



Arizona • Florida • Georgia • Nevada

## Student Spotlight 2022

### Rylea and Kimber Sutter Buckeye, AZ



Residing in the desert on the outskirts of Maricopa County, Ryan and Amanda Sutter undoubtedly live a different lifestyle than those in the more developed areas of Arizona. While not always easy, living in this region makes it possible for Ryan to fulfill his role with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and has also enabled the family to create additional income by farming alfalfa hay. The couple shares three young daughters – Rylea (8), Kimber (7) and Joanna (5). Their agricultural lifestyle has required them to be resourceful for many things, but thanks to scholarships from the AAA Scholarship Foundation they did not have to sacrifice their children’s education.

When their oldest daughter Rylea was preparing to enter Kindergarten, Ryan and Amanda were faced with the reality that they had very few school options in their area. The closest public elementary school was 40 minutes away and, to make matters worse, the schools they had to choose from received low ratings by the Arizona Department of Education due to poor performance – an issue that plagued many of the schools in Maricopa County. Knowing that Rylea – and eventually her younger siblings – would be spending a majority of their weekday hours in school and away from home, they worried the academic environment would not be suitable for their daughters.

“We want our children’s learning environment to be an extension of our home and our family, enabling them to thrive, to feel confident and to be guided on the right path,” says Amanda. “Unfortunately, the school options we had available at the time were not able to provide that for them.”

Just as they were feeling trapped due to their geographical and financial limitations, they learned that there was an opportunity for their daughters to learn in an environment that was familiar to their family – Grace Fellowship Academy, the academic extension of their church. Better yet, their family met the requirements to receive a tax credit scholarship from the AAA Scholarship Foundation, filling gaps in their income and enabling them to afford to send Rylea, and eventually her sister Kimber, to a school that was better aligned with their lifestyle and that met their expectations for a positive learning environment.

Now in the second grade, Rylea has blossomed at Grace Fellowship Academy, thanks to the close-knit atmosphere and small class sizes that enable her to feel comfortable and ask for help when needed. For example, when she encountered struggles with reading, the one-on-one support she received helped her overcome that hurdle without causing her to fall behind or limiting the



progression of the rest of her classmates. Rylea, who is naturally a quiet and reserved child, has also risen as a leader in her class, winning a character award as well as a recurring spot on the principal's list for her grades.



Kimber, currently in the first grade, is a vivacious member of her class and has developed a big love for reading, especially anything by Dr. Seuss. "I really love going to the library and my STEAM class," adds Kimber excitedly.

Amanda loves how the school cultivates a family-like environment and enables her to stay connected to her daughters' education through clear communication between parents and teachers, as well as the ability to engage in the classroom through volunteer work.

"Being at a school that meets their needs has truly fostered a love of learning for my children," says Amanda. "They are eager to learn new things every day, and even come home and play 'school' with one another, re-enacting what they learned – which to me, demonstrates what an incredible, positive impact their teachers are having in their lives."

Seeing her children thrive in school has also given her and her husband peace of mind.

"The AAA Scholarship Foundation has been a true blessing for our family," says Amanda. "I am in tears every year when we receive our approval letter for the scholarship because it relieves a huge amount of anxiety and worry, enabling our family to afford for our children to continue in an environment where they can thrive and grow and feel safe."

And perhaps her biggest appreciation is for the AAA donors who made it all possible.

"We are so incredibly thankful for the generous companies that fund AAA Scholarships," says Amanda. "Please know that every dollar donated makes a difference, not only for our family, but for so many other families and future generations. You are directly impacting children's lives and their futures. Thank you!"

### **About AAA Scholarship Foundation**

*AAA Scholarship Foundation promotes the advancement of education by administering educational choice programs. The typical AAA Scholarship student is an ethnic minority living with a struggling single parent/caregiver in a high crime community. More than 80 percent of these children are initially awarded AAA scholarships while living in households with annual incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Many are either below grade level, failing at their previous school or both when they first receive a scholarship. Parents, who find their children in these circumstances and are concerned about their future, look for viable options. They seek an atmosphere that challenges their children and will reverse inadequate learning, social patterns and potential lifelong negative impacts. They wish to change their children's learning environment, acquaintances and the unfortunate predictable outcomes associated with school failure.*

*AAA Scholarships are funded in Arizona, Florida, Georgia and Nevada by companies that redirect a portion of their state tax liability to the AAA Scholarship Foundation in exchange for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit. AAA Scholarship Foundation is one of the only 501(c)(3) nonprofit scholarship organizations approved to administer these legislatively-authorized tax credit scholarship programs in multiple states. AAA Scholarship Foundation provides your company with the convenience and efficiency of a single solution for participating in multiple state tax credit scholarship programs. For more information, or to learn how your company can participate in the program, visit [www.AAAScholarships.org](http://www.AAAScholarships.org), or contact Kerri Vaughan at [kerri@aaascholarships.org](mailto:kerri@aaascholarships.org) or 888-707-2465 ext. 730.*