



# Blue Mountain Academy COMMUNIQUE

MARCH 2011

## The Power to Think and Do

Ellen White wrote, “Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. ... It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men’s thought. ... Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen” (*Education* p. 17).

At Blue Mountain Academy (BMA), we have several examples of students who exercise their powers to think and do. One group formed an organization they call MITZVAH. Each month they plan “little acts of kindness” to help others. In December they spent an afternoon wrapping gifts at a mall and raised \$65 for the Easton Children’s Home. A BMA board member who heard about their project matched their gift.

Six students, along with their government teacher Doug Stewart, participated in the Pennsylvania Senator for a Day program for Berks County. They spent the day at the state capitol in Harrisburg, where they sat on committees and role-played the life of a senator. During the afternoon, the committees presented their bills to the full session.

Paige Burnett (’11) volunteered for the role of chairperson for the Education Committee. She said, “I was met with heavy opposition to some of my opinions. It is no simple undertaking to speak up for one’s self, let alone to speak up for thousands of people.”

We need to encourage our young people to become involved and to stand up for Christian principles. At BMA, we make it a point to provide these Christ-centered learning opportunities for our students.



**Craig Ziesmer**  
Principal

## Alumnus Realizes Childhood Dream

Aaron Adams (’98) recently achieved his dream of working as an animator for Disney. After graduating from BMA, he attended Southern Adventist University (SAU) in Tennessee, where he earned a degree in character animation. Following his SAU graduation in 2002, Adams was hired as a professor at the university, where he worked for eight years. During that time, he earned a master’s in animation and design at Savannah College in Georgia.

In January of 2010, Adams went to work as a technical animator for Walt Disney Feature Animation. His first film work for Disney was *Tangled*, which was released last November. He was one of the team members who cleaned up the gaps in the heroine’s hair and clothing, which is an extremely detailed, frame-by-frame process.

Adams is listed as a technical animator on the film, and his son, Isaac, is listed as a “production baby,” because he was born during the film’s production. Aaron, his wife, Holly, and their son now live in California.

“We’re so proud of Aaron,” said Kathleen Sutton, a longtime family friend and BMA’s Advancement director. “Even as a young boy he always said he wanted to work for Disney, and now his dream has come true!”



## Computer Science Class Incorporates Robotics

The new informational technology director at BMA might have binary blood. Mel Wade is also director of the Adventist Robotic League (ARL) and is incorporating

the robotics challenge into his computer science classes.

The ARL works in conjunction with FIRST LEGO League to sponsor regional robotic competitions across North America. The students build robots to meet nine different challenges. Using LEGO Mindstorm sets, teams have two-and-a-half minutes to build and program their robots for each challenge. Various objects have to be identified and manipulated by the robots without human interference.

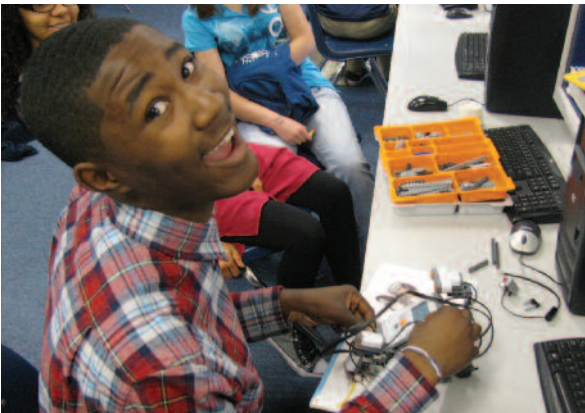
During the competition, student teams are interviewed about all aspects of their robots, from

design philosophy and strategy to actual construction details and programming. The robots are then turned loose on the competition table to meet the challenges. To meet each challenge, students use skills from mathematics, mechanics, science and computer programming.

“One of the exciting aspects of robotics is that it teaches much more than technology. It also teaches life skills, including teamwork, project planning and gracious professionalism,” Wade says.

For more information about the Adventist Robotics League, visit [adventistroboticsleague.net](http://adventistroboticsleague.net).

—Cary Corbin



*Adam Johnson ('14) shows enthusiasm as he builds his robot.*

## Physics Students Test Speed of Sound

How fast is it moving?” is a common question in BMA’s senior Physics class. Students often use digital video cameras to record the motion of objects, and then analyze the images on a computer. Recently they measured the speed of sound.

Equipped with two-way radios, stopwatches, a GPS unit and a 12-gauge noisemaker, most of the class went to a hill southwest of campus. Brendon Boyd located the exact position of those running the stopwatches.

Senior Fred Wasmer and Cary Corbin, Physics teacher, hiked up

the mountain to the north of campus. Wasmer keyed the radio and gave a countdown. Corbin fired the noisemaker. The sound was heard instantly over the radio channel. Radio signals travel at the speed of light, which is really fast.

Back in the classroom, they analyzed the data. They used the GPS coordinates to calculate the dis-

tance between the noisemaker and the timers, then averaged the times. Distance divided by time yields velocity, which—voilà—indicates the speed of sound.—Cary Corbin

*In calculating the speed of sound, Tim Wilkins handles the communication, Brendon Boyd reads the GPS data and Rebecca Richards and Kelsey Landa record the data.*



## Library Renovations Near Completion

BMA’s library renovations are nearly complete.

There are now 30 computer stations and a place for students to relax with access to computers for homework, research and email.

**Communiqué** is published in the *Visitor* by Blue Mountain Academy  
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