

THE CLASSICAL ACADEMY EXISTS TO ASSIST PARENTS IN THEIR MISSION TO DEVELOP EXEMPLARY CITIZENS EQUIPPED WITH ANALYTICAL THINKING SKILLS, VIRTUOUS CHARACTER, AND A PASSION FOR LEARNING, ALL BUILT UPON A SOLID FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

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# PALMARIUM

## Remembering Our Roots

The 2022-23 school year marks the **25th Anniversary** of TCA. The school started in 1997 at the old East Campus with 403 elementary students. Today, we have over 3,600 enrolled at TCA's seven schools. Page 5 of this volume includes a graphical representation of TCA's growth from both a student and facilities perspective. As we progress through this year the pages of the PALMARIUM will touch on different elements of our history, beginning with *character* over the next few issues, and hearing from some founders, plus long time staff early in 2023. Thanks for being a part of the TCA community and for your support. We look forward to the next 25 years.



## Titan of the Year 2021-22



On August 11, 2022 - when all staff returned to to start prepping for the new school year and hear from the TCA President, we also celebrated **Hugh DiPreto** as he was named the 2021-22 recipient of the **Titan of the Year** award. Mr. D., as he is affectionally known, has served TCA as an assistant principal, high school principal, and junior high principal over the past 14 years and he truly defines what it means to create a

caring relational environment for all his students and staff. The Titan of the Year video can be viewed by clicking [here](#). Mr. D is so deserving of this great honor and we are thankful he is a part of our Titan community - make sure to congratulate him the next time you see him.



In this month's issue you will find a segment from a recent interview of TCA's former Directors of Character - buiding off of Dr. Sojourner's recent podcast - **The Titan Pulse** (click to listen). Additionally, details are provided on upcoming *Beyond the Book Club* studies, a Parent Academy, this year's TCA-wide fundraiser, and the 2021-2022 Titan of the Year recipient.

The Editor

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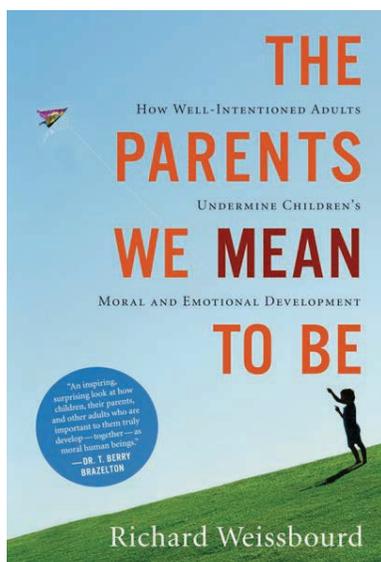
SEVEN SCHOOLS • THREE CAMPUSES • ONE VISION

25 Years - Remembering Our Roots



## The Parents We Mean To Be Beyond the Book Club Study

The second *Beyond the Book Club* study of the year will be during the **November 8-10th** timeframe. The 90-minute sessions normally take place at the TCA North Elementary library from 4:30-6:00 pm. For this study Dr. Sojourner, TCA President, will lead us through a discussion of *The Parents We Mean To Be: How Well-Intentioned Adults Undermine Children's Moral and Emotional Development*. If you'd like to be added to the RSVP invite that goes out about three weeks in advance of the book studies send an e-mail to me at [wjolly@asd20.org](mailto:wjolly@asd20.org) and I'll add you to the list for the final details e-mail. Both staff and parents are invited to participate.



## PARENT ACADEMY: WED, OCT 26 @ 6:30 PM

Join us as TCA welcomes author, **Dr. Richard Weissbourd, Senior Lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, to the Brown Center - TCA North Campus. As part of our TCA 25th Anniversary celebration he will be sharing with our community from his book, *The Parents We Mean To Be*, the book scheduled for our November *Beyond the Book Club* study (see column to the left). As we approach the October date an e-mail requesting RSVPs for the event will be sent to the community from the TCA President's office.**



**SPECIAL GUEST: RICHARD WEISSBOURD**

In May 2022, I had the opportunity to interview TCA's three former Directors of Character: **Dr. Russ Sojourner, Ruth Miller, and Betsy Brown**. Over the course of the next few PALMARIUM volumes we will share portions of the interview transcripts to provide some insight into the development of our Character efforts at TCA over the past 25 years. The questions below will be listed in blue followed by the individual answers.

**W. Jolly:** During your tenure as Director of Character Education, what was your biggest challenge, and what was your biggest accomplishment?

**B. Brown:** We needed a few more resources and that was one thing we had to work through. The other thing I think, was just a common language for a K-12 scope and sequence on character. I feel like we had a lot of people who were passionate about character and we had a lot of different language being used. What might be talked about in kindergarten would be something completely different than in high school.

And so I really felt that was a big challenge that I wanted to tackle—was this common language [we eventually choose *VIA Character Strengths*]*—plus we needed to get a scope and sequence.*

I also felt like, the idea of having the character outside of the integration under the schools became a point of contention sometimes. Because you had this stand-alone group, who would be saying, "Here is what we want to do..." The agency and autonomy that principals inherently need to have, to do their jobs well, sometimes I felt like that could be a "rub" there.

We worked through it all beautifully, but it did create some friction. And so, that was definitely some of the challenge.

Accomplishment? I would say the **Titan's Creed**. Because when that rock went up, that was the "Okay. I am done here" moment. I have done my work.

Also, I would say, you know, when we did the mission statement—I was passionate about the mission statement and I still love the mission statement—it is focused on one group of stakeholders, which is the parents. Which is an important group of stakeholders and there are a lot of other stakeholders in this school. You have the students. You have the parents. You have the staff. You have the administration. You have just everybody that comes into contact with [our school]...and the community. So this idea that a mission statement that was really focused on one group, I was really passionate about including all voices.

The process took eight months basically, start to finish. We had all stakeholders involved in that process. So watching it evolve...I might have had one thought about how this thing was going to look and it ended up being a very different, but much more comprehensive, amazing statement about who we are as a school. So, that would be it for sure.

**R. Sojourner:** I will reiterate what has already been said. A real challenge is what does character inculcation look like for kindergarteners is quite different than what it looks like for 12th graders. When

different one when we are talking about 5-year-olds verses 18-year-olds. That was a big challenge.

A victory, also, stories that Ruth will tell about kids who remember Titan team, remember what it meant to them...that is a victory. Betsy mentioned, "When you say at your school we put as much time into moral development of kids as much as the intellectual development," that is a concept that people just do not understand in education.

I am really proud that we together, collectively us three, plus Wes Jolly as a history teacher, plus our Director of Academic Services, and all the rest of our staff here. That is something that is remarkably different than what most schools experience. And that, is a great victory.

**R. Miller:** And if I can piggy-back on that Russ, the one thing that I have said again and again, and again, and I always paraphrase it, but Teddy Roosevelt's quote, "To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society." I feel like schools do a disservice to our society when we make people smart, but don't encourage the moral component underneath that.

**W. Jolly:** Ruth, what was your biggest accomplishment?

**R. Miller:** I look at the products of what came out of our efforts with students. And rather than looking at a specific program or something that we did (which there were multiple things that we feel very good about), I would have to say it would be looking at the results and that would be the students. Here are two examples.

Fifteen years out, I went into a restaurant with my husband and here walks up one of my Titan Team members. And he hugs me. He doesn't take my order. He sits down next to me in the booth. And he starts to tell me about his master's degree, his girlfriend, and his current challenges in life. I mean, that was the foundation that we laid in Titan Teams - is to have that open door, and he still, 15 years later, felt that.

## CHARACTER at TCA: Interview

you're sitting in that seat trying to figure out activities or conversations for those two levels, it is a challenge.

I mentioned in my time at the Air Force Academy, it is one thing to have a different conversation for 18-year-olds, verses 22-year-olds. It is an entirely



Second example: is the kiosk at *Loaf and Jug*. The little kiosk around the gas pump and a person sits in there? I'm filling up my car and the door opens, which never opens. You don't even know someone is in there. Here comes a person. It is one of my Titan Team members.

A little background: when we created the Titan Team lists for Jr. High and High School, I put them all in the cafeteria up on the wall. I put ten kids in each one. And remember this Russ? I would have our teachers go in and walk around and find the kids that they connected with, kids they already had relationships with. They would take the list and bring it to me and that would be their team.

So, [here we are] sitting down in a restaurant receiving hugs while a former student wants to engage [with us]. And the other gentleman who walked out of the kiosk at the gas pump, and he gave me a hug and told me about his life. So I consider that a success.

**B. Brown:** That's awesome.

**R. Sojourner:** That's a great story.

**B. Brown:** Yeah, the Titan Teams... that was a brilliant, brilliant piece of the character effort...

**R. Miller:** Everyone has eyes on someone. Nobody, at least, in Russ' terms, he said, is "Invisible." "Nobody is invisible."

**B. Brown:** I love that.

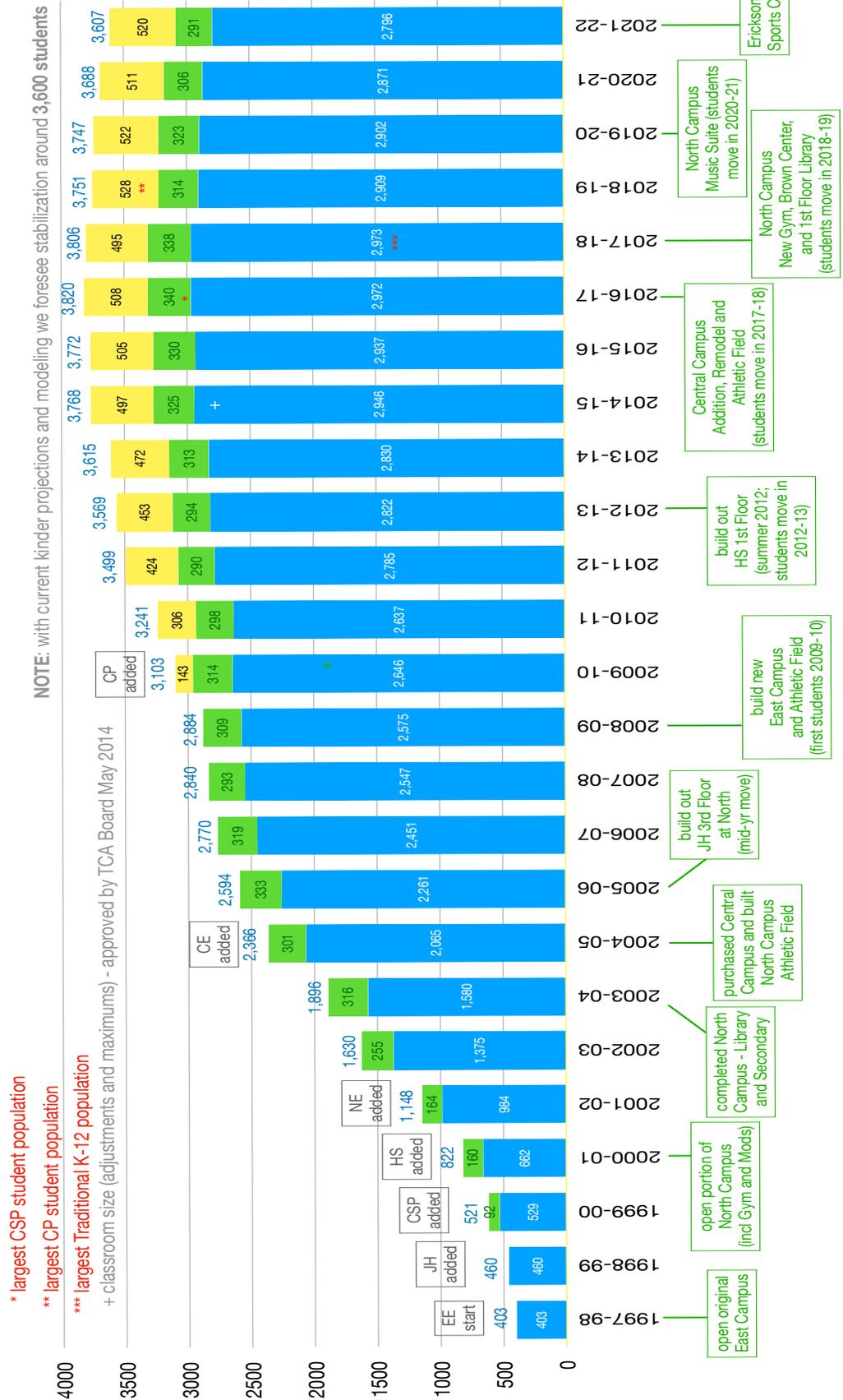
## The Titan Pulse: The President's Podcast



For more from the interview you can listen to **Dr. Sojourner's** podcast by clicking on the image above - the question: Continuing in the vein of foundational documents, **"The Core Values state under commitments: We strive to be a community of character by teaching and modeling virtuous character explicitly from kindergarten to graduation rather than considering ourselves to be a 'school of character' or claiming that we 'have great character.' What does that statement mean to you?"**

# Remembering Our Roots

## 25 Years | Student Population at TCA



## Titan of the Year History

## American Cancer Society

2003-04	Bobby Silva - Interim TCA President
2004-05	Leesa Waliszewski - Instructional Philosophy Director
2005-06	Carrie Stedman - Secondary Music Director
2006-07	Kay Goble - East Elementary 1st Grade Teacher
2007-08	Sarah Myers - East Elementary Kindergarten Teacher
2008-09	Mindy Herd - Central Elementary Kindergarten Teacher
2009-10	Diana Burditt - East Elementary Principal
2010-11	John Knuth - High School Math Teacher and Golf Coach
2011-12	Russ Sojourner - Junior High Principal
2012-13	Brenda White - East Elementary 3rd Grade Teacher
2013-14	Don Stump - Central Elementary Principal
2014-15	Candus Muir - Junion High Science Teacher
2015-16	Lori Hendricks - North Elementary Tutor
2016-17	Christina Schwartz-Soper - Secondary Bands Director
2017-18	Nikki Upchurch - CP/CSP Ed Phil / Health & Wellness
2018-19	Jessica Adair - Central Elementary 1st Grade Teacher
2019-20	Lisa Kuyper - Central Elementary PE Teacher
2020-21	Linda Durck - East Elementary 3rd Grade Teacher
2021-22	Hugh DiPreto - Junior High Principal

## TCA All-School Fundraiser for 2022-23



Last year TCA raised over \$100,000 for **Make-A-Wish Colorado** and this year we will be supporting the **American Cancer Society** throughout the 2022-23 school year. Look for more information from each school and their individual fundraising efforts throughout this coming year.

# ANNUAL TCA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Dear TCA Staff, Parents, and Community,

The Classical Academy (TCA) is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination. Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual shall be paramount. Accordingly, we have a "no tolerance" policy with respect to acts of discrimination or harassment. All TCA educational programs, activities, and employment opportunities offered by the school are offered without regard to disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, religion, ancestry, age, genetic information, or conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth. With respect to employment practices, TCA does not discriminate on the basis of age.

Protecting against and not tolerating discrimination and harassment is consistent with TCA's Core Values and our Creed, which states that "Titans love, respect, and protect one another. Striving to be our best, do our best, and give our best to the world." Policy AC-TCA: Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity was updated last year and is available by clicking [here](#). This policy outlines the procedures on how students, parents, staff, and the community may file complaints and how TCA will work to resolve all complaints.

The Classical Academy is committed to conducting prompt investigations. Any students or staff found to have engaged in any type of discrimination or harassment will be disciplined, and if circumstances warrant, suspension or expulsion of students may result. Consequences of discrimination for employees may include, but are not limited to, termination of employment. Let's work together to prevent all types of discrimination and harassment.

Any student, staff member, or parent should report any discrimination or harassment, including any Title IX, Section 504, or ADA complaints, to any TCA principal, counselor, or the following liaison:

Cheryl Birkey  
Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator  
975 Stout Road, Room 1114  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921  
719-488-6209  
[cbirkey1@asd20.org](mailto:cbirkey1@asd20.org)

We Are Titans!

Respectfully,

Dr. Russ Sojourner  
TCA President



## 25 YEARS: TWO STAFF MEMBERS REMAIN FROM FOUNDING



When TCA started back in 1997, **Sherry Wilkewitz** and **Susan Stone** were part of that original staff. Today they are the only staff members that have been at TCA for all 25 years since we were founded. Dr. Sojourner recognized them prior to school starting in an all-staff gathering. Sherry and Susan - **THANK YOU** for your years of service to our schools.



# TCA Digital Health

*join us!*



# Parent Town Hall

6:30-8:00pm • September 26th  
Brown Center for the Arts

*The Digital Health (DH) Committee invites you on the first leg of our journey as we start the conversation about*

# DIGITAL HEALTH

*for our kids.*

DH Parent Town Hall

September 26



DH Staff Campus Forums

October-November



DH Combined Focus Groups

December-March



# Character

*We live in a culture that teaches us to promote  
and advertise ourselves and to master the skills*

*required for success, but that gives little  
encouragement to humility, sympathy,  
and honest self-confrontation, which  
are necessary for building character*

**DAVID BROOKS**