks To Our Generous Underwriters for your support!