



The FALCON

ARBORBROOK CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

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BUILDING ON SUCCESS: PHASE ONE OF ARBORBROOK EXPANSION

Come next Fall, Arborbrook's campus will be abuzz with noise and activity. Not from students returning for the 2022-2023 academic year, though there will be plenty of that. Instead, the clamor the board of directors hopes students and teachers will hear is the sound of construction equipment busy at work on Phase One of the school's expansion plan — the new classroom building that will serve grades 7 through 12.

Board member Ulunda Baker tells *The Falcon* that the doors of the new facility are projected to open by August 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year. "Our intent [is] to build space to allow for the growth God has given us," she says.



While teaching through the pandemic posed numerous challenges for schools everywhere, Baker says people took notice of how much better Arborbrook was positioned to meet those challenges thanks to its commitment to eternal values and incorporating the outdoors into learning. Suddenly, she shares, school phones were ringing off the hook from parents in the Wesley Chapel, Weddington, and surrounding areas looking for a different kind of education for their children — one grounded in strong Christian ethics, a sense of godly community, and a nature-based academic model.

Part of the motivation behind the expansion is to serve that growing demand. "It will be so good to see fresh new buildings that we can open for everyone to enjoy but still provide space in the design to ensure we don't lose our school's mission of the integrative connection between God, home, school, and nature," says Baker.

The new facilities are also intended to better meet the needs of Arborbrook's current families.

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The new construction will alleviate the issue students and teachers frequently mention. Currently, if someone needs to use the restroom in building four, they have to leave and go to building three. "I only have my first and second periods in there, so it's not that bad for me," laughs seventh grader Andy Gill. "But if it's in the middle of the day, for other people, I know it's annoying. Having another building with more space will be pretty nice."

Ninth grader Emmanuel Riad is one of those students dealing with the frustration Gill describes. He currently has English and Spanish in building four and says he's looking forward to the new classrooms so he won't have to use the bathrooms in another building. His classmate Lili Carroll mentions bathrooms as well, but she's more excited for the increased sound insulation the new facility will have. As it stands, she says, the walls are thin and sometimes hearing instruction in other classrooms can be a distraction. Upper school math teacher Stephen Cook says Ms. Kimball's blackboard is

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on the wall opposite his, and sometimes the kids get a two for one lesson.

Faculty, too, are looking forward to the advantages the new building will provide. Upper school teacher Amy Norman has been with Arborbrook for ten years and has seen the school grow and develop. In that time, she says she's had to share her classroom with colleagues out of necessity. "Some teachers only teach one class and so they have to share my room. So I have to find a place to go when someone else is using my room," she says. "I do my planning sometimes in a little copy room. It's almost like a closet. So it'll be nice for teachers to have an actual workroom to go for our planning time. And maybe not as much sharing of classrooms."

But plans for the new building aren't just utilitarian. In keeping with the value the Charlotte Mason method places on beauty, the new building is designed to be far more inspiring to the imagination than the institutional type school constructions that often pop up around Charlotte. The renderings of the exterior highlight classic style and natural stone accents, designed to give teachers and students a feeling of comfort when they gather to learn.

Baker says the new structure will provide families the same opportunity to personalize the campus and make it a home away from home that has always been a hallmark of Arborbrook's community.

"We have put our time, talents, and treasures into the grounds and facilities of our current space," says Baker. "Even though we will have new buildings, we will still have opportunities to add paintings and outdoor landscape touches from our families throughout the new space."

As for logistics, the school is working collaboratively with Central Baptist Church's facilities team to ensure that Arborbrook's existing space and resources are maximized both during and after the building process. To that end, Baker says the school doesn't intend to add trailers as those require an extensive town approval process. Instead, she says, the school will move building four to a new temporary location behind the church offices where it can still be utilized as building goes on.

To keep the expansion plan on firm financial footing, the board of directors is hoping to raise \$2.5 million to be able to open Phase One debt free, though Baker says they are prepared to leverage a combination of fundraising dollars and loans. For that reason, she hopes families will prayerfully consider how they can partner with the school to meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's students.

"Our intent is to build space to allow for growth of God's school," Baker explains. "For years, we have been patient as we have sought God's will and favor for His plan for His school. Even though we know the months ahead will be challenging."



Baker says the board is particularly leaning on the words of Psalm 30:1-5 — joy comes in the morning — as it moves forward. "It's one of my favorite Psalms," Baker shares, "and oh what a joy it will be to open the doors of Arborbrook's new building on Arborbrook's own land! So we're asking families, extended families, and friends to join with us as we seek God's will for this new phase of growth and building for His school."

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In particular, Baker asks for prayer for the board as they move forward in traffic studies, town approvals, and other necessary hurdles that must be overcome. She also asks for prayer for Head of School, Dr. Andy Zawacki, students, and the Arborbrook community in general as construction takes place. “Pray for strength, endurance, and patience as we build,” she says, “pray for those who have a heart to join in with us on this project like our general contracting partner Myers Chapman.”

She also asks families, friends, and community partners to give as they feel led during upcoming fundraising campaigns for the first phase and to promote fundraising campaign opportunities with others.

Norman echoes Baker’s enthusiasm for what the future holds for Arborbrook and feels the long wait for the Lord’s direction regarding building plans has been well worth it. “I think it’s great,” Norman says. “We’re able to stay in this location, but also have better facilities. It’s going to be a wonderful improvement for Arborbrook. I’m super excited.”

As Phase One continues to proceed, Baker says the board will be busy working on plans for phase two and new facilities for grades K through 6th. But that’s a report for a later issue of *The Falcon*! ■



UPCOMING EVENTS

- April 29 Prom (Grades 10-12)**
- May 20 Baccalaureate**
- May 21 Graduation 10:00 a.m.**
- May 23 End of Year Ceremonies (K-6, 7-11)**
- May 24 Last Day of School (K-11)**
- May 26 Family Fun Day**



CONGRATULATIONS TO THESE SENIORS GRADUATING WITH HONORS IN MAY



- Haley Beamer is graduating with High Honors
- Hannah Beth Davis is graduating with Highest Honors
- Selah Harding is graduating with Highest Honors
- Noah Jones, Salutatorian**, is graduating with Highest Honors
- Philip Kasimir is graduating with Highest Honors
- Meghan Kent is graduating with Honors
- Cooper Lyon is graduating with Highest Honors
- Gabriela Madan is graduating with Highest Honors
- Sadie Mangum is graduating with High Honors
- Julianne McCoy, Valedictorian**, is graduating with Highest Honors
- Hannah Robson is graduating with Highest Honors
- Connor Tyson is graduating with Highest Honors
- Leighton Williamson is graduating with Highest Honors
- Elijah Woodman is graduating with High Honors

ARBORBROOK CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
4823 WAXHAW-INDIAN TRAIL ROAD
MATTHEWS, NC 28104



SUMMER AT THE FALCON NEST

ULTIMATE KIDS SUMMER CAMP

A half day summer camp running 9am - 1:30pm

JUNE 6 - JULY 29
SNACK PROVIDED
BRING LUNCH
AGES 4- 12

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HURRY LIMITED SLOTS
AVAILABLE!

Enjoy awesome summer activities like:

- Outdoor games
- Nature hike
- Treasure hunt
- Dance Party
- Storytelling
- Water Play
- Science Experiments
- Soccer
- Basketball
- Kindness
- Cheer
- Arts and crafts
- ... and many more!

Registration fee: \$160. Registration link
For inquiries and registration questions
email @ baldwin0912@gmail.com

