

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.

# PALMIARIUM

## New North Campus Facilities

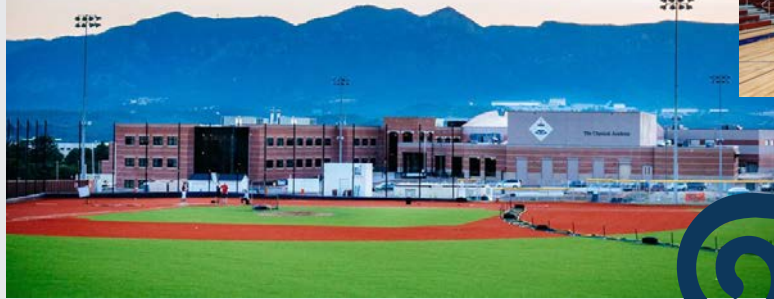
On Saturday, August 11 TCA hosted a Sneak Peek event at the North Campus for families to see the newly constructed gym, auditorium, library, and office spaces before the school year kicked off. The turnout was amazing. Thank you for your support and patience throughout this entire process. We look forward to the 2018-2019 school year and the new opportunities these wonderful new facilities provide. Please enjoy just a few photos, provided by Jeff Weeks, from the event last month.



Great turnout for the Sneak Peek event at TCA North Campus (above). Vance and Betsy Brown unveil the new **Brown Center for the Arts** (left and below). New TCA Founding Families plaque at entrance (far left).



The TCA North campus - a great thank you to all that made this possible.





## Core Values 101

The TCA Core Values document was the culmination of a two-year process involving a TCA board subcommittee comprised of board members and administration. The committee sought input from TCA's original founding board, past and present board members, and all of TCA's current administrative leadership (at the time). The document was adopted and approved in December 2010 by the TCA Board. As we move into the 2018-2019 school year we will continue our Core Values emphasis started last year.

To help with that effort this volume of the PALMARIUM will contain reprints of the five articles from last year, in addition, Dr. Sojourner (*to the right*) provides the President's perspective.



## Thoughts from Russ President's Corner Why Core Values?

There I was, almost five years ago ... working my way through the TCA President search process and being interviewed several times – by our Candidate Search Committee, Board of Directors, and community. While I don't remember many of those interview questions (or my answers), one thing stands out very clearly. When asked about my priorities if I were to become the next TCA President, I distinctly remember referring to founder Jim Kretchman. I've heard Jim state many times that back in the mid 90's, when our founders decided to start the little school called The Classical Academy, that **"We had the freedom to be about something."**

That something was eventually codified in a document approved by the Board and Administration in 2010, called The Classical Academy's Core Values. And that is the priority I spoke about during my interviews. As President, I'm committed to preserving the special and unique TCA that was envisioned by Mary and Jim Kretchman and the rest of our founding families. Put another way, as stated on the cover of the Core Values document, **"It is our intent that it (the Core Values) will serve as a compass**

## CORE VALUES SPOTLIGHT:

**and guide for keeping TCA on its originally intended course in the present and future."** That future is now, and one of my priorities is to steadfastly follow the compass heading established when we opened our doors in 1997.

Accordingly, last year and into this year, TCA teachers and staff have spent a great deal of time re-educating themselves on our Core Beliefs and Values, Mission Statement, Instructional Philosophy, Commitments, Behaviors and Practices, and Vision for Exemplary Citizens. That re-education journey includes several Core Values presentations/discussions at our upcoming Fall Break October Professional Development Conference, titled **Our Philosophy, Our Passions.**

As you can likely tell, I'm keenly aware that the TCA Core Values represent our unwavering commitment to our parents and students. And as you can see, this edition of the Palmarium has a decidedly Core Values-focus. Appropriate I think, as we continue to pursue what we're about, "in the present and future."

## Seeing the Roots Through the Dirt

"The foremost measure of our success now and in the future is how well we live up to the words of this document..." These words are found in bold letters on the front page of the Core Values document and clearly convey the message that this is the single most important document for us at TCA.

Notice that the structure of the Core Values document is based on the picture of a tree. There are roots, a trunk, branches, leaves, and finally, the fruit. We will begin our in depth look at our Core values by examining the "Roots," or the Core Beliefs and Values, of the tree.

When looking at a root or a root ball, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the type of fruit that tree will produce. Often, the dirt surrounding the roots obscures their identity as well. The only completely reliable method for determining the type of tree, and therefore, the type of fruit that tree will ultimately produce is to look inside of the root, to the DNA. Only upon examining the DNA can the true nature of the tree and ultimately, the fruit, be determined. The roots are more than just a foundation for the tree as they provide often unseen strength and support, while

## IN THE

their DNA forever determines the kind and quality of fruit that tree will produce.

TCA is the tree. All staff are the roots and our graduates are the fruit. This first page of the Core Values is the DNA for our roots. It describes the certain kind of people that we need to be in order to produce the certain kind of fruit that we desire to see walking across the stage at the end of 13 years of growth. **As you read this first section of our Core Values, take time to note the connection between the roots and the fruit, and remember the importance of each root immutably displaying this DNA so that we may together produce exemplary fruit.**







## IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

Ideas truly have consequences and our Core Values are a collection of the ideas that define TCA. It was written in 2010 by a group including founders, board members and others with a history of strong commitment to TCA, and then vetted by staff members from all areas of the school. This document describes the essence of who we are and how we strive to live as a learning community and it holds us together in a world where educational theories change with the wind.

Continuing last month's discussion on the "roots" of our Core Values we now come to the "trunk"; our Instructional Philosophy.

The trunk of the tree is the component that adds stability to withstand whatever winds are blowing. It is the pathway that delivers all the nutrients from the roots and gives protection in harsh climate changes. Even in its strength, it continues to grow year after year. If this part is underdeveloped or damaged (or in our case misunderstood or ignored) the tree will not produce the fruit or leaves it is meant to produce.

Our ideas about how and what we teach have deep consequences — consequences that move us toward our mission and take us ever closer to the fruit we are committed to produce. Our choices in the classroom and the atmosphere we set are grounded in great ideas that have gone before us. They are not new but are unique in today's educational setting. These ideas are our stability, our pathway to give direction to our students and our protection from a climate of change for the sake of change.

**Only the ideas that we really live have any value.** Hermann Hess

## BRANCHES POSITIONING TO ENSURE A SOLID FUTURE

Atop a solid trunk for support, scaffolding branches diverge in an effort to position themselves in sunlight to host the promising leaves that will emerge in spring. Equipped with vascular tissue to pipe water to the budding canopy, the branches will provide the leaves with the raw materials needed to create nourishment for the tree as a whole. The leaves will reciprocate in the relationship by sending down life-giving nutrients for the tree to use, providing energy for new growth and bearing fruit, ultimately ensuring a solid future.

In the metaphorical likening of our TCA Core Values to a tree, the branches are both upheld and secured by the trunk of our Educational Philosophy, a trunk that provides growth through life-giving relationships, a warm learning atmosphere, intellectual food in Classical ideas, the acquisition of authentic character, and the freedom found in learning discipline and healthy habits. The branches themselves do not perform the work of photosynthesis; rather they provide strength and access to life-giving substances for the leaves to do their part. Our students do the work of learning, which is in turn upheld and

sustained through staff members who model professional excellence, respect family values, and partner with parents in creating a community that teaches and models virtuous character.

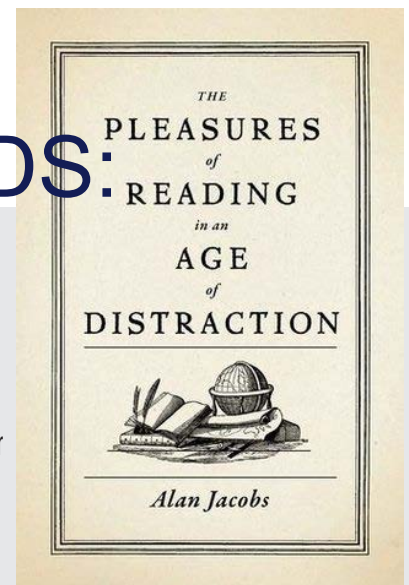
Just as there is not a single specialized spire acting as an extension of the trunk, but a multitude of diverging and forking branches which create more surface area to capture life-giving sunlight, so there is a balance of a variety of inspirational and disciplinary subjects through a liberal arts education (mentioned in the Core Values "Roots" section). This multi-disciplined, whole-person focused approach is intended to assist the diligent student in his pursuit of all that is true, good, and beautiful. The classroom is not only an environment where depth of knowledge is esteemed, but it is also a milieu in which the development of strong moral character is integral. We practice George Washington's statement written in a letter to his nephew in 1790, "It is therefore highly important that you should endeavor not only to be learned but virtuous."

Both education and character require depth and consistency in the face of life's struggles. The limbs of a tree may bend to the elements that challenge them, yet reach upward in continued growth. In the same way, "we partner with parents to recognize and embrace adversity, including struggle and even failure as healthy opportunities for each student's growth." We endeavor, as a community, to embrace one another in all conditions and circumstances, not allowing ethnicity, gender, disability, or religion to divide us. Since all trees require pruning to maintain healthy growth, we strive to honestly and humbly evaluate our practices and attitudes, pruning away what is unproductive and ensuring our resources—our "nutrients"—are intentionally allotted for the growing of fruit.

CONTINUED ON  
NEXT PAGE

## ENGAGING MINDS:

The first book study of the new school year with staff will be *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction* by Alan Jacobs. Staff members will be given an opportunity to RSVP for the 90-minute book study sessions via e-mail. Parents are also welcome to join. If you'd like to receive a reminder about future book studies send me an e-mail to [wjolly@asd20.org](mailto:wjolly@asd20.org) and I will make sure to add you to the book club listing and send you listing of the four titles we plan to read for this year. The sessions for Jacobs' book are scheduled for **Tuesday, September 18** and **Thursday, September 20** beginning at 4:00 pm (locations will be provided in RSVP e-mails).



## BRANCHES POSITIONING TO ENSURE A SOLID FUTURE [cont]

Trees inherently anticipate new growth. The branches' positioning affects the amount of nourishment the tree may receive and the bounty of fruit it may support. This "Branches" section of our Core Values offers our TCA community the framework necessary to create and maintain a relational, disciplined, life-giving atmosphere that promotes both continual growth and perpetual stability. Working as a single, cohesive unit, staff members can model professional excellence while stepping into positions of influence, and parents can guide, encourage, and love their children while raising them to make a positive impact on the world. Unified, we position, support, and nourish our students on their way to becoming exemplary citizens - the fruit of our labor.

From Cosette Perrodin - TCA College Pathways Sophomore - she is a writer with whom I shared my article:

"In order to make it possible for leaves to thrive and access sunlight, tree branches grow in many different directions. In windy areas, trees grow sideways with the direction of the wind with the purpose of protecting the branches and leaves. The biggest job of a tree's branches is to provide a stable place for leaves to access sunlight. "Why do branches matter to our school? A branch's most crucial purpose is to support the leaves and give them access to sunlight. Similarly, TCA's purpose is to support its students and give them access to a learning environment that will prepare them for success, academically as well as socially. TCA desires to build students of valuable character who will not only be able to grow with strength, but who will also be able to grow and flourish with beauty, in mind, body and spirit."

by Nikki Upchurch  
College Pathways

## TITAN OF THE YEAR



On behalf of the TCA Board of Directors, the TCA Titan of the Year Committee, and the parents of The Classical Academy, the 2017-2018 *Titan of the Year* award was presented to Nikki Upchurch at our Teacher In-Service Thursday, August 9, 2018.

Mrs. Upchurch has been a teacher at TCA for 11 years at College Pathways and High School. She currently serves as a College Pathways' Health and Wellness Teacher and the Educational Philosophy Specialist. She has also taught Biology, Aerobics, and Weights and Conditioning. Mrs. Upchurch is known for having a gentle spirit, contagious enthusiasm, and relentless positivity among students and staff

One of her students wrote: "Mrs. Upchurch is one of my top role models and if I could grow up to be just like someone, I would choose her without a doubt. She always manages to make time for me, and I am constantly astounded by how well she knows EVERYONE, how she remembers EVERY name, EVERY students' personal needs, and EVERY students' favorite things. She always knows exactly what to do to make us smile. I hope that I can one day be at least half the compassionate, wonderful woman that she is. I could never express to you how much she has influenced me."

We have posted Nikki Upchurch's *Titan of the Year* video on the TCA website - click [here](#), so you can learn more about her. We encourage you to take a few minutes out of your busy day to see what this special award is all about and celebrate all of the amazing TCA staff. If you see Mrs. Upchurch, please congratulate her on this great honor!

## CORE VALUES LEAVES & FRUIT

As we look at the final two sections of the Core Values, we find two very different parts of the tree – the leaves and the fruit. Each with a very different function.

Looking through the statements in the leaves section, we find many statements about things that we do at TCA that are not directly related to what happens in the classroom during the school day. These statements are instead, ways in which we live out our philosophy outside of the classroom. Think about a tree in the winter when there are no leaves. The tree is still alive and functioning, but it appears to be incomplete. When the leaves fill in during the spring and early summer, we see a tree that appears to be full and complete without any gaps. This same thing is true of our TCA tree. As we follow through with these commitments, our tree becomes full and complete without gaps or holes.

As we move on to the fruit, it is important to notice that most of what we find in this section is also found, in many cases word for word, in the roots section. This is not a coincidence. The fruit of a tree is the only part of the tree designed to fall off or leave the tree. The seeds in the fruit carry the same DNA as the roots. When the fruit falls off the tree, its purpose is to carry on the DNA of the parent tree to wherever that fruit ends up. When our students graduate and leave TCA they carry on the "DNA" they received here. The only way to ensure that they leave the tree as the certain kind of persons we want them to be is for us to be that same kind of person – to live out our Core Values on a daily basis. Look at the characteristics of TCA fruit (in this link to the [Core Values](#)). We need to express the Core Values DNA in such a way that our students leave here as the kind of exemplary citizens that we want them to be.

# CORE VALUES IN THE SPOTLIGHT:





# TCA: Perspective from a Graduating Student

Valedictorian Address by **Braden Jones** - Class of 2018

When I was a wee lad of about 6, I was waddling out of the house to meet my brand new kindergarten teacher. However, this teacher was not Mrs. Cross, the teacher whose classroom I would join a week later at TCA East. Rather, it was some Rockrimmon Elementary teacher whose name I never knew. Before we made it out the door that day, we learned that there was an open spot at TCA that was mine if we wanted it. I came to TCA by a fluke—some other kid a spot ahead of me on the waitlist turning down the offer—and some frantic parental decision making, which combined to put me where I was supposed to be. I was literally 2 minutes away from having a very different educational experience and one that likely would not have brought so much benefit to me and my family.

“A long time ago, there was no such thing as school, and children spent their days learning a trade, a phrase which here means ‘standing around doing tedious tasks under the instruction of a bossy adult.’ In time, however, people realized that the children could be allowed to sit, and the first school was invented.” Lemony Snicket, one of my favorite authors, makes a good effort at characterizing the nature of education, stereotypically filled with busy work and droning lectures intended solely for the purpose of preparing students to do well on state tests. But Lemony Snicket has clearly never been to TCA. Our education hasn’t been about tedious tasks or bossy adults. Well, at least not for the most part. We weren’t here to memorize a bunch of useless facts so that we could regurgitate them on a test. TCA’s faculty is in the business of teaching us to learn, to help us gain and appreciate wisdom and then figure out how to apply it, and to develop good character in the process.

Now, I understand that many of us have had our fill of those things and are eager to leave this school; after all, a bunch of us have been here for 13 years, which means, according to my calculations, that we have spent about 11% of the time we’ve had on this good green Earth sitting at a desk at one of the three campuses. Nevertheless, I wanted to use this time I was given to talk to you about all of the things I have loved and appreciated about TCA, and maybe share a little bit of advice as well, as is customary for speech givers to do. For some reason.

As a first grader, I transferred to Central, where I met several of my good friends. We always joke that, while Central had the worst facilities, it had the best teachers and staff. Regardless of the veracity of this sentiment, it was my elementary teachers’ enthusiasm for learning and focus on well-roundedness of the students that developed my desire to pursue my education with gusto and diligence. I know several of you feel the same way, even if you didn’t get to attend Central. And let’s be honest, no matter where you were, the Civil War battle was pretty awesome.

When we got to junior high and merged into one campus, Mr. D and Mr. Carroll intentionally got to know all of us by name. I’m pretty sure that doesn’t happen at most junior highs. This focus on being genuinely known and cared for continued on into high school. One of my favorite things junior year was weekend stories with Mr. Kueck, where I got to learn more about my peers outside of their academic endeavors. And we didn’t know it until we got there, but the pinnacle of our growth as students and individuals came senior year. The senior lounge and senior privileges were great and all, but it’s the teachers that make the experience of senior year. All of my senior teachers, Mr. Reed, Mr. Fricke, Mr. Knuth, and Mr... oh, forgive me, Dr. Wilson all care so much about their subjects, and they care about their students entering the world as good, well-equipped thinkers and citizens. Sure, I took a lot of AP classes and everyone wanted us to do well on the tests and get college credit, but there was a real emphasis on learning as a gift in and of itself, not just passing tests and getting zillions of arbitrary points like **Space Invaders**.

TCA grew us as students, but also as individuals. There is something here for everyone. Unless you played tennis. Or hockey. Or swam. Swam? Swimmied? Or wanted to learn Japanese. But if you wanted to learn the five conjugations of Latin verbs, there’s no place like TCA. Everyone can find a place at our school, whether on a court or on a field, on a stage or in a concert, in student council or a Star Wars Club meeting. There’s even a place for Latin kids whose preferred outlet for competition is a javelin contest using pool noodles and taking two hours of tests for the fun of it.

The final thing I’d like to mention is the unique sense of community that we have here at TCA. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that we’re a K-12 school, or that we have hugely supportive parents and grandparents, but we have been blessed with great community. I’ve been part of a small group that has been meeting since nine of us boys were in the 4th grade. We finished up a couple weeks ago, with every family member in attendance, and every parent writing us a personal note of support and encouragement. That’s the kind of community we have at TCA. More from Mr. Snicket: “It has been said that the hardest job in the world is raising a child, but the people who say this have probably never worked at a comb factory or captured pirates on the high seas.” True, but still, supporting a child through 13 years of school is an enormous commitment, particularly if you add in extracurricular activities and the years of your lives you’ve spent driving us around—and then you repeat the whole process with our siblings! Thank you so much, parents and family members, for all of the support you have given us as we traversed TCA. As Mr. Shields reminded us, today is not about us, it’s about the people who have put up with us.

In conclusion, I offer that bit of advice I promised, and, shucks, one more Lemony Snicket quote can’t hurt anybody. This one is from **The Penultimate Peril**, my personal favorite of his books: “One can remain alive long past the usual date of disintegration if one is unafraid of change, insatiable in intellectual curiosity, interested in big things, and happy in small ways.” In case you didn’t catch all that, I’ll break it down: Be unafraid of change. Be insatiable in intellectual curiosity. Be interested in big things and happy in small ways. Knowing a few card tricks doesn’t hurt either.

Thank you, fellow students, and especially TCA teachers and staff. Your influence on my life has been more than you could know, and I am a better, albeit stranger, person for it.



# ANNUAL TCA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Dear TCA Staff, Parents, and Community,

The Classical Academy (TCA) is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in relation to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, marital status, disability, or any other legally protected class. Respect for the dignity and worth of each individual shall be paramount. Accordingly, we have a "no tolerance" policy with respect to acts of discrimination or harassment.

Protecting against and not tolerating discrimination and harassment is consistent with TCA's Core Values and our Creed, which states that "Titans love, respect, and protect one another. Striving to be our best, do our best, and give our best to the world."

Recently policy AC-TCA: Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity has been updated and is now available by clicking [here](#). This policy outlines the procedures on how students, parents, staff, and the community may file complaints and how TCA will work to resolve all complaints.

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

Any student, staff member or parent should report any discrimination or harassment to any TCA principal, counselor, or the following liaisons:

**For Students:**

Cheryl Birkey  
Compliance & Nondiscrimination Specialist  
975 Stout Road, Room 1114  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921  
719-488-6209  
[cbirkey1@asd20.org](mailto:cbirkey1@asd20.org)

**For Staff:**

Katryna Lays  
HR Generalist/Employee Liaison  
975 Stout Road, Room 2200  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921  
719-488-6232  
[klays@asd20.org](mailto:klays@asd20.org)

We Are Titans!

Respectfully,

Dr. Russ Sojourner  
TCA President



Help TCA continue moving forward beyond our 20th year. Please consider donating to our kids future.



Our Kids.  
Their Future.  
Our Challenge.

*20 Years and Counting*

Click on the image above to donate now!



## A Case Full of Books

by Wesley Jolly, Director of Academic Services

My house is filled with books - lots of them. So many that I try to pass on to others as many as I can. Just this past year I've added many new bookcases to better organize our home library. As part of that process I've sorted through the stacks (of mostly history related titles) to provide to teachers, students, and others that I think may be interested in a particular subject.

Dr. Sojourner stressed reading with our staff as we returned to school this year - noting the importance of *reading out loud* with students and for reading as part of the family routine (see *Napoleon Bonapart quote on the last page*). As many studies show - students that read - **succeed**.

As we wrapped up last school year -- while parents, family, students, teachers, and former graduates filed into the gym for the graduation ceremony they were greeted by the bookcase shown to the right. On display was every book that the graduating students had read for class in their 13 years at TCA, separated out by grade level from kindergarten to 12th grade. Many pictures were snapped of the display and I heard stories of current students and graduates, after all was done with the ceremony, still talking about the collection of books -- the memories of reading a book in a particular class with a particular teacher, discussing their favorites, and not so favorites, and even how a particular book had impacted their lives.



The stories made me reflect on my favorite books in school and college (*many which I still have sitting on the shelves annotated, highlighted, and dog-eared, with pages falling out of them*). I even have some books signed by authors waiting to give to my kids when the appropriate time arrives (such as Jessica Lahey's *The Gift of Failure*). As we start the school year the first book of our staff read is *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction* by Alan Jacobs. One of my takeaways from his work is -- "read what gives you delight" (*and he is by no means the first to say this*). Additionally, "one of the wonderful things about books is that they don't grow agitated or dismissive. They patiently bear all the scrutiny you choose to give them, and the more carefully you read them the more of their secrets they yield. It's as though they are *asking* to be put to the question, announcing their readiness to be investigated."

As we move into a new school year parents share with your kids your favorite book (or books) growing up and why. Read to them and with them. Teachers, let your students know what you are currently reading beyond the classroom - and your favorite books when you were their age. That case full of books contains thousands of hours of interaction, memories, and sparks of imagination and curiosity that propel current students and graduates long gone towards amazing ideas, places, and aspirations. Keep the curiosity alive that reading provides . . . there is just something amazing about getting lost in a book whether in a land of imagination or an intellectual treatise. I encourage you to *engage your mind*.

---

READ - READ - READ - READ - READ

Never trust anyone who has not brought a book with them. Lemony Snicket in *Horseradish*

Quotes on  
**Reading**

The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go. Dr. Seuss in *I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!*

'Classic' - a book which people praise and don't read. Mark Twain

I cannot live without books. Thomas Jefferson

There are worse crimes than burning books. One of them is not reading them. Joseph Brodsky

If you don't like to read, you haven't found the right book. J.K. Rowling

Show me a family of readers, and I will show you the people who move the world. Napoleon Bonaparte

