



# ANNUAL REPORT

2011-2012



[www.ronclarkacademy.com](http://www.ronclarkacademy.com)



# OUR VISION

For children everywhere, in every classroom, to experience passionate lessons, advanced rigor and engaging methods that are ignited by the RCA Experience.



# WELCOME

## TO THE RON CLARK ACADEMY

The Ron Clark Academy is a private school with a public mission – to demonstrate excellence as we equip educators with best practices that transform student learning and promote academic and social success. We place a focus on **academic rigor**, **student engagement**, and **climate and culture** – the pillars of RCA.

RCA has intentionally created a model school setting where students thrive in a rigorous and innovative learning environment and visiting educators are engaged in a vibrant and wholly unique professional development experience.

Through ***The RCA Experience*** educator training, teachers and school administrators from around the world visit our classrooms to observe our instructional methods and attend our professional development workshops.

### **Founded**

Fall 2007 by Ron Clark and Kim Bearden

### **Location**

Southeast Atlanta, Georgia

### **Enrollment**

110 students, Grades 5th - 8th

### **After School Programs**

Robotics, basketball, soccer, etiquette, drumming, tutoring, Essentials Step Team, Georgia Aquarium Research Team, Model United Nations Team, cheerleading, financial literacy, Junior Achievement, and more





# DEAR FRIENDS,

As we reflect over the past year, we are once again extremely grateful for the abundant support we have received and for the difference that RCA has been able to make in the lives of students, both in our classroom and in classrooms around the world.

Academically, our students continue to thrive. Our award-winning Model United Nations Team competed in Istanbul Turkey earlier this year, and our Robotics Team is currently advancing to the state level. Our Georgia Aquarium Team continues to participate in extended and enhanced marine studies each week, and our students once again received many scholarship opportunities for high school.

Our students have also continued to learn the importance of serving our community through projects ranging from our neighborhood Christmas party to serving the homeless and singing for seniors. Our Essentials Step Team has been a force in the community, recognizing our local firefighters and policemen and organizing other service projects.

Our educator training program, The RCA Experience, reached several milestones this year: we have now trained over 15,000 educators from 40 states and 22 countries around the world. These educators affect the lives of over 10 million students. We have completed a year-long measurement study, and the results appear in this report. We are excited and overwhelmed by the impact that we are having on classrooms across the globe.

Our \$4.8 million dollar capital campaign is underway for the construction of our new multi-purpose educator training facility, and we are thrilled that to date, we have reached 91% of our campaign goal. This facility will enable us to expand our educator training even more. A groundbreaking is in the near future!

Our school was built by the community, and we greatly appreciate all that you have done to continue to support us on our journey.

**Together, we are changing lives.**

Sincerely,

Ron Clark Kim Bearden



**RON CLARK &  
KIM BEARDEN**  
Cofounders of the  
Ron Clark Academy



2011-2012

# YEAR IN REVIEW

**The Class of 2011** received \$1.4 million in scholarships and financial assistance to attend some of the best boarding and private schools across the country

**Over 400 attendees** attended this year's RCA National Educators' Conference – a record number for RCA

**8th grade Model UN students** were invited to compete against high school students in the Yale Model UN Conference in Prague

RCA hosts its first middle school **Model UN Conference** with help from Georgia Tech

RCA reaches milestone of training **more than 15,000 educators at RCA**

**KeKe Palmer** invites RCA students to join in her anti-bullying campaign

Ron Clark releases his third book, ***The End of Molasses Classes***

**RCA Staff perform a Step Show** for students on the first day of school

**RCA Legos Robotics Team** competed in its first state competition against 48 other top performing robotics teams in Georgia after recently winning the Regional Championships

**The Essential Step Team** performs at Nickelodeon's Worldwide Day of Play Event

**Top science students** were selected to travel to the Galapagos Islands for a unique marine adventure

**Kim Bearden** is honored by the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) as one of their Woman of Inspiration for 2011

**Ron Clark** receives the NAACP President's Award





# EXTRAORDINARY



## FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Where do I begin? There have been so many outstanding accomplishments this past year.

- Our incredible graduating class received over 1.4 million dollars in scholarships.
- Another 3,000 educators have been trained at RCA and are now impacting the lives of their students
- The RCA Model United Nations Team participated in the inaugural Yale University Model Government simulation in Prague, Czech Republic and our very own Imani Moss was named Outstanding Delegate
- RCA has launched its first capital campaign to construct a new multipurpose building that will be dedicated to enhancing its educator training program

Each of these are incredible achievements, but at the end of the day, they are all inextricably interwoven.

Ultimately, we have something special at the Ron Clark Academy that we want all schools to have: a place where an extraordinary day is the rule rather than the exception. For this, we should all be proud of RCA.

To reach this level of excellence, it takes an incredible amount of hard work, dedication and willingness to go the extra mile. I see this ethos in literally each and every member of RCA's faculty and staff. They are truly and extraordinary group doing extraordinary things. The parents see it, the students see it and the educators that train at RCA see it and the beneficiaries are students from across the globe. Extraordinary things by extraordinary people.

Just as the mosaic of events occurring at RCA are inextricably interwoven, the pieces to the puzzle that make RCA an agent for change in the global educational arena are also inextricably interwoven.

By this I mean that while the first two legs of the stool must consist of a great faculty and staff and dedicated parents, the other leg of the stool must consist of an outstanding group of supporters.

In this regard, RCA is truly blessed as none of this would be possible without you.

Please know that we sincerely appreciate your support, and I pray that we fully exhibit to you the impact your contributions are having not only on students at RCA but on education across the country.

So, thanks to each of you and thanks to my colleagues on the Board of Trustees.

**ALONZO LLORENS, SR.**  
RCA Board Chairman

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## MEET ROBIN

My name is Robin Okunowo and I am an eighth grade student at the Ron Clark Academy. I can honestly say that my life has been forever changed because I was fortunate enough to be a student at RCA.

When I came to RCA in fifth grade, I didn't even know what Lego Robotics was; in seventh grade, I was captain of the school's robotics team and helped lead the team to win trophies at the county, region, and state level.

Before RCA, I didn't understand the role the UN played in the world. Now, I have competed in Model UN competitions in Atlanta and at the actual UN building in New York City. This year I will travel to Istanbul, Turkey to compete in an international Model UN conference with students from all over the world.

In fifth grade, I loved to visit the Georgia Aquarium but wasn't able to often. As a member of the RCA Georgia Aquarium Research Team, I am able to visit the aquarium every week, and go behind the scenes and do actual research with the marine biologists.

At the end of last school year, I gave a presentation to the whole aquarium staff that summarized our research. My love of science was only intensified from the awesome opportunity. I am proud to say that not only have I been an honor student the past three years, but I have worked hard to help my fellow classmates become honor students as well.

Now that I am an eighth grader, I realize how RCA has helped me see the world in many new ways, literally and figuratively. My views of the world have been broadened by Mr. Clark and Mr. Dovico teaching me both sides of every issue in the news.

I got to see the world differently by actually seeing the world, as I traveled with the school to Washington, DC, New York City, London, Paris, and Utah. Before each trip I learned everything about the place we were going to visit and on the trip I learned even more.



"Every experience I have had at RCA has made me a better student, a better speaker, a better person, and for that, I am forever grateful."

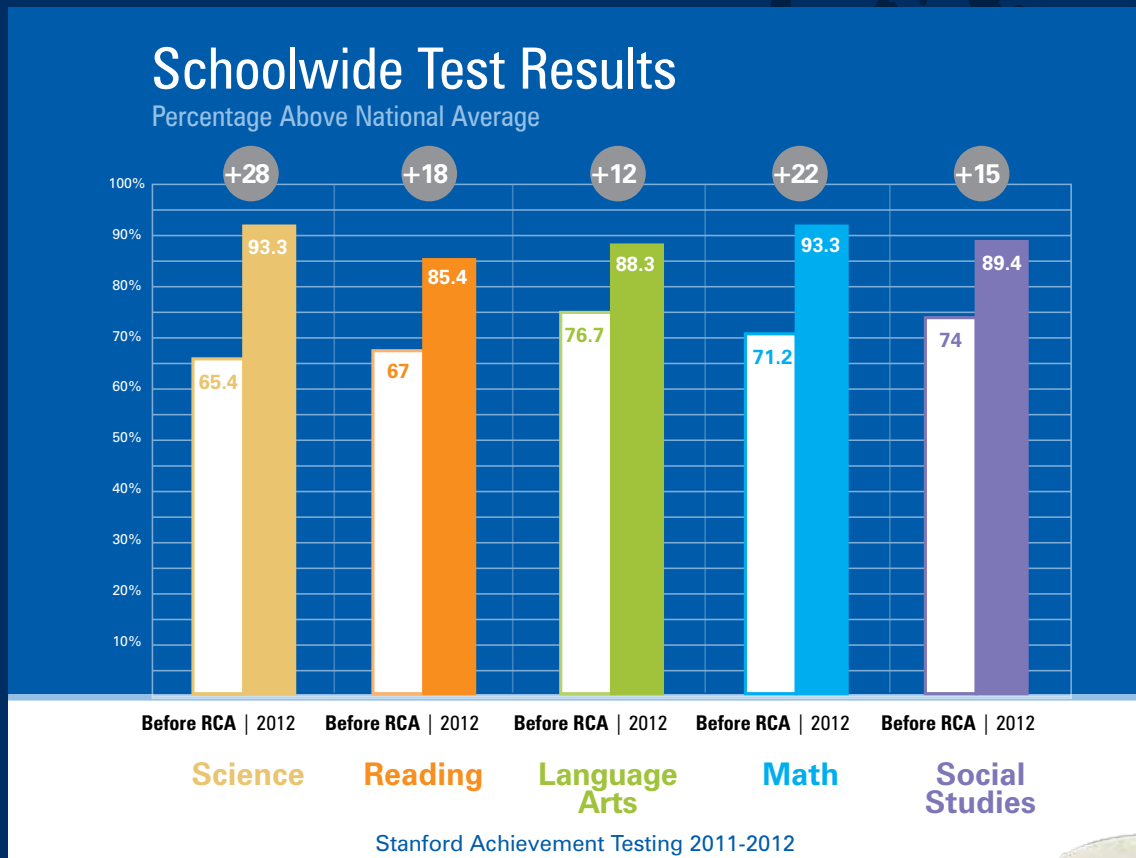
*Robin Okunowo*

**by Robin Okunowo**  
8th Grade Student



# STUDENT SUCCESS

2011-2012 PR Gains by Subject



## STUDENT SUCCESS

Students validate the success of RCA's learning environment: each class experiences double percentile increases in performance across all subject areas during the first academic year and continues to improve over time.

The first three graduating classes received \$3.5 million in academic scholarships to premiere high schools in Georgia and beyond.

## ENROLLMENT

RCA currently enrolls 115 students in grades five through eight who have had various levels of academic success prior to attending the Academy.

While students represent diverse academic and socio-economic backgrounds, 90% of RCA families have an average annual income less than \$34,000.





## TEACH WITH PASSION

Doodling in the back of a chaotic New York City classroom, I would have never imagined myself addressing an auditorium of teachers in Nebraska gathered specifically to hear my story; my journey as an educator. But this past summer that is just what I did.

The West Holt teachers and administrators invited me to be their guest speaker as they got ready for the 2012-2013 school year. And I have the Ron Clark Academy to thank for the opportunity to speak, from the heart, to educators who couldn't be further from the brash and gritty public school experience that shaped me.

My middle school experience was far from nurturing. I did not have a safe haven from which to dream or try my talents on for size. I was under the tutelage of teachers who had checked out because they didn't live in my neighborhood or were simply biding their time until retirement. And in preparing to speak to my colleagues, I realized that that was the story I had to share.

The West Holt teachers and administrators had already experienced my reciting poetry at RCA and singing the blues; they had watched my students perform stage scenes from plays being read in high school, and some



had been present when my eighth graders discussed Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* which later yielded the blessing of a personal note from one visiting teacher who thanked my class for helping her realize that she was hiding – just like Morrison's main character.

What they couldn't imagine was just how Ron Clark Academy has blessed me. RCA has allowed me to make amends for the past by challenging my own students to dig deep and try their talents on for size.

I craft a curriculum that not only addresses the standards for rigorous instruction, but my past experiences make it imperative that I identify the possibilities in my students: shaping quiet-types into spoken word artists or reluctant dancers into powerful steppers.

RCA does not limit my influence to the classroom, but expects me to act upon my passion for introducing my students to their best selves. The academy has supported me in creating indelible moments and through the RCA Experience I have reached more students than I could have ever imagined as visiting educators take some of RCA to their respective schools.

It is an honor to influence fellow-educators and ensure that the young people in their charge feel truly nurtured. Simply stated: **Be present.**



"I reminded myself that what we ultimately have in common is a calling to serve children."

**MS. SUSAN BARNES**  
Language Arts Teacher



## THE RCA EXPERIENCE

# EDUCATOR TRAINING

### Accomplishments and Growth Plans for Educator Training

*The RCA Experience* has welcomed over 15,000 educators and impacted over 10 million students from around the world over the past six years. Superintendents, administrators, teachers, and educational leaders have been trained by The Ron Clark Academy (RCA) staff and have taken new ideas and innovative methods back to their respective schools to make a change in the lives of their students.

As new standards and challenging assessments become more common in schools, RCA will continue to develop appropriate training opportunities for educators as they come through our doors in order to properly prepare them for educating their students.

Content specific training will be a desired next step for many educators, as RCA instructors can conduct valuable conversations and lessons within their specialty areas.

### Measuring the Impact of Educator Training at RCA

An in-depth data study was conducted in the fall of 2012 by RCA's School Implementation Specialist to measure the impact of our educator training program in the classroom.

Participating teachers were observed prior to coming to RCA and then again after they attended a professional development training day at the Academy.

In the end, teachers were found to have increased engagement on average by 40 percent in classrooms by implementing effective engagement strategies such as student and teacher movement, eye contact, learning games, and enthusiasm into their lessons. Data also showed a significant increase in the frequency of questioning used in the classroom by up to 40 percent.



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# MASTER EDUCATORS



@kimbearden

## MS. KIM BEARDEN

Cofounder, Executive Director,  
Language Arts Teacher

Kim Bearden was selected from over 70,000 teachers as the Disney American Teacher Awards Outstanding Middle School Humanities Teacher. Over the past twenty-six years, she has been a teacher, instructional lead teacher, curriculum director, school board member, staff development trainer, and middle school principal.



@ronclarkacademy

## MR. RON CLARK

Cofounder, Mathematics and  
Global Studies Teacher

Ron Clark has been called "America's Educator." In 2000, he was named Disney's American Teacher of the Year. He is a New York Times bestselling author, and his books have been honored at the White House on three separate occasions.



@ginacoss

## MS. GINA COSS

Social Studies and Science Teacher

Gina Coss graduated from the College of William and Mary, and had a challenging career with a Wall Street firm. After earning advanced degrees, Ms. Coss was recognized as a Cobb County District Teacher of the Year and a Georgia Teacher of the Year Finalist.



@ktownsel

## MR. KEN TOWNSEL

Science Teacher

Mr. Townsel has taught advanced placement physics, biology, chemistry, and earth science. Mr. Townsel is a former Teacher of the Year and Coordinator for the Global Thinking Project in St. Petersburg Moscow, Russia. Mr. Townsel worked as a physical science instructor at the Fernbank Science Center and is on the Advisory Board for the Georgia Aquarium.



@adamdovico

## MR. ADAM DOVICO

Global Studies and STEM Teacher

Mr. Dovico is a graduate of Wake Forest University, and a graduate of Appalachian State University, where he received his masters in education. He has been named a Teacher of the Year, Japan Fulbright Memorial Fund recipient, and a Teaching Tolerance grant recipient.



@drvcjones

## MS. CAMILLE VALERIE JONES

Mathematics Teacher

Dr. Jones received her Mathematics degree from Spelman College, Master's in Mathematics Education from Georgia State University, and Doctorate of Education from Teachers College Columbia University. She has served as a mathematics specialist, curriculum coach for high schools across the country, and was Teacher of the Year in 2005.



## MS. SUSAN BARNES

Language Arts and Reading Teacher

Mrs. Barnes has taught in Brooklyn and Harlem before coming to Atlanta. She is a gifted staff development trainer, artist, singer, and performance poet, and is known for integrating her love for art, photography, and poetry into her language arts lessons. She has a B.A. in English from Stonybrook University and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from Brooklyn College.



## MS. SARAH HILDEBRAND

Social Studies and Reading Teacher

Sarah Hildebrand is a graduate of Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania, where she received her degree in Speech Communications. Ms. Hildebrand received her teaching certification from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. She was recognized as the 2007 district wide Rookie Teacher of the Year for the city of Suffolk, VA.

# BY THE NUMBERS

**2011-2012** Financial Highlights | JULY 1, 2011 - JUNE 30, 2012

Operation Revenue and Support	2011-2012	2010-2011
Unrestricted Annual Giving	<b>\$536,436</b>	\$1,334,077
Restricted Annual Giving	<b>\$487,015</b>	N/A
In-kind donations <i>Travel, equipment, and services</i>	<b>\$344,327</b>	\$400,957
Tuition	<b>\$485,074</b>	\$284,714
Educator Training Program <i>Fees from visitation days and conferences</i>	<b>\$1,245,570</b>	\$860,412
Other	<b>\$42,139</b>	N/A
Total Operational Revenue and Support	<b>\$3,140,561</b>	\$2,880,160

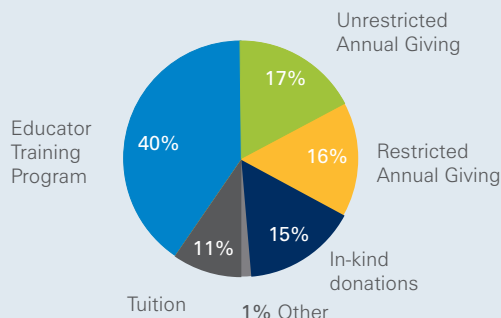
Operational Expenditures		
Program	<b>\$2,212,025</b>	\$2,561,519
Management and General	<b>\$433,050</b>	\$422,501
Fundraising	<b>\$442,890</b>	\$381,897
Total Expenses	<b>\$3,087,965</b>	\$3,365,917

The Ron Clark Academy is a non-profit school and is a 501(c)(3) Public Charity.

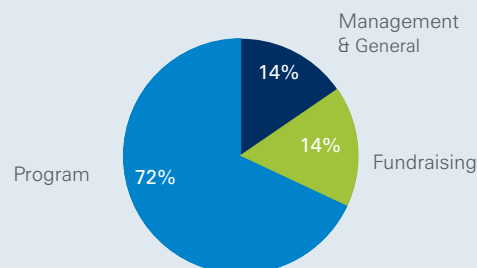
Operational expenses are majority funded by annual giving and our unique Educator Training program.

For 2012, the restricted annual giving was dedicated to the RCA Capital Campaign.

**Operation Revenue and Support**



**Operational Expenditures**







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(\$1,000,000+)

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\* Donors who made in-kind contributions to the Ron Clark Academy

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# Set the tone for a love of learning!

“The potential is there; it is our responsibility to see it, to encourage it, and to let our children know that, without a doubt, we believe in their dreams.”

***The End of Molasses Classes*** by Ron Clark

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**"Do not go where the path may lead;  
go instead where there is no path,  
and leave a trail."** – Ralph Waldo Emerson



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