



June 2024

Dear Friend of the Academy,

At the beginning of the school year, there is excitement about the months ahead, the learning to be accomplished, and the lives to be shaped. In contrast, the end of the year takes on a reflective feeling. Faculty and staff spend a few days wrapping up the year, and parents reflect how their children have changed over the last ten months.

Two families of the Houghton Academy community, who have intersected with the Academy in multiple ways over the years, recently reflected in an interview on what the Academy means to them and their families and why they feel it's essential to show up for the students at the Academy in various ways. **Jordan and Kristin (Gurley) Dover**, and **Kerrie (Stockin) and Bryan Davidson** are familiar faces around the Academy. Jordan, Kristin, and Kerrie are 1990's alumni, Jordan and Kerrie volunteer in various roles, and both families currently have children attending the Academy.

Below are some thoughts from the interviews conducted with Kerrie and Jordan. These chats emphasized very different aspects of the Houghton Academy experience, but **two themes united their thoughts**. The first is that **the Academy's mission and vision**, which have been instrumental in shaping the lives of countless students, **are as relevant and impactful today** as they were when it was founded. Secondly, **giving back to the Academy isn't just the role of the wealthy**. Every donation of time, talent, and treasure to the Academy has a return that is reaped tenfold as we come together as a community of parents, alumni, and friends to lift today's students, faculty, staff, and administration on their journey.



Dr. Travis with James Adenuga, recipient of the *Isaiah 61:3 Award*, Houghton Academy's highest honor.



Phil Stockin, Kerrie, Wes, Josh, and Dr. Bryan Davidson

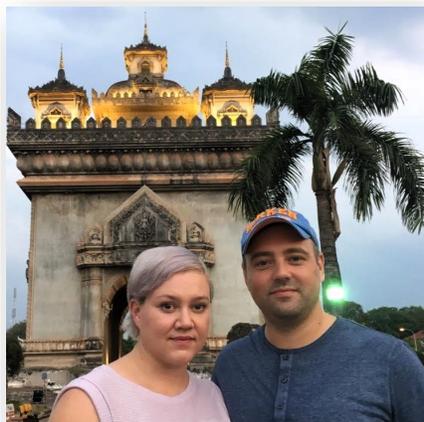
Why Houghton Academy?

The Davidsons and the Dovers lived outside Allegany County for many years. The Davidsons mostly homeschooled their children, while the Dover's children went to various prestigious international schools and public schools in Virginia. Each family recognized that the differentiators in a Houghton Academy education, such as its **small student-to-teacher ratio, unique location**, and focus on **authentic Christian education**, set it apart.

Kerrie remarked, *"Partly because I'm the daughter of Phil*

Stockin, I have always recognized the value of Christian education. From early on in our marriage, my husband and I wanted our kids to have a Christian education because the school years are such a formative time. We only have twenty-four hours in a day with our children to instill our values. When kids go to public school, those nine hours are, at best, neutral in their formation. When they get a Christian education, those hours become transformational. Christianity becomes much more ingrained in their worldview than if they were only hearing about Christ at church or when we try to squeeze in teachable moments at the end of an exhausting workday. I'm so grateful to the teachers and coaches at the Academy who model the importance of character and for whom Christ is the bedrock."

For the Dovers, the Houghton Academy education also matched the **diverse international population** and education their children had been receiving.



Kristin ('97) and Jordan Dover in front of Patu Xai in Vientiane, Laos.

Jordan said, "The Academy provides the same kind of globally focused school our kids are used to but in a unique setting. The advantages of Houghton Academy mimic those of the other schools they attended, but the student population is more stable. The grounding of a Christ-centered education allows them to learn about a broad range of perspectives, much less narrow than what other schools can offer. For example, they can study creation and evolution because of that foundation. But all this occurs in a rural county where they learn about things like agriculture, which they would not have covered in Seoul or Tokyo. This unique blend of global and local education is a privilege we, as a community, can be proud of."

Houghton Academy has a sense of community that isn't found everywhere. Kerrie mentioned that one teacher, Mrs. Shultz, offered to do up-dos [sic] for the girls preparing for prom, and Coach Hilsher regularly had the volleyball team to her house for dinners and parties. Jordan mentioned that he feels like his family, because of the tight-knit community, have been brought more into the life of the school than they were with other schools. For the Davidsons, that even extends to having an international student live with their family, helping the student develop relationships that extend into the Houghton community.

Why Now?

As a board member Jordan has had an insider view of the workings of the Academy. He is **excited and hopeful for the future**, a feeling he knows the whole board feels and is watching catch on in the Houghton Academy community.

He emphasizes, "This is a really wonderful time of transition. The administration under Dr. Travis is honoring as much tradition as possible while modernizing for the future. It's really important to be part of shaping that future, not just giving and hoping



Dr. Travis with two of our fifty plus international students this year.

the Academy becomes something better than ever. We need to do more than that - now is the perfect time to participate because you will be shaping the Academy. I'm so excited that my children are part of that renewal. Our involvement now is crucial in shaping the future of our Academy."

Kerrie, who has also seen the Academy's ups and downs throughout her life, says that **"what's happening now is generating excitement but we need more of Houghton as a town and the Houghton Academy community to join in."** She loves coming in daily to see the retirees volunteering and familiar faces at sporting events, but things are just starting to take off. At school events, more and more local families are taking part in activities, and **"the improvement is palpable."** She'd love to see every international student sitting with a family on Sunday morning at church or having dinner with a local family because that international flair is something the Academy has been known for, and it's back in full force. Even her son Wes, the Salutatorian of the Class of 2024, commented in his commencement speech that his **"international friendships have been life-changing."**



Jon Keith serving up the food for the Middle School Field Day!



Volunteer Diane Emmons hosted students in her home during Ignite Week - teaching them how to sew and quilt.

What Can I Do?

Both Kerrie and Jordan have lived in lots of places outside of Houghton and recognize the difficulties in staying connected to a community that can feel far away. But they also point out a **range of ways to get involved** that aren't always top of mind. Kerrie, who volunteers at the Academy inside and outside the classroom, mentioned that she'd love to see alumni, parents, and friends giving their time and talents. For those who are in Houghton, in addition to homestays for international students and volunteering, **the students love to see familiar faces** in the crowds at sporting events, musical performances, and even participating in chapel.

Jordan emphasized the importance of developing networks for Houghton Academy that provide camaraderie and give graduating students a soft place to land.

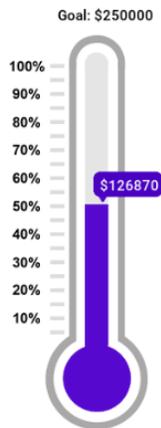
He said, "I didn't know I could participate until someone from the Academy was traveling in my region and reached out, but there are alumni pockets all over the world, and we need to nurture that engagement."

His eldest daughter will graduate next year, and he hopes she takes a sense of fraternity out into the world with her. He also hopes she knows her **Houghton Academy experience doesn't end at graduation** but that no matter what she does, whether humble or grand, the reputation and heritage of Houghton Academy go with her.

Jordan also talked about **the outsized return every gift has at the Academy.**

He said, "For financial support, you can be assured that every dollar has an impact larger than almost anywhere else you could give it. Just like the parable of the talents, every dollar or minute given to the Academy is transformed." Kerrie said, "Each minute that is volunteered frees up time for a teacher to focus on a student, and each dollar given furthers the mission. Christian families need to be helping other families; it's something we can all do better at."

Call to Action...



Our fiscal year will end this month, and **we are still \$123,130.00 away from reaching our Annual Fund need** toward finishing the year with a balanced budget. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, the faculty, staff, volunteers, current students, and families, **I ask that you prayerfully consider donating \$70 or more today.** If each household or individual receiving this letter sent in that amount we would not only achieve but exceed this year's goal.



The Houghton Academy National Honor Society
for 2023-2024.

Thank you for supporting our mission to offer young people a college preparatory education within the framework of a Christian worldview and prepare students to LIVE authentically, LEARN deeply, LEAD globally, and LOVE boldly for the glory of God. **Because of your support,** Houghton Academy provides students worldwide with small school care and large school opportunities.

Yours for Christ,

Dr. Toby A. Travis
Head of School



P.S. Please check out the Houghton Academy website and social media.

You can make your gift online, saving time and postage, and you can also check out our latest podcast and explore what our students have been up to. If you haven't already done so, **updating your email address with us** will ensure you receive our regular updates from the school, and liking our pages and posts on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram helps to expand our reach locally and globally as we work to grow enrollment.

LIVE - LEARN - LEAD - LOVE
Small School Care. Large School Opportunities!™

"...that they be called trees of righteousness." ~ Isaiah 61:3