

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 80

Year XII

of publication

October | November 2024

PALMARIUM

Annual AAA Report

Each year in November the TCA Board is provided with an Accreditation, Assessment, and Achievement report. Data contained in that presentation summarizes our SPF (School Performance Framework), CMAS, PSAT/SAT, AP Exam, graduation rates, college attendance rates, and college readiness measures compared over multiple years. In **37 of 39 tested areas TCA exceeded the District/State**, plus finished **#1 or #2 within the District in 27 of those 39 areas**. My synopsis of this year's report concluded: 'In my 12 years as Director of Academic Services when looking at the totality of academic performance and achievement . . . 2024 would rank as **the best year yet**. See snapshot (pp. 14-16).

Mental Health Resources

In December 2022 through efforts of TCA's **Wellness Task Force** we added a link to the home page of the main website providing our families resources to utilize for Mental Health crisis situations. Clicking on the title above or the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline image to the right will take you to those resources. Included are links to the *Colorado Springs Mental Health Parent Guide*, plus resources on a variety of topics including - *Mental Health Conversations, How to Help a Family Member or Friend with Mental Health Concerns, Tips for Parenting Through Divorce, Fifty Ways to Encourage a Child, Guarding Your Child's Heart with Internet and Social Media, Book Recommendations for Parents and Teachers, Digital Extortion Resources, Safe2Tell* information, and *TCA's Digital Health Resources*. From January 2023 through July 2024 the website link has been visited an average of 60 times per month (with the most visits occurring during January and February each year and usually an increase in August). As we head into those months that typically see increases nationally in mental health concerns, we wanted to make you aware of this resource.



In this month's issue we touch on the October Conference, history of the **Titan's Creed**, and TCA's Educational Philosophy via articles on *The Table*. Additionally, our fundraising effort, historical student population, Veterans Day Assembly, and ongoing *Beyond the Book Club* are highlighted.

The Editor

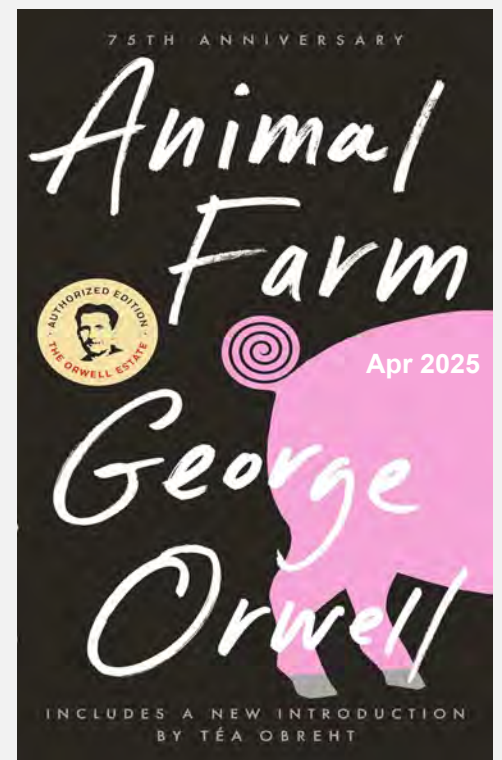
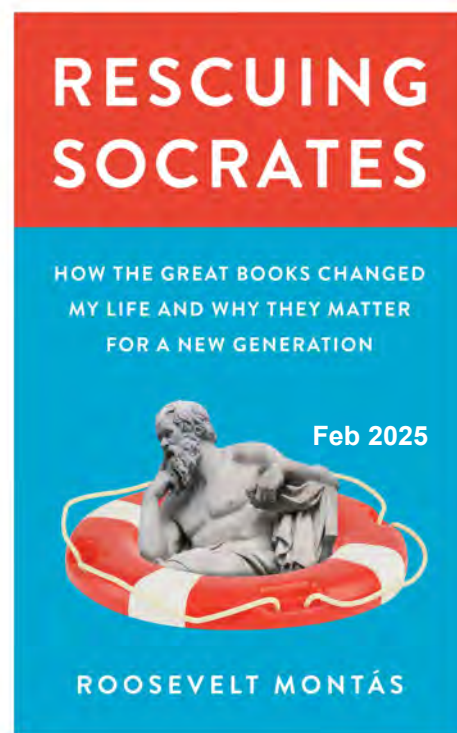
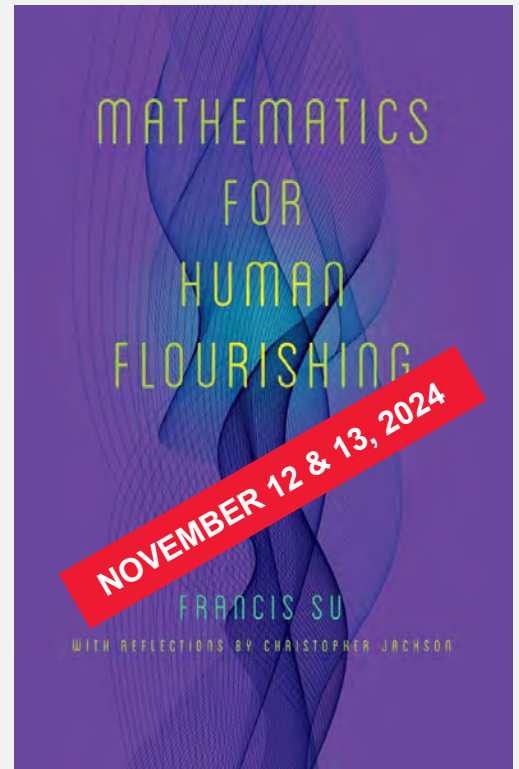
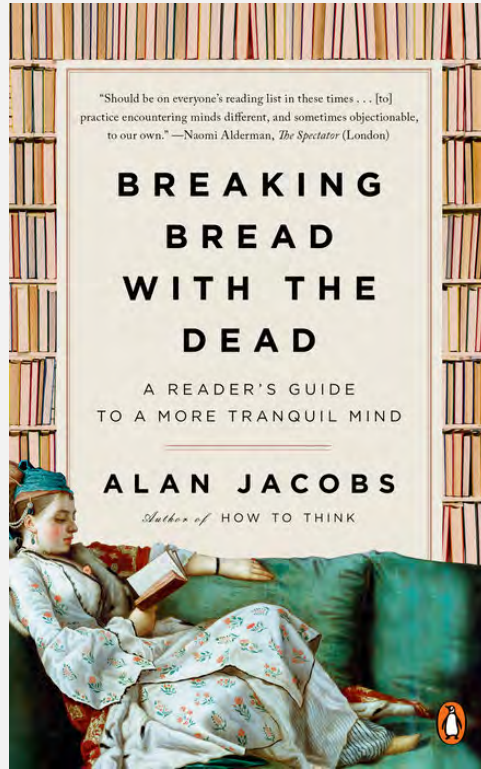


Dr. Diener

OCT Conference

On Monday morning, October 14, TCA teaching staff gathered in the Brown Center to hear **Dr. David Diener** address the staff on the topic *Teachers as Intellectuals and Not Technicians*. Dr. Diener works at Hillsdale College where he is an Assistant Professor of Education. Previously he spent fifteen years in K-12 education, eleven of those in administration and eight as headmaster of classical Christian schools. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Society for Classical Learning and the Board of Academic Advisors for the Classic Learning Test. He is the Executive Director of the Alcuin Fellowship, a member of the National Council of Classical Educators, and regularly provides consulting services and teacher training to classical schools. He is the author of *Plato: The Great Philosopher-Educator* and has published articles on Plato, Kierkegaard, and various topics in philosophy of education. He also serves as the series editor for Classical Academic Press' series *Giants in the History of Education* and is an associate editor for the journal *Principia: A Journal of Classical Education*. He holds a BA in Philosophy and Ancient Languages from Wheaton College as well as an MA in Philosophy, an MS in History and Philosophy of Education, and a dual PhD in Philosophy and Philosophy of Education from Indiana University. The TCA board has previously used Dr. Diener's book on Plato as a book study topic. After Dr. Diener's address and question/answer period, the staff attended breakout sessions discussing a short essay by Dr. Diener titled "Neil Postman on Education, Technology, and Purpose." The afternoon entailed staff attending two sessions of their choice from a selection of 20 different offerings.

Beyond the Book Club



SELECTIONS 2024-2025

A decade ago the **Titan's Creed** was created. This month I've had the opportunity to share about this touchstone document now on three separate occasions. The words below are adapted from two different speaking opportunities.

It is truly a pleasure to share with you today about the **Titan's Creed**. My name is Wes Jolly, and I am fortunate to serve as the Director of Academic Services at TCA, working directly for Dr. Thomason. This is my 19th year at TCA – the first seven of those were spent in the high school US History classroom, and now this is my twelfth year in my current leadership role.

In the spring and summer of 2013, as I was moving into the Director of Academic Services position, our then Director of Character, Betsy Brown (*one of our founding family members*) chatted with me about creating a Touchstone. A touchstone's focus or central idea is to help in creating an intentional school or organizational culture – it is designed to be something motivational and visionary in describing the purpose of the school or organization.

Discussions began in earnest that summer of 2013 on the way forward. I'll be honest with you, not everyone was as excited about the prospect as Betsy and I. Questions arose from some about the need, with pockets of skeptical pushback – we have a Mission Statement and Core Values codified in 2010 – why something else?

We spent from August 2013 through March 2014 working on the effort – generating ownership and buy-in across many various stakeholder groups. Students (120), parents (40), staff from all grade levels (200), administration, and the Academic Lead Team – all had a part in providing input and ideas for the development of the nine lines that today are **chiseled in stone at the entryway of each of our campuses**.

The goal was clear – to create a statement of what we strive for at TCA that could be embraced by all students, staff, and parents. The intent was NOT to replace the mission statement, or in any way diminish the Core Values – but rather have a document that embodied the essence of who we are – something that is actionable in our daily endeavors. The final words, after much thought, review, and reflection were approved, just over a decade ago, by the TCA Board on March 10, 2014.

These words reflect the Core Values document – **the who we are and what we strive to be** component of The Classical Academy. Never could we have imagined how the entire community would embrace these words – this touchstone is recited in assemblies, a point of focus in classroom discussion, and even guides conversations between leadership and students in matters of discipline and correction.

When I reflect on those things I'm most proud of during my time at TCA, this Titan's Creed is right at the top of the list . . . it will live on long after I've departed these hallways . . .

Titans endeavor to recognize and pursue truth, beauty, and goodness.

Titans celebrate virtue in scholarship, relationship, and citizenship.

Titans take ownership of and find joy in learning.

Titans value our responsibilities above our rights.

Titans love, respect, and protect one another.

Striving to be our best,

And give our best to the world, in

Mind, Body, and Spirit,

We Are Titans!

Those are not easy words to uphold – yet, they are a beacon shining brightly to light the way for the journey we are all on.

North Elementary ♦ Field Day (Sep 2024)



photos courtesy of Sonya Wittleder



About the Table . . . by Wesley Jolly, Director of Academic Services

I've read Alan Jacobs' book, *Breaking Bread with the Dead: A Reader's Mind to a More Tranquil Mind*, twice in the last 18 months, and reviewed it again recently as we approached our first *Beyond the Book Club* sessions of the year back in September. As I reflected on his words the image of a table continually filled my thoughts, which should not be surprising since Jacobs titles a chapter *Table Fellowship* and table imagery emerges throughout.

For example, on p. 27 he writes: "The project of increasing temporal bandwidth that I recommend here requires the opening of our minds and hearts to people from the past so that they stand before us three-dimensionally, in all the ways they resemble us and all the ways they do not. Thus I invoke in this book's title a line often uttered by the poet W. H. Auden: 'Art is our chief means of breaking bread with the dead.' Breaking bread is at the heart of this project: **sitting at a table with our ancestors** and learning to know them in their difference from, as well as their likeness to, us."

The PALMARIUM has been around for twelve years now – and tables have been mentioned in well over a dozen of the eighty volumes. Some highlights are touched on below:

- **Volume 3 (2013)** | Ronald Reagan's *Farewell Address* from January 11, 1989: "And let me offer lesson number one about America: All great change in America begins **at the dinner table.**"
- **Volume 6 (2014)** | Thomas Jefferson in a letter to Thomas Cooper from October 7, 1814: "Botany I rank with the most valuable sciences, whether we consider its subjects as furnishing the principal subsistence of life & beast, **delicious varieties for our table**, refreshments from our orchards, the adornments of our flower-border, shade and perfume of our groves, materials for our building, or medicaments for our bodies."
- **Volume 18 (2015)** | *Teamwork Makes the Dream Work* by Susan Nosal: "For those of you that have endured the difficult task of packing up your parents' home after they've passed, you know all too well the bittersweet flood of memories that wash over you during those days, weeks, months until you lock the door for the last time When our family tackled this chore last summer, I found a treasure near and dear to my heart: a small box of handwritten notes, saved by my mother. As I read through the pile, I realized these were **the very notes she placed on the kitchen table each day** through the years, reminding our busy family of eight to 'pick up a gallon of milk,' 'iron your Scout uniform,' 'mow the lawn before Grandma and Grandpa Edel arrive,' and the most repeated note of all – 'The last one in, lock the door and turn out the lights' In my mind's eye I see **TCA's founding families gathered around a kitchen table** voicing their shared vision with deep conviction: 'There must be a better way to educate our children.'"
- **Volume 19|20 (2015)** | *Our Table* by Michelle Hindman – see pp. 10-12 in this volume (*reprinted in full*).
- **Volume 21 (2015)** | *Love of Learning* by Besty Brown: "Titans take ownership and find joy in learning is one of my favorite lines from The Titan's Creed. The emphasis on instilling a passion and joy for learning is core to our mission and vision at TCA. From Immigration Day, to Roman Day, to Medieval day, to **sitting around the table at a Socratic seminar**, to defending a topic during hostile panels in Rhetoric, the goal of education at TCA is to cultivate a love of learning.
- **Volume 30 (2016)** | *At a Crossroads: Civility – Part 1* by Wesley Jolly: "Lack of civility is not exemplary citizenship – a critical component of our mission statement. If we are at a critical juncture in our nation, small efforts in the classroom, **at the dinner table**, on the sporting field, can make the big difference. We, our community, devoted to something bigger than ourselves – 'striving to be our best, do our best, and give our best to the world, in Mind, Body, and Spirit' can make the difference.
- **Volume 40 (2017)** | *Got Humor?* by Dorothy Simpson: "Despite a life marked by difficulty, Samuel Clemens' (Mark Twain's) journey is characterized by an uproarious sense of humor. His youngest daughter once remarked: '**Father was always ready to make jokes at the breakfast table** I would say that my father was the only one at the table who found real joy in life so early in the morning, and of course he didn't find it; he created it.'"

About the Table . . . (continued)

- **Volume 53 (2019)** | *Come Gather at Our Table* by Jennifer Walker – see pp. 8-9 in this volume (*reprinted in full*).
- **Volume 55|56 (2019)** | *A Strange, Wonderful, Indefinable Education* by Michelle Drake: “There is a **reason that we teach around tables** in the Senior year at TCA as a symbol of what we hope these years can achieve. It shows that we value the invisible, indefinable work of good conversation more than control or calculated results. . . . Some of you have had a thirteen year conversation – with adults and mentors who have loved you, with incredible authors who have challenged you, with experiments and exams that have exhausted you, with art that has required your very self to execute, with fellow students who have tried your patience, or broken your heart, or inspired you to be better – and of course that long conversation can’t quite be summed up with the piece of paper you will receive when you walk across the stage next week. That’s okay. . . . We urge you to make music. Become a teacher. Sketch in your sketchbook, even though it’s not for points anymore. Go on a hike, Read a big, long, challenging book and revel in the difficulty. Have a deep discussion late into the night. Listen to an opinion you disagree with, and truly consider it. Be willing to change your mind, share your passion, and give love to those you might not think deserve it. Admit that you’re wrong. Form a new community, **and sit around a table with people who challenge you, and inspire you and even frustrate you**, and learn to cherish them anyway. Follow the truth, and not just success.
- **Volume 74 (2023)** | *Curriculum Connections: K through 6th* by Jessica Powell: “From the moment our students begin their journey at TCA they are welcomed and have **a spot saved at a table with a feast of rich, transformative, and insightful ideas**. Almost immediately the creation of a grand tapestry of ideas has begun. . . .”
- **Volume 77|78 (2024)** | *Passions Conference 2023* by Jeremy Reed: “A recent example of this is the class I teach with Bleys, *Artes Liberales*. As we’ve joined Civics and AP English, we’ve found, time and time again, that the best ideas, the ideas that have stood the test of time are ubiquitous . . . and by further embracing a liberal arts approach, **we have joyfully discovered that Plato, Dostoevsky, and our Founding Fathers, and Joseph Conrad can all sit around the same table and have a single conversation with our students**. It’s fascinating; it’s also MORE classical, MORE liberal, not less.



There is so much value to gathering around a table for breaking bread, fellowship, and engaging with people from the past – we should relish the opportunity to do so (as one of our Senior students does – see p. 9 for his thoughts).

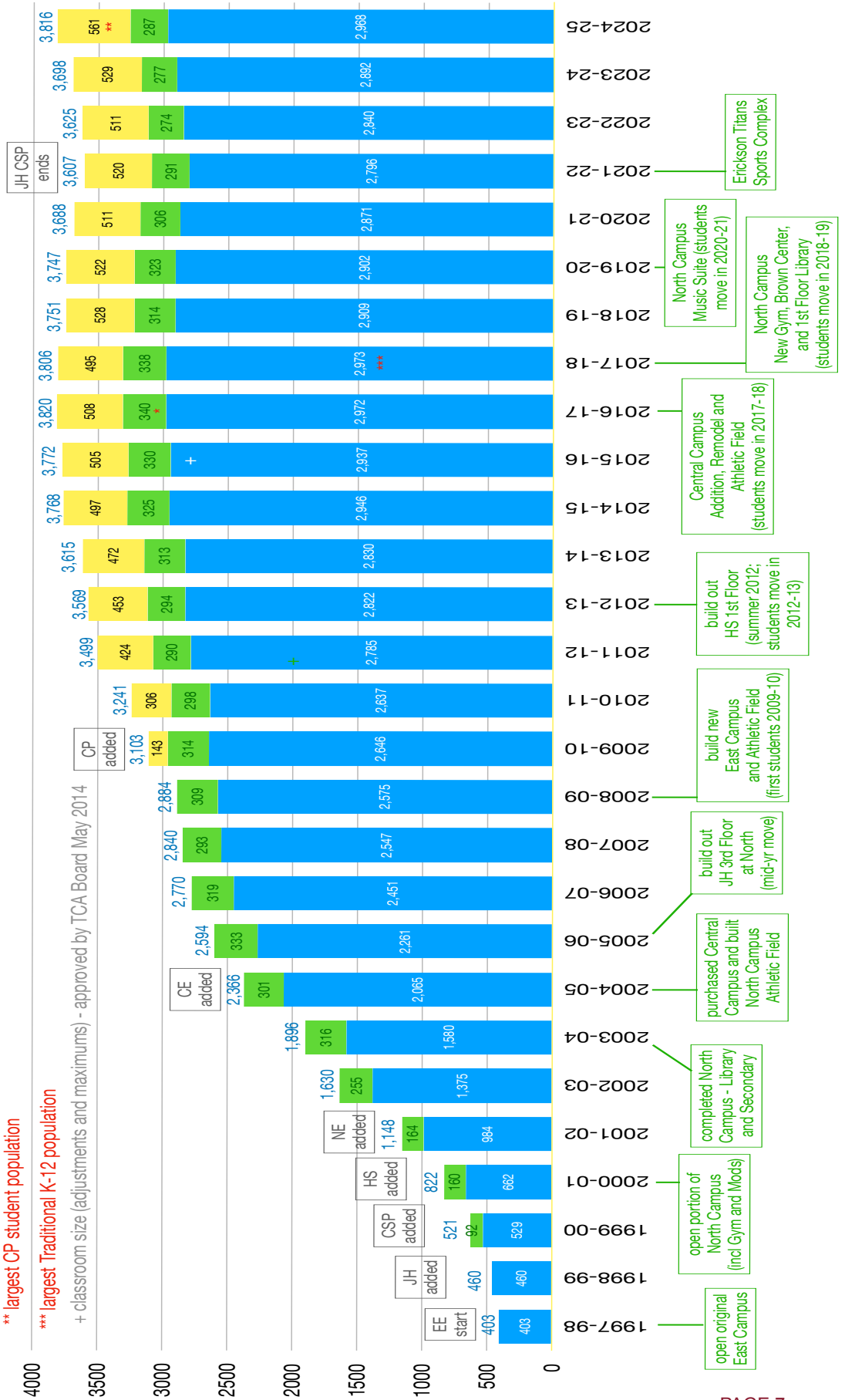
Jacobs continues in his book: “Plutarch thought that one could live a wise and fulfilling life anywhere, and that was in part because of books – that connect us to the Great. . . . The great figures of the past, then provide sustenance for those who seek the contemplative life. . . . Breaking bread with the dead is not a scholarly task to be completed but **a permanent banquet**, to which all who hunger are invited” [see pp. 65, 67, and 80].

For the next few weeks in the entryway to our North Campus (on the high school side of the building) you will see **a table – set for dinner – fitting for this time of year with Thanksgiving just a few days away**. It is a different table, however, in that the banquet is filled with the books that our TCA students read throughout their TCA journey. Each week a different set of grade level works will fill the plates. As you pass by the table, stop and reflect about the feast we, collectively, as parents and teachers provide for our students. And maybe take a moment to think about and reflect on those times gathered around the table in your life that have made a difference.

The **table** in the classroom, for families, and for our communities holds so much value and promise – if only we can sit down, look each other in the eye . . . and engage . . . with a family member, a great author, or someone that has different views than us.

28 Years | Student Population at TCA

* largest CSP student population
 ** largest CP student population
 *** largest Traditional K-12 population



Gather for an important event and there is bound to be a beautiful banquet of sweet and savory food and tables adorned with centerpieces that draw attention, make a statement, or start a conversation. Regardless of the reason, the gathering of friends and family for a special occasion provides life-giving opportunities to develop deep relationships as we share the richness displayed before us.

In the classical classroom, ideas are the life-giving centerpieces around which we gather and the main staple of the banquet set before us. We experience special occasions daily as we spend time with great authors, historians and scientists of the past. Charlotte Mason encourages teachers to "Spread an abundant and delicate feast and each small guest assimilates what he can" (Vol. 6, p. 183). As we prepare this table centered around classical literature, scientific concepts, and rich history, we provide opportunities for students to consider ideas from the greatest minds of all time, strengthening their ability to build relationships and formulate ideas of their own.

Engagement in discussion around big ideas allows us to understand one another on a deeper level as we discover how truth and beauty influences each of us in various ways. J.R.R. Tolkien observed, "True education is a kind of never ending story — a matter of continual beginnings, of habitual fresh starts, of persistent newness." We refer to our chosen texts as "living books" for this very reason. Through generations of thinkers and philosophers, students recognize and pursue truth, beauty, and goodness as they build a foundation of knowledge. Simply covering facts and presenting ideas as information to be mastered takes the joy out of learning and limits the impact of meaningful interaction.

Thoughts from Jennifer

Elementary Mentor Teacher

Approaching ideas as inferences to examine, explore and validate inspires learning and reminds us that we naturally find joy in knowing and sharing knowledge with others.

In an idea centered classroom students do the work of learning as they consider thoughts and ideas that shape and challenge their thinking. Pondering the ideas of those who have gone before us nurtures our sense of wonder. In the words of Mortimer Adler, "We are tied down, all our days and for the greater part of our days, to the commonplace. This is where contact with great thinkers, great literature helps. In their company we are still in the ordinary world, but it is the ordinary world transfigured and seen through the eyes of wisdom and genius." Encountering extraordinary ideas influences our fullness of living.

Come Gather at our Table

From the deep philosophical musings of Aristotle and Plato to Edison's practical concept of a filament, ideas have changed the course of history. When we immerse ourselves in the thinking that influenced history and recognize the power of ideas, we ignite our desire to learn and gain a sense of humility, which brings a deeper understanding of who we are as participants in the story of the world. In his book, *The Life of the Mind*, James V. Schall says, "Pride means, quite literally, that we are closed to everything but

ourselves." Humbly listening to the voices of the past allows us to better formulate our own ideas and make connections with the world around us.

As a mentor teacher, I have the great privilege of observing teachers as they present their prepared feasts of ideas. Students in second grade ponder the idea of immigrants coming to America in search of a better life. Listening to seven year olds discussing what defines a good life and what one might risk to obtain it is truly



astounding. As one of their first introductions to Socratic Seminar, fourth graders discuss the ideas contained in our Constitution to gain a better understanding of what it means to form a "more perfect union".



The Table – A Student Perspective

Recently one of our Senior students in applying to Stanford was given a prompt to write a short answer for as part of the application process. Aiden Adams, has given me permission to share this with the TCA community – as it fits with the theme in this volume of the PALMARIUM.

Virtually all of Stanford's undergraduates live on campus. Write a note to your future roommate that reveals something about you or that will help your roommate – and us – get to know you better.

What is your favorite piece of furniture?

Mine is the table, without hesitation.

Amazing things that can be found at tables. I can convene at a table at school discussing *The Brothers Karamazov*, then stand around a different one with my robotics team assembling a spring-powered climber, then sit around yet another table for a home-cooked meal with my family. At my personal table, one would likely find several open fantasy novels, shrimp fried in lemon pepper, a diagram of my current coding project, and a chess board configured to a position I'm trying to learn. They would also probably find a photo of a bird I have yet to identify and a pumpkin painted with my family.

Tables bring individuals together. Around my table, one would find my family, who regularly schools me at Mario Kart and Clue, and my close friends and teachers at school, with whom I ponder topics as varied as the nuances and woes of the Electoral College and if Cordyceps fungi will ever be able to infect humans. They might even find individuals that aren't human, like the great blue heron that I walk an hour every weekend to observe and I've come to consider a friend, and my dog, who would be very disappointed that I'm writing this letter.

Right now, we are like kindergartners on the first day of school sitting down at a lunch table, and I am ecstatic to see what we will both bring to it.

Thoughts from Jennifer

continued from previous page

It is awe-inspiring to listen to them debate how the phrases of this important document define us as a nation. Fifth graders pause to discuss a line in "My Side of the Mountain" about earthworms causing a "little stir" and consider how even our smallest stirs can make a huge impact on our relationships. After reading the *Odyssey*, sixth grade students examine the idea of heroism as they debate which character deserves the title of most honorable. Throughout their careers at TCA, students cross paths with some of the most influential people and important events in history as they wrestle with life's most contemplated ideas. Having graduated two seniors I can say with certainty that as students gather around the tables lavishly furnished by the senior teachers, they are fully prepared for the critical contemplation of the ideas laid before them.

Teaching classically is a long tradition of encountering ideas, asking questions and searching for answers. It is joining the "Great Conversation" by reading and studying the great books, pondering influential ideas and digging through worthy texts for gems to examine. It is a tradition of awakening wonder and fostering our desire to connect. It is offering the wholesome food necessary to journey on the well-tread path of tried and proven ideas. In the classical sense, centering our focus on foundational truths allows us to nourish the souls of our students on the good and the beautiful as we pass on a tradition, impart virtue, and prepare our students for their futures. I know I speak for many in saying I appreciate the encouragement of TCA's mission to gather together around tables set with ideas "that nurture a passion for learning that will last a lifetime through the context of human relationships and a foundational knowledge base."



Our Table by Michelle Hindman

a speech presented to the graduation Class of 2015 at Senior Breakfast

When I exchange small talk and people ask what I do for a living, I always illustrate the wonderful uniqueness of my job by telling them I “work at a small charter school where I get to teach around a table” instead of desks.

I’m aware that likely the image I put in their minds is something like this [picture to the right]. I admit, I want them to assume I am gracefully facilitating a pristine learning experience, where young adults sit around a polished oak table nodding sagely about Shakespeare like adolescent CEOs.



What I cannot explain to strangers is that on a daily basis, my beloved and bragged-about table looks a little more like this (*see below - don’t worry parents, I had them pose for that picture, they weren’t being rude.*)



I do *not* detail the inexplicable doodles or the spaces pennies can be squashed into; I don’t try to explain how students perfect the slide of a text book along a slightly sticky surface, or that I sometimes scold, “take your feet off the table”, and on one memorable, slightly concerning occasion, “stop crawling under the table, Hudson.”

While I might occasionally long for the quiet dignity of stock photos, I know in my heart, even while scrubbing off hot chocolate stains and brushing away eraser crumbles, that this is what the table should be. Because education is not a black tie affair. It is too precious and too essential to be roped off and perfectly polished. Education, and especially at tiny, quirky TCA, is a family dinner. Or, breakfast.

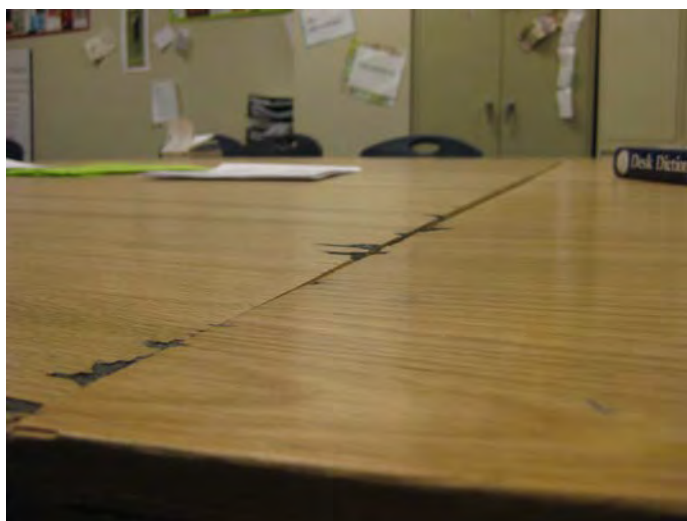
A table symbolizes both unity and simplicity. While important decisions can be made around them, they are more often simply the place we go to gather for some of life’s basics: being together, and eating. At the small college I went to, the campus pastor used to emphasize the importance of chapels, saying that while you don’t remember every meal you eat, every one is necessary, and you wouldn’t be who you are today without the meals you’ve shared with other people.

The table has always symbolized the unique approach to academics at TCA, especially in the Senior year. I sit down at the table with you, because I am not Michelle Hindman, irrefutable pillar of knowledge, doling out information you’re expected to swallow without question. I am human and

curious and needing conversation too and the table symbolizes that I too want to learn from the text, and also from *you* and your own insights.

Some of you have brought absolute brilliance and generous humor to the table. I have been humbled not only by your academic prowess, but by the strength and love in your lives as you live them. Some of you have brought your personal stories and beliefs, your acknowledgements of the shortcomings of humanity. Some of you have brought your precious honesty in a world full of facades, whether simply admitting you didn't read or that there are questions in life that have no answers. Some of us come to the table with nothing to offer, exhausted beyond thought, discussion of Dostoevsky the last thing on our minds.

But this falls away at the table, because regardless of what we come with or what we might feel we lack, we come together, every day, to laugh, to complain, to listen, to discuss. A very small part of the privilege of my job is helping you understand literature. The real gift is seeing you learn how to listen and how to speak with one another. You have learned how to use your voice to articulate your passions, but yet you have also learned how to listen sincerely and show compassion to others who view the world differently.



I can't thank you enough for restoring hope to me, on a daily basis, not just because you've understood semi-colons and become passionate about Orwell, but because you care for one another, and you've even managed to care for me. Whether you were prepared for it or not, this year you have shared too much around too many tables to remain apathetic. Whether playing super smash or debating absolute truth, your education has evolved to be much more about your shared humanity than your GPAs. You have achieved the remarkable, not just in your academics, but in the development of your characters.

And that's why I don't mind that my table is battered and treated like your own living room furniture and why I've never taken offense if I spy drooping eyelids. Because my most sincere hope is that you've felt welcomed at my table in whatever state you have come to it, with all of your imperfections and mine - because learning is about being better, not just smarter.

Education is not about the content you cover, but who you become in the process. Your learning does not happen in ten page papers or other landmark events. Even formal ceremonies like this only mark an intangible and slow change that has already happened - *growing up* - which has snuck up on you and your parents day-by-day, hour-by-hour. Before you knew it, all of those daily conversations and meals added up and formed you into the person you are, sitting here.

Up until now, you have not chosen who joins your table and your conversation. Your fumbling instructors and your imperfect classmates and your difficult courses have been foisted upon you. And

you have done well, learning far more in your time at TCA than MLA formatting and the exact amount of time it takes to get to the Loaf and back before class. But whatever is next for you, your education will continue, and while you are leaving behind the many tables of TCA, the world is waiting for you to form your own. My question as you continue into the world is this: who will you invite to your table?

I encourage you to expand your table. Welcome those others might not to your conversation. Sometimes those without social graces or your opinions are exactly the voices you need. Be curious, instead of defensive, knowing that what is most precious to you cannot be taken away from a mere discussion. Set your table with generosity. Be forgiving, seek out the whole story, and try to listen. Knowledge will never hurt you and the Truth cannot be overcome, even by your doubts. Be courageous as you fill your table, and be sincere. Cynicism and snobbery are easy and the world doesn't need any more sophists in love with their own voice. Real love and real learning and true conversation take work and risk. Be yourself. Don't worry about the polished-oak-and-blazers-model of education. Let the cracks and the dirt show and invite others to be themselves too.

Most of all, don't be afraid. You will join and leave many tables in life, but while those losses are real, they are never final. This is what we mean when we say we hope students become "life-long learners." Even if we don't trip over you reading Russian novels in the future, we hope you stay forever curious, forever kind, forever willing to admit you were wrong and acknowledge another's genius, willing to push yourself past your limit and then one step further. We trust and believe that the tables you invite others to will be lavishly furnished with critical thought, compassion and creativity. So here's to you, class of 2015 and the magnificent conversations we've shared with you so far. May your table be showered with joy and discovery from this point forward and may the long conversation, your life-long education, continue with great love.



Veterans Day 2024 - Legacy of Bravery



Lavon Coles

On Monday, November 11, TCA hosted our Veterans Day Assembly. Retired U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sergeant Lavon Coles addressed our community on the topic of *Legacy of Bravery: Inspiring Future Generations*. Students from across all school and grade levels shared the *Pledge of Allegiance*, the *Star Spangled Banner*, *God Bless America*, the *Marches of the Armed Forces*, the *Preamble to the Constitution*, the *Gettysburg Address*, plus other songs and musical interludes. In addition to this year's assembly, TCA continues to support the **Wreaths Across America** program to honor all those who served bravely and gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country. TCA families can donate a wreath to be placed at Pikes Peak National Cemetery (deadline of November 30th) or volunteer for the wreath laying ceremony on Saturday, December 14th. Please click wreathscrossamerica.org/co0024 for more information. To date for 2024, TCA has sponsored 417 wreaths.



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). To date TCA has donated **\$11,171.**



NOTE: the QR link above takes you to the TCA Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado donation page.

2024 Annual State Assessment Results


CMAS ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (all paper/pencil for TCA)																						
DAS Dashboard Rating	2022-2024 percent met and exceeded expectations				2022-2024 mean scale scores				2023/2024 test participation rates													
	TCA	D20	State	Rank vs D20	TCA	D20	State	TCA	Participation	D20	State	Participation										
	22	23	24	22	23	24	22	23	24	91.3	93.1	94.1	94.3	94.1	94.2							
	73	66	72	53	50	55	41	40	42	2	3	1	of 22	766	762	765	750	750	751	737	737	738
	75	79	73	59	59	59	44	44	42	1	2	3	of 22	763	767	763	753	755	755	740	742	741
	76	78	75	63	65	64	45	48	47	5	1	3	of 23	767	768	765	758	760	759	745	747	747
	76	76	79	64	59	60	43	43	44	1	1	1	of 9	769	767	766	758	755	755	742	743	743
	70	66	68	62	67	65	42	45	46	3	6	5	of 10	762	765	765	758	764	763	741	744	746
	61	74	87	62	67	65	42	45	46	5	3	1	of 10	759	764	773	758	764	763	741	744	746
	47	76	67	62	63	65	44	42	43	10	2	4	of 11	749	767	762	760	759	761	742	741	740
	83	83	65	62	63	65	44	42	43	1	1	5	of 11	766	771	763	760	759	761	742	741	740
DAS RATING CRITERIA:	Green				Scores at or above the district average and solid performance ranking compared to other D20 schools.																	
	Yellow				Scores below the district level and above the state level, but for no more than two consecutive years. Also examine trend and comparative ranking.																	
	Red				Scores below the district level for three consecutive years or below the state level in any year.																	
TCA ELA [Elem + JH]	<p>NOTE: The larger number in each column represents the last assessment year (2024). Numbers for TCA displayed throughout the chart in green indicate areas where we exceeded D20 scores and items in red indicate areas where we scored lower than the district. All top 2 rankings are marked in green in the "Rank vs D20" column. TCA's participation rates exceeded that of the district in only 2 of 8 assessed ELA areas (was 3 of 8 last year and 6 of 8 in 2022). Elementary has a green indication in every rated area and exceeded the district and state in each measured area, and it ranked in the top 2 schools for the district in 2 of 4 grade levels (was ranked 3rd in the other two grade levels). The 7th grade JH ELA and CP ELA areas are rated green with CP ranked the top school at 7th grade in ELA. The 8th grade JH and CP ELA scores dipped a little this year comparatively with the district. TCA is experiencing positive trends across the board in ELA exceeding the performance ratings from 2019 (pre-Covid) for 7 of the 8 areas shown above (lower at 8th grade CP ELA). The overall DAS rating for ELA is green due to 100% of the assessed areas being in the green range based upon the 2024 performance. A green overall rating equates to 75% or greater of the sub-areas within ELA being green as indicated on the summary page beginning the report. This chart reflects a combination of Elementary and Junior High ELA ratings, when including traditional High School and College Pathways High School, ELA is rated green overall for TCA (14 of 14 areas rated green) due to the added performance of 9th, 10th, and 11th grades on PSAT/SAT testing.</p>																					

2024 Annual State Assessment Results

CMAS MATH (all tests taken paper/pencil each year)																				
DAS Dashboard Rating	2022-2024 percent met and exceeded expectations				2022-2024 mean scale scores				2023/2024 test participation rates											
	TCA	D20	State	Rank vs D20	TCA	D20	State	TCA	D20	State	TCA	State								
	22 23	24	22 23	24	22 23	24	22 23	24												
	75 71	71	52 55	57	39 40	42	2 1	1 of 22	766 764	764	749 752	753	737 738	740	92.0	93.1	93.8	94.7	94.2	93.9
	67 68	66	46 49	50	31 33	34	3 3	2 of 22	759 761	761	746 747	749	732 733	735	88.0	91.1	93.5	93.0	93.8	93.1
	64 66	67	52 53	52	35 37	37	7 4	2 of 23	759 761	761	751 752	751	736 737	739	93.8	90.6	93.4	92.1	92.8	92.1
	61 59	55	44 44	44	26 28	29	1 1	3 of 9	755 755	752	744 745	745	728 730	732	87.2	90.3	89.7	87.7	89.8	89.0
	51 46	55	38 42	45	25 26	30	1 4	2 of 11	751 748	752	742 744	747	730 731	733	88.5	84.8	85.1	86.5	85.5	85.5
	39 49	48	38 42	45	25 26	30	4 3	5 of 11	740 743	746	742 744	747	730 731	733	81.0	92.3	85.1	86.5	85.5	85.5
	44 49	53	52 49	55	32 33	33	7 6	7 of 11	744 754	752	750 749	754	731 732	731	80.4	74.4	77.0	76.3	79.5	79.2
	58 52	61	52 49	55	32 33	33	3 4	4 of 11	753 747	757	750 749	754	731 732	731	68.9	74.1	77.0	76.3	79.5	79.2
DAS Dashboard Rating Overall	Green												Scores at or above the district average and solid performance ranking compared to other D20 schools.							
	Yellow												Scores below the district level and above the state level, but for no more than two consecutive years. Also examine trend and comparative ranking.							
	Red												Scores below the district level for three consecutive years or below the state level in any year.							
TCA Math (Elem + JH)	NOTE: The larger number in each column represents the last assessment year (2024). Numbers for TCA displayed throughout the chart in green indicate areas where we exceeded D20 scores and items in red indicate areas where we scored lower than the district. All top 2 rankings are marked in green in the "Rank vs D20" column. TCA's participation rates exceeded that of the district in 2 of 8 assessed Math areas (3 of 8 last year, and 6 of 8 in 2022). The 7th grade CP JH scores have a green + overall rating due to the fact that the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations surpassed the district by 3.0%, but the average mean score for the grade was slightly lower than the district average for the 2024 testing cycle. 8th grade JH traditional math score results are coded as a yellow + since the percentage of meets or exceeding expectations was slightly lower than the district (-2.9%) and the average mean score was just slightly lower. The + add is due to the fact the overall percentage of meets or exceeds is at a four year high for Junior High - moving from 34% (2021) to 53% (2024) in that timeframe. The overall DAS rating is green due to overall performance in 7 of the 8 individually rated areas meeting the green criteria (requires 6 of 8 to meet green criteria collectively). TCA is experiencing positive trends across the board in Math exceeding the performance ratings from 2019 (pre-Covid) for 7 of the 8 areas shown above (lower at 8th grade JH Math). This chart reflects a combination of Elementary and Junior High Math ratings, when also including traditional High School and College Pathways High School, Math is rated green overall due to scoring green in 13 of 14 areas in 2024 (75% or 11 of 14 needed for green score). Of note again this year TCA Elementary and Junior High garnered top 2 ratings amongst district schools in 4 of the possible 8 rated areas.																			

2024 Annual State Assessment Results

11th Grade - SAT Annual State Results													
DAS Dashboard Rating	Tested Area	2022-2024 average SAT scores and rankings within D20						2022-2024 SAT Participation Rates					
		TCA	D20	State	D20	State	TCA	D20	State				
		2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
		TCA High School											
	Read/Write	577	591	584	544	547	548	503	505	499	2	1	1
	Math	554	575	557	516	523	518	483	484	477	2	1	1
	Overall	1131	1166	1141	1060	1070	1066	985	989	976	2	1	1
		TCA College Pathways											
	Read/Write	580	579	578	544	547	548	503	505	505	1	2	2
	Math	555	529	548	516	523	518	483	484	477	1	4	2
	Overall	1136	1108	1126	1060	1070	1066	985	989	976	1	2	2
	DAS RATING CRITERIA	Green: Scores at or above the district average and solid performance ranking compared to other D20 schools. Yellow: Scores below the district level and above the state level, but for no more than two consecutive years. Also examine trend and comparative ranking. Red: Scores below the district level for three consecutive years or below the state level in any year.											
DAS Dashboard Overall Rating		NOTE: TCA exceeds the state and district in every measurable area for the SAT annual exam. 2017 was the first year that all 11th grade students took the SAT exam (the state previously used the ACT). The participation rate for 11th grade High School students is over 97% and has exceeded the district each of the past four years. College Pathways participation is listed as error for 2022 due to an issue at CDE in assigning students for the formal CDE report. College Pathways SAT participation is typically lower than the district (five consecutive years). When considering all 11th graders in the state TCA College Pathways ranked #23 (#37 in 2023 and #19 in 2022) and TCA High School #20 (#14 in 2023 and #21 in 2022) respectively out of 518 high schools registering scores in the state. Additionally, TCA College Pathways and TCA High School have ranked either #1 or #2 in the district in every measurable category for the past eight years, with the exception of Math at CP for last school year - slipped to 4th overall in 2023 (additionally, both schools scored in the top two schools for the ACT exam in 2016). Outstanding results once again.											
TCA SAT													
High School													
CP													



“The project of increasing temporal bandwidth that I recommend here requires the opening of our minds and hearts to the people from the past so that they they stand before us three-dimensionally, in all the ways they resemble us and all the ways do not. Thus I invoke in this book’s title a line often uttered by the poet W. H. Auden: ‘Art is our chief means of breaking bread with the dead.’ *Breaking bread* is at the heart of this project; sitting at table with our ancestors and learning to know them in their difference from, as well as likeness to, us. ‘Table fellowship’ . . .”

Gather at the Table

Quote from *Breaking Bread with the Dead* by Alan Jacobs, p. 27, in the chapter titled *Table Fellowship*