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## Student Spotlight 2022-2023

### The Adema Family

Reno, NV



One could say that Rebekah and Cole Adema were destined to help those in need. The couple met when they were both first responders – Rebekah working in law enforcement and Cole as a paramedic.

“In our line of work, we often encountered situations that showed us what a tremendous need there was for children to have advocates and to live in safe and loving homes,” recalls Rebekah. “In our hearts, we knew we were called to do something more to help. One of the first things we talked about when we got married was that we wanted to become foster parents – so that we could be advocates for those who can’t advocate for themselves.”

In a few short years, the Ademas have grown to a family of six, with them welcoming two biological children (now ages 1 and 4), as well as two adopted children – Tatiana and James (now ages 8 and 7). Biological siblings, Tatiana and James had a difficult start in life. Tatiana entered foster care when she was 7 months old, and her younger brother James was placed in foster care as a newborn. After enduring neglect and abuse from their biological mother, as well as their foster parents, the siblings were placed with the Ademas in the Spring of 2020 when Tatiana was in Kindergarten and James was in preschool. However, before they could begin to adjust to their new home, the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

“Within a short period of time, we became their parents, teachers – everything – all while trying to adapt to one another,” recalls Rebekah.

In addition to the trauma they experienced early in life, both Tatiana and James were born with a genetic condition that causes small stature and other developmental issues. By the time they came to live with Rebekah and Cole, both children were significantly delayed as no one had helped them with basic skills or educational resources to overcome their learning difficulties. Determined to get them the help they needed, the Ademas sought out assistance from professionals, including additional evaluations by a psychologist. Both professionals agreed that Tatiana and James should be retained in their current grade level to so that they could acquire the skills necessary to move forward in their education. However, when schools opened back up that fall and the Ademas presented their findings and concerns, the administration at the public school disagreed and insisted that the children continue to the next grade level.

“Almost immediately after starting first grade, Tatiana struggled,” says Rebekah. “She was so far behind academically and she recognized it, causing her to have a lot of anxiety and behavior issues.”

In contrast to their struggles with the school, the Ademas were making progress in the court system, and were able to officially adopt Tatiana and James in October 2020. Within hours of signing the adoption papers, Rebekah and Cole unenrolled Tatiana and James from their public school and enrolled them in The King’s Academy, a local private school

that could better address their learning needs. And to ease their financial burden, they learned that both children were approved to receive tax credit scholarships from the AAA Scholarship Foundation (AAA).

Being placed in the right environment – both at home and school – has made all the difference in the world for Tatiana and James. Two years after finalizing their adoption and changing schools, Tatiana and James are thriving. The positive change the children have experienced is a direct result of the combined efforts by the Ademas and the King’s Academy teachers and administrators, as well as occupational and speech therapy.

Tatiana’s teachers work with her consistently to conquer her struggles, which in turn has boosted her confidence.

“She used to question her answers in class because she was so unsure of herself,” says Rebekah. “But thanks to her teachers, she now feels valued and has confidence in her capabilities. She has also learned how to communicate her feelings and frustrations in a better way, instead of shutting down and acting out.”

For James, conquering the little things are leading to big achievements. He has struggled with grip strength, which made writing a point of frustration for him. However, thanks to individualized help from his teachers, he is mastering his handwriting skills and setting new goals along the way.

The Ademas credit their progress to the those who have helped them along the way – including the caring staff at The King’s Academy and the AAA donors who made it possible for their children to learn in an environment where they could overcome their struggles and obtain the skills necessary to create a bright future.

“AAA Scholarship Foundation and its donors have given us a peace of mind and so much hope for our children’s future,” says Rebekah. “Receiving the scholarship lifted a huge weight from our shoulders and has created countless opportunities for our children. We are so grateful!”

### **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.*