

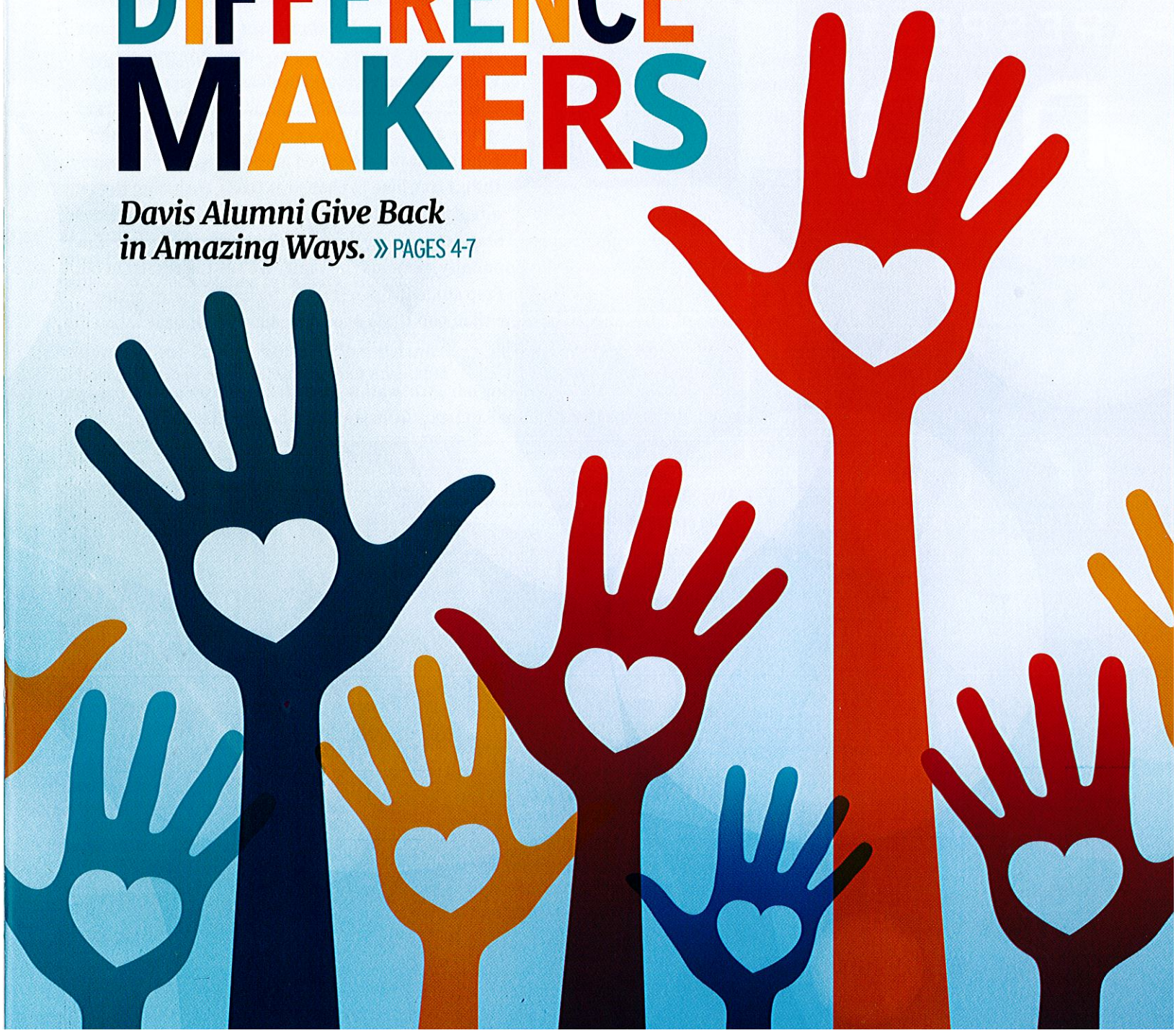
Alumni JOURNEYS

2017 ISSUE

Magazine

DIFFERENCE MAKERS

*Davis Alumni Give Back
in Amazing Ways. » PAGES 4-7*



Alum Giving Back to Davis Through Leadership Role

Russell Falkenstein, Class of 2002, is making Davis Academy history by becoming the first alum to serve on the school's Board of Trustees, opening the door for a new generation of leadership. When presented with the opportunity to join Davis Academy's 2017-2018 Board, Falkenstein says he embraced the idea because he wants to do his part to ensure that future generations of students benefit from the same kind of lasting impact that The Davis Academy made on his

life in so many ways. For one, Falkenstein said he'll never forget how much his teachers cared and always helped when students struggled. "The kind of personal attention students receive at Davis is unrivaled and really made a difference in my growth and confidence," said Falkenstein.

The Davis Board position is one of many important changes Falkenstein, 28, has experienced in the last year. In addition to this honor, he also celebrated his wedding with his wife Corinne, moved from New York to Atlanta, started a new job, and settled in to a new home. Formerly a consultant for the turnaround firm Alvarez & Marsal in New York City, Falkenstein now works as Vice President of Strategic Analytics & Financial Planning for Aaron's, Inc. Aaron's is a leading omni-channel provider of lease-purchase solutions based in Atlanta.

His strong connections to The Davis Academy and its people also make his return in this new capacity a special fit. Not only was Falkenstein part of one of the earliest classes at the school, but other family members including siblings and cousins were Davis Academy students as well. And even after attending high school at The Woodward Academy and then graduating with a degree in Business Administration from The George Washington University, he remains exceptionally close to many of his Davis Academy friends.

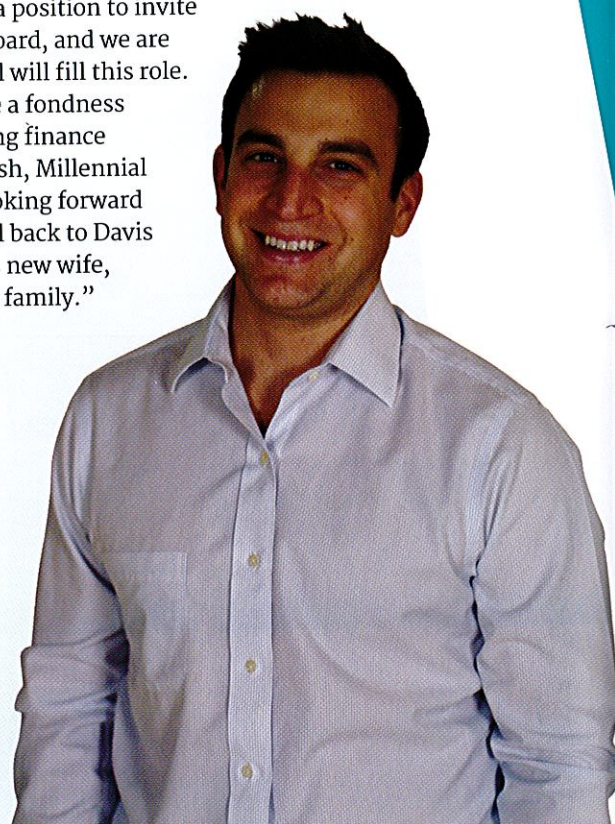
"The Davis Academy is truly a community," he said, "and it's those relationships that have meant so much to me and are part of shaping the person I've become."

Falkenstein realizes that The Davis Academy has undergone a lot of change since he graduated 15 years ago, including the addition of a Middle School building, which didn't yet exist. As he prepares to return in this role to help lead the school, Falkenstein says he is

impressed at how Davis has grown to become a leader in education offering students exciting opportunities, such as coding classes and other technology-focused programs, that are keeping Davis "on the cutting edge" of education.

Davis Academy Immediate Past President Debbie Kurzweil is thrilled that Falkenstein will be joining the Board of Trustees, especially as the school begins its 25th year. Says Kurzweil: "The Davis Academy is so dynamic with incredible offerings that sometimes we forget just how young a school it really is. It's wonderful that the nominating committee is now in a position to invite an alum to join the Board, and we are delighted that Russell will fill this role. He brings to the table a fondness for the school, a strong finance background and a fresh, Millennial viewpoint. We are looking forward to welcoming Russell back to Davis and to welcoming his new wife, Corinne, to the Davis family."

"I'm excited to be joining the Board," said Falkenstein. "I hope I can bring a new perspective and help Davis continue to evolve as a great school, supported by great values, that serves an important role in the community."



Fulbright Scholar Studies Maternal Healthcare in Chile

Davis Academy alumna **Amanda Harris**, Class of 2008, has recently embarked on a unique and inspiring journey to study and analyze health care issues of indigenous people in northern Chile. This experience is a nine-month research project which she was awarded as a recipient of the 2016 Fulbright U.S. Student Award. Harris arrived in March to begin her important work, to follow her passion and to continue her path toward a career in the field of public health.

Her project is an extension of research that she conducted as a Washington University undergraduate student during a semester abroad in southern Chile, where she studied the maternal healthcare system. Her winning Fulbright research proposal focuses on studying and analyzing an intercultural birthing initiative involving Aymara women who live in the Arica and Parinacota Region in northern Chile. There, midwives in the contemporary Chilean healthcare system work alongside Aymara parteras, who use distinct methods such as herbs and massages to assist Aymara women in labor and delivery in a hospital.

On the local level, Harris seeks to understand the coordination and the effectiveness of the initiative. But she also believes there could be broader implications for the program in which the modern medical system accommodates the practices of indigenous peoples for the benefit of the patient. To that end, Harris hopes to discover what can be learned from this program in northern Chile that could be implemented on a global scale in places where modern and traditional cultures co-exist.

As an anthropologist, this research fits well with her long-term career interests and goals. "Promoting public health, especially for under-served and marginalized communities, is my passion," explained Harris.

As part of her Fulbright scholarship, Harris will also have an affiliation with the University of Tarapacá in Arica, Chile, where she is taking a medical



anthropology class and working closely with an advisor who has worked with the Aymara population.

Harris remembers her Davis Academy years fondly and says that she always felt supported and safe to explore her interests – everything from intellectual curiosities to sports and theater. "Davis gave me a wonderful foundation, which allowed me to continue to explore and carry my determination to learn more about the world. Through my years at Davis, I was taught to stay curious, be respectful and remain compassionate."

During her nine-month Chilean residency, she looks forward to getting to know the beautiful coastal region where she is living and working, which

is surrounded by desert and nearby mountains. And, while she says her Spanish is good, she expects to become more fluent in the language before she leaves. The research program ends in late November, but Harris says she may travel for a while and return to the states by 2018. Graduate school is likely the next phase of her journey.

"I am really excited for this year of exploration," says Harris. "I feel incredibly lucky to have this opportunity and the resources to learn more about intercultural maternal health care, and I hope to bring my knowledge back to the United States and apply it in a meaningful way."

Follow Amanda's blog, "Exploring Chile," at <https://holachilesite.wordpress.com>.