

## Building Foundations



The Yang family has long held onto one of the first impressions Aristoi made on them.

James Yang explains, “I used to take the kids to school all the time. And, every morning, I would see the headmaster greeting and shaking the hands of every single student that he met at morning drop-off. To me, that really set the tone of earning respect and showing respect to all.” He continues, “It certainly set the tone of how I asked my children to interact with fellow students. That’s a memory I tell everyone. I was really surprised when I saw that.”

Jenny Yang, quickly jumps in, “We were so impressed. This was every morning and he would greet each student by their name.”

That foundational moment set the tone for the Yang's experience at Aristoi - and what they witnessed was just one of the virtues vital to the school's core. The nine Aristoi virtues are vital to the school's culture: honesty, wisdom, justice, courage, temperance, respect, humility, charity, and magnanimity. Blue and gold posters of the Parthenon designed with these virtues are hung up high in every classroom and office. The virtues are the foundation created at Aristoi. Together, they create the environment for forming responsible citizens of virtuous character in Aristoi's student body.

That first impression was made several years ago when the Yangs first joined the Aristoi family. Today, the Yangs attest that there are many more Aristoi events, administrators, students, and teachers that have made important and decisive impressions on them and their family. Many have affected their family culture. Shaking hands and showing respect was one of them. Another, according to Jenny, was finding the school that met and supported their values.

She says, “We struggled with choosing the best quality school education for our boys. We wanted our boys to have a voice in the system, but most importantly we wanted a foundation of positive learning. I think we made a great choice with Aristoi.”

Both Max (7th) and Zachary (10th) attend Aristoi's Upper School and have been Griffins for six years. Watching their sons progress through a curriculum that builds on a solid foundation and encourages them to be strong students is vital to the Yang family's philosophy.

“One of the benefits of classical learning is that students are taught through the different stages of learning. I actually have seen Max move through the Grammar stage with the tools, the

jingles, the poems, the tools of language. Now, he's in the Logic stage and he's questioning. He's a very curious person, so he is questioning the whys. We are able to have discussions of what is right and wrong, what is real and not real," Jenny continues, "Zachary is in the Socratic stage now, too. He is learning the arguments and how to think, and where to use that. I see the progress of the three stages."

Says James, "In a classical learning environment, our students are taught to question and interpret ideas to solve problems. Learning should be more than just about answering questions on a test or a worksheet."

Another Aristoi impression influenced Jenny to join in the Aristoi mission. Jenny reflects, "Aristoi has amazing teachers. The teachers actually inspired me to be a substitute teacher during our first three years at Aristoi. That's the best way to learn what the school is about - is to be on the inside. And, we're still learning."

"Wanting our kids to have a good sense of virtue -- that is available at Aristoi. We think that's very important. Knowing how to have compassion for those that are more in need, especially with COVID. We want them to be more caring and help others when they can. More important is to be a virtuous person. It shapes your character. It's not just about academics. It's about building character and virtuous people," emphasizes James.

"One of the previous headmasters talked about that -- to be hard workers, to have a good, strong character. Most importantly, he talked about how to tolerate and respect the differences between people. We have discussions within our family about it. We are all learning."

### **To Aristoi's donors and sponsors**

An attitude of thankfulness and charity is important, too. "First, I'd like to thank all the sponsors and donors. We've seen Aristoi grow as a school," James says, "We were at the elementary school and at Alief. We've seen the campus continue to improve. It's growing into a good facility." He goes on, "Even though we have excellent education provided by our teachers, it's certainly enhanced by the better facilities and equipment. Our students can always use that. Aristoi has definitely worked their time and investment. The community continues to rally through its fundraising activities through extracurricular activities. And, we certainly encourage everyone to participate when they can."

### **To Aristoi Parents**

"Embrace the Aristoi community. It's a caring community. We are all bound together by wanting to give the kids the best education available. In doing that Aristoi definitely has a very challenging curriculum. Your kids will definitely be challenged. So, give it your all!" James concludes.

Jenny enthusiastically adds, "We are all in!"