



# GSAALINK

Engaging in Service | Training for Leadership | Preparing for Eternity | Winter 2019



**Student Interview  
Gabriella Liebelt  
Sophomore**





# STUDENT LIFE

## Students Learn About Serving Others at Boise AMEN Clinic

Students and staff volunteered all three days during the Boise AMEN Clinic at Expo Idaho September 12-14, 2018. The clinic provided medical, dental, vision and other services to over 1,400 patients. Hundreds of volunteers helped provide services, including some of GSAA's own alumni **Dr. Victor Cook '66** and **Dr. Todd Spainhower '82**.

The GSAA staff and students assembled and distributed food boxes from the Idaho Food Bank, escorted patients to the different medical stations, provided child care, translated for non-English speaking patients, and helped register people. In addition, the GSAA handbell choir performed for patients waiting outside to get into the clinic.

Sophomore Gaby Liebelt says, "My favorite job was running the food table. I loved getting to hear people share their stories and giving them the joy of a free box of food. It made me feel so good knowing we were making a difference in their lives. Coming together as a school and helping out made me realize the impact we could have on our community."

Freshman Fred Martsch says, "Escorting people back and forth gave me a chance to get to know them and share about GSAA and why we were volunteering. I met lots of awesome people."

Many students were surprised by how patiently people waited outside to be seen. "The long hours these people waited outside showed how badly they needed help. It makes you realize how privileged we are to have insurance and get medical care," notes junior Kevin Recuenco.

"I don't know how some of these people keep smiles

*"Coming together as a school and helping out made me realize the impact we could have on our community."*

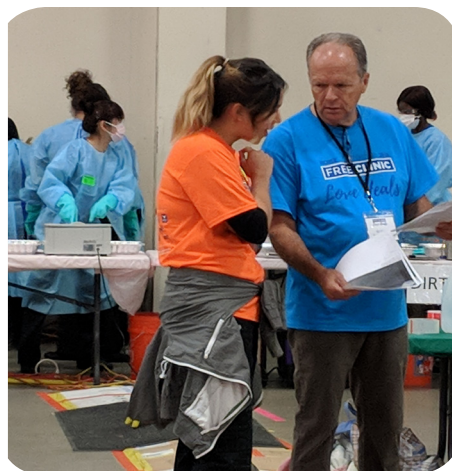


on their faces after hearing about their pain and suffering," says junior Jenae Rogers. "I talked to a person with a brain tumor, someone who was going blind, and another person who had been kicked in the mouth."

Another junior, Grace Thomsen, summed it up well, "One of the most important things in life is helping others and making a difference. I loved participating in the AMEN Clinic because it not only made a difference in the lives

of these patients, but in my life as well."

The Boise AMEN Clinic was put on by the Adventist Medical Evangelism Network, which provides clinics for the uninsured and underinsured in communities around the United States. The clinic was sponsored by former faculty Fred Cornforth. These clinics wouldn't be possible without the help of countless volunteers and medical professionals. #



**view more photos from the AMEN Clinic on our website at [www.gemstate.org/alumni/gsa-link-newsletter](http://www.gemstate.org/alumni/gsa-link-newsletter).**





## Rewarding Student's Hardwork: *The Work Scholarship Program*

Last year the Work Scholarship Program had a profound impact on the lives of 17 students. It not only rewarded their hard work but it helped them afford to get an Adventist education. As we all know from experience, it isn't easy to juggle academics, music, athletics and working part-time, but these students did it. And we are so proud of them!

In order for a student to receive the Work Scholarship they must have an excellent work ethic, work more than 65 hours per semester, maintain

a minimum GPA and receive an "A" in citizenship.

We typically award about \$14,000 per year from the Work Scholarship Fund. We need your help to raise additional funds for this school year. Please consider making a gift to the Work Scholarship Fund and help these hard working students at [www.gemstate.org/give](http://www.gemstate.org/give).

Thank you for your support of our students and mission! #

## Fall Phonathon Raised \$35,000

Thank you to our GSAA family for helping us raise \$35,000 during phonathon in November for the Annual Fund. This helps us "bridge the gap" between tuition and actual operating costs so we can keep tuition affordable for families. GSAA is so blessed to have faithful alumni and constituents that believe in our mission, students and staff. If you haven't given yet, you have until June 30 to help raise the remaining funds needed for this year.

## 2018-2019 Merit Scholarship Recipients



We are proud to announce the 2018 Merit Scholarship winners: Jenae Rogers (Academics), Portia Kluchesky (Music), Jenna Franklin (Leadership), and Kevin Recuenco (Athletics). Each of these outstanding students will receive a \$1,500 scholarship award.

Each year the Merit Scholarship is awarded to one outstanding student in each of these four areas: academics, leadership, music and athletics. Students are required to have a minimum GPA, write an essay, have

an "A" in citizenship, be outstanding in one of the four areas mentioned above, and have three letters of recommendation to qualify for consideration.

The Merit Scholarship not only rewards outstanding students for their achievements but it helps them afford Adventist Education. Please consider making a gift to the Merit Scholarship Fund to ensure we can continue this important program. Give online at [www.gemstate.org/give](http://www.gemstate.org/give). #

### GSAA Link

The GSAA Link is published twice a year by Gem State Adventist Academy for its alumni, student families and supporters.

### Editor

Nicole Batten

### Photography

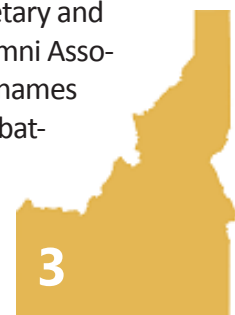
GSAA staff and students

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Find us on Facebook!

### NOMINATE ALUMNI!

Now accepting nominations for Vice President, Secretary and Historian for the Alumni Association. Please send names to Nicole Batten at [nbatten@gemstate.org](mailto:nbatten@gemstate.org).







# Student Interview

## Gabriela “Gaby” Liebelt Sophomore

### What made you want to attend Gem State Adventist Academy?

My family moved here from Portland, Oregon and this looked like an awesome choice for schooling. We came for a tour and I loved Gem State from the moment I started the tour.

*“I feel loved and valued by everyone here. I believe that this makes Gem State different from other schools.”*



### What is the highlight (best part) of your day at school?

The highlight of my day is usually when I get to connect with people from outside of the Sophomore class during choir with Miss Simmons. I also love getting to sit it on Algebra 1 with the freshman during my free period on B days. Over all, I would say the highlight is just getting to connect and socialize with other students both inside and outside the dorm.

### Who is your favorite teacher and why?

I would have to say that it is a very close tie between Mr. Waterhouse and Miss Simmons. Mr. Waterhouse always makes geometry fun, and we have a lot of fun while doing it. He is also very understanding and easy to talk to if I don't understand something or have a problem. Miss Simmons has a lot of energy and you can tell she is passionate about her subject she teaches--that definitely reflects in her teaching of choir. She is also very understanding and easy to talk to, and I appreciate that she challenges us in class to do our best, all while having fun. My favorite dean is probably Mama Fitting. She is always positive and I just love talking to her. She gives some great advice too!

### How do your peers make you feel supported at school?

My peers are always willing to help me accomplish certain tasks, and I really appreciate them. I also have some really awesome friends that I can talk to about literally anything. It feels nice to know someone cares.

### How do you think being at Gem State Adventist Academy is helping you grow in your relationship with God?

The dorm chapels every night along with the chapels during the day are super nice, and Bible class with Pastor Perez is one of my favorite classes. They are times to connect with peers while studying scripture. I have really learned how to apply certain principles to my personal life that I feel have strengthened my walk with God.

### What are you are most proud of?

One thing I am proud of is my ability to stay positive in not so good situations. I like how I can almost always see the good in any situation.

### What do you enjoy doing in your free time? What extracurricular activities are you involved in?

During my free time I enjoy reading, painting, craft projects, photography, volunteering, and of course hanging out with my friends and family. Choir is the only extracurricular activity I am really into. I have never been into sports.

### What are your career goals? What are your educational goals after high school?

After highschool I plan to go to a college (not sure where yet) and study something I am passionate about. I have thought about becoming a teacher, or maybe attending culinary school to become a chef. For a long time I wanted to become an artist. I hope to graduate highschool with straight A's. I have high expectations for myself.

### How is Gem State different from other schools?

I love the family piece of Gem State. The student body as a whole feels connected and just like a family. I can come to peers and teachers about almost anything and feel comfortable. I feel loved and valued by everyone here. I believe that this makes Gem State different from other schools.

### Share three unique things about yourself.

I live on a goat farm with around 150 goats. I have a dream of traveling the world and blogging about it. My favorite food is by far sushi. #





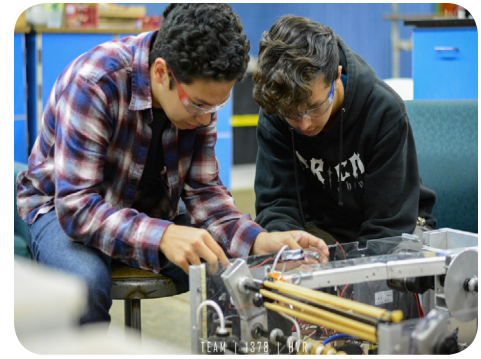
## GSAA Receives \$10,000 STEM Grant for Robotics Program

Gem State Adventist Academy has received a \$10,000 grant from Versacare Inc. to incorporate a robotics program into its curriculum. Math and physics teacher, Mark Waterhouse, says he hopes this will get students excited about science, technology, engineering, and math, and provide more concrete learning opportunities for STEM topics. The grant money will be used to purchase the needed equipment and software for the new robotics program.

The robotics program will also allow GSAA students to mentor elementary

students at area Adventist schools by having a junior robotics program at GSAA for grades 7 and 8. The program will be divided into junior robotics (grades 7-9) and senior robotics (grades 10-12). Students will also be able to compete with the creations they engineer.

To learn more about this new program, contact Mark Waterhouse at mwaterhouse@gemstate.org. #

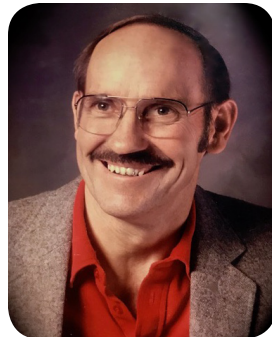


## New Scholarship to Honor Former Teacher Ray Blue

A new scholarship has been created by Community Development Inc. (CDI) in honor of former faculty member Ray Blue, who taught math and physics at GSAA for 22 years where he impacted the lives of hundreds of students. The Ray Blue Scholarship will be given out to GSAA students each year who exhibit excellence in math.

From an early age, it was clear Ray excelled in math and science. He attended Union College in Lincoln to study engineering but ended up getting a degree in Education.

Ray accepted a position as a math teacher at Plainview Academy in South Dakota. There, he continued his education attending The University of South Dakota and graduating with a master's degree in physics. Ray worked at other Adventist academies in Minnesota and California before accepting a



position at Gem State Adventist Academy in 1970.

In 1992, Ray retired from teaching to begin the second phase of his career as a builder and land developer with CDI. This afforded him the opportunity, in his spare time, to travel the world with his wife Betty, vacationing and building orphanages, churches and schools. The couple traveled to over 20 countries together. Sadly, Ray passed away on January 30, 2018 at the age of 82.

Ray had many passions throughout his life, but his chief passion was his love for his savior Jesus Christ and his family. He left a legacy among those who knew him, including many GSAA alumni.

If you are interested in honoring the legacy of a loved one with a scholarship or other memorial gift to Gem State Adventist Academy, please contact Nicole Batten at (208) 459-1627. #

## New GSAA Staff



**EVER PEREZ**  
*Chaplain & Bible Teacher*

Ever didn't get into full time ministry till his thirties when he went back to school at

Southern Adventist University for his degree in theology. After graduating from Southern in 2012 he pastored two churches and eventually became the chaplain, pastor and Bible teacher for Blue Mountain Academy in Pennsylvania. This past summer Ever made the move to Idaho. Ever is married with two kids: Kailey and Kristian.



**JEREMY PERKINS**  
*Athletic Director, Health & PE Teacher*

Jeremy has been a teacher for 13 years and a coach

for 22 years. He has also managed two fitness facilities and served as a kinesiology instructor and athletic director. He has a bachelors degree in physical education from Walla Walla University and a masters degree in kinesiology from the University of the Incarnate Word. Jeremy is married to Melissa and has three children: Andrew, Madison and Blake.





# State of the School

## A report from GSAA Principal Marvin Thorman



I am often asked how Gem State is doing, and I am proud to say GSAA is thriving. We have made huge strides in financial stability in the past four years. It has truly been a walk in faith, but God is so good. He knows our young people need this school. Here are just a few of the ways GSAA is more financially stable than it was five years ago:

- Four consecutive years of operating in the black
- \$400,000 ahead with cash on hand
- \$300,000 reduced debt to Idaho Conference
- \$200,000 funded capital improvements
- Student debt ratio has dropped by almost 200%
- Philanthropic giving to GSAA has more than doubled
- The average student now receives 35% in tuition assistance

And we have done all of this without raising tuition during the past five years! What a miracle!

We remain dedicated to providing the best faith-based education possible. A recent survey from

Walla Walla University shows our students perform well against other North Pacific Union Conference academy graduates, grabbing the top spot in math among freshman and sophomore college students.

A recent survey of our alumni revealed that 85% of Gem State students go on to college (the national average among highschool graduates is 66%). The same survey also showed that 30% of our graduates go on to receive a master or doctorate degree. In addition, the survey showed that a significant portion of our alumni go into the fields of health-care and education, which resonates with our core mission statement: "Training for Leadership. Engaging in Service. Preparing for Eternity."

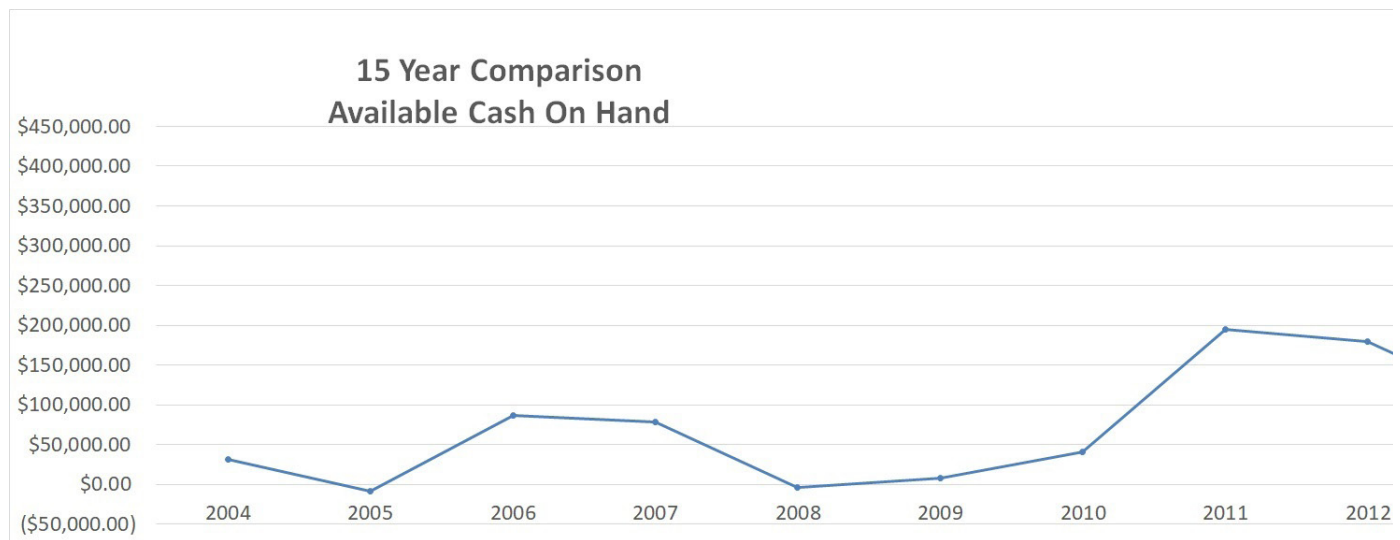
Challenges remain of course, and there are many opportunities for growth, including the need to update infrastructure and campus beautification, more recruiting to grow enrollment, and keeping tuition affordable for families. I am excited to report though that the GSAA Operating Board recently voted to hire a half-time marketing and recruiting

staff person to help address the challenge of growing enrollment at GSAA.

However, we can't achieve our mission without the support of our alumni and constituent community. We need your prayers and financial support. We are doing our part to keep this school strong. God is doing His part to sustain our ministry. And we need YOU to do your part. It takes all of us working together to insure the future of Gem State Adventist Academy and provide for the young people who attend school here.

We need Adventist education now more than ever before. The devil is waging war for the hearts and minds of our youth. Help us provide a safe place in today's world for our youth to learn and grow. They are worth the investment of our time and resources. #

**Thank you to everyone who helped us meet the Annual Fund matching challenge during the 2017-2018 school year!**





# Survey Results

## GSAA Engages in Strategic Planning

Throughout 2018-2019 Gem State Adventist Academy has been diligently working on a strategic plan to improve and prepare the school for the future. Part of that process was to collect information from key stakeholders, such as students, parents, alumni, pastors, the board, faculty and constituents. A consultant was asked to facilitate the process, which included:

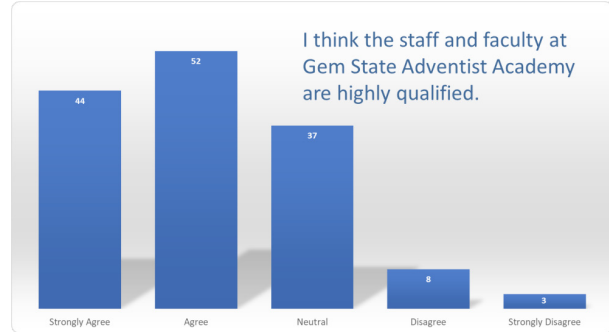
- Review of the mission, vision, and values statements
- Identifying and understanding key stakeholders
- Understanding and prioritizing the schools strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)
- Formal surveys of students, parents, constituents and alumni
- Combining all this information and developing a five-year plan

Many of you have been a part of this process in some way. Your input has been invaluable as the board,

administration, and faculty plan for the future. We can't thank you enough. It is evident you love this school just as much as we do.

### Key Survey Findings:

- 315 total responses
- 42 pages of written comments
- Overwhelmingly, respondents believe Adventist Education is very important.
- Respondents strongly believe Adventist Education is worth the investment, however expensive.
- Faculty and staff are highly appreciated and considered GSAA's greatest asset.
- Most feel GSAA has caring Christian staff and a family atmosphere for spiritual development.
- Respondents felt excellent academics and a positive spiritual environment should be the highest



priorities.

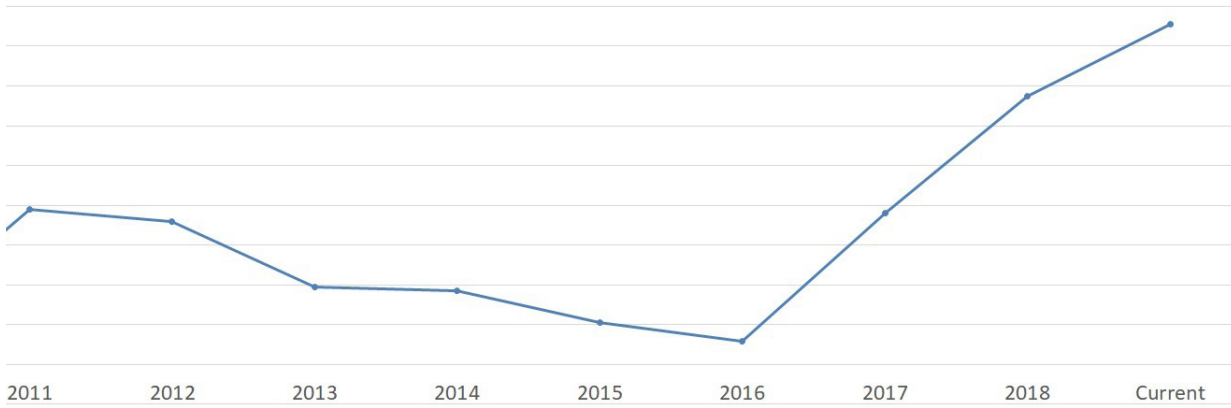
### Opportunities for Growth Identified:

- Respondents felt more maintenance and facility upgrades are needed.
- Respondents want more focus on STEM in academics.
- Respondents want to see more marketing and recruiting to grow enrollment.
- More regular communication with constituents is needed.
- Respondents want to see more options for keeping tuition affordable.

**View the full survey results at [www.gemstate.org/survey](http://www.gemstate.org/survey).** Contact Marvin Thorman, GSAA Principal, at (208) 459-1627 if you have further questions or comments.

## PHILANTHROPY THREE YEAR COMPARISON

| Giving Category      | 2017-18             | 2016-17             | 2015-16             |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Annual Fund          | \$115,044.58        | \$85,361.00         | \$17,442.00         |
| Scholarships         | \$135,579.33        | \$87,645.00         | \$90,091.00         |
| Capital Improvements | \$105,087.24        | \$18,000.00         | \$50,906.00         |
| Other                | \$90,271.10         | \$75,137.00         | \$35,255.00         |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>\$446,392.25</b> | <b>\$266,143.00</b> | <b>\$193,694.00</b> |



**GSAA**  
Gem State Adventist Academy  
Making Adventist Education Possible for Idaho Conference Families

**Worthy Student Scholarship Fund**

2018-2019 Goal: \$100,000





## Mark your calendar!

**MAY 19**  
**Alumni & Friends**  
**Golf Tournament**

**JULY 18**  
**Portland**  
**Alumni Dinner**

Want to stay in the know about  
upcoming events and news?

Follow us on Facebook or join  
our email list to receive invites.  
Contact [nbatten@gemstate.org](mailto:nbatten@gemstate.org).



16115 S Montana Ave  
Caldwell, ID 83607

**Make a hole  
in one and  
you could win  
a Hawaiian  
Vacation!**



Lots of other contests and prizes will be offered (including free rounds of golf, massages, and Bogus Basin lift tickets) so don't miss out on this event, including contests for closest to the pin, putting challenge and longest drive. Prizes will be given for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams.

It doesn't matter whether you are a good golfer or a bad golfer. This tournament is for everyone. Come have fun with us and support a great cause...scholarships.

Promote your business while helping a great cause. Become a hole or contest sponsor. All sponsors play for free!

# Alumni & Friends Scholarship Golf Tournament

*Sunday, May 19 | 8:00 am Start*  
*Timber Stone Golf Course*



To learn more or to register online visit:  
[www.gemstate.org/alumni/golf](http://www.gemstate.org/alumni/golf).

