

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.

Volume 79

Year XII

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# PALMARIIUM

## Ronald McDonald House

## Titan of the Year 2023-2024

In 2023-2024 our TCA schools raised approximately **\$75,000** for *St. Jude Children's Research Hospital*. Thanks to our amazing community for such a great response! In 2024-2025 we will be assisting **Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado**. Their mission is to keep "families and their critically ill children close to each other and provides the care and resources they need when they need it most." Page 10 has a link for donations. In addition, look for communications from your school principal during the school year. Thank you for supporting our efforts to give back to the community.



On August 8, 2024 we honored **Mr. Sean Frawley**, 6th grade teacher at Central Elementary as the 2023-2024 **Titan of the Year** recipient. Sean has served as a teacher at TCA for 20 years. He is known for instilling a passion for reading and writing in his students. One nominator shared this story, which has been echoed by many: "Mr. Frawley's genuine care for students and his passion for reading, writing, and learning has ignited a new fire in our 6th grader. For the past 5 years, our son has been a reluctant reader. While he has dutifully read his required reading and completed his assignments, he has never done so with any passion. Everything changed with Mr. Frawley. From the very first week, our son came home excited, humored, challenged, ready to learn, and ready to read more books than his teacher! After 7 months in Mr. Frawley's class, he has read more books this year than he has the past 5 years combined!" If you see Mr. Frawley, please congratulate him on this honor.



In this month's issue ***Beyond the Book Club*** enters its tenth year. Additionally, TCA's Educational Philosophy is the focus of two articles, we celebrate TCA staff, outline the Junior Year Hero Project, and give a brief snapshot of Advanced Placement results from the 2024 assessments.



The Editor



SEVEN SCHOOLS • THREE CAMPUSES • ONE VISION

*Teaching Kids How to Be, Not What to Be*

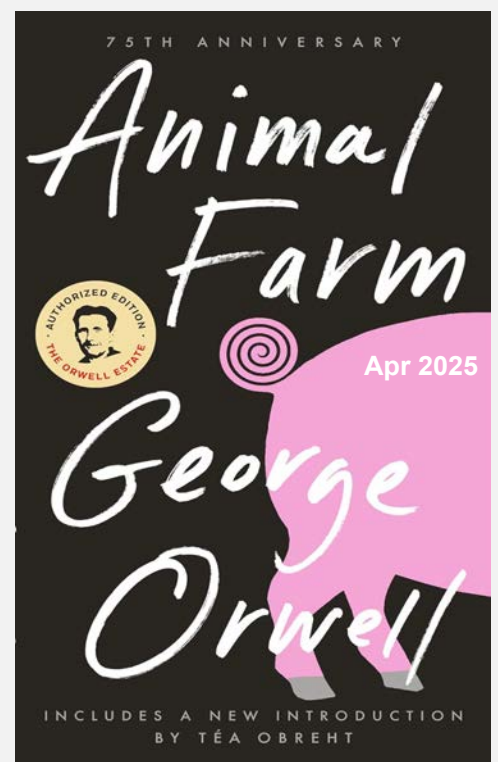
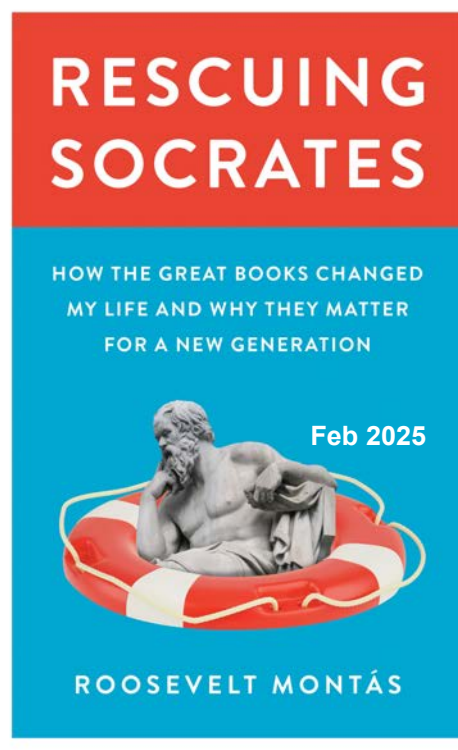
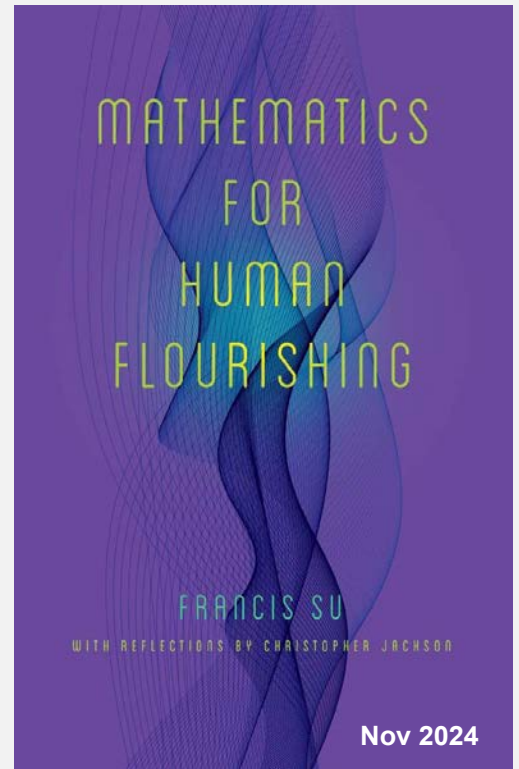
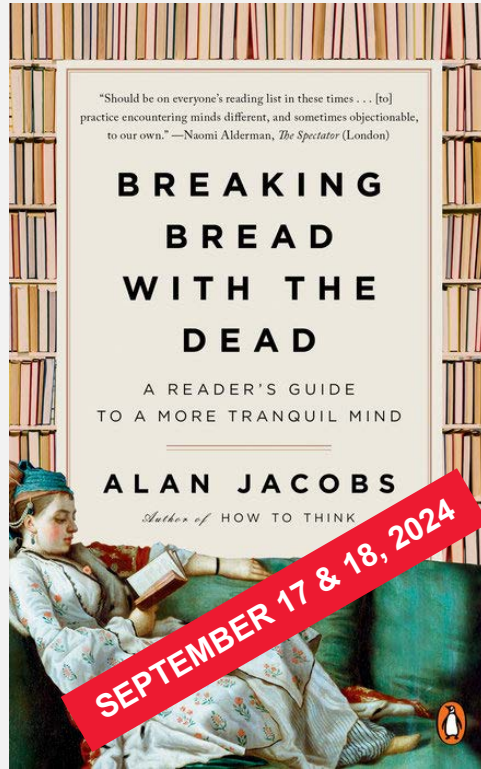
# Ten Years

## Engaging Minds

As we wrapped up last school year in Volume 77|78, I shared that 2024-2025 marks the tenth year of the *Engaging Minds: Beyond the Book Club* effort at TCA. In those ten years there have been **36 different staff wide reads** available including the four titles selected for this year (*shown to the right*). Dr. Roosevelt Montas will be joining us in February 2025 to address staff on his journey with the great books and liberal education. When this endeavor began a decade ago, little did I know the longevity of the effort and the impact it would have for our staff and me personally. Over the course of the past decade I've heard from many of you about the personal impact some of the selections you have read made personally and professionally. To wrap up the final Palmarium from last year I asked Darren Wilson to share about his experience with the book studies over the years (*go back to [Volume 77|78](#) for that great article*). If you'd like to join us for one of the studies this year please send an e-mail to me at [wjolly@asd20.org](mailto:wjolly@asd20.org) and I will add you to the RSVP request list that goes out about three weeks before each of the book study dates. We meet for 90 minutes in the North Elementary Library (Pikes Peak Room) from 4:30-6:00 pm on the selected afternoons.



# Beyond the Book Club



# SELECTIONS 2024-2025



*“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 on a solid foundation of knowledge.”*

**TCA Mission Statement**

As stated in our Mission Statement above, The Classical Academy exists for the primary purpose of developing exemplary citizens. The remainder of the Mission Statement explains what our founders believed to be the qualities of an exemplary citizen: Analytical Thinking Skills, Virtuous Character, a Passion for Learning, and a Solid Foundation of Knowledge. TCA was founded on the belief that the best education provides students with opportunities to grow in both wisdom and virtue. Parents look to The Classical Academy as a skilled and passionate partner in the educational journey of their school-age children—a journey toward becoming thoughtful, wise, and virtuous individuals. We believe that ideas nourish the soul and endeavor to build relationships that cultivate and unleash the natural curiosity of every learner through a stimulating, classically inspired curriculum that honors the whole child.

Classical education is steeped in the liberal arts tradition and is guided by the Trivium, which consists of three stages: grammar, logic, and rhetoric. During the grammar stage, students learn the basic elements of language and concepts and how to use them correctly. In the logic stage, students learn how to reason and consider ideas critically. The rhetoric stage prepares the student to communicate effectively and persuasively. The classical education model emphasizes the study of quality, *time-tested literature, history from primary sources (see article on pp. 8-10)*, mathematics, science and the arts. This approach to education focuses on the teacher guiding students to contemplate great texts for truth, appreciate the beauty of great works of music and art, and find the good in becoming exemplary citizens.

In his book, *Norms and Nobility*, David Hicks defines Classical Education as “the cultivation of wisdom and virtue by nourishing the soul on truth, goodness, and beauty by means of the liberal arts.” At TCA we approach education with this idea in mind and have articulated this philosophy in our Core Values. The big ideas that flow through this document inform our instructional approach. We are Whole Person Focused, Relationship Based, Idea Centered, and Classically Oriented.

**Whole Person Focused**

We see children honestly and realistically for who they are. We endeavor to foster a learning environment characterized by compassion, encouragement, and thoughtfully formed habits of mind, body, and spirit that inspire continual growth and self-discipline on the journey toward becoming an exemplary citizen. We cannot simply teach subjects, or information; we must teach the child as a whole person in pursuit of the true, good, and beautiful.

**Relationship Based**

Teachers masterfully facilitate and support healthy relationships in students’ personal and academic lives. Our curriculum and approach to education foster a joy in learning and a desire for a life-long pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness. As we build relationships with students and facilitate their relationships with one another, their community, and the curriculum, we cultivate the intrinsic motivation and natural inclination to learn and grow.

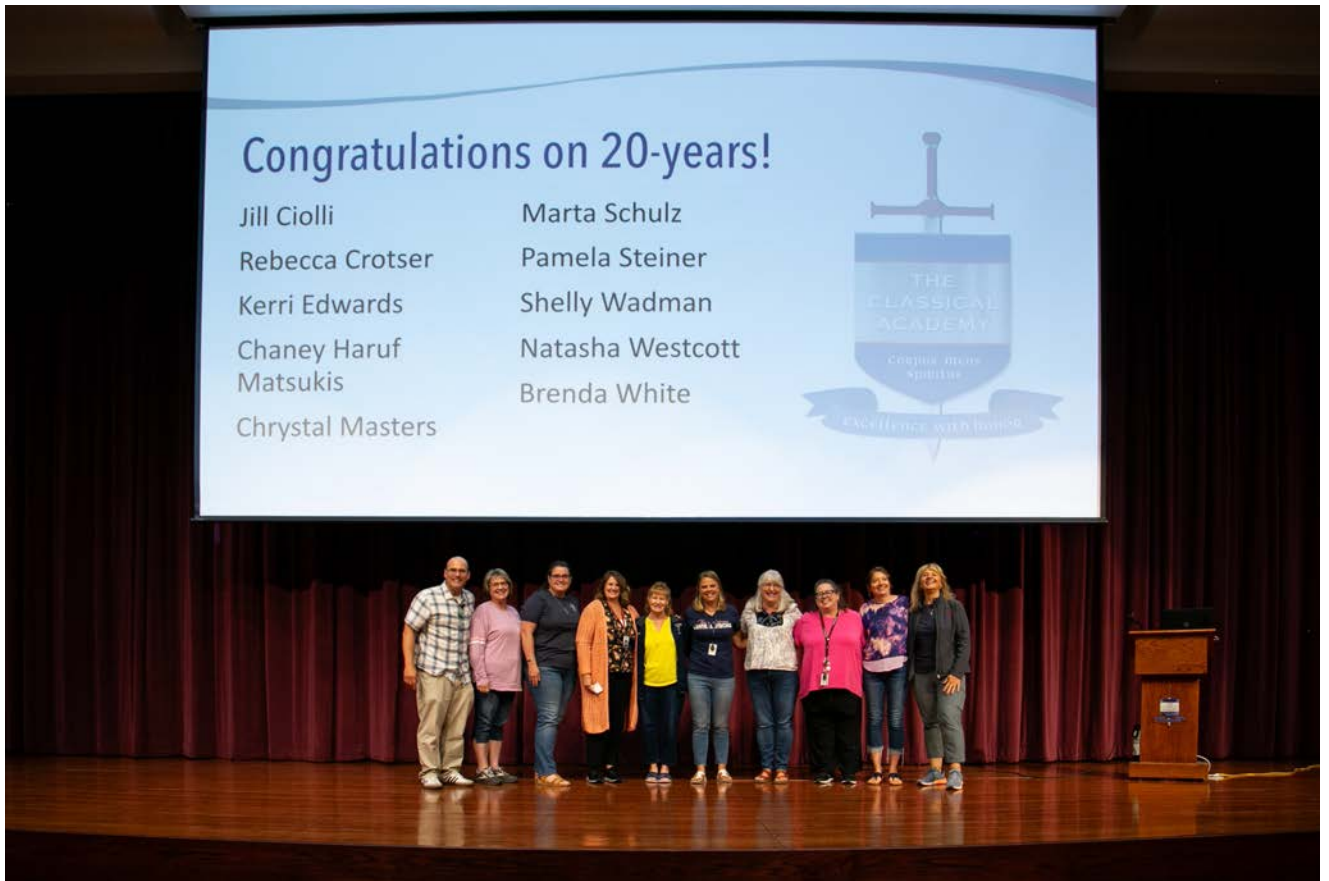
**Idea Centered**

Inspirational ideas and truths are recognized to be the real food for minds. We guide our students to do the work of learning by engaging with rich texts, primary source documents, classical art and music, and nature studies. Through guided exploration, students are prepared to enter the marketplace of ideas and examine the principles that influence society and their place in it.

**Classically Oriented**

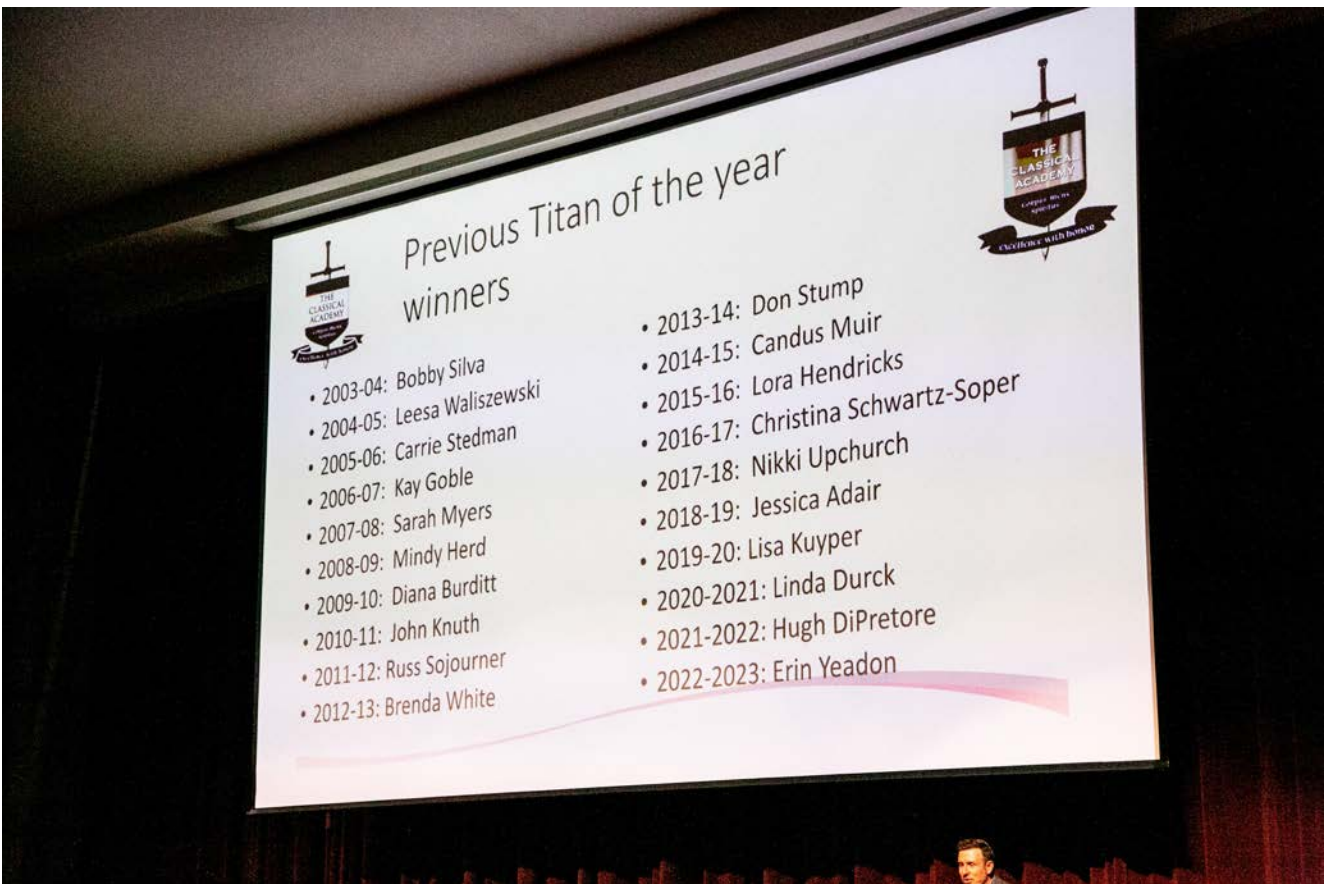
According to Plato, “Education is most fundamentally concerned with conduct, not with knowledge. The problem with knowledge is that it can be used for good or for ill.” Therefore, we believe the most significant outcome of education is not what a student has learned, but how they have learned to live. TCA is committed to building wisdom and virtue in our students through classic books, rich historical content, and the study of classical art and music. Teachers foster engagement and promote student voice through thoughtful questioning and a classical, discussion-based approach to education.

# Back-to-School Celebrating Staff



(Above) 20-Year Staff Members

(Below) Titan of the Year History







(Above) Sean Frawley & Don Stump

(Below) Kinetta Johnson 'Carry the Legacy'



# Back-to-School ◊ Celebrating Staff

# 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. Per Colorado State statute, all TCA educational programs, activities, and employment opportunities offered by the school are offered without regard to disability, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special educational services. With respect to employment practices, TCA does not discriminate on the basis of age, genetic information, and conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth.

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 in June. It and its corresponding policies outline 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 liaisons:

Cheryl Birkey  
Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator  
975 Stout Road, Room 3422  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921  
719-488-6209  
[cbirkey1@asd20.org](mailto:cbirkey1@asd20.org)

Myra Valdéz  
Compliance Officer/Title IX Coordinator  
975 Stout Road, Room 1114  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921  
719-488-6220  
[mvaldez@asd20.org](mailto:mvaldez@asd20.org)

We Are Titans!

Respectfully,

Dr. Robert Thomason  
TCA President



# Junior Year | Hero Project | Exemplars

<b>Class of 2014</b>	<b>James Braddock</b>
<b>Class of 2015</b>	<b>Clara Barton</b>
<b>Class of 2016</b>	<b>William T. Sherman</b>
<b>Class of 2017</b>	<b>Muhammad Ali</b>
<b>Class of 2018</b>	<b>Franklin D. Roosevelt</b>
<b>Class of 2019</b>	<b>Desmond Doss</b>
<b>Class of 2020</b>	<b>Lance Sijan</b>
<b>Class of 2021</b>	<b>no selection</b>
<b>Class of 2022</b>	<b>no selection</b>
<b>Class of 2023</b>	<b>Norman Borlaug</b>
<b>Class of 2024</b>	<b>Frederick Douglass</b>
<b>Class of 2025</b>	<b>Mark Twain</b>

Since the 2012-2013 school year, every junior in standard US History participates in a year-long hero project. Students spend the fall semester wrestling with the idea of what it means to be a hero, with an emphasis on the character traits that define a hero. Each student chooses a person (from the British American colonies or the United States) from 1607-2019 whose life reflected the student's definition of a hero. The students spend the year researching the life of their hero, culminating in a series of debates throughout the month of May. The debates are formatted into brackets with each student participating in the first round, and then the winners of each bracket moving on to further debates. Each round of debate asks the students to think through a different aspect of what it means to be a hero. The first round is simply why the student believes their chosen person is a great American hero. For the second round, students are asked to think of how their chosen person overcame flaws, mistakes, or failures to emerge as a hero. In the third round, the students are assigned a quote about heroism from Mark Twain, Ralph Waldo Emerson, or Robert Weldon Whalen and asked to evaluate the veracity of the quote in relation to the life of the hero the student chose. At this point, each class period has one student remaining as the winner of that period's debates. Then all the juniors in standard US history spend a class period all together with the winners of each class period debating each other. In this final debate, the students discuss how studying their hero personally affected their lives throughout the year and why their hero should be the hero to represent the entire class of juniors. At the end of this debate, all the juniors in attendance rank the heroes from the debate. These rankings are compiled to decide which American hero will represent that particular class and be retired from future use by another class. If a name listed above, of those previously selected, is not familiar to you, I'd encourage you to look them up to learn some of the reasons why the students in that graduating class may have selected them as their class exemplar.

In April 2023 as part of a series of presentations to the TCA Board, Jennifer Walker, and Blake Galvin, our Deans of Educational Philosophy at Elementary and Secondary respectively shared this edited transcript

[Jennifer Walker] Tonight, I'm going to be talking about living books. They are a staple of the elementary school and encompasses kindergarten through 12th grade at TCA. Throughout each student's time at TCA, we seek to pass on to them a love for reading and a love for learning. And when we put in front of kids what we call living books we want to transmit great ideas from those who have come before us. Texts that tell our story. The worthiest of these books are called living books because they display in the words of Charlotte Mason, "imagination, originality, and the human touch." Consider this statement about living books from Charlotte Mason: "Children must grow up upon the best books... then we shall train a race of readers who will demand the best, that is, the fit and beautiful expression of inspiring ideas and pictures of life that come from living books."

"Which books are the best books?" and "which books are considered living books?" is one of the questions we ask each time we review our curriculum.

The first mark of a living book is that idea of "fit and beautiful expression." The descriptions in living books are well told and well put. The words are artfully composed with vivid language and descriptions that draw in the reader and brings to life whatever the topic is. Instead of presenting dry facts in some sort of a lecture or note taking presentation, the living books (both fiction and non-fiction) turn the accumulation of information into inspiring and engaging experiences.

The authors of these living books rise to the level of experts in their

field. They have a passion for and a deep knowledge of their topic. They make use of artful language while accurately conveying meaningful content. Classically oriented books and books that are primary sources, original texts, are typically what we look to as requirements for a living text. If you look at subjects like history, you can find texts simply filled with dry facts, but kids don't learn to love history that way. They learn to love history by being involved in deep conversations over great texts and learning about these fascinating people who lived at vastly different times, whose stories still impact us today. They're not presented as just names and dates to memorize, rather they are books that offer the great tradition, passed on from generations from the past to our students today. This helps them recognize that they are part of the story. It's their story too. They



## Living Books & Primary Sources Educational Philosophy

understand that they are not only a part of this history, but they're part of the timeline of history. By presenting a living book, we encourage them to find their place in this content.

The second mark of a living book is found in the content of the text. It needs to be accurate. It needs to be presented in a way that engages the reader, that makes them want to learn more. When we think about the mind of a child, we think about influencing them for not only wisdom but for virtue as well. Do the living books engage such matters? Is there character development and character formation? Is there something about the human condition that they can learn from this? In this manner, Charlotte Mason talks about nourishing the mind and heart of a child. She says, "Education is a life. That life is sustained on ideas. Ideas are passed from one generation to the next, whether by word of mouth, written page, or a musical symphony. We must sustain a child's inner life with ideas just as we sustain his body with food."

So, in planning this rich diet, we're constantly looking at the various texts that are available. Are they engaging? Are they inspiring? Are they character forming? Are we drawing them in and lifting them up to things that are better, things that really make them want to pursue knowledge, to pursue truth and beauty and goodness because they've been engaged in a meaningful text? Cultivating this text, cultivating these ideas, often times makes a reader want to read more. They want to expand their knowledge, they want to read more fiction, different types of fiction, different genres, different types of non-fiction. It makes them want to pursue knowledge more and also to understand the human condition, who they are and what they are meant to be.

If we are to fulfill our mission to develop lifelong learners we have a responsibility to find the best books. There is limited time and opportunity to read the many great books available and we want to put before them the best. We want to expose them to the best so that they know when they choose something that's not so good, maybe it's summer vacation and they want to read something that's just not as challenging, they just know the difference. And that's good for them to understand, right now I want to read something that's not as challenging, and then we dig into the challenging, they learn that they can. They understand that they can think deep thoughts and they can take on a challenging book.

[continued on page 9]



TCA'S CORE VALUES DOCUMENT

[transcribed from April 2023 TCA Board training]



Because we're in the business of character formation, we want to make sure that these aren't just speaking to their mind, gaining knowledge, but also gaining virtue, getting to their heart. Charlotte Mason writes, "Our business is to give a child mind-stuff, and both quality and quantity are essential. Naturally, each of us possesses this mind-stuff only in limited measure, but we know where to procure it; for the best thought the world possesses is stored in books; we must open books to children, the best books" for "the souls of children are waiting for the call of knowledge to awaken them to delightful living."

Our business is to give our kids the best gifts, and one of the best gifts we can give them as a school is the love of learning through learning to love books. And living books, those that have time-tested information set in an engaging manner have the proper ingredients for this endeavor.

[Blake Galvin] I'm going to touch on primary source documents. Before I do that, I just want to clarify something for you. Nikki [Upchurch, from CP/CSP] and I have spoken, Jennifer [Walker, from Elementary] and I have spoken, and we all agree that these things that we are talking about tonight, they apply at traditional as well as at non-traditional. Whether we're talking about living books at traditional elementary or at the Cottage School Program, or primary source documents in the traditional secondary or elementary, or College Pathways. They apply across the board. I just wanted to make sure that was clear before I proceed.

In the 1950s, a professor from the University of Chicago, Robert Hutchins, coined the term "the Great Conversation" when referring to Classical, Liberal Arts, Education. The term, the Great Conversation, is the ongoing

process of connecting, refining, and building upon the thoughts and ideas of historical figures that played a role in the development of Western Civilization and especially that of the United States. Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Augustine, Hamilton and Madison, Lincoln, Fredrick Douglass, Anna Julia Cooper; these are just a few of those great thinkers to which I am referring. Each of these individuals were influential in their own way in their own time, and they continue to be influential today. Through their writings, they each contributed to this Great Conversation. While most of them were unable to have an actual conversation among themselves, it is evident, the influence many had on each other.

Our Core Values document states that "Education is a life where inspirational ideas and truth are recognized to be the real food for the child's mind and are provided through original primary and

## Living Books & Primary Sources Educational Philosophy (continued)

secondary source documents to gain historical and experiential perspectives." The writings of the historical figures that I previously mentioned are these kinds of primary source documents. This [holding up a bound collection of documents] is the primary source reader for our seniors. It contains 452 pages worth of "inspirational ideas and truth." It contains primary source documents by Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, the Federalist Papers, George Washington, several by George Washington, Frederick Douglass, Alexis de Tocqueville, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., and many others. It certainly is possible to read a book by some other author in which that author talks about the Federalist Papers, the Articles of Confederation, or the Gettysburg Address. But instead of slogging through the opinions and biases of that other author, why not actually read the Federalist Papers, the Articles of Confederation, and the Gettysburg address? We often talk about meeting mind to mind with an author in order to more deeply understand their thoughts and ideas. There is no better way to do this than by going back to the original source and reading what the author actually wrote.

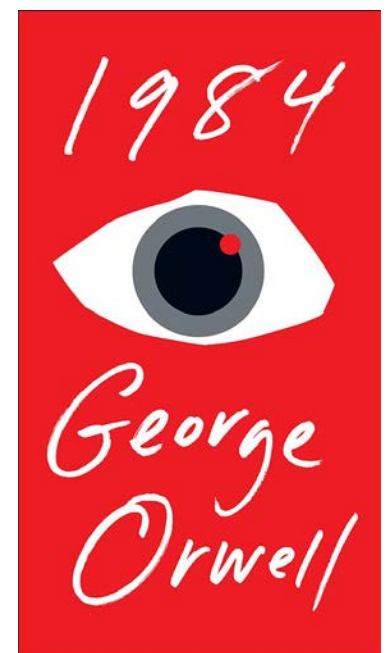
I want to give you a few examples of how reading primary source documents help make connections and develop a deeper, more meaningful understanding of the ideas and truths that are contained

in these documents.

First example, in *Federalist Paper #49*, Madison refers to Plato's *Republic* and his idea of philosopher kings as the ideal ruler. Because our students have read Plato's *Republic* before they get to the *Federalist Papers*, they're familiar with his ideas, and they're able to gain a deeper understanding of how he influenced our founding fathers and their ideas regarding the formation of our government.

Another example, I recently watched a class in which a group of seniors were discussing George Orwell's classic *1984*. One of the students had quite a puzzled look on her face for quite some time. Eventually she got up the courage and asked the question – "do you think that Orwell was familiar with Plato's *Republic*? It seems that there are so many parallels." That sparked a further, more deep conversation among the students in which they were comparing and contrasting what they had read in *1984* with what they had read in Plato's *Republic*.

Finally, I recently watched a Latin IV class discussing Virgil's *Aeneid*. One student began to compare a section of the *Aeneid* with the dystopian society of Orwell's *1984*.



[continued on page 10]

[transcribed from April 2023 TCA Board training]

[continued from page 9] These are just a few examples of how primary source documents contribute to the Great Conversation. Each of the aforementioned examples demonstrates the influence of one author upon another. Without these kinds of primary sources, the deep connections between the ideas of these great thinkers would not be possible. As previously mentioned, most of the authors of these primary sources were not able to discuss their ideas with each other. And so, it is our responsibility then, to continue the Great Conversation, using these primary sources, so that we can connect, refine, and build upon the ideas of the greatest thinkers of Western Civilization, especially those that influenced the founding and development of our great Nation.

## 2024 Advanced Placement Exam Snapshot

In a brief preview of some academic results for TCA from the recent 2024 testing cycle - here are the big picture **AP Exam results** from the most recent exams. **179 TCA students** completed **324 AP exams**.

Over the past 11 years the average number of students taking exams per year is 189 - completing an average of 332 exams each year. **88.5% of students** in 2024 scored a "3 or higher" on a least one exam - that is the **BEST result in 11 years**

(the average over that timeframe is 81.4%). Additionally, TCA had **67 students awarded AP Scholar Status** - also the **BEST result in 11 years** (the average number of scholars over the 11 years is 53). Finally, the percentage of all exams taken that were scored a "3 or higher" (the range to potentially qualify for college credit depending on the institution) was **85% matching the 11 year high**. TCA's average for exams "3 or higher" over 11 years is 78% with a national average of approximately 59% of exams reaching that threshold.



## Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Southern Colorado

For the 2024-25 school year all TCA schools will be supporting **Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado** through our combined fundraising efforts. Look for more information from each school and their individual fundraising efforts throughout this coming year. **Click on the image above to learn more about Ronald McDonald House Charities.** The QR code to the right takes you to a donation page for TCA's fundraiser (*see note*).



NOTE: the donation link above defaults to monthly, but there is a **ONE-TIME option** - select accordingly.



# Enter the Ancient Courts . . .



"When evening has come,  
 I return to my house  
 and go into my study.  
 At the door I take  
 off my clothes of the day,  
 covered with mud and mire,  
 and I put on my  
 regal and courtly garments;  
 and decently reclthed,  
 I enter into the ancient  
 courts of ancient men,  
 where, received by them  
 lovingly, I feed on the food  
 that alone is mine and  
 that I was born for.  
 There I am not ashamed  
 to speak with them and  
 to ask them for the  
 reason for their actions;  
 and they in their  
 humanity reply to me.  
 And for the space of  
 four hours  
 I feel no boredom,  
 I forget every pain,  
 I do not fear poverty,  
 death does not frighen me."

*Niccolo Machiavelli*

Quote from *Breaking Bread with the Dead* by Alan Jacobs, pp. 63-64 (reflections of Niccolò Machiavelli after exiled from his native Florence).