



# The FALCON

ARBORBROOK CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Fall 2022 | November 1, 2022



Arborbrook's campus will undergo a significant transformation as the Roots Capital Campaign was launched in October 2022. The campaign's theme was revealed, "Roots established in love, creating space for students to thrive."

## A Turning Point for Arborbrook

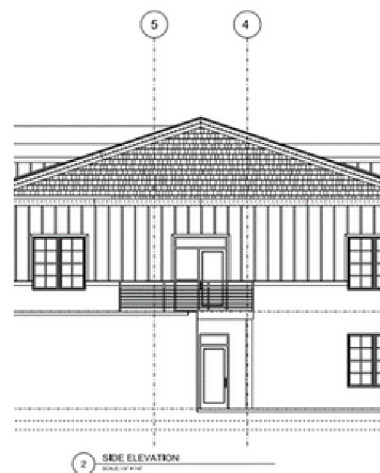
Finding a place where like minded families pursue a quality education laced in Charlotte Mason principles is not common; finding a community rooted and grounded in love (Ephesians 3:17) is even more rare. Arborbrook is an oasis for the families who enter our doors.

Founded in 2005, several distinctives have created a unique culture: small class size, a love of learning, a biblical worldview, parental involvement,

hands-on learning, the use of living books, developing critical thinking skills, and time outdoors.

Since its inception, Arborbrook has sought a way to provide a quality education for children K-12 modeled after the principles of Charlotte Mason. During all those years, the school has been very creative in its approach to finding space solutions for classrooms.

Beginning with just four classrooms and 40 students, the school has grown into 5 buildings across the Central Baptist Church  
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Floor plans were shared at Roots campaign dinners this fall.

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# Featured articles

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campus at 4823 Waxhaw Indian Trail Road. We now use 24 indoor classrooms, a gymnasium and sanctuary, along with multiple outdoor spaces, trails, and gardens for our 265 students.

Today, Arborbrook is at a transitional point.



Outdoor learning continues to be a hallmark of Arborbrook. Here, a group of 6th grade students explore the garden's bean trellis tunnel.

The buildings we use are dated and filled to capacity. The classrooms are small, which makes it difficult sometimes to fit the students we have. So at the beginning of 2022, Arborbrook purchased one acre of property from Central Baptist Church on our current campus to make plans for the future.

For nearly two decades Arborbrook has done a lot of growing from well developed roots.



Renderings like this one that depict the new Upper School building excite the Arborbrook community.

Our student body has grown. We gained accreditation through Christian Schools International and Cognia. We added dual enrollment courses for high school students, giving students the opportunity to earn 30 college credits while at Arborbrook. All this while inspiring students to develop a lifelong love of learning and a love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Over the years, our reputation in the community has grown such that we are poised for further growth. The proposed building project will allow Arborbrook to impact more families and students with the life that comes from the Gospel of Jesus.

As we look to the next decade and beyond, we see how God is working to keep our roots where we have been planted. It is time that the wonderful things going on inside Arborbrook are also on display for the community through a new building.

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# Student Life

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## Varsity Volleyball Dominates the Competition

Varsity volleyball is on its way to another double-digit win season following their seventeen-win season last year. A big highlight for the team this season was defeating Charlotte Latin in five sets. Arborbrook's Varsity Volleyball team has eight seniors this year, including two who will likely play college volleyball next year.

The Arborbrook Athletics program has experienced tremendous growth this Fall. Volleyball, cross country, soccer, and tennis have all had successes and continue to improve.



Arborbrook Falcons 2022 Varsity Volleyball Seniors

## Middle School Sports Join Carolina Beltway Conference

Athletics Director Stephen Widenhouse reports that the Middle School sports teams are now a part of the Carolina Beltway Conference.

Middle school teams will now be able to play in conference tournaments at the end of each season beginning with basketball this Winter. It is anticipated that high school teams will join a conference next year, as Arborbrook seeks to give athletes the chance to compete for postseason championships for years to come.

Widenhouse says, "We look forward to being strong Christian examples to new opponents/schools we play, glorifying God in how we act, play, and treat officials and opposing players."



Together, High School students conquered a hike to the Camp Harrison overlook.

## High Schoolers learn to Follow and Fish

For the first time since 2019, Arborbrook's High School students returned to Camp Harrison for a Fall Retreat. For three days, students participated in a wealth of activities that were designed to help them connect in community with one another while leaving ample room for them to spend time singing, reading Scripture, hearing the word preached and being encouraged to grow closer to Jesus.

The theme of the retreat was "Follow and Fish" from Mark 1:16-20. Students spent time with this theme in morning and evening devotionals, small and large group gatherings, and personal quiet time.

Evenings were spent in serene locations around the camp where the High School Worship Band led a time of singing, and Arborbrook parent and pastor Justin Roper taught students how to follow Jesus and "fish" for people. This teaching left students with inspiration and practical tools to join God's mission in the world.

Some student highlights from the retreat came from a new game called Jelly-Ball, a night time competition of Just Dance, and many hours spent on the lake. Wednesday night was a special one, filled with a campfire, smores, and "Shoutouts". Students today live in a world where criticism and negativity are the air they breathe, so they were given the chance to flip that script by publicly sharing shoutouts: bits of praise, gratitude, and encouragement for one another. This sharing time went on for over an hour. Mr. Andrew Reinken, Bible Teacher and Retreat Leader, says, "There is something heavenly about watching and hearing the people of God laugh and lift up one another together, and it is particularly awesome to see high school students doing it so well."

With experiences like these, it really is no wonder that year-after-year our students point to these retreats as some of the hallmark moments of their high school careers.

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# Staff Highlight

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## Arborbrook Welcomes New School Psychologist

This year Arborbrook has welcomed several new faculty and staff members. One such addition is Atley Sassano, Arborbrook's new school psychologist. While new to Arborbrook, Sassano has worked in schools for several years. She started out teaching classes at a homeschool co-op while completing her bachelor's degree in Special Education from Anderson University. Sassano taught students with disabilities for four years before returning to graduate school to study school psychology. She is now a Nationally Certified School Psychologist. Prior to coming to Arborbrook, she worked in a local public school district. The Falcon interviewed her to learn more about this new role.

**Falcon:** What is a school psychologist?

**Sassano:** School psychologists have knowledge of learning and teaching methods, differentiated instruction, students with disabilities, classroom management, behavior and social skills, mental health, assessment, data interpretation, systematic problem-solving, systems-level support, and consultation. Within a school system, school psychologists may wear many hats. They may conduct assessments and interpret testing results, consult with teachers and parents, and work with school administrators to solve schoolwide problems. The school psychologist may have different roles depending on the needs of the school.

**Falcon:** What is the role of the school psychologist at Arborbrook?

**Sassano:** Part of my role here is to work with the leadership team at Arborbrook to provide big-picture, schoolwide support. I review research and best practices to provide recommendations that have been proven to help students. I also provide consultation to parents and teachers when a student is struggling, and I help to develop accommodation plans as appropriate. Some of my work involves working individually with students. For example, I provide limited counseling services and administer the admissions testing for student applicants. In the future, I hope to also provide training to teachers during staff development days.

Overall, I endeavor to empower students, teachers, schools, and families, helping them work together so that every student experiences success.



Pictured: Mrs. Atley Sassano, School Psychologist

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I know God designed me to help children fulfill their God-made design and to equip others, including teachers and families, to do the same. My heart is broken whenever I hear a discouraged educator or parent who simply does not know what to do to help a struggling child. Sometimes, they have the skills to figure out a solution, but they do not have the time or resources to devote to the problem. I hope to be a resource – a support – in situations like these. I want to be a problem-solver so that every student experiences success and no student loses hope.

**Falcon:** What's something about you that the Arborbrook community may not yet know?

**Sassano:** In my free time, I enjoy drawing, painting, and crafting. Some of my favorite memories are spending time with my family in the mountains talking and crafting together.



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# Campus News

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## Arborbrook students to star in Honk Jr. Production

The town of Matthews and beyond will be flocking to Arborbrook's production of HONK! JR., a contemporary and comic re-telling of Hans Christian Andersen's The Ugly Duckling. Based on the award-winning musical Honk! by George Stiles (composer) and Anthony Drewe (books and lyrics), HONK! JR is a witty and heartwarming show celebrating what makes each of us special.

HONK! JR. follows "Ugly," who hatches looking quite a bit different from his darling duckling brothers and sisters. The other animals on the farm are quick to notice, and despite his loving mother's protective flapping, Ugly's odd, gawky looks instantly incite prejudice from his family and neighbors. When Ugly is separated from the farm and pursued by a hungry Cat, he must find his way home. Along his harrowing yet hilarious journey he not only discovers his true beauty and glorious destiny, but also finds love and acceptance.

Catch this award winning show with our all-star Arborbrook cast on, November 17 and 18 at 7 PM, and November 19 at 11 AM. Buy tickets at [arborbrook.org](http://arborbrook.org).

*HONK! JR. is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized materials are supplied by Music Theatre International 421 West 54th Street, New York, NY, (212) 541-4684, [mtishows.com](http://mtishows.com).*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### November 8

Pep Rally

### November 10

Grandparents & Special Friends Day

### November 17-19

Fall Production (grades 2-8)

### November 17

School Spelling Bee (Grades 4-8) 9am

### November 28-December 1

Food Drive

### December 5-8

ROOTS Commitment Collection Week

## Parent Volunteer Cooperative transforms campus

By simply taking a few steps onto Arborbrook's campus, it is evident that great effort has been put into its beautification. Many thanks are owed to our Parent Volunteer Cooperative. PVC Coordinator Malana Ennis says, "We are so grateful for the multitude of ways that families serve at Arborbrook. In the last couple of years, parents have gone above and beyond their usual faithful service and have completed a number of fabulous projects."



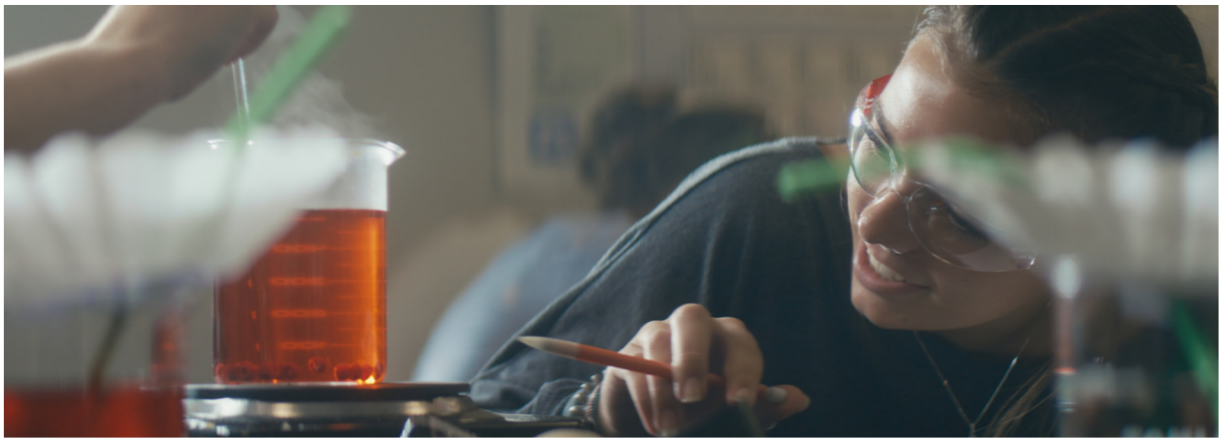
Student painted rocks adorn the Peace Garden in the Building 2 courtyard.

Parents have been busy on campus this fall. The Building 2 courtyard was recently transformed from an unusable space into a beautiful tranquil Peace Garden. Parent volunteers worked diligently to add secure fencing, a paver patio, a block walled garden, seating areas, artificial turf & picnic tables with umbrellas. It is one of the most popular places on campus. You can find students and teachers using this space for silent reading, devotion time, class celebrations, Nature Study, and other lessons.

Our new Peace Garden is not the only space that experienced transformation; gifted parents also beautified indoor and outdoor spaces around campus with incredible murals. Security enhancements were made by parent team members, who installed privacy fencing around campus. Finally, new raised garden beds were constructed for grades K-8. These beds are one of the cornerstones of our Nature Studies program. PVC members also installed decorative stone beds with arbors for flowering vines/plants behind Building 3.

Finally, a uniform sale and parent donations allowed the purchase of materials for a Gaga Ball Pit. Wood was then measured, cut and assembled by our dedicated families. Students have been overjoyed by this fun new addition and can be seen using it daily at lunch and recess.

Arborbrook Head of School, Dr. Andrew Zawacki says, "A distinctive of Arborbrook is that we partner with parents. We are very thankful for the ways that our PVC meets our student and campus needs through their volunteer service."



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We want our students to take pride in their school, and how they are taught to the classrooms in which they engage the curriculum and ponder deeper questions and thoughts.

With Roots planted, we:

- Offer a trustworthy alternative to modern education
- Impart a life-long love of learning and of the Lord Jesus Christ to each student

- Equip, Empower, and Encourage students to cultivate godly character, pursue life-long learning, and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is our vision to expand the school and have 2 sections of each grade, K-12, making our total enrollment just under 400 students.

Give today at

[arborbrook.org/roots](http://arborbrook.org/roots)



**Arborbrook Christian Academy**

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