

WARRIOR WELCOME PACKET

RISING WARRIORS ACADEMY







WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Friends of Rising Warriors Academy,

It is with great joy and anticipation that I greet you as we begin this incredible journey together. At Rising Warriors Academy, we believe that each child is uniquely created by God with a purpose, a calling, and the capacity to make a lasting impact on the world. It is our honor to walk alongside your family in nurturing that God-given potential.

Our mission is simple but powerful: to equip every Rising Warrior with the spiritual fortitude, academic excellence, and practical skills needed to rise above life's challenges and live with faith, character, and purpose. This is more than an education—it's a training ground for life, rooted in Christ-centered values and fueled by a commitment to integrity, resilience, and excellence.

Here, our four pillars-Christianity, Academics, Occupational Skills, and Nutrition & Wellness-work together to shape the whole person. We study diligently, pray fervently, serve joyfully, and grow steadily in wisdom, strength, and grace. Whether our Warriors are engaging in hands-on learning, developing real-world skills, exploring God's creation, or worshiping together, every moment is designed to point them closer to Christ and prepare them for their divine calling.

At Rising Warriors Academy, culture is not just what we do-it's who we are. We are a community that believes in discipline with love, learning with purpose, and leading with courage. We remind our students daily of Ephesians 6:12-that our battles are not against people, but against the spiritual forces that seek to hold us back. And together, we equip them to stand strong, fight with faith, and live victoriously.

Thank you for trusting us with your most precious treasure—your child. We are excited to partner with you in building warriors who will shine their light in every sphere they enter. This is more than a school year—it's the beginning of a movement.

With faith, purpose, and anticipation for all God will do,

Founder, Rising Warriors Academy

Sherrie Sams

MEET OUR TEAM



Ms. Nia
Office Administrator



Frank Washington
Operations Manager



Rebecca Newby

Chief Academic Officer



Sherrie Sams



Codney Washington

General manager



Damon Thomas
Operations Manager



Evan Jones
Training Supervisor



Lucas Armstrong

Athletic Director



Mrs. Gwen

Director of Learning & Achievement

MEET MS.NIA



Nia Nelson WE Center WE Build, OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

With over a decade of dedicated experience in the field of administrative support, Nia Nelson is an essential member of the WE Center WE Build team. As an Office Administrator, Nia plays a crucial role in ensuring the smooth operation and efficiency of our office environment. Her expertise spans various aspects of administration, including office management, coordination, and communication, making her an asset to the organization. Nia's career is marked by her exceptional organizational skills and her ability to handle complex tasks with ease. She excels in managing daily office operations, streamlining administrative processes, and providing top-notch support to both staff and management. Her keen attention to detail and proactive approach have consistently contributed to the improvement of office productivity and employee satisfaction.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Nia is known for her positive attitude and her ability to foster a collaborative and supportive work environment. She believes in the power of teamwork and is always willing to lend a helping hand to colleagues, ensuring that the office runs smoothly and efficiently.

At WE Center WE Build, Nia's contributions are integral to our mission of building and maintaining a dynamic and innovative workplace. Her dedication and expertise continue to drive our administrative success and support the broader goals of the organization.

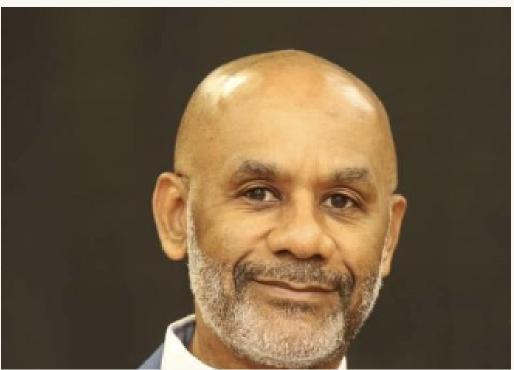
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FRANK WASHINGTON WE Center WE Build, ASST. PROJECT/OPERATIONS MANAGER

Frank Washington joined the WE Center WE Build team in 2022, taking on a dual role as a Certified Heavy Equipment Operations Instructor and providing oversight to subcontractors and trainees on build sites. With over 40 years of experience as a State Licensed Contractor, Frank's expertise spans commercial and residential construction. His comprehensive knowledge includes foundations, framing, project management, heavy equipment operation, carpentry, and concrete and masonry work. Throughout his career, Frank has managed a diverse range of construction projects. He has successfully completed over 50 residential home projects, each valued between \$100,000 and \$1 million. Additionally, he has specialized in excavation and hauling projects for various cities and municipalities for more than 30 years.

Frank is renowned for his thorough understanding of local building regulations and zoning laws, as well as his proficiency in cost estimation and budgeting. His ability to manage time effectively and prioritize tasks is complemented by his strong skills in procurement and construction documentation. Frank's leadership and communication skills have been pivotal in his professional success. We are proud to have Frank as a valuable member of the WE Center WE Build team.



CODNEY WASHINGTON WE Center WE Build, DIRECTOR

Codney Washington is a distinguished professional with over 30 years of experience in entrepreneurship and business management. He founded Washington Enterprises in Little Rock, Arkansas, focusing on residential remodeling, new construction, and excavation. Over time, this venture evolved into the WE Center WE Build, where Codney is currently the Director. He holds numerous certifications and instructs courses for the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), specializing in carpentry, landscaping, and project management.

From May 2022 to June 2023, Codney served as the Interim Director at The Pine Bluff Generator, a nonprofit dedicated to entrepreneurship and business development. In this role, he led strategic planning, program development, and implementation to enhance entrepreneurial and small business growth. He worked closely with board members, built community partnerships, and ensured compliance through thorough oversight and reporting.

From July 2010 to March 2020, Codney owned and operated Skateland LLC, a roller-skating rink in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. His team provided a variety of recreational activities, including roller skating, birthday parties, and youth programs. During this time, Codney developed teen enrichment programs, which significantly influenced

Earlier in his career, Codney held significant roles at Lockheed Martin IMS. As Deputy Project Director in Little Rock from October 1995 to June 1997, he managed payment processing operations, contract compliance, recruitment, and financial reporting. He later served as Project Director for the Arkansas Child Support Clearinghouse from July 1998 to August 2001, overseeing project operations, budgeting, and client relations.

his vision for the WE Center.

Codney also gained valuable experience in banking, working at Simmons First National Bank in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, in roles such as Items Processing Supervisor, and in positions at both Simmons First National Bank and First Commercial Bank. He earned a bachelor's degree in computer science from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff in 1993, studying subjects like programming, data structures, accounting, and business management. Codney is recognized for his excellent skills in business development and management, effective time management, and his ability to meet deadlines consistently.



EVAN JONES, WE Center WE Build, TRAINING SUPERVISOR

Evan Jones, a native of Pine Bluff, is dedicated to the transformative work at WE Center We Build, enhancing local neighborhoods and the broader community through innovative projects and youth initiatives. As the Training Supervisor at We Center, Evan spearheads efforts to advance community youth programs, nurturing future entrepreneurs and supporting their personal and professional growth.

In his role, Evan coordinates and implements youth programs, developing systems to measure performance and generating insightful reports to assess outcomes. He also manages marketing initiatives and oversees the company's website, ensuring it remains user-friendly. His responsibilities extend to real estate, where he identifies and negotiates acquisitions, ensuring compliance with zoning regulations while maintaining thorough transaction records. Additionally, Evan provides vocational training, fostering skills development and career advancement among young individuals.



DAMON THOMAS,
WE Center WE Build, PROJECT/OPERATIONS MANAGER

Damon Thomas serves as the Operations Manager at WE Build, where he plays a pivotal role in promoting community growth and stability through the management of home manufacturing components. With a career spanning over 25 years in the construction industry, Damon possesses extensive expertise in a multitude of areas including general carpentry, residential electrical work, plumbing, excavation, heavy equipment operation, project management, residential framing, concrete and masonry, trim carpentry, and asphalt roofing.

In addition to his operational duties, Damon is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of skilled tradespeople. He actively mentors' students at the WE Center, guiding those who have completed their foundational and core training modules and are now poised to gain hands-on experience in various vocational trades. Damon's commitment to education and practical training underscores his broader mission to support the community not only through construction projects but also through the empowerment of future professionals.



Lucas Armstrong Athletic Director

They say you can always judge the size of a man's character by the size of the obstacle that it takes to overcome him. Lucas Armstrong has triumphed obstacles even when the odds were against him. His message and true life stories of winning against his deadly encounters with life will encourage, challenge, and uplift any audience.

Lucas Armstrong has the reputation as one of the most respected and recognized names in schools and ministries throughout the United States. He is convinced that every human has a "winner within" and his message has delivered hundreds of youth from a life of depression, crime, drugs, and even suicide. Because of his own personal experiences and accomplishments at such a young age, Lucas is the ideal speaker to teach and inspire troubled youth to new levels of achievement.

"During my life's tenure, I have grown tremendously. Growing up in rural Arkansas presented many obstacles that I was determined to overcome. I was a premature child weighing one pound; doctors told my mom that I would probably not live to three years of age. From being verbally and physically abused as a child to struggling to develop and maintain a successful business, I know the feeling of triumph very well. In addition, I have witnessed others experience jubilation in surviving nearly fatal events."

Young, Dynamic, Powerful ...a Master at Inspiration.

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Rebecca Newby Chief Academic Officer

What inspired you to work in education?

I wanted to make sure that I could be there for students who fall between the cracks like I did my 9th grade year. Going from being an all-A student to barely passing a single class showed me just how much relationships with teachers matter. I come from a family of educators, and I had many amazing teachers from Dollarway who helped shape who I am—Dollarway will always be my foundation as I was there Kindergarden-9th. I attended five high schools in four years, and through every transition, I saw the impact of great teachers even beyond high school. I know without a doubt that I was called by God to serve in education—to stand in the gap and be a light for students who need someone to believe in them.

What is your educational and professional background?

Rebecca Newby is a Christ-led educator, mother, and servant leader from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, called by God to educate, build systems, and inspire generational change. By age 30, while raising her 10-year-old daughter, she earned a B.S. in English Education (Summa Cum Laude) from UAPB, an M.Ed. in Educational Equity from the University of Arkansas, and is completing her Ed.S. in Educational Leadership from A-State—all with a 4.0 GPA. She has served as a teacher, Director of Teaching & Leadership, Academy Director, and Principal of the #1 charter school in Arkansas, and now serves as Chief Academic Officer of Rising Warriors Academy, giving all glory to God for every step of the journey.

What is your vision for Rising Warriors Academy?

I envision RWA as a garden of goodness for the city of Pine Bluff-where we cultivate generations of leaders, business owners, and change-makers who are deeply rooted in faith, community, and purpose. Our students will not only be academically equipped but spiritually empowered to testify and declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ boldly. They will be the voices that speak up, the hands that build, and the hearts that serve—invested in their community and committed to sowing into the generation behind them.

What is your favorite part about working with students?

I love their personalities and how they're truly like sponges—students want to learn, and they are hungry for knowledge. Getting to know them as individuals is the most rewarding part. Everyone has a story, and if I can empower them to own theirs and share it, we can build stronger communities—both in and beyond the classroom.

What's one fun fact about you that students or parents might not know?

In her second year of teaching, Rebecca Newby went viral for her Cardi B-themed hall passes—but her students rarely used them because they wanted to be in class. That same year, her students broke records for most words read and earned Arkansas's "Beating the Odds" award for ELA growth. She later went viral again for speaking at a memorial candlelight ceremony honoring her student, Daylon Burnett, after a tragic school shooting in 2021. Daylon's name is now tattooed on her right (dominant) hand—a permanent reminder to keep telling his story and to carry forward the mission of giving every student a reason to rise.

Do you have a favorite quote or motto that guides your work?

"Students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." This quote grounds everything I do. Relationships are the foundation of learning, and students thrive when they feel seen, heard, and valued.

I'm also deeply inspired by Dr. Rita Pierson's words: "Every child deserves a champion—an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists they become the best they can possibly be." To me, a champion is someone who stands in the gap when a child doesn't yet see their own worth; someone who believes in them more than they believe in themselves. Every child deserves that. And I've made it my mission to be that champion for as many students as I can.



Gwendolyn Middleton-Rockett Director of Learning & Achievement

Gwendolyn Middleton-Rockett is a native of Southeast Arkansas, born and raised in Eudora. She is an accomplished nonprofit and higher education executive with more than a decade of leadership as President and Chief Operating Officer of Arkansas College Management Company. In that role, she led multi-campus operations, directed accreditation and compliance processes, and implemented systems that improved student retention, enrollment conversion, and academic quality. She now serves as Chief Operating Officer for Ambassadors for Christ Youth Ministries, providing strategic oversight for programs in Arkansas and Texas, including the launch and operation of Rising Warriors Academy, a nonprofit microschool model designed to prepare students in Southeast Arkansas for both college and career pathways.

Her career began in higher education and youth development, serving in TRIO Programs at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the University of Central Arkansas, where she worked to expand access to higher education for first-generation, underrepresented, and college-bound youth. She has also assisted in writing successful grant proposals that have secured funding to enhance educational opportunities and resources for students.

Gwendolyn holds three master's degrees from Webster University: a Master of Arts in Human Resource Management, a Master of Arts in Management and Leadership Studies, and a Master of Public Administration. She also earned a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design from the University of Central Arkansas.

Grounded in her strong faith in God, Gwendolyn was called to ministry as an evangelist nearly 20 years ago. She is currently a member of First Missionary Baptist Church in Little Rock. As a firstborn daughter, granddaughter, and niece in her close knit family, she often jokes with her siblings that the crown is great, but she was born to wear it. She teases that if God gave them her role for one day, they would be handing it right back. Her humor, faith, and determination continue to guide her as she looks for ways to make things happen for the people and communities she serves.





Sherrie Sams Founder

A visionary leader and steadfast advocate for youth, Mrs. Sherrie Sams founded Ambassadors For Christ Youth Ministries (AFC) in 2006. With established operations in both Texas and Arkansas, this faith- and community-based nonprofit has impacted the lives of more than 18,000 youth and young adults through a wide range of transformative programs, bringing hope and resources to those facing challenges such as mental health struggles, substance abuse, human trafficking, teen pregnancy, homelessness, and the barriers of reentry after incarceration.

In 2013, Mrs. Sams launched a Street Outreach Program to reach individuals at risk of homelessness directly where they were- on the streets- and connect them to critical resources. A year later, she established the Transitional Living Program, which for the past decade has provided up to 18 months of safe housing and wraparound support for young adults, including foster care alumni and college students without stable housing. Through strategic partnerships with the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Labor, she has expanded Ambassadors For Christ's reach by bringing prevention education into schools and offering housing, career training, counseling, and substance abuse services for justice-involved youth and returning citizens- all at no cost to participants or their families.

But God was not done! Earlier this year, Mrs. Sams stepped forward in faith to fulfill the vision God placed on her heart in 2017- the creation of Rising Warriors Academy. Rooted in Ephesians 6:12- "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world..." - Rising Warriors Academy is a Christ-centered microschool serving middle and high-school youth. Her vision was to create a safe, faith-filled environment where education goes beyond academics-fostering spiritual growth, mental resilience, and practical skills. Here, each Warrior is seen, heard, and challenged to rise, just as God intended.

Mrs. Sherrie Sams is more than a founder- she is a builder of warriors, a cultivator of resilience, and a living example of what it means to serve with purpose, vision, and unwavering faith.

CONTACT INFORMATION LIST

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Damon Thomas	damon@wecenterwebuild.com
Frank Washington	frank@wecenterwebuild.com
Evan Jones	evan@wecenterwebuild.com

MONDAY-THURSDAY

CLASS SCHEDULE

8:00am

Morning Devotion & Community Time

8:30am-11:35am VA- Academics & Occupational Courses

11:40am-12:25pm Lunch & Fellowship Time

12:30pm-1:00pm

P.E

1:05pm-2:05pm

Power Hour- Academic Review, Support, Medidation/Mindfulness Time

2:05pm-3:05pm

Clubs/Gardening/Shop/Projects

3:10pm-3:30pm

Afternoon Devotion & Community Time

3:30pm-4:00pm

Dismissal- Please pick up by 3:45pm

FRIDAY

CLASS SCHEDULE

8:00am

Morning Devotion & Community Time

8:30am-10:30am VA- Academics & Occupational Courses

10:30am-11:30pm

Power Hour- Academic Review, Support, Medidation/Mindfulness Time

11:30am-12:00pm Grab and Go Lunch & Fellowship Time

Rising Warriors are equipped with spiritual fortitude, academic excellence, and life skills to fulfill their God-given purpose.



CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

VIRTUAL ARKANSAS CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

- ➤ All Warriors are enrolled in flexible-paced Virtual Arkansas courses.
- > Warriors may work ahead and receive individualized support as needed.
- > Warriors are expected to complete all coursework with a spirit of excellence.
- > Daily check-ins with a facilitator help ensure academic success and encourage personal growth.

Rising Warriors Academy | Attendance & Curriculum Overview

- ❖ Facilitators will monitor grades and communicate consistently with families.
- Christ-centered excellence is the goal in every subject, every day.

Christian-Based Learning Environment

At our micro school, we are committed to nurturing the spiritual, academic, and personal growth of every student within a Christ-centered environment. As part of our daily rhythm, students will engage in age-appropriate prayer, daily devotionals, scripture study, and Christian-based discussions. These practices are thoughtfully integrated into the school day to encourage faith development, moral character, and a deeper understanding of God's love and purpose for their lives.

We believe that faith and learning go hand in hand, and our goal is to create a safe and supportive community where students are inspired to live out Christian values such as kindness, integrity, responsibility, and respect both in and outside the classroom.

AUGUST 2025 Rising Warriors Academy SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT **Important Dates** 30 31 01 02 Open House & Orientation Fall Semester Begins 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 13 15 16 **OPEN HOUSE &** ORIENTATION **Date Guide** 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 Instructional Days Holiday/ School Break School Events 24 **FALL SEMESTER** BEGINS



OCTOBER 2025 **Rising Warriors Academy** WED THU FRI SUN MON TUE SAT **Important Dates Date Guide** Instructional Days Holiday/ School Break School Events



DECEMBER 2025 Rising Warriors Academy SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT **Important Dates** 30 02 03 04 05 06 01 Christmas Break New Year's Eve 07 08 09 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 20 **Date Guide** 21 26 27 Instructional Days CHRISTMAS **CHRISTMAS** CHRISTMAS CHRISTMAS CHRISTMAS BREAK BREAK Holiday/ School Break 28 29 CHRISTMAS CHRISTMAS **NEW YEAR'S EVE** BREAK BREAK



FEBRUARY 2026 Rising Warriors Academy SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT **Important Dates** President's Day 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 14 **Date Guide** 17 18 19 20 15 16 21 Instructional Days PRESIDENT'S Holiday/ School Break School Events 22 23 28



APRIL 2026 Rising Warriors Academy WED THU FRI SUN MON TUE SAT **Important Dates Date Guide** Instructional Days Holiday/ School Break School Events





When does school start?

The first day of school is Monday, August 25.

What time should students arrive?

Students should arrive by 7:45 a.m. so they are ready to start classes at 8:00 a.m.

Where do I drop my student off in the morning?

Drop-off is in the circle area in front of the Training Center.

Should my child bring water?

Yes. We have water stations available, but we recommend students bring their own water bottles.

Can my child use their cell phone during the school day?

Yes, but only within school guidelines. Cell phones cannot be disruptive to the learning environment.

Where do I pick up my child?

Pick-up is in the same location as drop-off, in the circle in front of the Training Center.

Will lunch be provided?

Yes. Students will receive a catered meal Monday through Thursday and a catered portable or mobile lunch on Fridays.

What time is dismissal?

Monday through Thursday, school ends at 3:30 p.m., and students should be picked up by 3:45 p.m. On Fridays, school ends at 12:30 p.m. with pick-up no later than 12:45 p.m.

How do I contact the school?

You can call us at 870-868-0299.

What should my child bring on the first day of school?

Students should bring their water bottle, any required school supplies (list provided separately), and a positive attitude ready for learning.

What is the dress code?

Acceptable Attire

- Modest tops (no crop tops or plunging necklines)
- · Pants/skirts must be at the waist and knee-length or longer
- No offensive graphics or secular influences

Unacceptable Attire

- · Midriff showing, short shorts, sagging pants
- · Head coverings unless for religious purposes
- · Clothing promoting violence, profanity, or rebellion

What is the procedure if my child will be absent or late?

Please notify the school office as soon as possible if your child will be absent or late.

How will I be notified of school closings or emergencies?

Updates are provided on the Parent GroupMe Text Chat, by email to the address you have on file, and as a secondary method via phone call.

When is the first fundraiser?

Our first fundraiser is scheduled for the second week of September. More details will be shared soon.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

At Rising Warriors Academy, Christ is at the center of all we do. We believe that consistency, accountability, and excellence honor God-and our school culture reflects those values in both attendance and academics.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

"Every Day Counts"

School Hours

• Monday - Thursday: 7:30 AM - 3:30 PM

• Friday: 7:30 AM - 12:00 PM (Optional)

Arrival & Dismissal

- Please arrive by 7:45 AM to prepare for Morning Devotion, which begins at 8:00 AM sharp.
- Dismissal is at 3:30 PM; all students must be picked up by 3:45 PM. Supervision ends at 4:00 PM.
- Repeated late pickups may result in a parent meeting or administrative fee.

Absences

- Notify the school with a written excuse for all absences.
- Excessive unexcused absences may result in withdrawal.
- Call school by 8:00 AM to report absences and include the reason (especially for illness).

Tardies & Early Dismissals

- Frequent tardiness or early pickups disrupt learning and classroom flow.
- Please schedule appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

QR CODE FOR SCHOOL HANDBOOK



Rising Warriors Academy Media Release Form

Purpose:

Rising WarriorsAcademy (RWA), operated underAmbassadors for Christ Youth Ministries, may take photographs, videos, or other media recordings of students, parents/guardians, and staff during school activities, programs, and events. These images and recordings may be used in print, digital, and social media platforms to promote and share the mission, programs, and activities of RWA.

Authorization I hereby grant Rising Warriors Academy, Ambassadors for Christ Youth Ministries, and its representatives the right to take, use, and publish photographs, video footage, and/or audio recordings of myself and/or my child in connection with RWA activities.

This may include use in:

- Social media posts and stories
- Website content
- Printed promotional materials
- Newsletters and reports
- Press releases or media coverage
- Event or program advertising

I understand that these materials may be edited, copied, exhibited, published, or distributed, and I waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product.

I also understand that I will not receive payment or other compensation for the use of these images or recordings.

Release of Liability

I release RWA, Ambassadors for Christ Youth Ministries, its employees, and representatives from any claims, demands, and liabilities related to the use of the media described above.

Consent Options				
Please check one:				
 □ YES, I give permission for RWA to use photos, videos, and/or recordings of myself/my child as described above. □ NO, I do not give permission for RWA to use photos, videos, and/or recordings of 				
			myself/my child.	
Participant Name:				
If participant is a minor:				
Parent/Guardian Name:				
Signature:				
Date:				
Contact Phone:				

