

First Grade Initiative Underway!

The exceptional education that Tuscaloosa Academy offers to its students can and should begin in the very earliest years of a child's life. The sooner a student experiences the advanced, innovative program offered at TA, the stronger and more solid will be that child's academic standing. Although our pre-school traditionally reaches full enrollment each year, our Lower School, due to many factors, sometimes has some spots available. One factor that influences enrollment is lack of knowledge about the advanced level and significant scope of a TA Lower School education. Not only are the creatively taught academics more challenging, but the enrichments from which every TA Lower School student benefits (music, drama, art, computer, foreign language, and laboratory science) propel our students to an overall realization of their own individual talents and academic strengths.

Included in TA's first grade activities are field trips to CHOM in conjunction with their study of the human body, Tuscaloosa Children's Theatre productions, the Atlanta Aquarium, a health program with their teddy bears at DCH, a tour of Tuscaloosa, and a tour of the UA's Planetarium. Subjects covered in TA's first grade social studies include All About Me, Ancient Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt, Early American Explorers and Settlers, Famous Americans, Flat Stanley's Adventures, My Town Tuscaloosa, and map skills. First grade science units include Human Body, Earth, Our Home, Weather, Plants, Animals and People, and Describing Matter.

In an effort to extend the opportunity for enrollment in TA's first grade to more deserving students in our area, we are offering some initiatives that focus on our fabulous first grade. With Joan Robards as the consummate teacher of that class, TA's first graders are sure to be taken to levels only possible with an outstanding teacher using a curriculum that sets a new standard for area six-year-olds. TA's new First Grade Initiative will include the following exciting incentives:

1. Provide half tuition to any student enrolling in first grade for the rest of 2007-2008 school year, subject to available slots. Space is currently limited to up to nine (9) new students.
2. Provide half price tuition to any brother or sister of a newly enrolled first grader for the rest of the 2007-2008 school year, subject to available space.
3. Provide a \$1500 credit to any current or newly enrolled first grader toward tuition costs for enrollment in second grade at TA for the 2008-2009 school year. Credit is only available to students that turn in contracts with appropriate deposit by the early deadline period and have no outstanding debts with the school.
4. Provide a \$1000 credit to any TA family with currently enrolled students in grades 2-12 and Pre-School that brings in a new first grader that is admitted to TA and signs a contract by January 15, 2008. Credit will be applied toward tuition costs for enrollment next year at TA and is only available to students that turn in contracts with appropriate deposit by the early deadline period and have

no outstanding debts with the school.

5. All new students must go through and be accepted by the normal admissions process.

We hope many of you will seriously pursue admission for qualified first graders. If you or anyone you know would like to tour our campus, please call our Admissions Director, Lane Parker at 758-4462. Better yet, sign up for “WOW!” (*Welcome on Wednesday*) which allows you the opportunity to sit for a while in our first grade (or any other grade) during a regular school day (please see our WOW! ad for more information!). We look forward to hearing from many of you who want to take advantage of these exciting offers! Thank you!

Warmest regards,

Dr. George B. Elder
Tuscaloosa Academy Headmaster

Mary Madge Crawford
Tuscaloosa Academy Lower School Dean

P.S. To further emphasize the importance of establishing a solid academic foundation at an early age, educational research has shown that a small class size (13-15 pupils) in grades K-3 produces significant, long-term benefits through high school and possibly beyond. The students who attended smaller classes in K-3rd grade outperformed students in larger classes (22-25) in both reading and math on the Stanford Achievement test for elementary students. A follow-up study of these same students in high school indicated that, compared to their peers who attended regular-size K-3 classes, the small-class students completed more advanced courses and were more likely to graduate with higher rankings (top 10% of their class).