



June 2025

# URBAN CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Donor

# NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends,

We're excited to give you a closer look at what's happening at UCA. From our students and staff to our donors, volunteers, and the growing relationships with church partners, there's a lot unfolding and we're grateful to have you alongside us.

As summer approaches, many of our children need a safe, supportive place to learn and grow, and not every family can afford summer school. Would you consider sponsoring a child this summer? Your generous gift directly provides a nurturing environment where kids can thrive both academically and spiritually. Thank you for being part of this important work.

## Summer School and the Interns

We are excited to announce that our summer enrollment has grown to 127 students—what a fantastic way to begin the season! We are truly grateful for your prayers and support in helping us reach this milestone.

We're also gearing up to welcome eight interns who will be supporting classrooms, assisting with activities, and building meaningful connections with our students. What makes this group especially special is that a few of them are former UCA students themselves—now returning as interns to invest in the same community that once invested in them.

## Student Spotlight: Graduating Andy Zhao

From a kindergartener in 2016 to a confident graduate in 2025, Andy Zhao has been an integral part of the UCA family for the past nine years. Andy's growth over the years has been remarkable. Once struggling with homework, he now ends his 8th grade year with strong As and Bs—a testament to his dedication and persistence. In the classroom, he has grown into a leader: running the weekly Snack Shop, restocking supplies, and taking initiative every Friday to help pack up the room. One especially fond memory of Andy was when he was in 3rd grade during summer school helping his friend Wesley who didn't speak English at the time. Andy went out of his way to include and support Wesley—translating when he could, making sure they were field trip partners, and helping him navigate the day with kindness and empathy. Throughout his time at UCA, Andy has built many meaningful relationships, but he has especially connected with Brent Gin, sharing many laughs and conversations. We will mostly miss Andy's gentle and friendly spirit. He has been a big brother figure to many, a dependable student, and a conversationalist who could chat about anything and everything.



## Volunteering and Partnership

At the beginning of the year during spring break, we had the joy of welcoming a team from Harvest Mission Community Church. Ten college students chose to spend their break serving in Chicago by partnering with local faith-based nonprofits, including UCA. They jumped right in: serving lunch, tutoring students, and helping with cleanup projects. One of our students put it best: “It’s cool how they come all the way here just to help us.” Their presence brought joy, encouragement, and meaningful connections that left a lasting impact on our students. Later in the season, during our Faith in Full Bloom event, volunteers from Living Water Evangelical Church joined us for the day. While teachers spent time engaging with and supporting parents, the Living Water team cared for students by helping with activities, snacks, and providing steady support behind the scenes. Their presence helped the day run smoothly and created space for deeper connection within our school community. These church teams reminded our students that they are seen, valued, and loved by the larger Body of Christ. To both Harvest Mission and Living Water Evangelical Church, thank you for showing up with open hearts and willing hands. Your generosity and service continue to encourage us all.



*“Kids are like little plants,” she says with a smile.*

*“We water them and help them grow.”*

-Miss Rachel  
K-5 Lead Teacher

## Ms. Rachel’s Journey So Far

When Rachel first joined UCA as a volunteer, she had no idea how deeply the experience would shape her future. “The Lord has given me the gift of teaching,” she says with quiet conviction. That gift, combined with her deep love for children, soon blossomed into a full-time role leading UCA’s K–5 after-school program. Today, she’s a steady presence at the heart of a program designed not only to support academic success but to nurture the whole child. For Rachel, this work is more than just a job, it’s personal. She sees each student as a seed, full of potential, just waiting to grow. And under Ms. Rachel’s care, those little plants are beginning to thrive.

## A Glimpse into the Classroom: UCA Dollars & Financial Responsibility

At UCA, we’re committed not only to academic growth but to helping our students develop the tools they need to thrive in all areas of life. That’s why we introduce financial literacy early on in ways that are both practical and fun. Students earn “UCA Dollars” each day by doing their chores, bringing their agendas, and helping one another. They use their earnings to pay weekly UCA rent, cover any fines, and shop at the UCA snack store on Fridays. It’s a system that teaches responsibility, encourages saving, and even gives them a taste of classroom fundraising. As third grader Angie put it with a big grin, “First, I like paying off my rent and then I save up to buy snacks!” Her excitement captures exactly what we hope for, students who are engaged, learning, and proud of the choices they make.

## Meeting Our Donors

One of the highlights of this year has been the chance to meet so many of you donors in person. It's been a joy to connect face-to-face over a cup of coffee. Sharing stories, yours and ours, has reminded us that behind every gift is a heart deeply committed to our kids. These moments have become sacred: hearing how God led you to partner with us and getting to share how He's moving at UCA. Thank you for showing up, not just with your generosity, but with your presence, encouragement, and prayers. It's made this year feel especially rich. We look forward to continuing these conversations and sharing more of what God is doing in the months to come.



## Easter at UCA

Our K–8 students celebrated Easter with our annual Easter egg hunt! Each student had the opportunity to collect six eggs filled with special prizes, candy, and UCA dollars. After the hunt, our younger students enjoyed a cross-themed craft activity—generously sponsored by one of our donors—while the older students had fun playing Easter Bingo. It was a joyful day as we came together to celebrate our risen Christ with our students.



## Our 8th Graders Are Closing Out the Year

We congratulate our graduating 8th grade class! Your hard work, dedication, and accomplishments—both in academics and extracurriculars—have been truly inspiring. As you step into this next chapter, we celebrate not only your graduation but also the exciting high school decisions you've made. Each choice represents a new journey filled with opportunities for growth and success. Though we will miss your presence in our program, we are excited to see all the incredible things you will go on to achieve. May this milestone be the foundation for even greater success, and may your journey be filled with opportunity, growth, and joy!



## *Thank You for Being Part of This Story*

Every time you give, visit, volunteer, or pray, you're helping shape something lasting in the lives of our students. We hope these stories have encouraged you as much as your support continues to encourage us. We're looking forward to all that's ahead and are grateful to be in this together.