

BEN COURCHESNE
Head of School

LEADING WITH HEART. BUILDING WITH PURPOSE.

This fall, our community gathered to reflect on what it truly means to lead with heart. The Parents' Club welcomed author and journalist Jennifer Wallace, whose powerful message about mattering struck a deep chord with faculty, parents, and students alike. She reminded us that human flourishing begins not with achievement, but with connection: with knowing that we are valued and we add value to others.

In her book *Never Enough*, Wallace identifies seven essential ingredients that help us feel we matter, each one beautifully reflected in life at Trinity Valley:

Attention: Every student deserves to be truly seen. In classrooms and hallways, when teachers notice a question, a struggle, or a spark of curiosity, they affirm a child's place in the community.

Importance: Students thrive when they know their contributions make a difference. Whether leading a service project or helping a peer, their actions remind them that their presence has impact.

Dependence: Mattering grows when others count on you. Group projects, team practices, and stage productions teach our students that responsibility and reliability are forms of love in action.

Ego Extension: To feel that someone else cares deeply about what happens to you is powerful. Faculty mentors, coaches, and advisors invest not just in performance, but in the whole person, walking beside students through triumph and setback alike.

Noted Absence: When someone is missed, it signals belonging. At TVS, when a student is absent from rehearsal or class, his or her friends notice, because they are part of something larger than themselves.

Appreciation: Gratitude is the heartbeat of community. When we take time to thank one another – for effort, kindness, or courage – we reinforce a culture that celebrates both excellence and empathy.

Individuation: Perhaps most importantly, students flourish when they feel known for their true selves. Our mission calls us to honor every child's uniqueness and to help each student discover who he or she is and who he or she is becoming.

Each of these elements of mattering reminds us that belonging precedes becoming. When students experience that deep sense of being valued, they develop the courage to lead with heart and the wisdom to build with purpose.

In a broader culture that often measures worth by grades, titles, or college admissions, Wallace's message is both timely and courageous and a call to the kind of counter-cultural values upon which TVS was founded. She reminds us that achievement without belonging can leave students feeling hollow, while true success is grounded in relationships of care, trust, and purpose. Her words echo those of our founder, Stephen Seleny, who cautioned that "goodness without knowledge is

weak, but knowledge without goodness is dangerous." At Trinity Valley, we hold fast to the belief that education is not about producing résumés but about building a life, nurturing both intellect and character for the formation of lasting values.

To lead with heart is to offer students not just guidance, but presence, and to give them our attention, our appreciation, and our belief that who they are matters more than what they accomplish. To build with purpose is to ensure that every aspect of School life, from academics and athletics to service and the arts, reinforces that message. When students experience that deep sense of mattering, they find the confidence to explore boldly, to persevere through challenge, and to contribute meaningfully to the world around them.

As we move forward, may we continue to nurture an environment where achievement grows from belonging and purpose springs from compassion. In doing so, we honor both Seleny's founding vision and the living spirit of Trinity Valley today, a place where great minds and great hearts grow together.

In the pages that follow, I hope you will see what I see each day during my rounds across campus: a School that is, like all good schools, still imperfect but ever aspiring. Aspiring to center meaning and purpose for its students. Aspiring to lead with heart and to build with purpose, every single day.

Be Sturdy and Full of Hope,





Author Jennifer Wallace visits TVS

