

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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Year XII

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PALMARIUM

PARENT SURVEY

A Twelve Year Journey

1,038 parents participated in TCA's annual Parent Survey this year, which concluded at the end of February. Over a 23-year period the survey has averaged 989 parents providing input. After reaching all-time highs for the 2023-24 school year - the results for the past two years while strong have shifted back towards the ten-year norms. "Strongly Agree" indicators for both the **academic prep** and **character** questions were at their highest over the past 10-year period **increasing 20% and 26%** respectively. Overall survey *positive response* rates approached **88%** (the 7th highest rating over twenty plus years) and parent strongly agree outnumbered strongly disagree indicators by a factor of **64 to 1** (5-yr average in this area is 63 to 1). Thanks to all that participated on the survey [more results included on pp. 11-13].

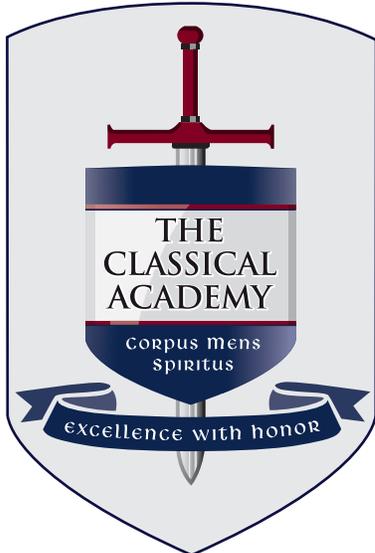
On September 11, 2013 the first volume of the PALMARIUM was published. Little did I know, at that time, that this effort would encompass twelve years and over eighty volumes. As with all great journeys, I believe it is time to bring this one to an end. The idea behind this effort, shared in the first volume was to evoke the idea that as we pursue truth, beauty, and goodness in our development of exemplary citizens we are in part striving to create a great work - a *masterpiece*. **Palmarium**, from the Latin, means *deserving of a palm - a masterpiece*. What better name for a document that delved into what it means to develop "exemplary citizens equipped with analytical thinking skills, virtuous character, and a passion for learning, all built upon a solid foundation of knowledge." In that same first volume, I described the office in my home and a small blank canvas that greeted me each morning - and what that blank canvas represented. Are the brush strokes I freshly paint each day on that canvas something I'd want to sign my name to when it is finished? Am I contributing to truth, beauty, and goodness? Each new day gives me that opportunity. A fresh canvas. As those words were written over a decade ago the words that came to my mind were from 1971 - "Yes, it sure has been a long hard climb / Train wheels runnin' through the back of my memory / When I ran on a hilltop following a pack of wild geese / Some-day, everything is gonna be smooth like a rhapsody / When I paint my masterpiece."

Bob Dylan, *When I Paint My Masterpiece*

In this final issue we touch on the **Parent Survey**, **TCA's Educational Philosophy**, the **Senior Capstone**, and a speech by **Frederick Douglass** (*the Class of 2024 Exemplar*). Additionally, our **fundraising efforts** and ongoing **Beyond the Book Club** selections for 2025-2026 are addressed, amongst other highlighted topics.

The Editor

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SEVEN SCHOOLS • THREE CAMPUSES • ONE VISION

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



U.S. News & Colorado Awards

Typically at the end of the school year we include the *U.S. News & World Report* High School Rankings in this volume. This year it appears that the High School rankings will be coming out later than normal (August instead of April), but there is now a new category of reports detailing Elementary and Junior High performance across the nation. The **2025 U.S. News & World Report** results were recently released which compared over 103,000 pre-K, elementary, and middle schools nationwide. Those schools were then broken out into state rankings (*no national overall rankings included*).

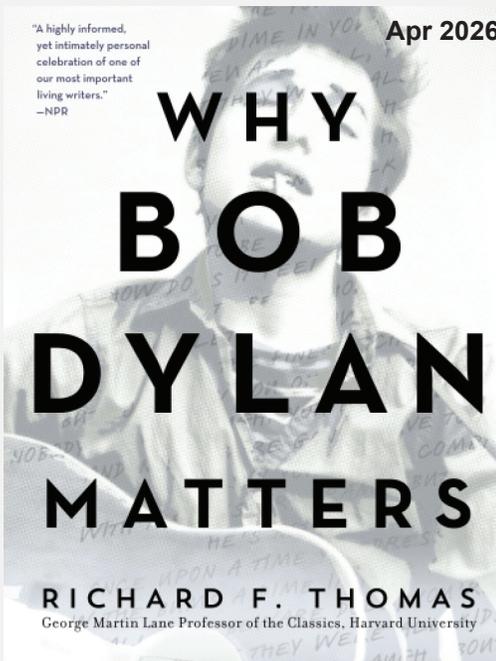
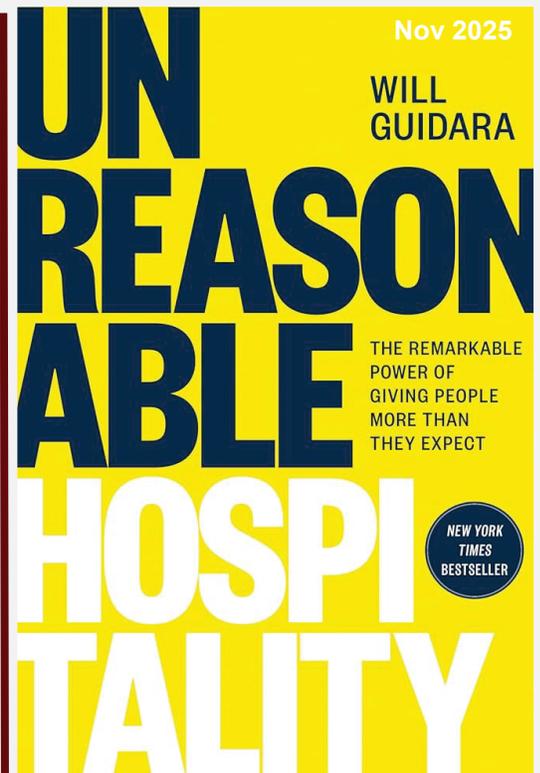
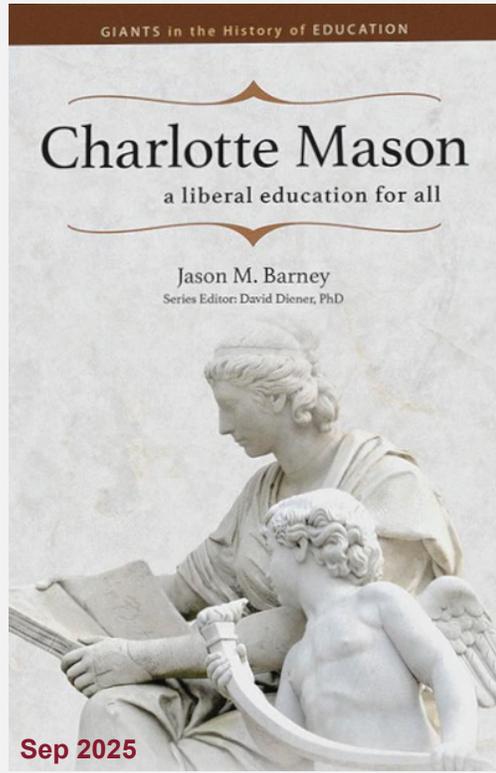
TCA Elementary ranked **#1** in Academy School District 20, **#5** amongst Colorado charter elementary schools, and **#39** overall in the state amongst the 1,417 ranked elementary schools.

TCA Junior High ranked **#5** in Academy School District 20, **#37** amongst Colorado charter middle schools, and **#102** overall in the state amongst the 987 ranked middle schools.

From the **2024 results** previously reported TCA High School ranked **#1** in Academy School District 20, **#9** overall in the state amongst the 987 ranked schools - and **#465** in the nation amongst 25,000 reviewed high schools. *Note: since the TCA College Pathways program does not offer Advanced Placement courses (but instead PPSC classes) it is not fully considered for the top rankings.*

Additionally, the annual 2024 state of Colorado **John Irwin Awards** "given to schools that received an Exceeds Expectations rating on the Academic Achievement indicator . . . reflecting exceptional performance in Math, English Language Arts, and Science" were awarded to **TCA Elementary, TCA Junior High, TCA College Pathways, and TCA High School.** Only 12 of the 39 Academy District schools were lauded. TCA is honored to account for **33% of the district recipients** and the **only two high schools so recognized.**

Beyond the Book Club



The 2025-2026 school year marks the eleventh year of the TCA **Beyond the Book Club** effort. During that timeframe staff, parents, and board members have discussed **forty different titles** in small staff-led book studies. Those forty books (some used multiple years) have resulted in **100+ book study sessions** over the decade. This year we have three new titles selected to engage with during the months of September 2025, November 2025, and April 2026. Books are made available to staff on a first come, first served basis until the available selections are exhausted. If you'd like to be added to the RSVP invite list prior to the scheduled study sessions - e-mail me at wjolly@asd20.org and I will add you to the e-mail invite list for next school year.

SELECTIONS 2025-2026

In the summer of 2011, while still a classroom U.S. History teacher at TCA, I was selected to attend a summer program in Rochester, NY, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Approximately 20 high school teachers from across the country experienced this unique opportunity to learn about the impact of events, places, and people in this area during the **19th century reform movements**: Susan B. Anthony, the Erie Canal, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, the *North Star* abolitionist newspaper, and renowned orator and author **Frederick Douglass**. The opportunity to participate was truly beneficial, enlightening, and is remembered fondly to this day. In addition, it provided some personal stories, photos, and video for my history classroom. As participants we held original copies of the *North Star* and interestingly enough a lock of Douglass's hair.



Over the years Douglass's "**What to the Slave is the Fourth of July**" delivered on July 5, 1852 has easily ranked in my list of top speeches in our country's history. A few years ago I read a book solely devoted to this significant speech as our nation headed towards Civil War. As we head into summer and approach the 249th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and look forward to the 250th celebration in 2026, I thought it important to include portions of Douglass's speech in this volume of the PALMARIUM. Recently President Trump signed an executive order to create a "National Garden of American Heroes" with statues honoring 250 people to be established before the 250th anniversary of 1776.

Names suggested to honor include Frederick Douglass, Amelia Earhart, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., Betsy Ross, the Wright Brothers, Christa McAuliffe, and many others.

A little background on the speech – it was presented at Corinthian Hall in Rochester, NY on July 5, 1852. Douglass was 34 years old at the time of this speech. The gathering was organized by the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society and the 13th President of the United States, Millard Fillmore, was in the audience that day. The full speech was around 10,000 words and published in a 40-page pamphlet. Today most sources edit the speech to four to five pages – a full version (at fourteen pages) can be found at this link: <https://loveman.sdsu.edu/docs/1852Frederick-Douglass.pdf>. Punctuation, formatting, and capitalizations are in accordance with the 1852 published version – printed shortly after the speech was delivered. We use a version of this speech in our "Classical Curriculum for Classical Teachers" reader for secondary staff. Additionally, the TCA Class of 2024 selected Frederick Douglass as their class exemplar (hero) during their junior year. I've included an abbreviated version in this volume but would encourage you to read the entirety of the speech and reflect on the time the speech was given and our nation as we anticipate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and 1776 in fourteen months.

What to the Slave is the Fourth of July? (1852)

Mr. President, Friends and Fellow Citizens:

He who could address this audience without a quailing sensation, has stronger nerves than I have. I do not remember ever to have appeared as a speaker before any assembly more shrinkingly, nor with greater distrust of my ability, than I do this day. A feeling has crept over me, quite unfavorable to the exercise of my limited powers of speech. The task before me is one which requires much previous thought and study for its proper performance. I know that apologies of this sort are generally considered flat and unmeaning. I trust, however, that mine will not be so considered. Should I seem at ease, my appearance would much misrepresent me. The little experience I have had in addressing public meetings, in country school houses, avails me nothing on the present occasion.

The papers and placards say, that I am to deliver a 4th July oration. This certainly, sounds large,

and out of the common way, for me. It is true that I have often had the privilege to speak in this beautiful Hall, and to address many who now honor me with their presence. But neither their familiar faces, nor the perfect gage I think I have of Corinthian Hall, seems to free me from embarrassment.

The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, the distance between this platform and the slave plantation, from which I escaped, is considerable—and the difficulties to be overcome in getting from the latter to the former, are by no means slight. That I am here today, is, to me, a matter of astonishment as well as of gratitude. You will not, therefore, be surprised, if in what I have to say, I evince no elaborate preparation, nor grace my speech with any high sounding exordium. With little experience and with less learning, I have been able to throw my thoughts hastily and imperfectly together; and trusting to your patient and generous indulgence, I will proceed to lay them before you. . . .



Site of Corinthian Hall (2011)

On the 2d of July, 1776, the old Continental Congress, to the dismay of the lovers of ease, and the worshippers of property, clothed that dreadful idea with all the authority of national sanction. They did so in the form of a resolution; and as we seldom hit upon resolutions, drawn up in our day, whose transparency is at all equal to this, it may refresh your minds and help my story if I read it.

Resolved, That these united colonies are, and of right, ought to be free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown; and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, dissolved.

Citizens, your fathers made good that resolution. They succeeded; and today you reap the fruits of their success. The freedom gained is yours; and you, therefore, may properly celebrate this anniversary. The 4th of July is the first great fact in your nation's history—the very ring-bolt in the chain of your yet undeveloped destiny.

Pride and patriotism, not less than gratitude, prompt you to celebrate and to hold it in perpetual remembrance. I have said that the Declaration of Independence is the RINGBOLT to the chain of your nation's destiny; so, indeed, I regard it. The principles contained in that instrument are saving principles. Stand by those principles, be true to them on all occasions, in all places, against all foes, and at whatever cost. . . .

Fellow-citizens, pardon me, allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here today? What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? and am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?

Would to God, both for your sakes and ours, that an affirmative answer could be truthfully returned to these questions! Then would my task be light, and my burden easy and delightful. For who is there so cold, that a nation's sympathy could not warm him? Who so obdurate and dead to the claims of gratitude, that would not thankfully acknowledge such priceless benefits? Who so stolid and selfish, that would not give his voice to swell the hallelujahs of a nation's jubilee, when the chains of servitude had been torn from his limbs? I am not that man. In a case like that, the dumb might eloquently speak, and the "lame man leap as an hart."

But, such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence,

bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth July is *yours, not mine*. You may rejoice, I must mourn. . . .

. . . My subject, then, fellow-citizens, is AMERICAN SLAVERY. I shall see, this day, and its popular characteristics, from the slave's point of view. Standing, there, identified with the American bondman, making his wrongs mine, I do not hesitate to declare, with all my soul, that the character and conduct of this nation never looked blacker to me than on this 4th of July! Whether we turn to the declarations of the past, or to the professions of the present, the conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future. Standing with God and the crushed and bleeding slave on this occasion, I will, in the name of humanity which is outraged, in the name of liberty which is fettered, in the name of the constitution and the Bible, which are disregarded and trampled upon, dare to call in question and to denounce, with all the emphasis I can command, everything that serves to perpetuate slavery—the great sin and shame of America! “I will not equivocate; I will not excuse;” I will use the severest language I can command; and yet not one word shall escape me that any man, whose judgment is not blinded by prejudice, or who is not at heart a slaveholder, shall not confess to be right and just.

But I fancy I hear some one of my audience say, it is just in this circumstance that you and your brother abolitionists fail to make a favorable impression on the public mind. Would you argue more, and denounce less, would you persuade more, and rebuke less, your cause would be much more likely to succeed. But, I submit where all is plain there is nothing to be argued. What point in the anti-slavery creed would you have me argue? On what branch of the subject do the people of this country need light? Must I undertake to prove that the slave is a man? That point is conceded already. Nobody doubts it. The slave-holders themselves acknowledge it in the enactment of laws for their government. They acknowledge it when they punish disobedience on the part of the slave. There are seventy-two crimes in the State of Virginia, which, if committed by a black man (no matter how ignorant he be), subject him to the punishment of death; while only two of the same crimes will subject a white man to the like punishment. What is this but the acknowledgement that the slave is a moral, intellectual and responsible being. The manhood of the slave is conceded. It is admitted in the fact that Southern statute books are covered with enactments forbidding, under severe fines and penalties, the teaching of the slave to read or to write. When you can point to any such laws, in reference to the beasts of the field, then I may consent to argue the manhood of the slave. When the dogs in your streets, when the fowls of the air, when the cattle on your hills, when the fish of the sea, and the reptiles that crawl, shall be unable to distinguish the slave from a brute, then will I argue with you that the slave is a man.

For the present, it is enough to affirm the equal manhood of the negro race. Is it not astonishing that, while we are ploughing, planting and reaping, using all kinds of mechanical tools, erecting houses, constructing bridges, building ships, working in metals of brass, iron, copper, silver and gold; that, while we are reading, writing and cyphering, acting as clerks, merchants and secretaries, having among us lawyers, doctors, ministers, poets, authors, editors, orators and teachers; that, while we are engaged in all manner of enterprises common to other men, digging gold in California, capturing the whale in the Pacific, feeding sheep and cattle on the hillside, living, moving, acting, thinking, planning, living in families as husbands, wives and children, and, above all, confessing and worshipping the Christian's God, and looking hopefully for life and immortality beyond the grave, we are called upon to prove that we are men!

Would you have me argue that man is entitled to liberty? that he is the rightful owner of his own body? You have already declared it. Must I argue the wrongfulness of slavery? Is that a question for Republicans? Is it to be settled by the rules of logic and argumentation, as a matter beset with great difficulty, involving a doubtful application of the principle of justice, hard to be understood? How should I look today, in the presence of Americans, dividing, and subdividing a discourse, to show that men have a natural right to freedom? speaking of it relatively, and positively, negatively, and affirmatively. To do so, would be to make myself ridiculous, and to offer an insult to your understanding. There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven, that does not know that slavery is wrong *for him*.

What, am I to argue that it is wrong to make men brutes, to rob them of their liberty, to work them without wages, to keep them ignorant of their relations to their fellow men, to beat them with sticks, to flay their flesh with the lash, to load their limbs with irons, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them at auction, to sunder their families, to knock out their teeth, to burn their flesh, to starve them into obedience and submission to their masters? Must I argue that a system thus marked with blood, and stained with pollution, is *wrong*? No I will not. I have better employment for my time and strength, than such arguments would imply.

What, then, remains to be argued? Is it that slavery is not divine; that God did not establish it; that our doctors of divinity are mistaken? There is blasphemy in the thought. That which is inhuman, cannot be divine! Who can reason on such a proposition? They that can, may; I cannot. The time for such argument is past.

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. O! had I the ability, and could I reach the nation's ear, I would, to day, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced.

What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour. . . .

Take the American slave-trade, which we are told by the papers, is especially prosperous just now. Ex-Senator Benton tells us that the price of men was never higher than now. He mentions the fact to show that slavery is in no danger. This trade is one of the peculiarities of American institutions. It is carried on in all the large towns and cities in one half of this confederacy; and millions are pocketed every year, by dealers in this horrid traffic. In several states, this trade is a chief source of wealth. It is called (in contradistinction to the foreign slave-trade) "*the internal slave-trade*." It is, probably, called so, too, in order to divert from it the horror with which the foreign slave-trade is contemplated. That trade has long since been denounced by this government, as piracy. It has been denounced with burning words, from the high places of the nation, as an execrable traffic. To arrest it, to put an end to it, this nation keeps a squadron, at immense cost, on the coast of Africa. Everywhere, in this country, it is safe to speak of this foreign slave-trade, as a most inhuman traffic, opposed alike to the laws of God and of man. The duty to extirpate and destroy it, is admitted even by our DOCTORS OF DIVINITY. In order to put an end to it, some of these last have consented that their colored brethren (nominally free) should leave this country, and establish themselves on the western coast of Africa! It is, however, a notable fact, that, while so much execration is poured out by Americans, upon those engaged in the foreign slave-trade, the men engaged in the slave-trade between the states pass without condemnation, and their business is deemed honorable. . . .

But a still more inhuman, disgraceful, and scandalous state of things remains to be presented.

By an act of the American Congress, not yet two years old, slavery has been nationalized in its most horrible and revolting form. By that act, Mason & Dixon's line has been obliterated; New York has become as Virginia; and the power to hold, hunt, and sell men, women and children, as slaves, remains no longer a mere state institution, but is now an institution of the whole United States. The power is co-extensive with the star-spangled banner, and American Christianity. Where these go, may also go the merciless slave-hunter. . . . For black men there are neither law, justice, humanity, nor religion.

The Fugitive Slave Law makes MERCY TO THEM, A CRIME; and bribes the judge who tries them. An American JUDGE GETS TEN DOLLARS FOR EVERY VICTIM HE CONSIGNS to slavery, and five, when he fails to do so. The oath of any two villains is sufficient, under this hell-black enactment, to send the most pious and exemplary black man into the remorseless jaws of slavery! His own testimony is nothing. He can bring no witnesses for himself. The minister of American justice is bound, by the law to hear but one side; and that side, is the side of the oppressor. Let this damning fact be perpetually told. Let it be thundered around the world, that, in tyrant-killing, king-hating, people-loving, democratic, Christian America, the seats of justice are filled with judges, who hold their offices under an open and palpable bribes, and are bound, in deciding in the case of a man's liberty, to hear only his accusers! . . .

[T]he church of this country is not only indifferent to the wrongs of the slave, it actually takes sides with the oppressors. It has made itself the bulwark of American slavery, and the shield of American slave-hunters. Many of its most eloquent Divines, who stand as the very lights of the church, have shamelessly given the sanction of religion, and the bible, to the whole slave system. They have taught that man may, properly, be a slave; that the relation of master and slave is ordained of God; that to send back an escaped bondman to his master is clearly the duty of all the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ; and this horrible blasphemy is palmed off upon the world for christianity. . . .

Let the religious press, the pulpit, the sunday school, the conference meeting, the great ecclesiastical, missionary, bible and tract associations of the land array their immense powers against slavery, and slave-holding; and the whole system of crime and blood would be scattered to the winds, and that they do not do this involves them in the most awful responsibility of which the mind can conceive. . . .

Fellow-citizens! I will not enlarge further on your national inconsistencies. The existence of slavery in this country brands your republicanism as a sham, your humanity as a base pretence, and your christianity as a lie. It destroys your moral power abroad it corrupts your politicians at home. It saps the foundation of religion; it makes your name a hissing, and a bye-word to a mocking earth. It is the antagonistic force in your government, the only thing that seriously disturbs and endangers your *Union*. It fetters your progress; it is the enemy of improvement, the deadly foe of education; it fosters pride; it breeds insolence; it promotes vice; it shelters crime; it is a curse to the earth that supports it; and yet, you cling to it, as if it were the sheet anchor of all your hopes. Oh! be warned! be warned! a horrible reptile is coiled up in your nation's bosom; the venomous creature is nursing at the tender breast of your youthful republic; *for the love of God, tear away, and fling from you the hideous monster, and let the weight of twenty millions, crush and destroy it forever!*

But it is answered in reply to all this, that precisely what I have now denounced is, in fact, guaranteed and sanctioned by the Constitution of the United States; that, the right to hold, and to hunt slaves is a part of that Constitution framed by the illustrious Fathers of this Republic. . . .

. . . [B]ut I differ from those who charge this baseness on the framers of the Constitution of the United States. *It is a slander upon their memory, at least, so I believe. . . .*

Fellow-citizens! there is no matter in respect to which, the people of the North have allowed themselves to be so ruinously imposed upon, as that of the pro-slavery character of the Constitution. In that instrument I hold there is neither warrant, license, nor sanction of the hateful thing; but interpreted, as it *ought* to be interpreted, the Constitution is a GLORIOUS LIBERTY DOCUMENT. Read its preamble, consider its purposes. Is slavery among them? Is it at the gateway? or is it in the temple? it is neither. While I do not intend to argue this question on the present occasion, let me ask, if it be not somewhat singular that, if the Constitution were intended to be, by its framers and adopters, a slave-holding instrument, why neither *slavery, slaveholding, nor slave* can anywhere be found in it. What would be thought of an instrument, drawn up, legally drawn up, for the purpose of entitling the city of Rochester to a track of land, in which no mention of land was made? . . .

Now, take the constitution according to its plain reading, and I defy the presentation of a single proslavery clause in it. On the other hand it will be found to contain principles and purposes, entirely hostile to the existence of slavery. . . .

Allow me to say, in conclusion, notwithstanding the dark picture I have this day presented, of the state of the nation, I do not despair of this country. There are forces in operation, which must inevitably, work the downfall of slavery. "*The arm of the Lord is not shortened,*" and the doom of slavery is certain.

I, therefore, leave off where I began, with hope. While drawing encouragement from "the Declaration of Independence," the great principles it contains, and the genius of American Institutions, my spirit is also cheered by the obvious tendencies of the age. Nations do not now stand in the same relation to each other that they did ages ago. No nation can now shut itself up, from the surrounding world, and trot round in the same old path of its fathers without interference. The time was when such could be done. Long established customs of hurtful character could formerly fence themselves in, and do their evil work with social impunity. Knowledge was then confined and enjoyed by the privileged few, and the multitude walked on in mental darkness. But a change has now come over the affairs of mankind. Walled cities and empires have become unfashionable. The arm of commerce has borne away the gates of the strong city. Intelligence is penetrating the darkest corners of the globe. It makes its pathway over and under the sea, as well as on the earth. Wind, steam, and lightning are its chartered agents. Oceans no longer divide, but link nations together. From Boston to London is now a holiday excursion. Space is comparatively annihilated. Thoughts expressed on one side of the Atlantic, are distinctly heard on the other.

The far off and almost fabulous Pacific rolls in grandeur at our feet. The Celestial Empire, the mystery of ages, is being solved. The fiat of the Almighty, "*Let there be Light,*" has not yet spent its force. No abuse, no outrage whether in taste, sport or avarice, can now hide itself from the all-pervading light. The iron shoe, and crippled foot of China must be seen, in contrast with nature. *Africa must rise and put on her yet unwoven garment. "Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand unto God."* In the fervent aspirations of William Lloyd Garrison, I say, and let every heart join in saying it:

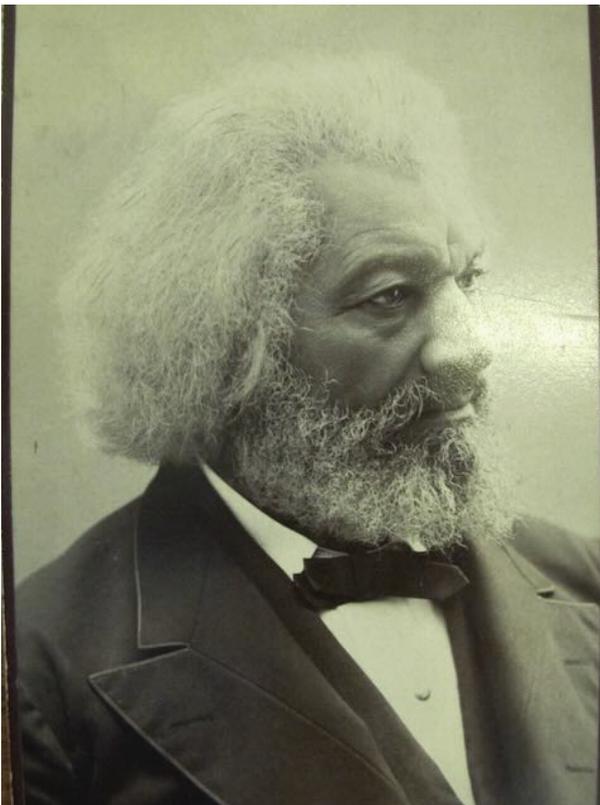


Image of Douglass in Rochester Archives (2011)

God speed the year of jubilee
 The wide world o'er!
 When from their galling chains set free,
 Th' oppress'd shall vilely bend the knee,
 And wear the yoke of tyranny
 Like brutes no more.
 That year will come, and freedom's reign,
 To man his plundered rights again
 Restore. . . .

God speed the hour, the glorious hour,
 When none on earth
 Shall exercise a lordly power,
 Nor in a tyrant's presence cower;
 But all to manhood's stature tower,
 By equal birth!
 THAT HOUR WILL COME, to each, to all,
 And from his prison-house, the thrall
 Go forth.

Until that year, day, hour, arrive,
 With head, and heart, and hand I'll strive,
 To break the rod, and rend the gyve,
 The spoiler of his prey deprive
 So witness Heaven!
 And never from my chosen post,
 Whate'er the peril or the cost,
 Be driven.

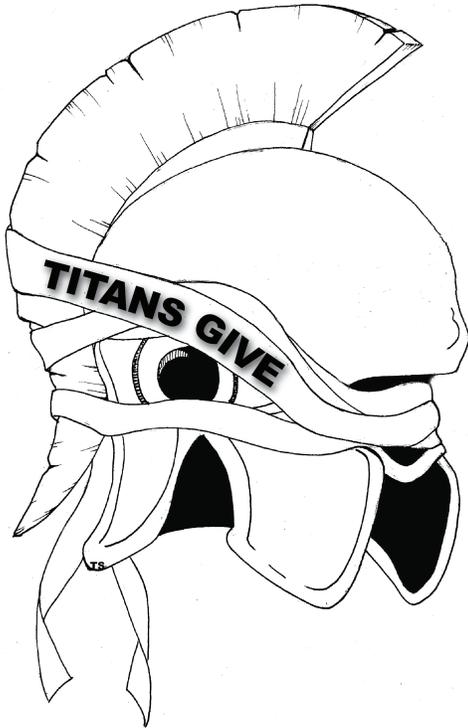


“Plutarch thought that one could live a wise and fulfilling life anywhere, and that was possible in part because of books - that connect us to the Great. . . . The great figures of the past, then, provide sustenance for those who seek the contemplative life. . . . Breaking bread with the dead is not a scholarly task to be completed but a permanent banquet, to which all who hunger are invited.”

A Permanent Banquet

Quoted from *Breaking Bread with the Dead*
by Alan Jacobs, pp. 65, 67, and 80.

Six Year Plan | TCA All-Campus Fundraisers



Over the course of the 2025-2026 school year TCA leadership and students have worked on updating a new Titans Give fundraising plan for our schools. Twenty-nine suggested organizations were vetted and narrowed, ultimately to six organizations selected by students across all our campuses. From 2018-2025 TCA schools have supported Memorial Children's Hospital Colorado, Wounded Warrior Project, Make-a-Wish Colorado, American Cancer Society, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado (this year's effort - see below). For the first five organizations listed TCA campuses have raised approximately \$375,000 or an average of \$75,000 per year. For the next six years the plan is to support the following organizations - the school year of each fundraiser is listed after the organization name. **CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of the Pikes Peak Region** (2025-26), **Alzheimer's Association** (2026-27), **Make-a-Wish Colorado** (2027-28), **American Red Cross** (2028-29), **Care and Share Food Bank** (2029-30), and the **American Heart Association** (2030-31). Thanks to all our families that make this effort a true success.



**Ronald McDonald
House Charities®**
of Southern Colorado

For the 2024-25 school year all TCA schools have been supporting **Ronald McDonald House Charities of Southern Colorado** through our combined fundraising efforts. Thanks to all of the efforts of our students and families, TCA was able to donate over **\$67,000** to our local Ronald McDonald House on Royal Pine Drive.

Snapshots ◇ Parent Survey - ‘Best Thing’

results presented to TCA Board - April 2025

Question 1: If I were to name the best thing overall about TCA, it would be.

1,129 distinct answers were tabulated for all schools combined.

The Top Ten answers are listed below.

The Top Ten in order of frequency cited were

(% of parents listing this topic as the best thing about TCA - ranking versus last year):

- **Teachers/Staff** 31.5% [#1 last year & every year @ 28.9%]
- **Community** 11.9% [ranked #2 last year @ 12.3%]
- **Academics/Quality Ed** 11.3% [ranked #3 last year @ 10.6%]
- **Curriculum/Classical/Philosophy** 8.9% [ranked #5 last year @ 7.8%]
- **Character** 7.9% [ranked #4 last year @ 8.2%]
- **Culture** 5.3% [ranked #7 last year @ 4.4%]
- **Core Values/Values** 4.2% [ranked #6 last year @ 5.0%]
- **Partnerships** 2.8% [ranked #9 last year @ 2.2%]
- **Families and Students** 2.4% [ranked #10 last year @ 2.0%]
- **Class Sizes** 2.1% [ranked #8 last year @ 2.7%]

Top 4 areas:

64% of parents listed as best thing (60% and 59% last two yrs) 717 responses

Top 10 areas:

88% of parents listed as best thing (84% and 85% last 2 yrs) 995 responses

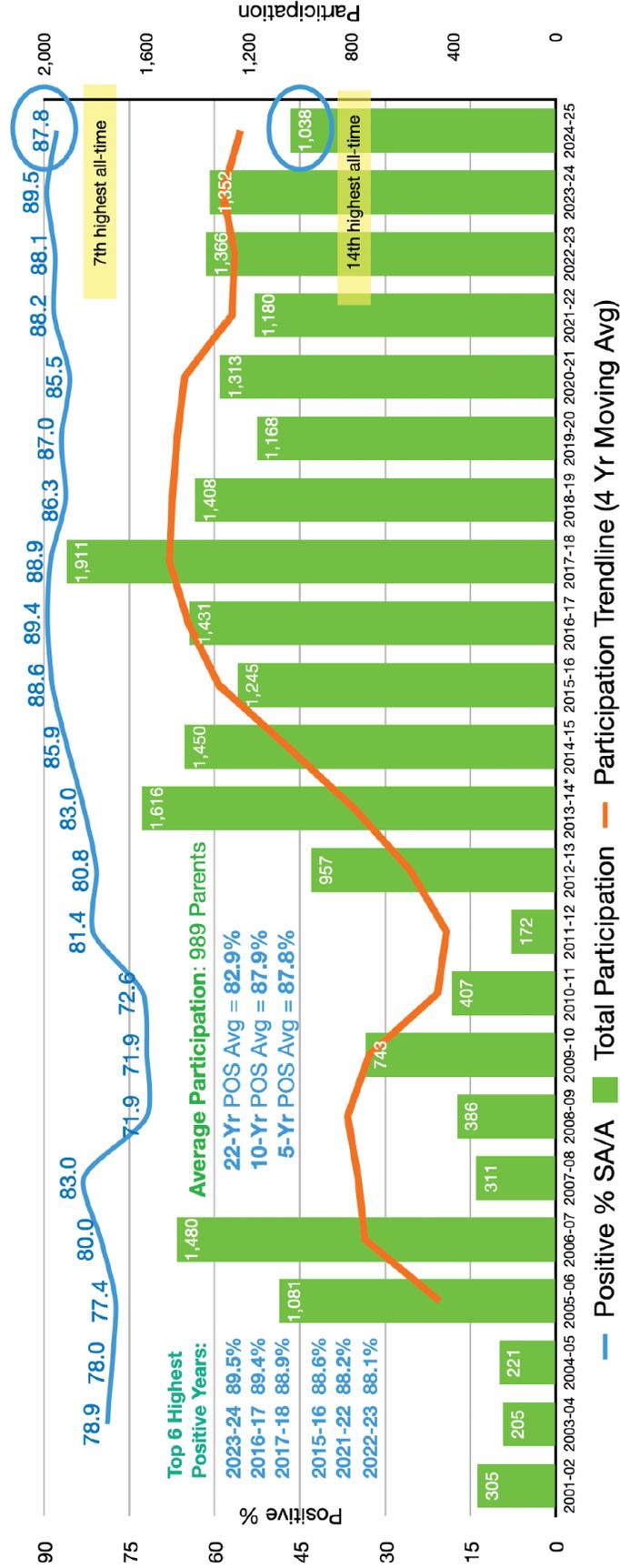
* the 134 other responses (roughly 12% of total) were reflected in 46 different categories

Snapshots ◇ Parent Survey - Participation

results presented to TCA Board - April 2025

Historical Participation & Positive Response

This was a new slide four years ago. Data from the past 23 years was gleaned to produce the overall participation numbers per year and a *positivity* rating overall. Those *positive response* statistics had been captured many years ago — showing the combined strongly agree / agree percentages on common TCA questions (including homework and uniform when asked).



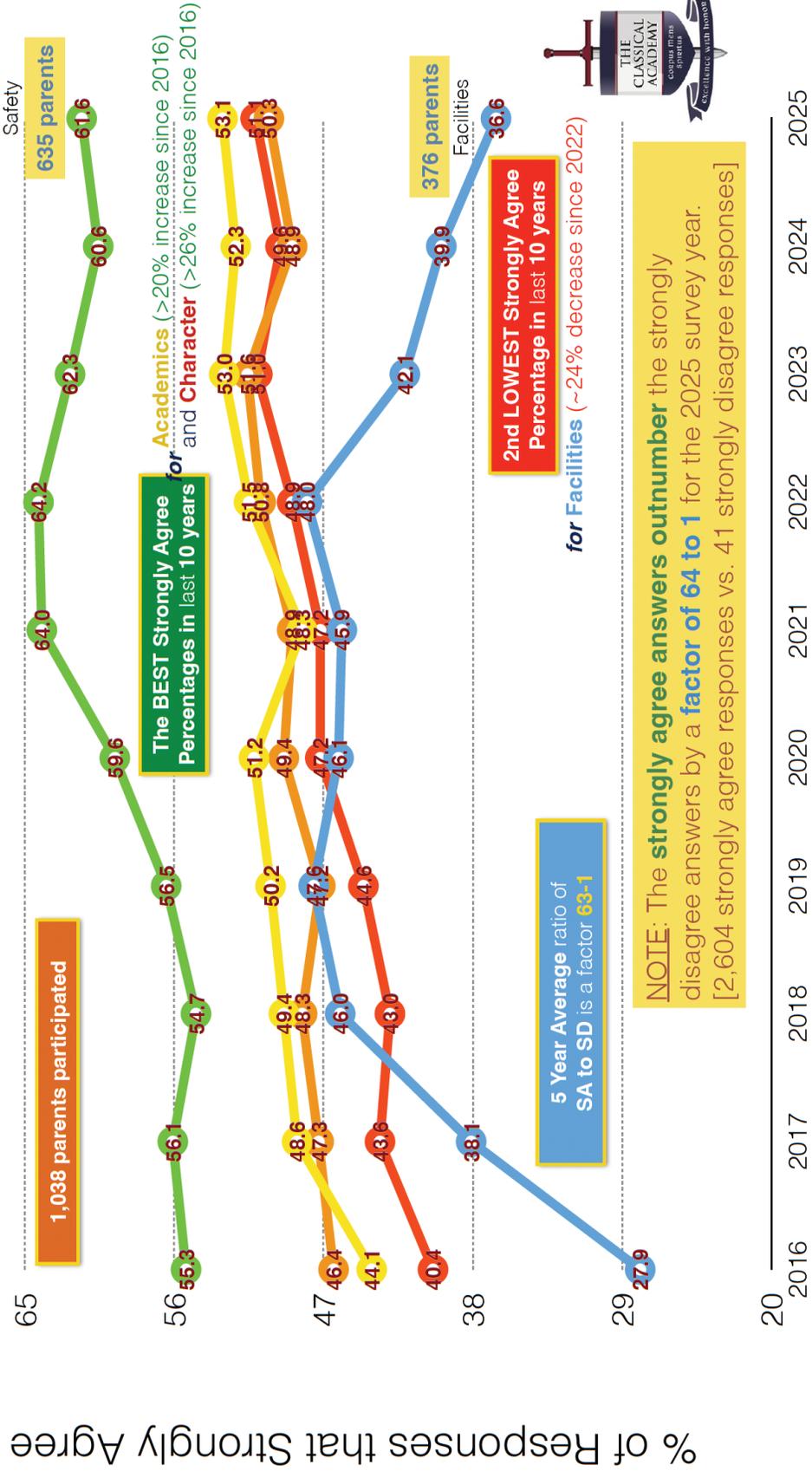
PARENT SURVEY: Participation Numbers and Positive Ratings (Strongly Agree / Agree) Percentages on TCA-Wide Questions (includes homework and uniform in years asked)

Snapshots ◇ Parent Survey - 'Strongly Agree'

results presented to TCA Board - April 5 2024

Strongly Agree Comparison Year-over-Year

● Facilities
 ● Safety
 ● Academics
 ● Communication
 ● Character



Parent Survey Year

BUILDING HABITS, CULTIVATING CHARACTER

Training a child’s character begins with the notion that character matters. Cultivating traits that allow students to be successful in school and flourish in their adult lives begins with bringing to life excellent qualities of character. In this virtue centered learning community, we are dedicated to our mission of developing exemplary citizens. Charlotte Mason believed character traits were in essence habits— “Habits of thought and habits of deed. Habits of gentleness, courtesy, candor, respect for others, and truthfulness” to name a few—and define a virtuous person.

Character and temperament stem from habits of behavior. “As Aristotle taught, people do not naturally become morally excellent or practically wise. They become so, if at all, as the result of lifelong personal and community effort” (*Jon Moline*). What we desire most for our students is a heart change. To change at a heart level requires an understanding that kindness and generosity, integrity and virtue matter. This takes the effort of a community to master but results in becoming part of a civil society aimed at the good, the true, and the beautiful.

While acquiring knowledge is important and necessary, becoming a person of virtuous character is essential to human flourishing. At the elementary level, we begin by nurturing our students with good ideas, worthy work, and carefully chosen curriculum. Through the best of stories, fables, and fairy tales, we build a foundation of what is precious and noble. Through hands-on experiences in science, we build a love of nature and an appreciation for beauty. Through the study of math and history, we build an understanding of truth.

To build these habits and cultivate virtuous character we first recognize and respect the child as a whole person—one with flaws and ignorances to be sure but one with every capability of mastering themselves, acting with moral courage and treating others with compassion and relational grace. Therefore, we expect failures and setbacks as habits are being learned and respond to every child with respect and encouragement as we offer plenty of opportunities to practice and improve. Charlotte Mason suggests “root out the bad habit gently by keeping the child close by and reinforcing the good habits with positive attention and authentic praise.” When children understand there are musts in life and they build healthy habits of mind, body, and spirit, they acquire an authentic character and freedom that will serve them well their whole lives.

As part of this endeavor to cultivate character, teachers masterfully support and facilitate healthy habits of mind, body, and spirit to cultivate the continual growth of self-discipline. Students in elementary school receive feedback and evaluation on their progress in establishing these healthy habits in a supportive and encouraging atmosphere. This brings a level of accountability to the continued development of habits and prepares students well for navigating junior high and high school where personal accountability to continue growing in virtuous character is expected. In the end, we desire for every student to be prepared “to be their best, do their best, and give their best” as they enter the world outside of The Classical Academy in pursuit of the rest of their lives.

[this document can be found on the TCA website at tcatitans.org | Explore TCA | TCA Educational Philosophy | Building Habits, Cultivating Character]

TCA Model of Classical Education

The TCA model of education is whole person focused, relationship based, classically oriented and idea centered. We believe that a *classical education* intends to cultivate **wisdom and virtue** within our students. We believe that the aim of classical education is the lifelong pursuit of **truth, beauty and goodness** and there are **unifying, governing principles** to be discovered through **reasoned discourse**. In this pursuit we learn to know, not just to know about. The purpose of a *classical education* is an appropriate discipline of **mind, body, and spirit** to enable us to act in accordance with what we know, and it goes well beyond the bounds of information accrued. We believe **ideas** nourish the mind and consequently offer an integrated curriculum that stresses the importance of **great works** of literature, art, music, science, math, and history. Classical education is founded in the **Western tradition** and offers an intellectual framework that is both disciplined and liberating and in the words of Aristotle is **complete and sufficient unto itself**.

Liberal Arts Education

Liber. Latin for “free.” But what does it mean to be free? Certainly this idea, being free, conjures up all manner of thoughts in our brains. Who is free? What does freedom really consist of? Is freedom an illusion? Is anyone free? Are we all free? In today’s America, we have a diminished view of freedom as freedom *from* all constraints, and thus as *license* to do as we wish. However, when we look at Latin, it has a different word for “freedom from” or “license,” *licentia*, as opposed to the idea of freedom, or *libertas*. The difference is key, for true freedom, *libertas*, is not freedom *from* but freedom *to*, or at least is not freedom from what we think of as limiting us today. True, classical, freedom serves to free us from our own misunderstandings and misapprehensions so we can choose the good, not to free us to do whatever we want. This positive freedom (freedom to) is the basis of a truly free society and is a necessary part of an exemplary citizen; and so, an education in the “arts of freedom” (Latin: *artes liberales*) lays the groundwork for such citizenship.

The idea of a Liberal Arts education is an ancient and well-traveled one, stretching back at least to Classical Athens, with some refinement in Rome, further clarification in the Middle Ages, and is still with us today. Rather than examining how the Liberal Arts have been taught at various times or what they consisted of (for instance, the Medieval concepts of trivium and quadrivium), I would like to focus on why a Liberal Arts education is important and valuable, especially in developing exemplary citizens. The Roman philosopher Seneca had much to say about the topic, but his ideas are best summarized here in his 88th *Moral Epistle*: “Only one study is truly liberal: that which gives a person his liberty. It is the study of wisdom, and that is lofty, brave and great-souled.” Once again, we notice the focus on Liberal Arts for the purpose of acquiring liberty or freedom; wisdom, in this conception, frees us from our ignorance in order to pursue truth, beauty, and goodness, for this is where our focus truly belongs. Wisdom, along with truth, beauty, and goodness, however, are such broad ideals, with such wide-ranging applications, that they do not fit neatly into one specific area. This is where we can see the value of a Liberal Arts education, one that serves to free us to pursue the good.

For a Liberal Arts education does not prepare one for a specific job or career; this is the purpose of vocational or technical training. Ideally, it does not even prepare one for anything specific other than the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness, through freeing one to pursue these in a variety of ways. Thus, from John Henry Newman’s *Idea of a University* we can agree that: “This process of training, by which the intellect, instead of being formed or sacrificed to some particular or accidental purpose, some specific trade or profession, or study or science, is disciplined for its own sake, for the perception of its own proper

[cont. from p.15] object, and for its own highest culture, is called Liberal Education..." We should notice that the reason for studying the Liberal Arts is the Liberal Arts themselves, for when we succumb to the temptation to instrumentalize our teaching or learning and give it some immediate, practical purpose, we have lost the larger view of *liber* as free; we must be truly free to pursue the highest truths, not have our learning sacrificed to the immediate.

What does this look like for our broader curriculum and in our day to day lives and classes, then? How to carry out a Liberal Arts education well? I propose several keys/reminders. First, we study Liberal Arts for *their* own sake. I stress this point because modern society constantly forces upon us the perceived need to give some practical, utilitarian explanation for why we teach or learn anything. The terms are nearly ubiquitous: career ready, 21st Century preparedness, practical skills, and the like. This is not to say that a Liberal Arts education does not provide such things; however, none of them can be the purpose for such an education, rather when we study the Liberal Arts we do so because of the intrinsic value of what they are.

Second, the Liberal Arts introduce us to foundational thought and ideas. Through reading and study of classic (not only Classical!) works of philosophy, history, music, science, mathematics, or any other area, we have the ability to grapple with the best that has been said, written, or made. In our mission to build and to be exemplary citizens, exposure to influential prior thinkers is invaluable. As Matthew Rose writes, "Liberal education examines the greatest works of philosophy, history, art, and literature because they lend themselves to be studied in a special way--as enactments and depictions of the activity of human intelligence itself."

Third, they teach us how to think. Returning to Matthew Rose's quote about "the activity of human intelligence itself," through careful reflection upon such great works, we see the best of human culture in action, which helps to shape our own thinking and intellectual development. Should we agree with all anyone we study has said or done? Certainly not! But should we look to them as exemplars of *how* to approach the process? Indeed we should.

Fourth, they are *holistic* and interconnected. This aspect of a Liberal Arts education is the greatest challenge I see from the perspective of a high school teacher. Much like the temptation to commodify learning, the temptation to compartmentalize it is also ever present. However, when we undertake the ideal path of the Liberal Arts, we learn to make connections between and across disciplines. What historical influences inspired John Locke to write his *Second Treatise on Civil Government*? What was the intellectual environment in Russia when Dostoevsky was writing *The Brothers Karamazov*? What impact might Euclid's *Elements* have had on Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (see the article *Lincoln and Liberal Education* by Christopher B. Nelson)? An education in the Liberal Arts prepares one to seek the true, good, and beautiful wherever they may be found, not merely in one area of study, and as such opens up possibilities for deeper thought and reflection across the curriculum.

Fifth, the Liberal Arts help us cultivate curiosity. Did you find yourself wondering whether you knew the answers to the questions above? When we really learn to think through our various areas of study, we should strive to discover how one idea relates to another, or even better, how they all relate to one another. While this may come more naturally to some, I would hope that the more we learn, the more we want to learn; thus, the more connections we make, the more we want to try to make further connections. This approach to learning, while it might not give us the practical knowledge to perform a specific task, is actually as useful as it gets, for through it we develop a clear method of thinking and the ability to learn new things.

[cont. from p.16] Finally, I would like to return to the idea of the freedom acquired through a Liberal Arts education. I began with the thought that this type of education should free one from ignorance and misunderstanding to allow the pursuit of the true, the good, and the beautiful. I would like to finish with the idea that it also has the practical side benefit of freeing one to pursue further any education, work, or personal interests without being limited by a specific path or skill set. Or, as Robert Harris puts it, "Thus while a liberal arts education may not teach you how to take out an appendix or sue your neighbor, it will teach you how to think, which is to say, it will teach you how to live. And this benefit alone makes such an education more practical and useful than any job-specific training ever could." We of course should not seek a Liberal Arts education for this purpose (I hope I have made that point clearly enough!), but what a side benefit to have!

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is
mended--
That you have but slumbered
here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend.
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearnèd luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's
tongue,
We will make amends ere long.
Else the Puck a liar call.
So good night unto you all.
Give me your hands if we be
friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.

Good Evening. I'm Jeremy Reed, and I am one of the English teachers at TCA. I came here right out of Hillsdale College. This is my 22nd year at TCA, it's the only job I've ever had, and I love this place.

I greet you today, somewhat ironically (I suppose), with not the opening, but the closing of Shakespeare's, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. And, I do so not because it has some inherent connection to my topic, *The Trivium*, or *Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric*, but instead because when I was 12, a college wanted Puck to be played by a young person, instead of a college student, and I still remember these lines, from 33 years ago. They were, in my life, an important example of grammar.

THE TRIVIUM

from Feb 2023 (TCA Board Mtg)
by Jeremy Reed

When most people hear the term, *grammar*, they think back to an early English class in which they learned vocabulary, the basic sentence, and maybe even subject-verb agreement...but the *grammar* I am referring to is the stage of learning and the level of questioning, not the subject area.

Grammar, thus understood, is the first step, the foundation of all learning, the beginning of mental exercise. At this step, we are chiefly concerned with Observation and Memory. So, I learned these lines from Shakespeare, and what felt like countless others, and I mostly had no idea what they meant. But, I said them over and over again. The words felt like honey on the tongue; The meter skipped happily across my lips, but as much as I *knew* these lines, I didn't really *know* them. I remember my very patient director frequently pausing play practice and asking me, "Jeremy, what did you just say?" Most of the time, I didn't know, but he would tell me...which enabled me to add the correct inflection and action to my words, Shakespeare's words. This is the Grammar step. I was memorizing great literature. I couldn't do much with it, but that would come later. I was, without knowing it, laying a foundation.

Of course, this doesn't just happen in English class. In History, Grammar involves dates and places, stories and maps. In Science, it's the ability to name things, and in Math it's the ability to add, subtract, and multiply. At this stage, there is no *why*. There is only, "do this. Learn this." Everything is chosen for you, by design. I grew up in the 1980s, so if you'll forgive the reference, the Grammar stage is akin to painting Mr. Miogi's fence or waxing his cars, and only later do you find that you know Karate.

The Grammar level, associated with rote memorization, often gets a bad rap. And, while we certainly don't want to end there, it is not to be skipped. Everyone should know a poem, at least a line or

two. There is no position in life and no profession where being able to recite a poem doesn't make you a more interesting person.

Next, once the person is capable of abstract thought, we turn to the Logic step. Again, I do not mean *only* the subject, although the ability to argue correctly and discern the validity of an argument does form here.

Instead, Logic is when the student begins to discover the *how* and *why* of the things he studies. Armed with the basic skills and foundation provided by the Grammar step, he now seeks to order those things logically. Simple sentences become more complex as he knows how and why we put words in a certain order. The student avoids fallacy, ambiguity, and irrelevance...and detects it in others. In English class, not only does he read more complex fiction, but he turns his attention to essays and criticism. What's more, the student writes original works. In Math, Algebra replaces simple numbers with letters put into complex equations to do and know so much more. In History, simple Ethics are replaced by more nuanced understandings of great men and women, and the student now asks, "Was he right when he did that?", "Was what she said True?" In Science, it's no longer merely, "what is that thing called?", it's "What does that thing do? How can it help me? And, what do I owe it?"

Thinking back to my early Shakespeare days, the logic-level was seen in my new ability to not only understand what I had memorized, but the ability to see why the words were ordered in a

[cont. from p.17] certain way. Suddenly, the lines weren't chaotic poetry filled with mind-bending inverted-syntax, No. I could see how the iambic feet ordered each line and how the properly placed sonnet emphasized his central theme.

The final Stage of the Trivium, Rhetoric, is not merely a subject-area, although we do have it as a required course for graduation at TCA...a course I thoroughly enjoy teaching.

The Rhetoric level of learning is about synthesis. No longer are subjects discrete, existing alone in each textbook or classroom. Here, students are encouraged to see the inherent connections between all knowledge. Each subject has something to add to the other, something to say to and about the other. All Truth is ONE. What's more, the Rhetoric level is a time of freedom. Equipped with the grammar-level facts and logic-level discernment, the student is now free to choose a field of study to appreciate. He now adds to the field with self-expression, composing his own works of impressive scope and Original Thought. However, the proper Liberal Arts education doesn't allow the student to get trapped in a single silo. As a life-long and joyful learner, the student must continue to see connections between disciplines.

The Rhetoric Stage is the hallmark of the Senior year at TCA. It is rigorous. It is joyful. It is free. Allow me to show you how.

In the Senior year, building upon the excellent but more scripted and limiting instruction in writing, our students write a 10-page literary analysis. After learning, in 9th and 10th grade, the helpful but restricting 5 paragraph essay with its 3-part thesis sentence, the student now casts these aside like the figurative training wheels that they are. After learning, in the 11th

grade, how to connect to an author's life to his or her work, the student now attends to other more complex and nuanced criticism.

We call this 10-page literary criticism the Senior Thesis. This is truly performing without a net, and the risks loom large. Now, the student must create their own argument about the work. They can argue anything they want, as long as it's not the bio-crit from 11th grade, as long as they can sustain it for 10 pages, and as long as it's True. The student, at this Rhetoric stage, is ready for this challenge, and the ideas they put forth are truly impressive. I've received brilliant papers on the gold doubloon from *Moby-Dick*, the violence in *Blood Meridian*, and the humor of *Pride and Prejudice*. Our seniors discover that they have something meaningful to add to the timeless discussion of great literature.

Another example of the Rhetoric Stage at TCA is our new class, *Artes Liberales*. Literally, the Liberal Arts, this new class (that I co-created and co-teach with Mr. Kueck) is the combination of our Civics class and our AP: Literature class. By design, this class centers on the idea of connecting different subject

THE TRIVIUM

areas. At the Senior-level, the TCA classes are already so intertwined that I am frequently delighted by hearing a student say, "I can't remember if we discussed this in Civics or Rhetoric, but what the author says here seems to echo what Plato said here." Ahhh...is there any better proof that our students are living out this Rhetoric Stage?! But, this new class, with two teachers in the room for most lessons, seeks to intertwine our classes even more. As we read *The Brothers Karamazov* or *Moby-Dick*, we discuss their themes in light of Ancient Greek philosophers and America's Founding Fathers. It's exciting! And, the very fact that these seemingly disconnected authors and ideas come together so easily is proof that All Truth is ONE, that all subject areas speak to one another. The best example of the goals of this class is our final exam. Each semester the students come alone into a room with Mr. Kueck and me. They do not write. They participate in a 30-minute oral exam covering the entire semester. Ahead of time, they are given several intense and broad questions to consider, but once they sit down, they may have no notes with them, and we simply ask, "What do YOU want to talk about?" They choose a question, and we see what they have to say. We see what evidence they have from the texts. And then, we pick a question. And this continues for 30 minutes. It's rigorous. It's scary. But, at its best, it's joyful and illuminating for both student and teacher.

The last and almost certainly best example of the Rhetoric Stage at TCA is the Senior Defense in our Rhetoric class. Not to be confused with the Senior Thesis, the Senior Defense absolutely depends upon a student's pursuit of knowledge throughout the entire Trivium...Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric. Here the student must answer one of our Senior Capstone Questions. "Simple" things like, "What does it mean to be human?" "What is Justice?" "How does one live the good life?" and "How does one pursue Truth, Beauty, and Goodness?" There are ten in all, and each student must pick one to answer. The answer comes in the form of a 12-15 minute-long speech that they memorize. They are afforded only a single 3x5 notecard to aid them as they present their ideas to their class and to 2 TCA staff members. What's more, like a thesis defense in college, they then must endure 35 minutes of questioning from those two staff members. But, what makes this the singular Capstone experience at TCA is the evidence they use to answer their chosen question. They must pick a minimum of 2 TCA "texts," any 2 things they were taught from kindergarten to 12th grade as evidence for their thoughts. These texts can be literature, history, science, math, foreign language, but also a piece of art or music. Simply put, it can anything they've learned K-12. The arguments we receive are, again, impressive! Students have argued that humans are unfinished, but beautiful cathedrals, students have argued that beauty is best described by Calculus, and students have argued that we pursue Truth, Beauty, and Goodness by first recognizing that Truth, Beauty, and Goodness are all ONE and the SAME.

We expect so much from our students at TCA. At the age-appropriate level, we engage them in the proper stage of the Trivium. And, I hope by looking at these stages and by looking at these examples of what we do, you can see Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric at work and play at TCA.

TCA SENIOR GAPSTONE QUESTIONS

1. How does one live the good life?
2. What does it mean to be an exemplary citizen?
3. How does one pursue truth, beauty and goodness?
4. What does it mean to be human?
5. What is the purpose (telos) of human existence?
6. What is the nature of justice?
7. What is a just society?
8. What is the proper purpose (telos) of government?
9. What does it mean for people to be equal?
10. What is the proper purpose (telos) of education?

Each TCA senior selects one of these questions to address as part of their final project in the required Rhetoric course.

“But no, thought [novelist and teacher Brian] Morton:
‘it isn’t the writer who’s the time traveler. It’s the
reader. When we pick up an old novel, we’re
not bringing the novelist into our world
and deciding whether he or she is
enlightened enough to belong
here; we’re journeying into
the novelist’s world and
taking a look around.’

The author is not a
guest at
our table;
we are a guest at hers.”



The Guest

Quote from *Breaking
Bread with the Dead*
by Alan Jacobs,
p. 34, in the
chapter titled
Table Fellowship