

Acaciawood **EAGLE FLYER**

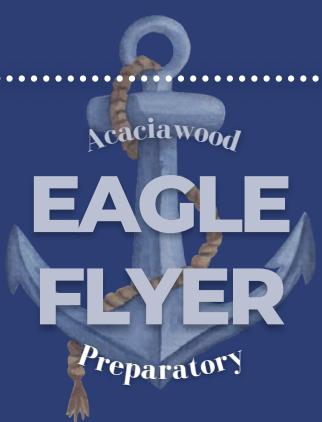
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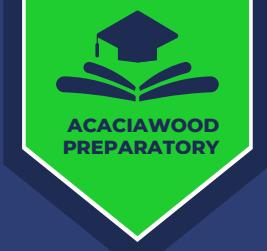
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Lady Eagles Persevere through Early Season Challenges

By: Naomi Velecela and Nebi Ermias



Building upon the success of their league championship season last year, the Lady Eagles are faced with a difficult challenge after moving up two leagues in difficulty due to their outstanding performance the year prior. The Eagles opened their season with a non-league game to Nova Academy where they lost 64-26. Their next non-league game was against Liberty Christian where our Lady Eagles triumphed 39-10 led by 29 points from Nebi Ermias. Most recently our girls played against a much larger school, Avalon, experiencing a tough loss of 51-14 in their first league match. Despite their losses and being in a higher league, the girls have learned to persist regardless of what the score may be. They are learning how to find joy in the games that they play and perform to the best of their abilities while coming together as a team. This year the focus with new players is acquiring proficient teamwork with one another and persevering through challenging obstacles.

Coach White during the most recent practice reminded the team who they are truly playing for and what the game of basketball should mean regardless if it ends with a win or a loss. The starting lineup for our resilient Lady Eagles includes Nebi Ermias, Sarahi Rincon, Deborah Miller, Isabella Hernandez, and Naomi Velecela. These girls are closely supported by their teammates including Acacia Hearne, Viera Wang, Minjee Jeong, and Kyrie Valdez. The girls have been practicing with their strategic coach, Miss White, closely assisted by Mrs. Baustista and have gained great help from their managers, Crystal Lai and Brooke Nguyen.

Captain Nebi Ermias recently said, "Through everything this team has been through this season we have been able to work hard and together efficiently. After a long talk with Coach White we are learning how to have fun and enjoy the rest of the season. I am very proud to be the team captain of this team!"

The Lady Eagles still have several more games left in late January and early February, so please turn out to support your Lady Eagles!



Learning to Win Together

By: River Wang and Heesung Lee



The Acaciawood boys' basketball team has launched the 2025-26 season with grit and momentum, earning a solid 6-4 record through their first ten games, in the midst of injuries and the flu season. Under Coach Kuan and Assistant Coach Dawson's leadership, the team displayed a 'never say die' attitude. They showed uncommon resilience, improvement, and a hunger to push deeper into the league and ultimately toward CIF and beyond.

Currently, the Eagles stand at a 1-2 win/loss record. The season opened with a close one-point loss to Samueli Academy (48-47) in which the Eagles rallied from a nine-point halftime deficit to tie the game with less than 2 minutes remaining.

Even with the loss, the boys persevered through all the adversity, fighting until the last minute. As Coach Kuan says, "The team demonstrated a never-give-up mindset, battling with determination and resilience to close the gap with the other team." The team bounced back in their next league game, led by David Chiang's 21 points, overcoming a small first-half deficit to dominate the second half and secure a strong 52-44 win over Avalon. Their most recent matchup, a tough battle against First Baptist, ended in a loss despite outstanding scoring from Dimitry Yang, who dropped 24 points, and David Chiang, who added another 20, including 10-10 from the free-throw line.

Leading the team this year are team captains Sherlock Li, David Chiang, and William Chiang, whose leadership sets the tone on and off the court. The starting lineup features "Jordan" William Chiang (#23), "Bulldog" David Chiang (#1), "Speed Kills" Sherlock Li (#12), "Maestro" Dimitry (#24), and "Euro Float" Issak (#0). The roster continues with a deep bench: "Dominate" Jasper Chen (#2), "Jumpman" Daniel Lim (#8), "Larry" Levi Boswell (#9), "Bullet" Paul Lee (#10), "Sleeper" Julian Chu (#11), "Skinny Luka" Woody Yang (#12), "Flowing" River Wang (#14), "Curry" Ethan Loewen (#15), "Hustler" Sam Liu (#21), and "Sniper" Heesung Keon Lee (#35).



STEPPING INTO MY FUTURE

COLLEGE VISITS

By: Brooke Nguyen and Casey Lee

“Where you go is not what you will become” took on real meaning for Mr. Kuan’s College Prep students after visiting Cal State Fullerton, UCI, and the AUHSD college fair. At CSUF, students explored the energy of a large university and heard from Acaciawood alumni, making college feel less like an idea and more like a place they could picture themselves. UCI offered a different perspective, highlighting its research focus as alumni guided students through Aldrich Park, STEM buildings, and study spaces, helping them understand what a UC education is like. These visits showed students that choosing a college is not just about rankings but about finding a place where they can grow academically and personally. The AUHSD college fair added even more insight as students spoke with representatives from universities, junior colleges, and military branches, opening their eyes to new majors and programs. As junior River Wang shared, “I never realized how many options for degree paths ASU offers along with their honors program.” Together, these experiences helped students feel more confident and less overwhelmed about life after high school, and they are grateful to Mr. Kuan and the Acaciawood alumni for making these opportunities possible.



A DASH FOR THE CASH

JOG-A-THON

By: Ezekiel Enriquez and Max Luna

The Jog-a-Thon is an annual school event which helps to raise funds for the school. Contestants range from 1st grade through 5th grade. The Jog-a-Thon helps raise money by allowing sponsors to either pay a flat fee of how much money they are willing to pay or set a specific amount of money they will pay for every lap a student runs. The event encourages students and parents to support the students as they run.

The students prepared promotional posters and occasionally some students who came to support decided to join the race, running alongside the participants. We would like to congratulate all those who were able to attend and support our runners. We would like to dedicate this next section to list the students who ran the most laps per grade level. In first grade, Onyx Rundles completed 29 laps, 2nd grade has Timothy Lin who ran 31 laps, then in third grade we have Amory Li who ran 34 laps, 4th grade has Keinan Li who ran 36 laps, and lastly in 5th Grade we have Ivan Rincon and Malachi Wu who tied with 31 laps run. We would like to congratulate these runners for their hard effort, along with all other students who participated in Jog-a-Thon as well.



GET ON BOARD THE CITIZENSHIP



ELEMENTARY MUSIC PERFORMANCE

By: Aletheia Blatz and Deborah Miller

This past November, as part of the annual custom, the elementary school hosted a spectacular show for parents, families, and students. This year's theme, which aligned with the schoolwide nautical theme for this year, was "Get On Board the CitizenSHIP". It featured catchy songs compiled to share messages for character development. The annual performance is not only designed to uplift the school atmosphere, but it also provides an opportunity for elementary students to memorize meaningful content, practice speaking boldly on stage, and share songs prepared in class rehearsals. The opening scene started with the 5th graders singing and announcing they were on a quest to find persons of character for their voyage, those who demonstrate good citizenship. Throughout the musical, the crew traveled to destinations where each new class was added to the citizenSHIP after presenting their song and rhyming poem-like lines to demonstrate aspects of good citizenship.

"Seeing the students share with joy, shine with confidence and sing from their hearts is always a highlight in these performances." –Mrs. Blatz

Q: What are some highlights from this year's performance?

A: This year we had some instrumental parts for students to experience, with the tone bells, the triangles, the rhythm sticks and the tambourine. We also incorporated a slideshow of the scenery and landmarks seen from the boat as the sailors "traveled" to their destinations. Students also enjoyed the fun rhyming lines in the script and the chance to act a part on a ship.

Q: What made this performance stand out from others done in the past?

A: Every year we have worked toward getting the students higher so all can be seen by their parents. This year we accomplished getting all the students on stage and on platforms behind the large boat. Special thanks goes to Mr. Blatz for strengthening the stage by building new pieces and constructing the giant boat we used as our AWP citizenSHIP.



GET ON BOARD THE CITIZENSHIP

By: Aletheia Blatz and Deborah Miller

Q: Were there any challenges during this years' production?

A: One added challenge to this years' endeavor was the addition of the "boat" on stage. This required more transitions from in front to behind the boat and more standing positions for students.

Working around the large structure during practices and finding places for everyone involved more time and planning, but thanks to color coded sticky dots placed strategically for each class, the students knew where to stand, and when they moved, where to land. It's like figuring out a puzzle at first, but once all the pieces came together, I think we can all agree the final arrangement of all the students aboard the CitizenSHIP singing in unison was worth it!

Q: What was a favorite song this year?

A: While each class may vary in their vote for the favorite song, I know that all the students enjoyed our last piece, sung in three parts at the end to summarize the main message of the presentation. Once everyone walked to their places on stage behind the boat, the whole elementary enthusiastically sang out "Come Get On Board" with the memorable words from this chorus:

"We need each one,
Everyone here has a part.
We need those who
Rise up with effort and heart."



4th and 5th grade



3rd grade



2nd grade



1st grade

As always, it takes a crew for a production such as this. We are beyond grateful to the faculty, volunteer parents and students who rose up to "Get on Board the CitizenSHIP!"





SHE DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: CRYSTAL LAI

By: Enoch Lai

Every year, the Acaciawood administration likes to honor at least one student with the prestigious Golden Eagle Award. Recipients of the Golden Eagle Award are those who uphold the school's values to the highest extent, being persons who are strong in character and high in standard.

This year, the award was proudly presented to none other than senior Crystal Lai, who throughout her years at Acaciawood has not only learned but exemplified the values of Acaciawood in all she does.

We would like to congratulate Crystal Lai for her strong character throughout her time at Acaciawood and look forward to seeing where she goes!

ASC President, Volleyball Captain, and senior Crystal Lai states that, "Throughout my time on the volleyball team, I've realized the importance of character. Hustling on court, hustling off court, your attitude and determination matters in every situation. You have to take every opportunity, in athletics and also in academics, helping your team, and helping your community. This is a lesson I'll carry with me through college and beyond"



Q: What's one lesson Acaciawood has taught you that you will carry forever?

A: One lesson Acaciawood has taught me is hard work and hustle. These 2 lessons have been the most important I've learned over the years and have made me the person I am today. I've been able to experience so many things outside of school and had the privilege to receive so many honors because of it.

Q: What has been your favorite memory of the year?

A: One of my favorite memories from this year has been my volleyball senior night. As someone who has helped carry out previous senior nights and seen all the seniors graduate, having my own felt surreal knowing that now I'm that senior graduating. I will miss playing high school volleyball with all the girls.

Q: What's one thing people don't know about you?

A: I'm a VERY sentimental person so I keep a lot of things people have given me over the years or if it's something from a big/important event in a pouch. Sometimes I take those things and scrapbook it because I also like scrapbooking.



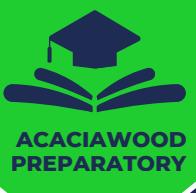
Q: What advice would you give to your younger self?

A: Don't be afraid to ask for help. I'm a pretty independent person but when it gets overwhelming I tend to be stubborn and think I can handle it myself. But I've learned especially in this last year that asking for help isn't something bad but something that can make you stronger. Letting people help you and support you isn't taking away your independence but it's a reminder you don't have to deal with everything alone.

Q: What excites you the most and what frightens you the most about graduating?

A: One thing that excites me the most is starting a new chapter and being able to experience new things. I've been at Acaciawood for 13 years so going to a different, bigger school is definitely exciting but also scary. One thing that scares me the most is losing my place of comfort and not being able to see the same people everyday. Going out into the real world and not being able to rely on my parents as much is something I've been scared of.

IN HIS SHOES: A TESTIMONY BY WILLIAM CHIANG



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

By: Daniel Lim and Sam Liu



Q: What's one lesson Acaciawood has taught you that you will carry forever?

A: One lesson Acaciawood has taught me is to care for each other. Because Acaciawood is a small, close-knit community, we thrive when we show up for one another. I've experienced that personally through teachers and faculty who cared for me when I needed it. In the same way, we're called to help people in need and to build each other up like individual pieces in the Armor of Christ.

Q: What class or teacher had the biggest impact on you?

A: The class that had the biggest impact on me was Mrs. Rosales's Biology class. She taught me not to stop at the textbook, but to stay curious and search for understanding beyond what we were assigned. I especially enjoyed the dissection labs. They made learning feel exciting and real. That curiosity and sense of purpose helped shape my future career goals.

Q: What excites you the most, and what frightens you the most, about graduating?

A: What excites me most about graduating is stepping into the next stage of life and moving forward with my brothers. I'm also looking forward to experiencing the college church life. What frightens me most is being far away from home and adjusting to a new place and new responsibilities. Even so, I trust God will guide me through the change.

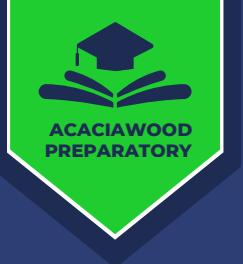


Q: What are your plans after graduation, and how did high school influence those plans?

A: After graduation, I plan to finish college and then join the FTTA. Acaciawood influenced these plans because the teachers here genuinely love the Lord and encouraged me to keep Christ at the center of what I do.

Q: What advice would you give to your younger self?

A: I would tell my younger self to be uncomfortable. If you work hard now, it will be much easier later. Also, don't lose sight of God: always trust in the Lord and unceasingly pray.



TEACHER TESTIMONY: MRS. VERNON

By: Sarahi Rincon and Isabella Hernandez

Q: How long have you been teaching at Acaciawood?

A: I have been teaching for about one year at Acaciawood.

Q: What led you to teaching the classes you teach?

A: I enjoy teaching elementary because it is a fun age group to teach. (:

Q: What classes have you taught or do you teach at Acaciawood?

A: Elementary P.E. and 3rd grade

Q: What is the most rewarding part of being a teacher?

A: The most rewarding part of being a teacher is witnessing students' growth—seeing their progress and the moment when a new concept finally clicks. It is also incredibly fulfilling to support students as they learn, develop confidence, and grow both academically and personally.

Q: What's one piece of advice you would give to students about life beyond school?

A: One piece of advice I would give to students about life beyond school is to never give up, no matter how challenging life becomes or what obstacles arise. Life isn't always easy, but perseverance is key—keep trying, keep learning, and keep moving forward.

Q: What caused you to decide to become a teacher?

A: I believe every student can succeed. As a child, I often felt that I was not capable of doing well in school or even making it to college. I wasn't an "A" student and was naturally drawn to art, music, and dance. While those interests are valuable, as I grew older I came to understand how important education is alongside creative expression. With the support of God, dedicated teachers, and loved ones, I was able to accomplish my goals, attend college, and even pursue higher education. These experiences have inspired me to become the kind of teacher who helps students believe in themselves, recognize their potential, and know that they can achieve their goals and succeed.





ALUMNI ARTICLE: DANIEL HAGE

By: Ethan Loewen

Q: When did you graduate from Acaciawood?

A: 2004. I was an OCC Pirate and then I went to UCLA.

Q: What was your experience like in Acaciawood?

A: I enjoyed learning and bonding with my teammates for 4 years, growing my character and as a person.

Q: What are you doing currently in life?

A: I build and develop multi-state territories for companies that sell construction material, mainly flooring

Q: What did you like about Acaciawood?

A: I played basketball where I led the state of California in fouls per game. I was slow and violent! We had some great coaches. I also had some great teachers like Sandy Yang, Arla Campbell, and Diane Owen.

Q: What is a piece of advice you would give students at Acaciawood?

A: I played basketball for four years under Coach Duddy, where I learned how to work hard and persevere under pressure, stress, and tiredness. As a high schooler, you should continue to persevere through struggle. You will often be stressed out and tired, but in that, you should continue to push through. Your adult life really depends on your attitude and your work ethic. All relationships are built on this, and your success in your career will depend on this. It's important to realize that despite your situation, you are in control of your attitude, and you are in control of how hard you work. These are the only two things you can control, so focus on them and develop them as skills



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Thank you for reading this edition of the Eagle Flyer 2026! We hope to keep you updated with school events and help you get to know our community a little better.

