

THE VISION

A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE AT RIVERSIDE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

BY DR. LAWS RUSHING

We are so very excited to announce a new dual enrollment partnership with Freed-Hardeman University. We are striving and providing the very best academic opportunities for our beloved students here at RCA.

32 HOURS OF FREE COLLEGE CREDIT

We will be able to offer 32 hours of college credit for free to our Tennessee students and reduce the cost of dual enrollment college credit for our Alabama students by half. We began this process many months ago by meeting with different universities. Freed-Hardeman stood out for several reasons. They have already established dual enrollment in both private and public schools to great success. We personally met with members of the Freed-Hardeman administration including President David Shannon and followed up with schools currently in the dual enrollment program, who provided positive feedback on their incredible program.

"The opportunity for RCA students to take up to 10 tuition-free courses really helps them jump-start their college careers," Jared Gott, FHU director of emerging and innovative programs, said. "We are excited to partner with RCA and to contribute to the success of their graduates."

We are excited to partner with a university of this caliber. FHU has a proven track record of academic success in dual enrollment and beyond. This fulfills our long-standing mission of giving our students excellent instruction and expands our class offerings on the college level. FHU represents the very best in higher education with academic rigor and Christian faith.

BOBBIE SOLLEY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Freed-Hardeman University also has the Bobbie Solley Center of Excellence in Teaching. This will be a great resource for our teachers in the future with needed help in professional development and personal growth. We are also proud to partner with a Christian institution that complements our precious values and Biblical worldview.

This is only the beginning. We are working towards a comprehensive agreement which will be transformative to the future of RCA and our students. It is because of God's blessing, families, students, and staff that we are making these huge steps forward.

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In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps.

- PROVERBS 16:9



DR. LAWS RUSHING & FHU PRESIDENT, DAVID SHANNON

[Click here to view a dual enrollment informational video with Dr. Rushing & President Shannon.](#)



THE VISION FOR RCA

by: **Daniel Eldridge, RCA Board Chairman**

I've always liked the name of this newsletter – "The Vision". I believe that vision is so important to any organization because it sets a direction. Vision motivates and encourages. Although it necessarily deals with the future, by its very nature it also shapes the present. Progress towards the "what if" comes only through the responsible attention to "what's next". To any goal, there is a path that starts with "now".

There has been a lot of prayer and discussion recently regarding where God might be leading RCA over the next 20 years. Our parents provided some great feedback in the survey given earlier in the school year, and the Board and Administration have been using that feedback to inform and guide our strategic planning process. We have been working to put together some ideas, and I am excited about what is developing!

The "now" part of the vision involves giving attention to our current facilities and programs. God has blessed us with so much – great facilities, wonderful teachers, and the very best students and parents. First and foremost, we need to be good stewards of what God has given us. To that end, facility maintenance and upgrades are a priority that everyone should be noticing soon. Some of our current learning programs are also being enhanced.

Upgrades to other areas of our current offerings, such as all our athletic programs and extracurricular opportunities are also getting significant attention. Another area of focus that was often suggested in the parent survey was a greater focus on our Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). With our proximity to Huntsville, RCA has a great opportunity and responsibility to equip our students who are interested in pursuing careers in technology fields with the knowledge and experience they need to succeed. Announcements will be coming soon about some exciting initiatives in those areas.

Dr. Rushing and the Board have finalized an agreement with Freed-Hardeman University to expand dual enrollment classes for high school students that will provide benefits unlike any other offerings that are currently available. As an additional part of this partnership, RCA will also be participating in leading-edge, university-level research to develop and incorporate best practices into our classrooms at all levels and to provide innovative professional development for our teachers.

Finally, as part of the "what-if" portion of our vision, we are working with a landscape engineering company to develop a long-term site plan so that future growth and campus development can be accomplished in a way that is efficient and thoughtful. This plan can be used to show potential donors what the RCA vision for the future looks like. Hopefully, by showing that there has been prayerful, thoughtful, strategic planning, those opportunities can become a reality!

Vision is powerful. With all the excitement that it creates, it is important for all of us to remember why RCA exists. RCA exists to impact children and families for Christ. Everything we do should point to that end. As we, the RCA family, continue to seek God's direction, please pray that His plan for us will be clear, and that everything we do will align with it.



RCA celebrated its 20th anniversary this year with a founders' day celebration.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT RCA

BY: DR. LAWS RUSHING

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE ELK VALLEY TIMES, 2022

A student will spend over 12,000 hours in the classroom before high school graduation during the most formative years of life. This time has a profound impact on academic performance, character formation, social-emotional learning, and spiritual wellness.

Riverside Christian Academy is continuing a rich tradition of Christian education that is needed more than ever. Parents with demanding professional lives and prioritized faith have a trusted resource in RCA. The school has served this community for more than 20 years with over 200 graduates, who have gone on to prestigious universities and diverse careers. Students on average have been offered \$100,000 in scholarships per student.

We strive to make our students dedicated disciples. The great CS Lewis stated, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." It is through the lens of Christ that we teach our students to see the world clearly. Our gravest problem is sin and greatest contribution in life is service to others and God. Love and truth are the most powerful forces as opposed to violence and propaganda. It is truly a blessing to pray and speak the name of Christ in every classroom.

RCA is committed to cultivating courageous citizens. We are so blessed to live in such a free and prosperous country. It is every generation's task to preserve and expand justice and freedom. Some of the greatest Bible characters were exceptional citizens empowered by God, such as Joseph, Daniel, and the Apostle Paul. RCA teaches a love for American democracy which was forged through Judeo-Christian values over the last two millennia.

RCA students become lifelong learners. Learning is indispensable in every stage of life. Nearly 100% of RCA's students go on to universities or trade schools. Learning doesn't stop in high school or college but is required in every industry where change is the norm. Students must be academically prepared to pivot as technological advancements emerge and industries transform in the decades to come. The school is expanding dual enrollment offerings with 32 hours of college credit and 22 courses offered with the new Freed-Hardeman University partnership.

RCA is concerned for students' health and healing. Our country has struggled for decades with obesity, sedentary lifestyle, addiction, suicide, and mental health crises. Teaching students the love of God in every aspect of life brings wholeness and healing. The RCA ministry includes athletics, family services, and mental health professionals for all aspects of wellbeing.

There is nothing more precious than our children. They are the future of our families, country, and church. Christian education is needed more than ever as our culture seems to become more godless and as a result more existentially vacuous of morality and meaning.

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STEM PROGRAM COMING TO RCA & ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Riverside Christian Academy's administration is excited to announce that a new STEM program is in the works for the school. Many parents have expressed an interest in more opportunities in this area. Currently, Dr. Rushing and the middle and high school science teachers are researching different programs to determine the most viable and effective for RCA. We look forward to having this program ready for the 2023-2024 school year.

Since RCA has begun the first phase of implementing a STEM program, we are spotlighting an alum who is gaining great experience at the collegiate level in biomedical research. Lauren Fielding is a 2019 graduate of RCA who attends Freed-Hardeman University; she is currently getting ready for a summer research internship in biomedical and molecular sciences led by Dr. Joe Deweese.



Dr. Deweese earned his Ph.D. in biochemistry from Vanderbilt University in 2009. He taught for Lipscomb University College of Pharmacy for 12 years in the areas of biochemistry, molecular biology, and anticancer pharmacology. During that time, he maintained an active research laboratory focusing on DNA topoisomerases and anticancer pharmacology. He now serves as Professor of Biochemistry and Director of Undergraduate Research for FHU.

"The Biomedical and Molecular Sciences Summer Research Program is an opportunity for students to engage in focused research. Students will be working with me on projects that I have been pursuing over the last few years. Our research focuses on human DNA topoisomerase II, which is an important enzyme in our cells that also is a cancer drug target," said Dr. Deweese.

Lauren hopes to gain experience in various processes that are commonly used in research. "I hope to acquire the skills to interpret gel electrophoresis or a relaxation assay, and to gain more clarity for determining what path I want to take after graduation from Freed-Hardeman," said Lauren.

Currently, Lauren is weighing her options for different career paths upon college graduation. She has considered medical school or obtaining a PhD in chemistry in order to continue in the field of research.

"One characteristic that I grew in because of my time at RCA was the ability to collaborate. RCA is such a close knit community and prior to attending Riverside, I had not experienced anything like it. People genuinely care about others around them. Peers and teachers alike will work with you in order for you to do your best. I got used to working with people and that was a skill I'm so glad I had as I entered college. Classes such as Chemistry and Anatomy & Physiology have given me the foundation necessary to thrive in my classes at Freed-Hardeman," said Lauren.

"FHU provides solid training in science and pre-health professions. Our professors aim to model living as a Christian while also being scientists. We help students learn to interpret the evidence found by science in the context of a biblical framework. We try to wrestle with hard questions while remaining grounded in scripture. Above all, we hope to communicate humility and the recognition that many questions we may not be able to answer, but we can trust in God and His Word," said Dr. Deweese.

The path from Riverside to a private Christian university is a seamless one for many RCA graduates including Lauren, and RCA's administration is striving to make the transition to college even smoother with the addition of the new STEM program and the FHU partnership for dual enrollment courses.



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Riverside Christian Academy's Board of Directors engaged Mercer & Associates, PC to conduct an audit of our 2020-2021 school year. They reported that the financial position of RCA as of July 31, 2021 was found to be in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. RCA's administration is pleased to announce that because of stakeholder generosity and implementation of additional accounting processes the school finished the 2021 school year positively.

ANNUAL HEART OF RCA EVENT RAISES \$44K!

A big thank you to the RCA family for all of your support for the Heart of RCA Benefit Dinner and Auction this year.

We had a great event with a garden party theme. The students painted beautiful ceramic trays during their art classes at school for the food service. They trays were sold at the event in a silent auction.

The auctioneers made the live auction fun and entertaining for the guests and everyone involved.

We also honored Cara & Paul Sain for their many years of dedication to the ministry of RCA.



BOOK RELEASE RECEPTION & SIGNING

Join us on June 12 at 2:00 p.m. for an afternoon with RCA's own Travis and Whitney Creasy, the authors of *Reframing Hope: Our Journey through Cancer, Adoption and Love*.

Dr. Laws Rushing will host an interview with the Creasys and a question and answer session as the Creasys tell some behind-the-scenes stories and give details on the book-writing process.

- Refreshments
- Free bookmarks
- Author autographs for all book purchases

[CLICK HERE TO
RESERVE YOUR
SPOT FOR THIS
FREE EVENT!](#)



REFRAMING hope

*Our Journey through
Cancer, Adoption, and Love*

READERS ARE SAYING:

"Every time I read the words of Travis and Whitney I am encouraged and challenged in my own faith. As I view their trust through their written words as they rode out the storms, I'm absolutely in awe of their faithful courage. I remember watching from a distance as they went through these challenges. However, *Reframing Hope* provides the unique perspective of viewing troubles from inside the eye of the storms -ground zero. You will be inspired as you jump back and forth between the mind of Whitney and the mind of Travis as they process and share with the world what it looks like to foster and adopt while fighting an unforeseen war on leukemia. It's personal and powerful. It's an emotional roller coaster that will have you laughing, crying, and ready to go anywhere and through anything with Jesus."

-BEN HAYES, MINISTER IN MUSCLE SHOALS, AL

"I love reading the Psalms of David because they feel like a shockingly honest look into the heart of one of God's greatest servants. Reading *Reframing Hope* made me feel the same way. It's an open and incredibly intimate look inside the hearts of two other outstanding servants of God. Like the Psalms, Travis and Whitney's story is inspiring and encouraging. Gut-wrenching things will come into our lives. It's hard to maintain perspective in our own lives and when we are in the middle of a life-changing problem it's almost impossible. Reading about how God worked in the Creasys' life will help readers understand that when you get to the other side of a horrible time in your life, if you will maintain faith in God, you will be able to look back and see how God was holding onto you the whole time you thought you were alone."

- TRAVIS HARMON, VP OF STUDENT SERVICES AT
HERITAGE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY