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## Gym Campaign: Challenges and Miracles

We've experienced miracles and challenges in our history, and now a miracle IS the challenge...a challenge grant! In fact, two. "A friend of Sophia Academy" has issued us a challenge grant of \$500,000 when we reach our \$2.45 million goal of paying for our Gym/Theater/Chapel building. This grant motivated another \$50,000 challenge, and we are well on our way to raise the remaining \$590,000.

*"When thou goest, thy way shall be opened up before thee step by step." - Proverbs 4:12*

*"The Lord never builds a bridge of faith except under the feet of the faith-filled traveler. If He builds the bridge a rod ahead, it would not be a bridge of faith. That which is of sight is not of faith."  
- Henry Clay Trumbull*

### RECENT DONORS INCLUDE:

"A friend of Sophia Academy"  
The Catholic Foundation of North GA  
John and Mary Franklin Foundation  
Mr. and Mrs. Steve May  
Mr. and Mrs. Craig Mullins  
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Charles and Laura Smith-  
in honor of Caroline Corrigan's graduation  
Stent Family Foundation  
Mr. and Mrs. Ron Tansill  
Mr. and Mrs. Gordy Germany  
Mr. and Mrs. Oskar Rogg

Editors: Cathi Athaide, Emily Coulter



### A Heart for Giving

This year, the Sophia Academy community donated 106 coats and blankets to the Atlanta Union Mission, over 100 toys to Toys for Tots, 486 pounds of food to the Atlanta Community Food Bank, 604 books and 162 videos to the Elaine Clark Center and Sheltering Arms, and over 20 bags of clothes to the Carrie Steele Pitts Home. We are delighted to share our resources with those in need and look forward to our next opportunity to serve.

# Eagle's Watch



Sophia Academy | Summer 2011

## Re-Accreditation Process Aligns with New Mission Statement

As we work toward our re-accreditation with SAIS/SACS this fall, we will create a strategic plan to chart our future for the next few years. From Curriculum, Library, Technology, Assessment and Mission Statement committees, the process includes many constituents and surveys to fit our school with best practices.

We have always provided personalized education and attention, and have refined our mission statement to allow those without diagnosed learning differences. Sophia Academy is an excellent choice for those searching for a smaller school and classroom where children have better chances of participating, achieving and excelling.

Our new tagline communicates this message well. For 12 years we have been offering transforming opportunities which have, in turn, transformed the lives of our students. We are very proud to now offer this exceptional model of education to siblings and other students.



**THE MISSION OF SOPHIA ACADEMY IS:**  
**To provide personalized education tailored to meet student needs in a faith-based environment.**

## Preschool: Early Intervention For Every Child

By Cheryl Johnston, Advisory Board member and Sophia Academy Preschool Director



Twenty-five years ago, as a trained special education teacher, I discovered the benefits of preschool as early intervention. My interest in early childhood education developed as I noticed more and more children coming to me for testing and tutoring who demonstrated difficulties in a variety of areas including reading, receptive and expressive language, mathematical concepts, and self-help/organizational skills. By second or third grade, some of these children were frustrated and already did not like school (or learning). Testing indicated that many of these children did not have specific learning differences, just gaps in their skill development. Many of these skills should have been learned in preschool.

Preschool early intervention is not a new idea. The Montessori method began in the early 1890s, and the government's Head Start program began in the sixties.

There are similar philosophies running through many of the most-used early childhood curricula.

Some of these include:

- 1) That learning is both social and solitary and that we need to guide children to help them develop a sense of community and social responsibility (Bank Street)
- 2) That a child has unique instincts and sensitivities to the environment and learning should be self-directed (Montessori)
- 3) That learning is sequential and steps must be built one upon the next
- 4) That preschoolers, who are given opportunities to make choices and experience the consequences of those choices, make better decisions as teens and adults (Highscope/Perry)

Through observations and research, we know that  
*continued on next page*



## Letter from the Director

Dear friends and families of Sophia Academy,

Re-accreditation is a wonderful time of reflection and introspection. While many would say that re-accreditation is “just a lot of work” and it is, it is also a time to boast about all of the growth and development that the school has had. Looking over our documents from our first accreditation I am struck by how small we were, with just a strong vision for what we could be and an even stronger faith that we would, some day, become what we dreamed about.

So much that was written in those initial documents has come to be. We have our own wonderful facility and each year we’ve consistently added more sports and fine arts. We’ve continued to broaden the scope of our Christian education program and we’ve added more opportunities for parents to be engaged with the school. On the instructional side we’ve added more classroom time each day, coordinated our vision for each grade level with the Georgia Performance Standards and we’ve raised the standards for our teachers. With our re-accreditation we’ll look farther into the future; we’ll take into account the rapidly changing field of technology and how this can help our students as well as incorporating more of a global perspective of our world.

We’re looking forward to welcoming our SAIS-SACS representatives in the fall. Stay in touch with us, I know there will be many great things to report!

Sincerely,

Marie Corrigan

*continued from page one*

young children learn through their senses; from their own experiences; and by imitating adults and peers. Consequently, the classroom environment must be dependable – yet flexible – so children can extend their individual skills and expand learning and understanding of their environment.

Teachers – educators and parents – must maintain a good role model for the children in their care, guide children as they expand their developing skills, and provide more opportunities for an individual child to learn. A teacher must support the individual learning of each child and be flexible, yet consistent, in their guidance.

**A successful preschool takes all of these elements—the child, teachers and parents, and the classroom environment—and fosters an approach to learning that intersects all three with the family and spiritual life of the home, with the goal of achieving the child’s fullest potential.**

The classroom environment must be print rich with picture and word (labeled) on the real object. This idea came from success in teaching adult stroke victims to learn to read again and has been used in special education classrooms since I began teaching in the late 1970’s. Parents can also label things in the home environment.

A successful preschool takes all of these elements—the child, teachers and parents, and the classroom environment—and fosters an approach to learning that intersects all three with the family and spiritual life of the home, with the goal of achieving the child’s fullest potential. The benefit of a preschool education is that it provides a robust foundation from which grade level learning may flourish. It is probable that later complications in school may be alleviated by simply having a proper starting place. Sophia Academy will be hosting a preschool starting this fall and hopes to provide such an environment.

## Assistive Technology Grand Opening



On Friday, May 6, Sophia Academy opened the doors of its Assistive Technology Evaluation Center to the community.

Speakers at the event included Joe Tedesco of Georgia Tech and Chris Gatch of CBeyond, as well as AT Director, Ashley Bjorklund (pictured with scissors).

Those attending the Grand Opening had the opportunity to test cutting-edge technology, see hands-on demonstrations, and enter a raffle for a free AT Evaluation.

## SCHOOL LIFE

### AWARD-WINNING TRACK & FIELD



Sophia Academy’s track and field teams competed in the Atlanta Private Athletic Conference finals, taking home first place ribbons in 10 events. In the girls’ running events, Leela Mitchum won the 100M, Alicia Cantrell won the 200M, and Liza Beem finished first in the 800M. In the running relays, the team of Caroline Christy, Tracy Walker, Leela Mitchum, and Alicia Cantrell won the 4 x 100M and Liza Beem, Sarah Berkowitz, Carter Hall, and Mary Pollock won the 4 x 400M. In the girls’ field events, Tracy Walker placed first in the shot put and Caroline Christy won both the triple jump and discus. In the boys’ events, Austin McKinney placed first in the discus and the team of Jack Meehan, Michael Nilan, Max Pimentel, and Yan Olea-Perez won the 4 x 400M relay. Many of the winners were new to track and field this year and are rising stars. **Eighty percent of eligible students at Sophia Academy participate in team or intramural sports.**

### ANNUAL PLAY: The Little Mermaid



Each year, every student at Sophia Academy takes part in the annual theatrical production “The Love Letter.” This thematic production is done as a display of love and thanks to all the people who support the school. The theme of

this year’s Love Letter was “The Little Mermaid,” written by playwright Kathryn Schultz Miller.

Middle school students gave a dramatic performance and K-5 students showcased their singing talent with Under the Sea-themed music. Directed by Drama and Art Teacher, Mrs. Tracey Buot, along with musical direction from Music Teacher Mrs. Laurie Plate, the show was a smash hit, complete with glittering costumes and witty dialogue.



(Above): Seventh grader Jackson Tucker, as Prince Edward, asks for the hand of Annabelle, played by eighth grader Caroline Christy, while Aruba (seventh grader Jack Meehan) and Finny (seventh grader Adam Russell) look on with approval.



(Left): Fourth graders Jordan McGuffey, Matthew Buckis, Koale McKenzie, Nathan Tobias, Grace Shelton, Josh Gordon, and Grace Wilson sing a “Joyful Noise” while donning sea creature head gear.

### ALUMNI CORNER: SARAH PIPER

A rising junior and honor roll student at Marist School, Sarah Piper was a hard worker at Sophia Academy. She is on the color guard with the Marist Marching Band, and loves spending time drawing, painting, and doing origami. In school, her strongest subjects are math and English.

When she was at Sophia Academy, she remembers being in a small class.

“When we read, Amy Codman gave us these book-marks with a strip of clear blue plastic on the top to help us keep our place. That was one of the most helpful tools I was given. I also remember learning the sign language to “Shout to the Lord” in chapel and I still remember all of that. I have learned that I am a kinesthetic and visual learner. If I can see something and make it in to an image, I can understand it. Some study tools that I use are making flash cards and outlining. With both of these things it is not enough to just make the cards or outline but you have to go over things every day, particularly with dates and names.

Right now my goals are to keep doing the best I can in school. I would like to become a pediatric physical therapist or graphic designer at some point, and yes, I realize how different those are! I also want to get in to a good college.”

Knowing her learning style and working with teachers who care, finding the right study aids and putting forth effort have certainly helped Sarah accomplish her dreams.



Follow our school blog at [mariescorrigan.blogspot.com](http://mariescorrigan.blogspot.com), or ‘Like’ Sophia Academy on Facebook!

## GRADUATION



Below: Mrs. Corrigan congratulates the graduating class of 2011. (L to R): Jordan Williams, Alicia Cantrell, Avery Antoniou, Sarah Berkowitz, and Caroline Christy have turned their tassels and are ready for high school.



## EXCELLENCE AWARDS



Left: Rising eighth-grader, Jackson Tucker, receives the Eagle Award, given for exemplification of Christian character. The award includes a \$150 gift.



Right: Mrs. Corrigan presents rising third-grader Laura Turnbull with the Corrigan Family Scholarship Fund Award.

## CORRIGAN FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP FUND FUN RUN



All students participated in annual run to raise funds for a merit scholarship to the most improved student.

## WALKING IN FAITH



Right: Bo Gambrell takes on the part of Jesus at the 5th grade re-enactment of the Last Supper.

Below: Students gathered for the National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 5.



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## The Good Shepherd

Joe Evans, grandfather of Sophia Academy student, Peyton, recently spoke at our Leadership Donors' dinner and shared his commitment to the school with these words:

I am into my second generation of helping kids grow through learning differences. Back in the middle 1980's, our younger daughter was in kindergarten when we realized things just weren't tracking according to schedule. At the time we were living just south of Macon, and the resources available to kids with learning issues were scarce. Fortunately, there was a school close by that helped lay the critical foundation for her. We felt similarly blessed to be led to Sophia Academy for Peyton.

For those of you who have experienced raising children with learning issues, I don't have to describe the relief and sheer joy for both parent and child that comes from extracting a child from a learning environment in which he or she has been lost and placing them in a community that meets them where they are and lovingly leads them forward toward their potential. Raising a child with learning issues makes me think of the story of Jesus and the lost sheep in Luke 15:3-10.

"So he told them this parable: 'What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.' "

**There are at least 3 lessons here that I think apply to parenting kids with learning needs and schools like Sophia that fill such a critical need.**

1. The competency of a shepherd is not defined by the sheep that show up in the pen on time with no prompting and never wander off, but by how effectively he gathers up the lost. I think the same is true about raising kids. We may all dream about low maintenance offspring that go through life on autopilot, score 1600 on the SAT and get a free ride to Harvard, but it's the kids with dyslexia, ADD, autism, speech and hearing issues, and on and on that



need warrior parents and schools like Sophia that attack the barriers to their development.

2. The good shepherd in Jesus' story did not stand at the gate to the pen yelling and screaming, threatening to beat the sheep to within an ounce of his life if he didn't straighten up and get his butt back in the pen. The good parent and the good school, like the good shepherd, go and meet the child where he or she is, accepting the differences and affirming the worth, and lovingly carry the child to where he or she needs to be. They can't be driven, they can't be sent- they have to be carried on loving shoulders until they can find their way on their own.
3. Getting lost happens- that is one of the realities of life, but to the good shepherd, the good parent, and the good school, staying lost is not acceptable. As parents, grandparents, educators, and financial supporters, we must demonstrate willingness to pay the price- in time, talent, tears, and treasure, to see that these special needs children that God has entrusted to us do not stay lost- that they get their best shot at realizing their potential in life.

Good shepherding is all around us in the Sophia community. The unwavering love and commitment to give our children their chance in life; the commitment to meet our children where they are, to address their unique needs, and to lovingly, but firmly lead them forward; and the determination to never give up on a child is evident.

**Just as the Good Shepherd invested a disproportionate amount of his time on one lost sheep, we are called upon to disproportionately invest in the development and education of our special needs children.**

Just as the Good Shepherd invested a disproportionate amount of his time on one lost sheep, we are called upon to disproportionately invest in the development and education of our special needs children. Many have reached beyond tending to the needs of their immediate flock to share in the shepherding of the children of Sophia Academy. For that, on behalf of the children, parents, grandparents, faculty, staff and board of Sophia Academy, "thank you" for helping to change the world one child at a time.

## Character Trait Awards

The Character Trait Award Ceremony, held annually, honors each child for exemplifying a trait of Christian character. The following list showcases the character traits selected for each student.

**Katie Anderson:** Helpfulness  
**Avery Antoniou:** Compassion  
**Bella Ardell:** Humor  
**Brooke Ashby:** Loyalty  
**Layne Atkinson:** Creativity  
**Sam Barone:** Enthusiasm  
**Liza Beem:** Perseverance  
**Sarah Berkowitz:** Joyfulness  
**Josh Brown:** Honesty  
**Jack Buck:** Enthusiasm  
**Matthew Buckis:** Leadership  
**James Burgess:** Compassion  
**Turner Bynum:** Wonder  
**Alicia Cantrell:** Wisdom  
**Jackson Carter:** Loyalty  
**Ben Cheatham:** Compassion  
**Caroline Christy:** Endurance  
**Emily Cowart:** Leadership  
**Matthew Cowart:** Cleverness  
**Catie Claire Coyle:** Kindness  
**Elijah Crowell:** Wonder  
**Katie Cuellar:** Curiosity  
**Clara Cullerton:** Creativity  
**Don Daugherty:** Humor  
**Samantha Estlund:** Gracefulness  
**Peyton Evans:** Curiosity  
**Liam Flynn:** Wonder  
**Chase Follis:** Enthusiasm  
**Garrett Foster:** Curiosity  
**Will Gakio:** Creativity  
**Bo Gambrell:** Helpfulness  
**Sebastian Gomez:** Enthusiasm

**Josh Gordon:** Loyalty  
**Finn Gosch:** Consideration  
**Carter Hall:** Determination  
**Miles Harrison:** Peacefulness  
**Aubrey Hickson-Smith:** Peacefulness  
**Elizabeth Higbee:** Wonder  
**Jamie Huber:** Enthusiasm  
**Alex Jarrard:** Justice  
**Will Klaus:** Inquisitiveness  
**Harrison Kleinschnitz:** Perseverance  
**Bailey Kolacinski:** Humor  
**Kathleen Landskroener:** Helpfulness  
**Carlin Lathi:** Enthusiasm  
**Robert Lipscomb:** Leadership  
**Nick Loggins:** Loyalty  
**Noelle Marchais:** Ambition  
**Will McGee:** Diligence  
**Jordan McGuffey:** Determination  
**Will McInerney:** Humility  
**Koale McKenzie:** Compassion  
**Austin McKinney:** Endurance  
**Jack Meehan:** Joyfulness  
**Matthew Miramontes:** Wonder  
**Leela Mitchum:** Determination  
**Elise Mooney:** Gracefulness  
**Emma Mooney:** Leadership  
**Max Mooney:** Leadership  
**Alex Moore:** Wonder  
**Will Mosier:** Compassion  
**Brayden Motes:** Cooperation  
**Michael Nilan:** Curiosity  
**Yan Olea Perez:** Humor

**Eric Osgood:** Curiosity  
**Stephanie Panos:** Creativity  
**Garrett Pedersoli:** Enthusiasm  
**Audrey Peterson:** Faithfulness  
**Max Pimentel:** Wonder  
**Mary Pollock:** Wonder  
**Will Rankin:** Encouragement  
**Gregory Riley:** Dedication  
**Adam Russell:** Courage  
**Liya Seife:** Kindness  
**Grace Shelton:** Thoughtfulness  
**Maxwell Shelton:** Humor  
**Freddie Simon:** Humor  
**Kia Smith:** Faithfulness  
**Connor Sullivan:** Perseverance  
**Kelsey Sullivan:** Enthusiasm  
**Jack Tansill:** Perseverance  
**Cody Tawfik:** Responsibility  
**Nathan Tobias:** Creativity  
**Jackson Tucker:** Respectfulness  
**Mary Mitchell Tucker:** Consideration  
**Laura Turnbull:** Stewardship  
**Ansley Vallely:** Gentleness  
**Guille Valls:** Endurance  
**Eric Vogel:** Perseverance  
**Tracy Walker:** Joyfulness  
**Jordan Williams:** Loyalty  
**Tyler Williams:** Honesty  
**Grace Wilson:** Wonder  
**Julia Wolfman:** Perseverance  
**Richard Zimmerman:** Generosity



**Full Name:** Heather Ann Tomkins

**Birthplace:** Madison, WI

**Position/Education and Affiliations:** Middle School Science Teacher, B.S. in Secondary Science Education, National Science Teacher Association (NSTA), Professional Development, Discipline, Science Fair, and Curriculum committees. Led Green Cup Challenge to a second place win in GA and participated in radio show, "Radio Sandy Springs" on implementing GEMS in middle school.

**Personal:** Recently engaged to Jonathan Milo of Wisconsin

**Hobbies & Interests:** Reading, running, watching movies, volunteering at the Atlanta Food Bank

**Claim to Fame:** Featured in a nationally-acclaimed hair magazine at age 15, where she met Michael C. Hall

**Favorite Quote:** "Be the change you wish to see in the world." - Mahatma Gandhi

**Quote about Sophia Academy:** "I feel very privileged to be a part of such a caring community of students and teachers."

**Full Name:** Emily Coulter

**Hometown:** Brentwood, TN

**Position/Education and Affiliations:** Advancement Assistant. B.A. in Psychology and Religion, Wake Forest University; Master of Divinity from Candler School of Theology at Emory University; Completed 1 Unit Clinical Pastoral Education, Spiritual Life Committee.

**Personal:** Engaged to Pastor Chris Harrington and just participated in her first Peachtree Road Race

**Hobbies & Interests:** Indoor rock climbing, yoga, blogging, music, travel, foreign language, world missions, theology

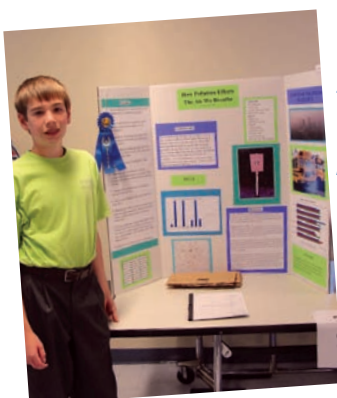
**Claim to Fame:** Can trace genealogy back to the Royals of Scotland

**Favorite Quote:** "Peace is such a precious jewel that I would give anything for it but truth." - Matthew Henry

**Quote about Sophia Academy:** "Sophia Academy uniquely gives students opportunities they may have missed out on at other schools, and I love to watch them grow to find new interests and passions based on these opportunities for success."



## SCIENCE FAIR



Left: Jack Buck proudly displays his first place ribbon for "How Pollution Affects the Air We Breathe."



Right: Caroline Christy demonstrates the wind speed of a model tornado.



## Middle School Honor Roll

- Liza Beem
- Ben Cheatham
- Liam Flynn
- Stephanie Panos
- Noelle Marchais
- Bailey Kolacinski
- Adam Russell
- Alicia Cantrell

We feel character is so important that we nominate staff monthly for awards, who in turn award two students who represent that trait:

**TRAIT**

Helpfulness  
 Loyalty  
 Thankfulness  
 Humility  
 Joyfulness  
 Perseverance  
 Hope  
 Stewardship  
 Enthusiasm

**STAFF**

Cami Rat  
 Brittany Etheredge  
 Caroline Bligh and Liz Price  
 Ashley Richards  
 Sue Astley  
 Bligh/Mouledous/Peterson/Lang  
 Caroline Hurlbert  
 John Turner  
 Alicia Jones

**STUDENTS**

Liya Seife  
 Turner Bynum  
 Adam Russell  
 Robert Lipscomb  
 Garrett Pedersoli  
 Jack Tansill  
 Josh Gordon  
 Eric Osgood  
 Eric Vogel  
 Mary Mitchell Tucker  
 Audrey Peterson  
 Elise Mooney  
 Brooke Ashby  
 Grace Wilson  
 Jordan McGuffey  
 Stephanie Panos  
 Cody Tawfik  
 Kathleen Landskroener