

# PALMARIUM

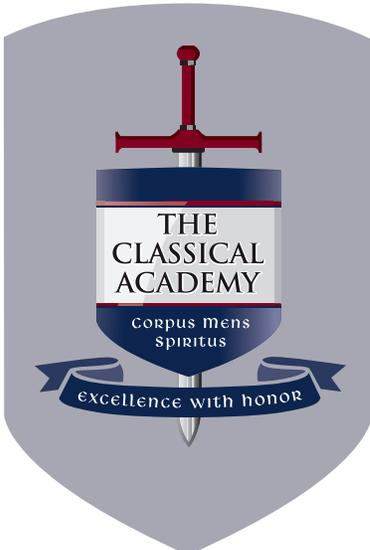
## Parent Survey



The **Parent Survey** for this year included 1,366 responses across all TCA schools. A quick **snapshot of the results**: the *fifth best all-time overall positive response rate* (covering 21 years of data) and four of the six common question areas reached **10-year highs** (or *5-Year for the homework question*) including **academic prep, communication, character, and homework**. Nearly 45% of all areas TCA-wide attained 5-year bests and three common questions reached 9-year bests on *strongly agree* response rate (see page 4). **Areas of focus include** maintaining these strong results, homework, and facilities. Thanks to all that participated - your feedback is greatly appreciated.

## Engaging Minds: Beyond the Book Club

As the school year winds down and we wrapped up the last book study of this school year in April it is time to look forward to next year. These *Beyond the Book Club* studies started in 2015, and when including the titles for next year (see page 2) we will have covered 38 unique book titles in over 80 different book studies in those nine years. Hundreds of participants including staff, parents, administrators, and board members have participated in this effort over the years. Thanks to all that have given up 90-minutes of their time to engage on a topic of interest. For 2023-2024 we have four new titles to add to our growing list. The goal is for us as a community to wrestle with relevant topics pertaining to our endeavors as a school and as individuals. The selected books are ultimately designed to stimulate conversation and intellectual discourse. If you'd like to be added to the RSVP list for next year's studies let me know at [wjolly@asd20.org](mailto:wjolly@asd20.org)



In this month's main article, Dr. Sojourner shares his last message with the TCA community, bookending his first in the August 2014 PALMARIUM. In addition, you can learn about the American Cancer Society fundraising tally, hear the founder's thoughts on the TCA *mission statement*, see the Parent Survey results and the history of TCA's state championship efforts over 25 years, and find out next year's *Beyond the Book Club* study titles.

The Editor

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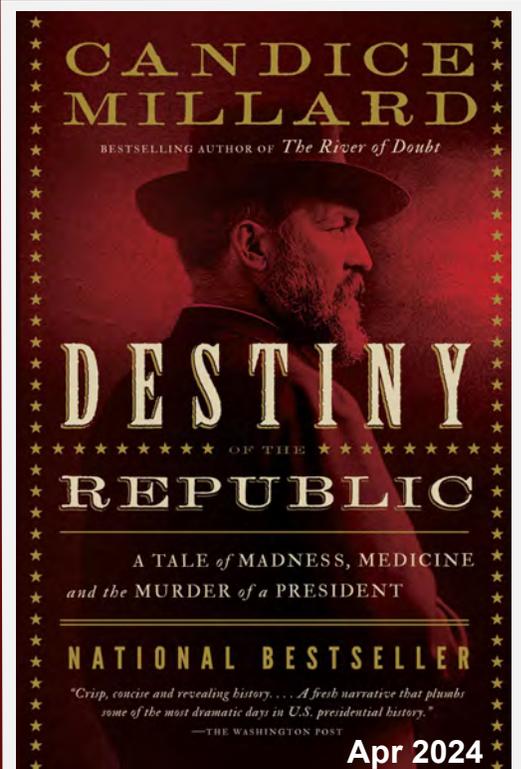
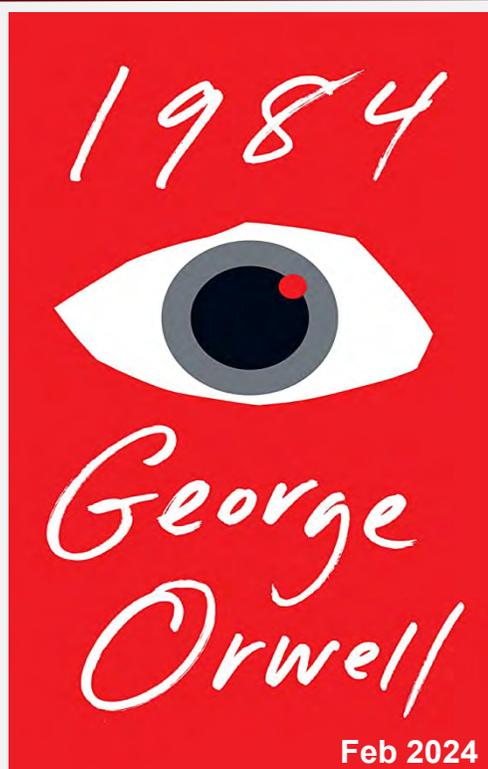
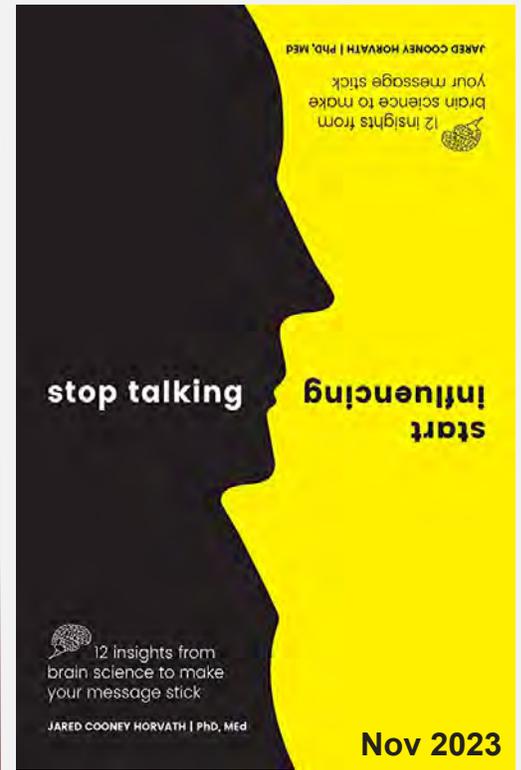
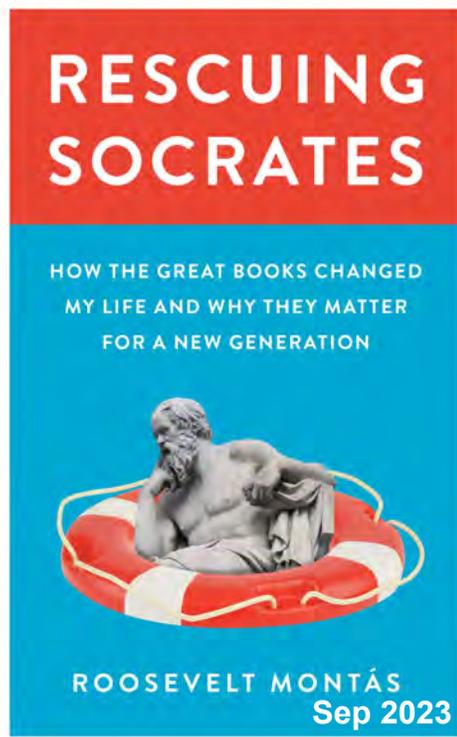


# Fundraiser

# Engaging Minds: Beyond the Book Club

## American Cancer Society

Since 2018, except for the 2020-21 school year, TCA has held several fundraisers for local, state, and national organizations. Those organizations were selected by our students. Included in that list are *Children's Hospital of Colorado*, *Wounded Warrior*, the *Make-A-Wish Foundation*, and this year the **American Cancer Society**. Through separate fundraising events at each of our seven schools this year TCA has donated over **\$80,000** to the American Cancer Society. Their mission statement is "to improve the lives of people with cancer and their families through advocacy, research, and patient support, to ensure everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer." See page 6 for some images from the North Elementary and Junior High events in the month of May. For the 2023-24 school year TCA will be supporting **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital**.



# SELECTIONS 2023-2024

Dear TCA family,

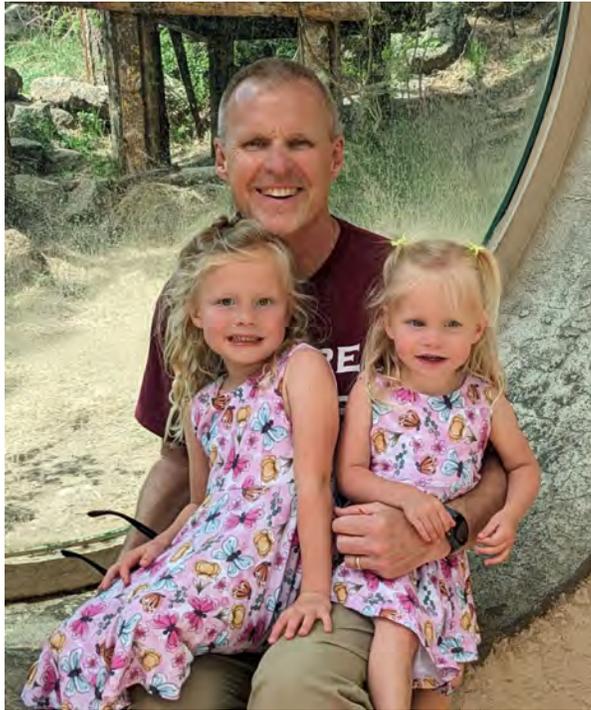
Palmarium Editor extraordinaire and Director of Academic Services Wes Jolly asked me a number of months ago if I'd be willing to write a farewell article, for inclusion in this last K-12 newsletter edition of the year (Volume 75!). Since then, I've put off writing until the very last deadline minute, knowing with some growing sense of dread that saying farewell means I'm getting close to parting with TCA. "Close" being a somewhat relative term, as I'm still "The President Around Here" (a phrase I've uttered literally hundreds of times – usually from some sort of stage when I address a large group of TCA community members) until August 1st, when my good friend and colleague Dr. Robert Thomason will take over this incredible position of President.

So, you ask, "Why the dread? You now get to ride off into the sunset, celebrating 19 great years at this amazing school, where you led great people doing great things for great kids and families, while now turning your focus to spending more time with your great family – including the three most important people in your life – your wife of almost 40 years and high school sweetheart Lori, and your two beautiful granddaughters Rosie and Louisa?" (I can't resist including a recent picture, as one of my last most blatant and final attempts at bragging).

Why the dread? That's an easy one... because I dearly love this place, with all of my heart. And I'm going to miss TCA more than I'll ever be able to put into words. But taking one last shot...

Nine years ago, shortly after taking over as President, I wrote

my first article for the Palmarium, aptly titled "I Love TCA." In that piece, I described a little of the path that led me to my current position, and I listed some of the specific reasons that I love this place. Pulling from that list, and reminding you of what we already know about The Classical Academy:



## I Left My Heart ... at TCA

- Kids really do stay kids longer here.
- Character continues to count. And we've never lost sight of the fact that educating in morals is just as important as educating in intellect.
- Our parent-teacher partnership is special, and cherished.
- We passionately value community.
- It all starts with love, kindness, caring, grace, and...relationships, relationships, relationships.
- Small schools and small classrooms, where no child is invisible.
- Parents, teachers, and staff who are sincerely grateful for each other, and for our complementary roles in developing exemplary citizens

As I think of the list above, and as I contemplate what it means to say farewell, it's impossible for

me not to reflect, ever so briefly, on the magnetic draw that pulled me to TCA's doors almost two decades ago. As I was about to retire from the Air Force back in 2004, I was handed a TCA promo video (titled "Our Hope for the Future") as I considered applying to be our very first junior high school principal. Two comments in that video that jumped out at me, quotes that I will remember forever, and for which I will be forever grateful:

*"TCA is all about producing a culture of service, of taking responsibility for your actions, a culture of having the moral courage to do the right thing."* (Former TCA President Mark Hyatt)

*"Being involved with TCA is probably the most important and meaningful thing I've ever done. If I get hit by a bus tomorrow, I'll go to my grave knowing I did something that mattered."* (TCA Founder Jim Kretchman)

The TCA I know, the TCA that I have led, and the TCA that I love, has indeed been not only all about the academic success of our children and their pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness, but also of our children's service, and responsibility, and moral courage to do the right thing. So as I prepare to close the book on my own involvement here, I too will someday go to my grave knowing I did something that mattered.

Please never forget that "TCA will always have the freedom to be **about something**" (thank you again Jim Kretchman), and will always be unique, special, countercultural, and... extraordinary.

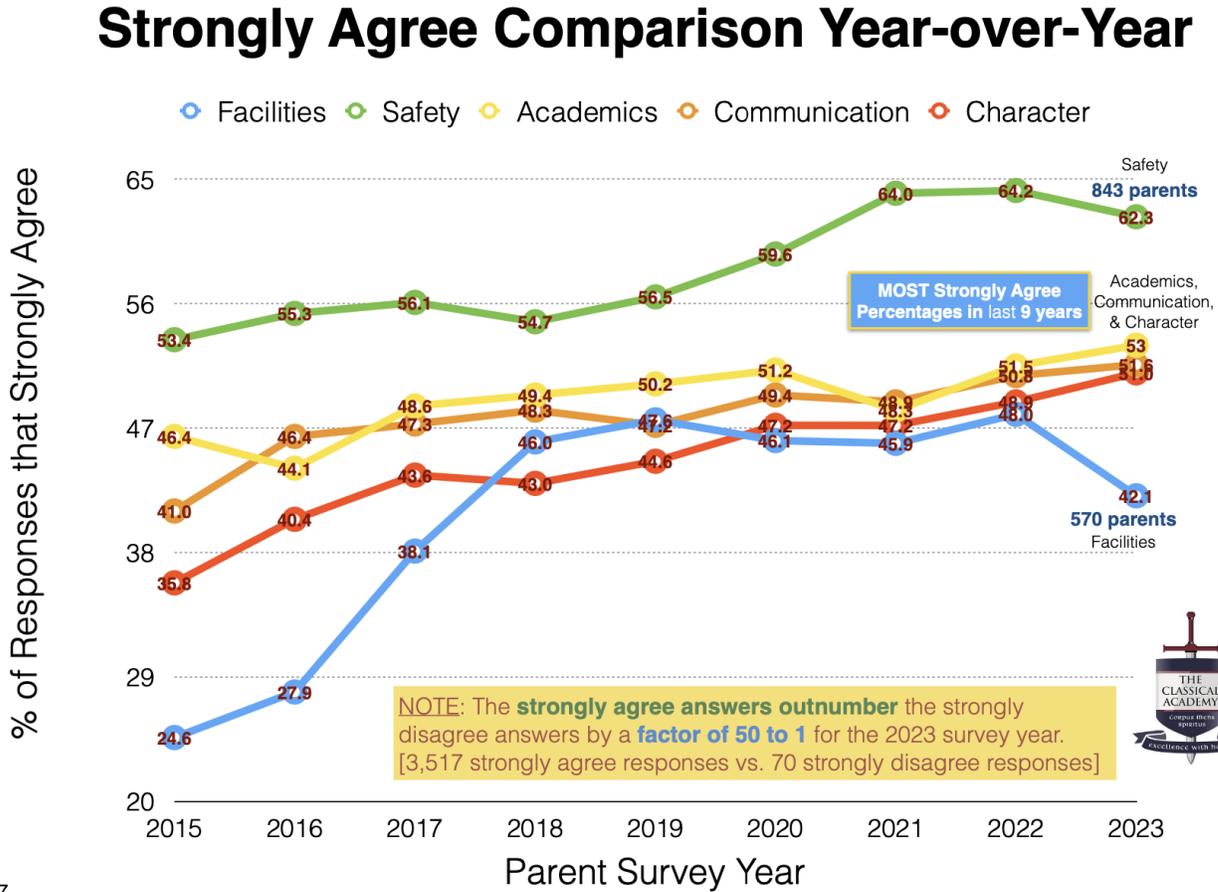
Thank you, deeply, for allowing me to journey with you.

With utmost respect,  
Russ Sojourner



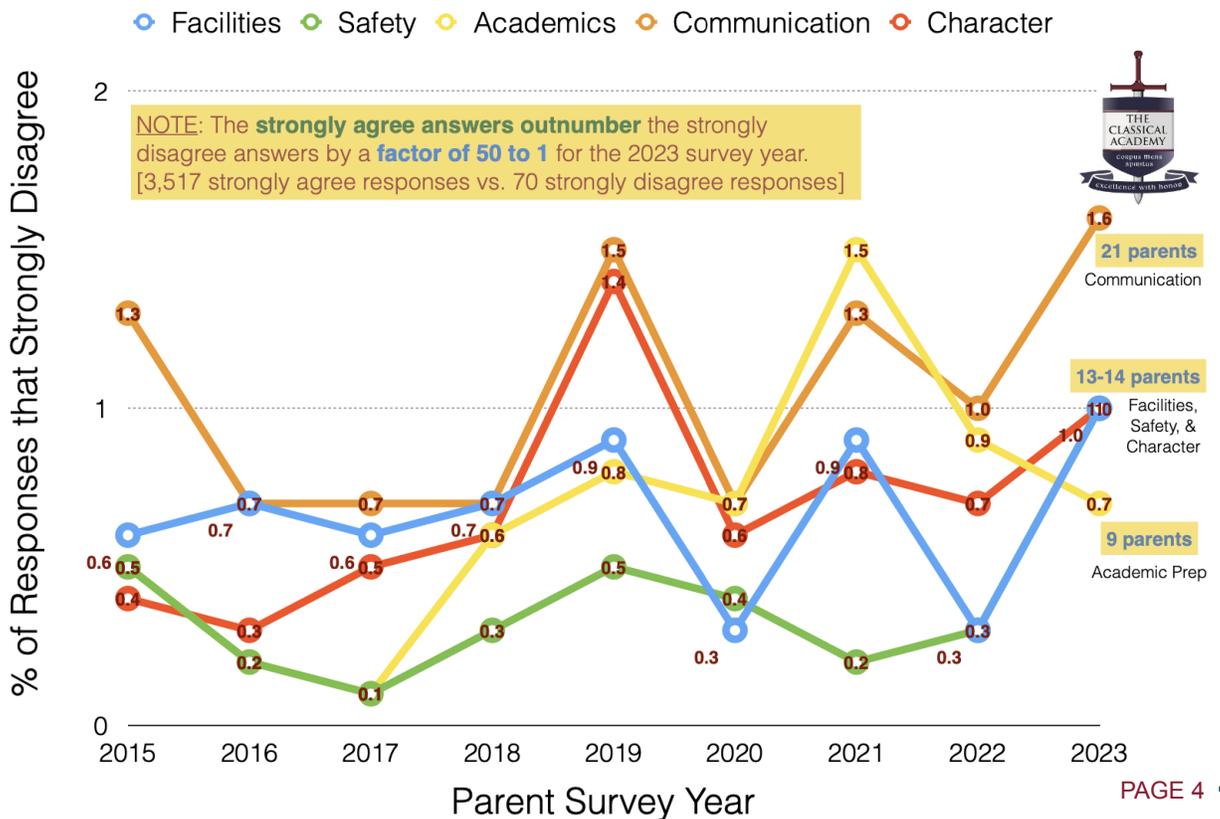
# PARENT SURVEY: Strongly Agree / Disagree

27



## Strongly Disagree Comparison Year-over-Year

28



**R. Sojourner:** I know of schools that have mission statements. I know of organizations that have mission statements where people cannot recite any piece of the mission statement. Our mission statement is still hugely important to us and I would like, if any of you have a thought about our mission statement, what do you believe are the important pieces? I would love for you to remind us of what those pieces are. Jim, I am staring right at you.

**J. Kretchman:** There are only thirty-four words and they are all pretty important. So, if I had to pick, I would say “analytical thinking.” I think, it is a little harder to understand what we meant when we wrote those words. It dawned on me recently that schools have so many agendas now and you feel like education is about getting people to think your way. I guess that I was naïve in thinking, “I thought education was about teaching kids to think.” I grew up with the knowledge that there are two sides to every story.

The course at TCA that I just love—and I don’t mean to single anybody out—but rhetoric is a capstone course that every student has to go through. And you have to pick a subject and learn how to look at it from both sides. It is really like the debate club. You ought to be able to take either side of an issue and point it out, defend your ideas, examine the data, and look at the things that support their argument. How can you defend what you have to say, when there are disagreements with it? How do you back it up?

So, I had just so much passion for teaching kids to think critically. I just thought it was common sense. I am just an old man now and things have changed, but it doesn’t seem to be the way most kids are educated anymore. So, I am thrilled that we help children look at both sides of an issue and think

things through to see reasons of support for different arguments. Bravo.

**R. Sojourner:** Thank you, Jim. Mary?

**M. Kretchman:** I spoke a little bit about the “Foundation of Knowledge” and the “Passion Pillar,” but I wanted to add two cents to your “Analytical Thinking.” When we generally got up to speak in front of a group, Jim would say things that were very compelling for me. And one of them was discernment. He would ask, “Do you want your children to be able to discern when someone is coming up and trying to sell drugs to them. Like, what is their agenda? What is going on? In the advertising they are seeing on the TV, what is really being said? Are there holes in the statistics as they are analyzing this? We must get our kids to think about things and use *discernment* [emphasis hers]. And I thought “Wow. That is powerful.” Without analytical thinking, there is no discernment and then, that made me want to introduce the character theme to our children.

Whenever we would speak to groups, we would remind them that you can have incredibly intelligent people, I mean, look at Hitler’s crew. Incredibly intelligent, but no character. Or I think of Moriarty a lot, with Sherlock Holmes. Incredibly intelligent, but no character. Wow. What a hole you would have without character!

## FOUNDERS 25th Anniversary

**B. Brown:** Clearly the Character Pillar has always been a passion for me. I am a therapist by training. So many times, when you are sitting with people, you discover a lot of individual’s bigger core issues come from never being taught character or virtue. Some of the basic concepts that we think everyone should know. And as a school, to really emphasize those and be in a place where we can talk about these things that are bigger than the typical lesson. Character lessons are shaping their lives, right? What you do in those arenas, those conversations you can have with kids, they might not ever have those at home. So, what a gift. That is why the Character Pillar is so important to me.

**V. Brown:** Passion for learning would be mine. And I know Mary you will want to follow up with that one, but I will certainly take a shot at it. First of all, knowing all of us, we always thought that one was important. I mean, what I ended up doing in my career did not exist when I went to college. Right?

And without a joy and passion for learning, I don’t know how I would have succeeded.

I do know all of my children, all three of them — Collin, Noelle, and Dylan—they just have a passion for learning and I think having a school environment where that is talked about and modeled—and I say modeled most importantly—because it brings subjects to life. And you know, the skies open up and you just get so excited about the opportunity to learn. When I watched our kids learn something, it brought great joy. So again, I think a passion for learning is being modeled from teachers and it echoes into the lives of TCA’s students.

**R. Sojourner:** Any follow-up from anybody? Mary?

**M. Kretchman:** We had this all written out back in the day. And Jim was saying, “Where do we put parents?” And finally, we said, “Actually, it is their mission statement. Parents should oversee their children’s education and figure out what is the best school for their child. Every child might be different. It is not the school’s responsibility; it is ultimately the parent’s responsibility.” And I thought, wow, that is brilliant. I never would have thought of it.

It is not that parents are just here to help with everyday tasks. Ultimately, without The Classical Academy, everything goes back to those parents. And they need to decide and make these decisions. And to me, that is a huge and pivotal part of the mission statement.



TCA'S CORE VALUES DOCUMENT

[transcribed from October 2022 all staff conference]

# American Cancer Society: TCA Fundraiser Over \$80,000 Raised

## North Elementary Fun Run



photos courtesy of Sonya Wittleder



## Junior High Carnival



**Thank you for your generosity in supporting our students in their fundraising efforts this school year.**

# STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS for TCA TRACK AND FIELD

## Women

<b>2004</b>	Emily Hanenburg	1600m	5:26.44
	Emily Hanenburg	3200m	12:02.02
<b>2006</b>	Emily Hanenburg	800m	2:14.77
<b>2007</b>	Shannon Harrell	400m	1:00.02
<b>2008</b>	Kaitlin Hanenburg	1600m	5:00.52
	Kaitlin Hanenburg	3200m	11:19.72
<b>2009</b>	Kaitlin Hanenburg	1600m	5:00.86
	Kaitlin Hanenburg	3200m	10:52.67
<b>2010</b>	Emily LaValley	800m	2:11.24
	Kaitlin Hanenburg	1600m	5:09.78
	Kaitlin Hanenburg	3200m	11:00.44
<b>2011</b>	Alexa Chacon	300H	46.56
<b>2012</b>	Alison Kropkowski	400m	58.31
	Regan Mullen	1600m	5:05.67
	Shelby Stableford	3200m	11:19.01
	Alexa Chacon	100H	14.88
	Alexa Chacon	300H	44.41
<b>2013</b>	Brianne Hoglin	400m	57.71
	Lauren Hamilton	800m	2:19.23
	Alexa Chacon	100H	14.23
	Alexa Chacon	300H	42.75
<b>2014</b>	Andrea Willis	PV	11-6
	Hannah Carr	Shot	41-4.75
<b>2015</b>	Andrea Willis	PV	12-6
<b>2016</b>	Andrea Willis	PV	13-4
<b>2017</b>	Erika Willis	PV	12-5
<b>2018</b>	Erika Willis	PV	12-9
<b>2019</b>	Kaylee Thompson	3200m	10:58.00
	Kristina Willis	PV	12-1
<b>2021</b>	Anna Willis	PV	12-6

## Men

<b>2007</b>	Wes Suchsland	800m	1:56.62
	Trevor Waliszewski	3200m	9:48.70
<b>2009</b>	Ben Hinckfoot	300H	39.27
	Kevin Schwindt	PV	13-0
<b>2010</b>	Eric Versaw	800m	1:54.99
	Kevin Schwindt	PV	14-0
<b>2011</b>	Josh Simkins	1600m	4:27.02
<b>2012</b>	Nathan Weeks	400m	49.31
<b>2013</b>	Nick DeRay	400m	50.00
	Collin Scheer	TJ	44-0.75
<b>2014</b>	Nick DeRay	200m	22.28
	Nick DeRay	400m	49.12
	Connor Wilburn	3200m	9:44.02
	Jonathan Roy	300H	38.67
	Jayce Hall	LJ	20-10.5
<b>2016</b>	Conor Bertles	Shot	53-2.75
<b>2017</b>	Tanner Norman	3200m	9:14.45
<b>2018</b>	Ryan Moen	1600m	4:25.72
	Ryan Moen	3200m	9:38.97
<b>2021</b>	Drew Morton	400m	49.87
	Mitch Anderson	Disc	150-2
<b>2022</b>	Jordan Wenger	TJ	47-2.5



### TCA State Championships:

**2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2012 2013**  
**2014 2016 2017 2018**

### TCA State Championships:

**2009 2010 2012 2013 2014**

## TEAM

### Cross Country Women:

**2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009**  
**2010 2011 2012 2018 2019 2020 2021**

### Cross Country Men:

**2004 2006 2008 2010 2011 2017 2021**  
**2022**

**2011** Women's Soccer  
**2016** Men's Soccer

### Marching Band:

**2017 2018 2021 2022**



## INDIVIDUAL

**2013** Andrew Register Wrestling  
**2018** Nathan John Wrestling  
**2019** Nathan John Wrestling  
**2022** Chandler Wilburn Cross Country

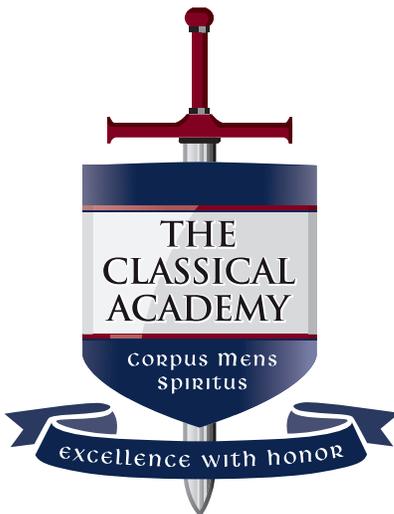


In honor of TCA's 25th Anniversary listed above are all the individual and team state champions since the school was founded.

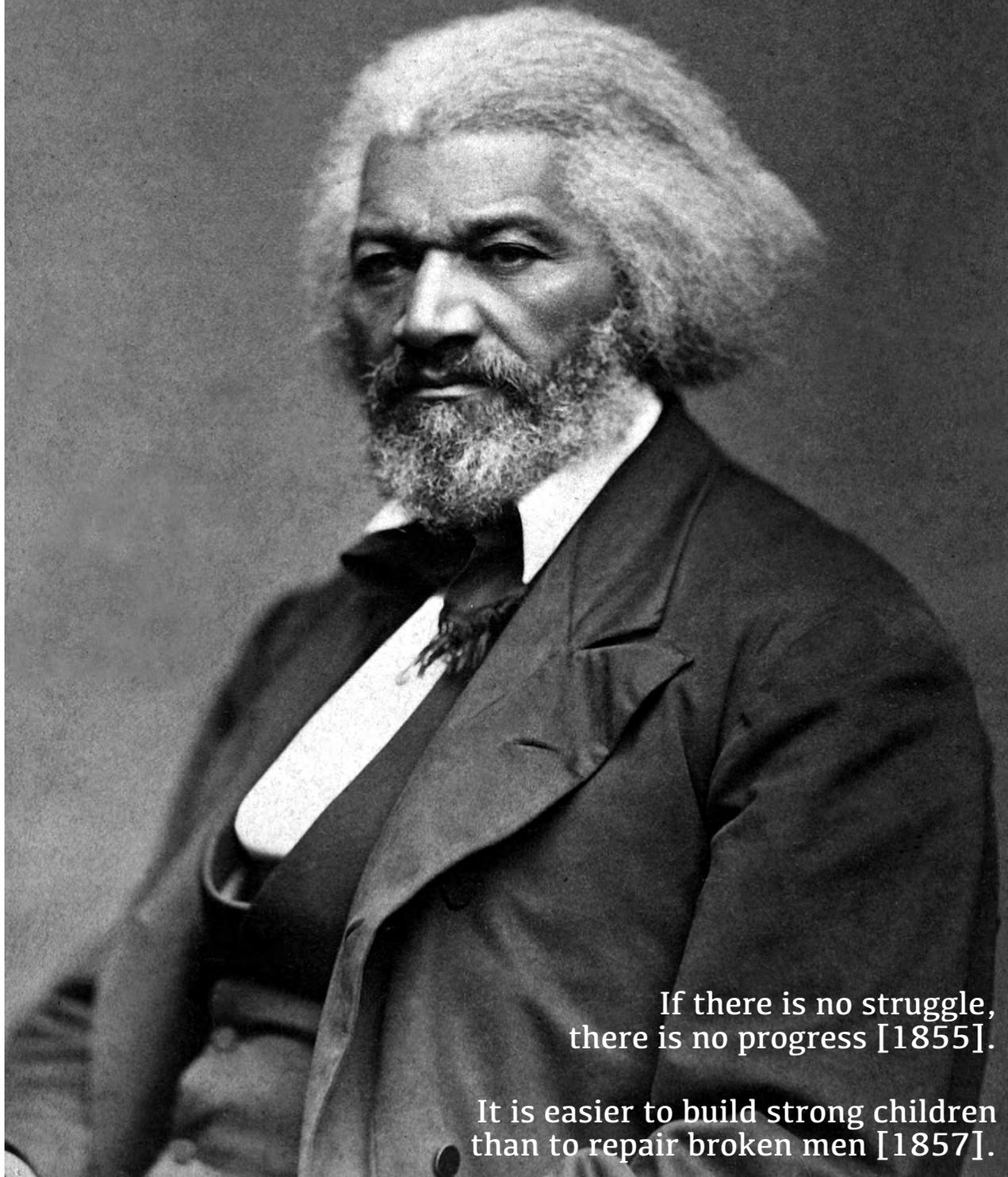


## COMMUNITY SERVICE: CORE VALUES IN ACTION

Each year our Titan Teams at High School go out into the community for a service day. In early May, over forty different teams participated in a myriad of projects including: *Bear Creek Park, Western Museum of Mining, YMCA's at The Farm and Cordera, multiple ARC Thrift stores, La Foret, multiple Goodwill stores, Discover Good of Southern/Western CO, Liberty Heights, Colorado Springs Therapeutic Riding Center, Special Kids Special Families Zach's Place, Fresh Start Center, WildBlue Animal Rescue, various TCA school projects, Pikes Peak Children's Museum, Ronald McDonald House, New Day Cottages, StableStrides, Rocky Mountain Field Institute, Glen Eyrie, Dale House Project, helping with the homeless downtown, Habitat Restore, and the National Mill Dog Rescue.*



Each year TCA's High School juniors, after a lengthy project, select an overall American Hero exemplar representing their class - from the presentations made by students. The Class of 2024 chose Frederick Douglass (1818-1895).



If there is no struggle,  
there is no progress [1855].

It is easier to build strong children  
than to repair broken men [1857].

**TCA Class of 2024 | American Hero Selection**

# Anonymous TCA Student Note in Secondary Library



be an idea  
so our heart  
feel s full  
bring a better day  
make it possible  
do good  
do anything  
you have a glow in you