



*Our Mission:  
Supporting improved  
educational opportunities for  
the children and youth of the  
isolated Malësia e Madhe  
region of Northern Albania*

President: Steve Cook, PhD

Secretary: Terri Cook

Albania Manager: Marash Rakaj

Executive Dir: Kristina Milaj

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### *From the President*

Our year started with a bit of a kerfuffle as I could not go to Albania due to the expiration date on my passport. While it expired after I would return from Albania, the rule (which I was not aware of) says it has to expire three months after my return. I learned this the day of departure. Unfortunately, we were not able to sponsor the annual school competition, however, the year was still a good one for us. We have expanded our donations to two more schools in the Shkrel School District. The villages of Reç and Zagore now receive kindergarten supplies and library books from AAI. Students from these two villages are now also eligible to apply for our university scholarships. Over the mountains in our other school district, Kelmend, we are trying to open a kindergarten in the village of Vukel. However, we are having difficulty finding a teacher because qualified people tend to leave the village. We will continue to look for a teacher.

In October, we welcomed a new board member, Jen Gervais, who has generously agreed to donate her time and knowledge of running non-profit organizations to AAI.

I want to personally congratulate Marin Malotaj, one of our star AAI university scholarship students. Marin finished second in an extremely competitive entrance exam to the Engineering Master Degree program at Tirana University. Well done, Marin! We're all proud of you.

In September, AAI Secretary, Terri Cook organized a twentieth anniversary celebration at a local winery near Corvallis. It was well attended and it was wonderful to see such a large turnout, including many long-time supporters of AAI. Below are some photos from the event.

Thank you to you, the donors, who have made it possible to continue our support of the educational opportunities in this little corner of the world.  
*Steve Cook, President*



### Scholarship Applicants for the 24-25 School Year

Denisa Pepaj	Math/Informatics	Masters	Fifth Year	Vrith
Ernest Gjelij	Math Education	Masters	Fourth Year	Vukel
Marin Malotaj	Civil Engineering	Masters	Fourth Year	Bzhete
Rozalba Malotaj	Physiotherapy	Bachelors	Third Year	Bzhete
Anjeza Mitaj	Nursing	Bachelors	Second Year	Selce
Denada Pepaj	Biology/Chemistry	Bachelors	First Year	Vrith
Desara Volaj	Psychology	Bachelors	First Year	Brozë
Leonida Naçaj	Physiotherapy	Bachelors	First Year	Kozhnje

## KINDERGARTEN CUTIES



## WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBER JENNIFER GERVAIS

Jen is a wildlife ecologist who worked for many years for a small nonprofit organization focused on wildlife conservation and management. She now works in pesticide risk communication at the National Pesticide Information Center. She has a lifelong background in informal science education. Other interests include riparian restoration on the land she owns with her husband, pretty much



any activity as long as it is outdoors, and working with her blind and deaf dogs. She hopes to make a substantive contribution toward guiding AAI into the coming years, and to the rest of the team.

## NEW FUNDRAISER



AAI partnered with Altrusa International Foundation of Corvallis to run one of the Grab n Go concession stands at the OSU home football games. We are grateful for this opportunity. Pictured above are Kristina Milaj, Executive Director, and her brother Bernard Milaj. A huge shoutout to Bernard for his volunteer efforts. He worked nearly all the games for us.



I want to thank you for the support you have given me for years. The scholarship means a lot to me, considering the expenses of a student and the place where I live. With the scholarship I received from AAI, it was easier for me to buy books, pay for transportation and rent.

Denisa Pepai



I am very grateful for the scholarship I received from you, this is a good help for me because the cost of rented houses, textbooks and school fees are high. Thank you very much!

Ernest Gjelaaj

