



Arizona • Florida • Georgia • Nevada

Student Spotlight 2026

The Gary Family

Tucson, AZ



As the devoted parents of four children, Lauren and Matthew Gary understand how wildly different each child can be, each with their own unique qualities, needs, and abilities. Seeing firsthand how each of their children has needed their own individual approach to learning, the Garys are grateful that the AAA Scholarship Foundation (AAA) has given them the ability to provide the right educational environment for them.

Matthew, an Arizona native, has been a firefighter in Tucson since 2001. Lauren, originally from Florida, moved to Texas for Baylor University before settling in Tucson, where she met Matthew at church. They married in 2014 and have four children: Liam, Madelyn, Finley, and Oliver.

When Liam was ready to begin school, Lauren and Matthew evaluated various local educational options. Concerned by Arizona's low public education rankings, they determined that Tucson's schools might not provide the optimal environment or structure for their son. Complicating matters, Liam was beginning Kindergarten at the height of the Covid pandemic in 2020.

Lauren remembers, "At that time, I seriously thought about homeschooling because we didn't believe we could afford other options like private schools. But everything changed when we discovered scholarships offered by organizations such as the AAA Scholarship Foundation."

With their financial barriers lifted, the Gary family was able to enroll Liam at Pusch Ridge Christian Academy. The school, affiliated with their church, provided both a sense of familiarity and the educational opportunities they desired for their children. Over time, Liam's three younger siblings have also joined him at Pusch Ridge Christian, thanks to the continued support of AAA Scholarships. This has allowed all four children to benefit from a nurturing environment tailored to their individual needs.

Now in the 5th grade, Liam has excelled in school thanks to the accelerated curriculum which has provided a much-needed challenge for the self-motivated 11-year-old.

“Liam has always been very driven and a high achiever,” says Matthew. “Academically, he could be a grade ahead in school,” adds Lauren. “Because learning comes so easily for him, his teachers have been great at challenging him academically while at the same time holding him accountable to ensure he is striving to reach his full potential.”

During his time at Pusch Ridge Christian, Liam has developed a strong interest in history and the performing arts, securing a lead role in the school's Shakespeare production and participating as a clarinetist in the band program. He has also honed his public speaking abilities through involvement in the school's speech program. As he completes his elementary education, Liam is preparing for middle school this fall, where he plans to join the flag football team.

Madelyn, the Gary family's second eldest child, followed a significantly different journey than her older brother. She encountered academic challenges early on, facing obstacles such as an ADHD diagnosis and bilateral amblyopia, a condition that impairs vision in both eyes and hinders their ability to focus together. Despite the use of prescription eyeglasses, Madelyn continued to have difficulty with her vision, which significantly affected her reading and academic progress. Participation in a vision therapy program, combined with the dedicated support of her first-grade teacher who provided hands-on assistance and tutoring, enabled Madelyn to begin overcoming these difficulties. Her advancement persisted, and she was able to catch up academically thanks to further help from her second-grade teacher.



Lauren recalls, “Madelyn faced major challenges that at one time seemed impossible. However, she never gave up, often putting forth double the effort compared to some of her peers. Now in third grade, Madelyn is succeeding academically without extra tutoring, thanks to the supportive school environment and dedicated teachers.”

“Absolutely,” Matthew says. “We feel very thankful that Madelyn was able to get the help she needed when she did—otherwise, I doubt her progress would have been as remarkable. For instance, she now enjoys reading. There was a period when I never imagined hearing her ask, ‘Dad, can I read to you?’”

The two youngest siblings have also settled in well at Pusch Ridge Christian. Finley, who is energetic and fearless, is wrapping up her first-grade year. She excels academically, with a particular passion for science and space, aspiring to become an astronaut—she even dressed up as one for Halloween and as Neil Armstrong for her school's literary day. Oliver, the youngest,

was thrilled to start kindergarten alongside his siblings this year. Motivated and prepared, he practiced for kindergarten with Finley and was ready to jump right in from day one. He enjoys reading books and collecting rocks, often filling his pockets with stones to bring home.

“AAA Scholarships have allowed us to enroll our children in a school that supports their growth and helps them reach their unique potential,” says Lauren. “The teachers understand their strengths and encourage them to overcome obstacles without easing expectations—a lesson that’s important because life won’t lower standards for them, so they need to learn to embrace challenges. The school is preparing them for the future and nurturing the qualities they’ll need as successful adults.”

“We are so grateful to the AAA Scholarship Foundation and all the donors,” adds Matthew. “Your support represents more than a tax obligation; it is truly impacting lives and has a ripple effect that will last generations and make a difference in our society as a whole.”

About AAA Scholarship Foundation

The typical AAA Scholarship student is either below grade level, failing at their previous school, or both, when they receive an income-based scholarship. Parents who find their children in these circumstances and care about their future look for viable options. They seek an atmosphere that challenges and engages their child to reverse inappropriate learning and/or social patterns and the lifelong negative impact they imply. They wish to change their child’s learning environment, acquaintances and the unfortunate predictable outcomes associated with school failure. Another is the first-time student, who is just entering kindergarten. Parents, wanting to empower their child’s academic journey from day one, choose the AAA scholarship so that their child will have a quality education tailored specifically for their learning needs ensuring their time in school is a seamless experience from K-12. Your contributions to AAA provide the lifelines that these parents need.

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, or contact Kerri Vaughan at kerri@aaascholarships.org or 888-707-2465 ext. 730.