

# to **RESTORE**: re-store (*verb*) [ri-stawr, -stohr] to bring back to a state of **health**, soundness, or **vigor**.

A Newsletter for Restoration Academy in Fairfield, Alabama

Fall 2009

## Great Advancement...

I recently met a young man who was a music minister in the Fairfield area. He told me that when he began working at his church that he lived in an apartment in Fairfield. He then expressed that as he was promoted in his church that he soon moved to Trussville and soon after moved to Hoover. He noted that this was step by step advancement in his life. Most people would agree. However, let me compare this story to a recent one involving a Restoration Academy student.

Rodney Ellis graduated from Restoration Academy in 2002. He is close to finishing his degree at Southeastern Bible College. He has put himself through school working nights as a custodian and unloading freight at Walmart.

## ...Great Affirmation

This summer Restoration was presented with the opportunity to enroll 33 kids from Grace House - a home for abused girls and The Lovelady Center - a women's reentry ministry. All of these children have great need for the education that we provide at RA. Economically, this decision in a hard recession does not make sense. Regardless, we did not hesitate in saying yes to this opportunity of justice and compassion.

On Friday morning at the the end of the first week of school I was having breakfast with Ty, Carl and Nick Wade, our newest Board Member. The waitress saw Carl's RA logo on his shirt and asked if he worked there. She went on to excitedly say that she was a resident at Lovelady and how the Restoration



He is getting married this month, and he plans to relocate to the community of Fairfield in October. Some would say that this is a step back. For us, he represents the heart of our mission--"up and back in" not "up and out." As our students advance in education, character and compassion, we hope that they will take intentional steps to return and share their lives in difficult places. We consider these types of steps great advancement.

Carl Lynn, Executive Director

opportunity has lifted the spirits of the whole place. She then invited two other waitresses to our table. They were also from Lovelady. There, for a few minutes, a bustling restaurant stopped getting scrambled eggs and coffee while three smiling children of God expressed their true gratitude. There was no mistake about it. God had chosen to give us His affirmation in providing the very best in Christian education to the very least of these.

Thank you for your help in this work. We do need you. I Cor. 15:58 encourages me greatly. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord knowing your toil is not in vain in the Lord".

Sonny Culp, Board Chair

# The Best in Medicine and Music

I called my doctor at home to get his advice on whether or not I should take my son Simeon to the emergency room. He told me to bring him into the office in the morning. I called my doctor and asked if he could do a physical that my son's school required. He said bring him by in the morning, and we will work him in. He treated my son Isaac, who has developmental delays and is very difficult to handle, with such gentleness and patience. His staff greets me with a big smile and acts as if they genuinely want to get to know my children. My doctor will not let me leave without himself or a member of his staff praying for my children by name. Dr. Edwards and his staff at Hope Health Clinic are a true gift to my family and this community, offering the

best medical attention.

One of the students came from her first day of choir practice exclaiming, "That man is for real. Thank you for bringing him here!" I can not take credit for bringing this renowned pianist and choir teacher to Restoration. It was all his idea. He started volunteering one day a week and then added another. He has a five year plan to develop the best performing arts program possible at Restoration Academy. He is gathering instruments and recruiting music instructors across the city to give our children lessons. His passion is infectious. Dr. Daniel Cason is a true gift to our students, offering the very best in music instruction.

*By Carl Lynn*



*In August, two RA graduates moved into the 360 house. Hear about Stephen's experience.*

It has been one month since four guys moved into the ThreeSixty house and it has been two weeks since we all started at Jeff State. I can truly tell you college is much different than high school. College is a faster pace and lots of responsibility. Now that I am away at college and my mom does not know my every move, it makes her worry. I pray that God will give her peace that passes all understanding and let her know that she has raised me well.

the **BEST**: best (*adjective*)

Surpassing all others in excellence, achievement, or quality

## The Best Graduates...

Now back to the ThreeSixty house, it is like the survival of the fittest. We have to clean, cook, blog, wash clothes, study, walk back and forth to school, attend public speaking meetings, yard work, do odd jobs for extra money, grocery shopping, understand Moru (the language spoken by Andrew and Bullen in southern Sudan) and do it all with a SMILE. Whew!!!! Let me catch my breath for a minute.

God has taught me this week that in order to be a leader, I have to choose to sacrifice for others. You have to be humble and whatever you do you must shine a light for Christ and give Him the glory. He also talked through me at the Kings Ranch to share my testimony and let the teenagers know that even though life is hard, Jesus will always love and protect you.

# The Best Staff... Meet our New Teachers

John Sardin



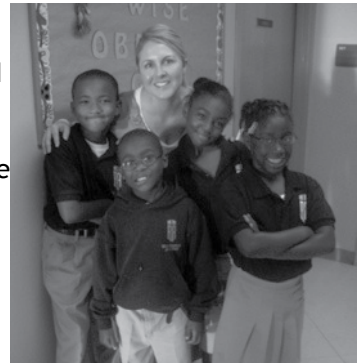
John came to Restoration Academy from the business sector. His son, Jerime, started at the school last year as a sophomore. Like many people in this struggling economy, John lost his job last fall. Prior

to this John would come in almost daily to tutor in math for an hour or two. He wanted to use his time and talents to make a difference. After losing his job John increased his tutoring to almost six hours a day. His presence was felt almost immediately as kids came to him for math help and for help with their lives. In May, John was offered another steady job in business, but two hours earlier he was offered a job by Restoration Academy to take on a full-time position teaching high school math. The school's offer was significantly lower than the offer to return to the business world. John admitted that he felt "called" to teach and mentor the students at Restoration Academy and after taking some time to pray and discuss the options with his wife he chose to take the teaching position at the school.

## Kelly Jackson

Kelly came to Restoration Academy after years of teaching in the Birmingham City Schools. Kelly had an opportunity to visit the school with her husband during one of RA's monthly visitor luncheons. She was very impressed with the school, the academics, and the climate that the school offered. With a 3rd grade position open at Restoration, the administration offered her a job. She knew she'd need to take a cut in pay and in her

benefits. Despite this, she and her husband determined that they were "called" to come join in the work at Restoration Academy.



## Brian Goessling

Brian joined the Restoration family after 8 years of teaching at Briarwood Christian School where he taught English and Bible in the junior high. Brian was deeply engaged in urban ministry during his undergrad years at Wheaton where he coached basketball and mentored young men at the Cook County Juvenile Jail in Chicago. During his years at Briarwood, Brian mobilized students and their parents to do ministry and outreach in the urban area. One of Briarwood's administrators said that Brian was one of "his best teachers." Brian had to overcome the same financial issues as John and Kelly yet he too felt "called" to bring academic and spiritual excellence to Restoration Academy. He is now teaching high school Bible and 7th grade science.



By Ben Sciacca

# the **NEED**: need (*noun*) lack of the means of subsistence

## And Yet, So Much to Be Done

### *Caring for the Widows and Orphans*

“How good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity.” Psalm 131:1 is a reflection of partnerships that we have formed with the Grace House and Lovelady Ministries.

Grace House ministers to girls who have been removed from their homes by DHR. The Grace House staff provide these children a safe Christian home where they can grow.

The Lovelady Center serves 300 women, recently released from prison. Both ministries approached Restoration this summer seeking education for their children. We felt called of God to partner with these ministries and agreed to take on the expense of educating 33 young men and women.

As I have talked with the students about their transition from their other schools to Restoration Academy, three themes emerge.

First, the students realize they are loved and safe each day. They know that the staff care about them. Second, the students realize Restoration Academy teachers give work and expect you to do it. The teachers push them to be their best. Finally, the students know they will be held accountable for their actions.

Many of these students have never seen a school that is not only willing to hold them accountable for their actions but will also care for their hearts.

*By Brian Goessling*

### *Caring for the Fatherless*

As we start another football season, my excitement is always tempered by the reality of the lives of many of our kids. The needs are so great, and my desire to meet them is so great, that at times, I am simply exhausted from it all.

As I am writing, we have two football players who are about to lose their homes. Another student already lives in a hotel.

After a recent game, one young man who rarely sees his father, was invited to his father's house the day after the game. This young man was excited because this was the first game his dad had ever seen him play. He thought his dad was going to congratulate him on all his efforts--not just football, but all the things he was doing well. However, when he arrived at his dad's home, he found his dad drunk on the couch. His dad proceeded to cuss him out for losing the game.

The needs of the urban community are many. As much as I want to meet all of them, I realize that I can't. I am sure that every teacher at RA would say the same thing. I can put boots to the ground, in fact, that is where I am most comfortable; however, there are so many things I can't do. It takes everyone working together through their various talents and resources to make a difference.

*By DeWayne Coker*

## Scholarship Update

At the time of print (September 23rd) we have raised 35 scholarships of the 200 we must raise this year. Please remember that scholarship program is the primary source of funding for the school.

Most of our students pay something to

be here but in no way does this cover what it costs us to educate these children. We must raise \$5,000 per year to educate one student. For more information on how you can help, please contact Ty Williams at [etywilliams@aol.com](mailto:etywilliams@aol.com) or 205.785.8805 ext 106.