

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.

PALMARIUM

Stories from the Classroom

For the 2019-2020 school year we plan to share with the TCA community in each of the eight volumes of the PALMARIUM, **Why I Teach: Stories from the Classroom**. These reflections, written by our teaching staff, will touch on some of the varied reasons why they do what they do. I hope you enjoy reading these small glimpses of why our staff dedicate themselves to the teaching profession and interacting with your students on a daily basis.



2018-2019 Titan of the Year was awarded to **Jessica Adair** at our teacher in-service on August 8. Jessica has worked at TCA for 16 years in various roles at Central Elementary. Please make sure to congratulate Jessica on this great honor the next time you see her.



We ended last year's volume of the PALMARIUM with an article by Dorothy Simpson on *Growing in Virtuous Character: The Golden Mean*. Dorothy spent 21 years at TCA and impacted so many lives during her time here that I thought it fitting to share the words she sent to the elementary staff on her last day. Richard M. Gamble, *Professor of History at Hillsdale College* remarked: "The Classical Tradition embraces an enduring community of learning that values liberal education for its own sake; desires to educate for wisdom and virtue, not power and vanity; finds tiresome the present age's preoccupation with utility, speed, novelty, convenience, efficiency, and specialization, and refused to justify education as a means to wealth, power, fame or self-assertion."



The Editor





WOUNDED WARRIOR

Last year we started a TCA-wide fundraising effort for the same organization, across all school levels, for the first time in our history [the 2018-19 school year focused on **Children's Hospital** and we raised nearly \$75,000]. The organizations selected for the six-year period from 2018-2024 were determined by students across all campuses. For the 2019-2020 school year the TCA-wide school fundraising focus will be for the **Wounded Warrior Project**. Each school has an individual donation page. If you'd like to donate to TCA's overall effort [click here](#).



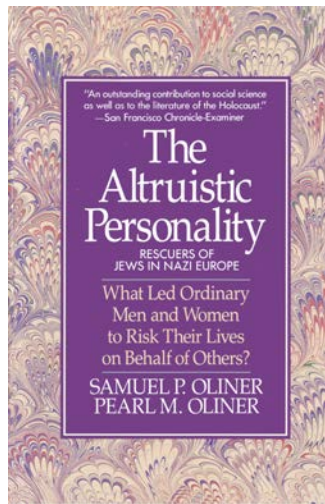
**WOUNDED WARRIOR
PROJECT**

DR. MAYFIELD on Social Media:

On August 27, Dr. Mayfield joined with us again for a presentation on **A Parent's Guide to Social Media**. Just under 275 parents attended the event. Thank you for the great turnout that evening. The slides used in the presentation have been generously provided by Dr. Mayfield for our community to review. You can find the slides on our website via [this link](#).



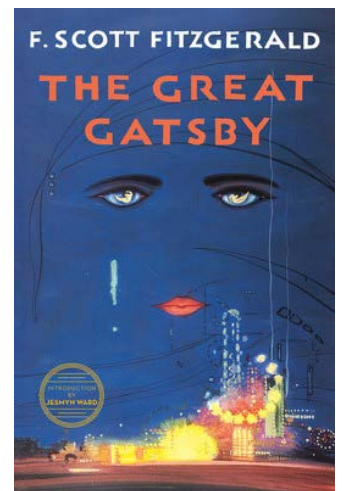
ENGAGING MINDS x 2:



The first book studies of the new school year with staff will be **The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe** by Samuel and Pearl Oliner, and **The Great Gatsby** by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The book study sessions last 90 minutes each. The sessions for the Oliner's book will be scheduled for two days **Tuesday-Wednesday**,

September 24-25 beginning at 4:00 pm (in the NE Library Pikes Peak Room). Fitzgerald's work will also be discussed for two days on both

Wednesday-Thursday, September 25-26 beginning at 4:00 pm (Michelle Drake's HS classroom on the 25th and the NE Library Pikes Peak Room on the 26th). Parents are also welcome to join. If you'd like to receive a reminder about future book studies send an e-mail to wjolly@asd20.org and I will make sure to add you to the book club listing and send you a listing of the five titles we plan to read for this year.



As I reflected on the topic, I realized that my journey towards becoming a teacher **began week one of kindergarten.**

She was my **kindergarten music teacher.** Mrs. Nolting had **shoes that made a click-clack sound** on the tile floors, and was always toting a **plastic travel coffee mug.** To my kindergarten brain, those two things were just about the coolest things ever.

I **decided I wanted to be a teacher in 2nd grade.** At that age, the administrative things about teaching inspired me. The school supplies, the changing of the calendar each month, the schedule, etc. As the year progressed, I started noticing and appreciating **the notes Mrs. Bodnar would leave on my desk,** and the way she made learning fun.

As I entered middle school in 6th grade, I was your typical, angst-y preteen.

Very social, very dramatic, slightly defiant. (Perhaps you know the type.) It was a roller coaster year for me. (& my poor parents.)

Ms. Schmidt was my favorite teacher that year. She had a way of teaching that **made me feel seen and appreciated.** She used humor liberally, while at the same time knowing where to draw the line. I always looked forward to her class.

At the end of the year, she wrote the following in my yearbook, "Alysha, **you can do anything you wish.** You have the brains and talent to succeed. Go for it girl!"

Despite the tumultuous year full of hormones, drama, and endless crushes, **Ms. Schmidt got me.** She saw past the insecurities, pimples, and boy-craziness. She saw my potential, and yet never shamed me for being where I was emotionally, developmentally, etc.



Every year I show a slideshow to all the 6th graders at East. The last slide has a picture of me in 6th grade. I tell them that it is my goal to **love them well,** teach them well, and be an additional adult in their life that will support them.

To sum it all up: children are watching. **They hear the click clack of your shoes.** They see the coffee mug you carry every day. They notice when you change the monthly calendar. They appreciate the notes, and will remember the lessons that tapped in to their learning style. Most of all **they know when you see them for who they are** despite their insecurities, and immaturity.

I guess in a way, **I became a Schmidt,** and it is my hope that each day my students will walk through my classroom door knowing that **I see them, and love them for who they are.**

This is why I teach.

Alysha Brintnall, 6th Science - East Elementary

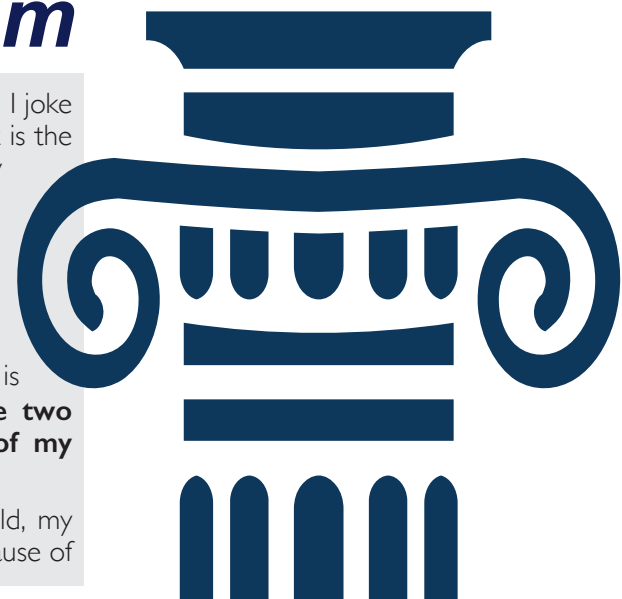
WHY I TEACH: Stories from the Classroom

Since we are both teachers, my husband and I joke that we never graduated from school. If that is the case, **we are in 29th grade this year.** Why is it that I never left? Better yet, why do I choose to teach? **School is my "Happy Place."** It always has been. I found success in the classroom at an early age. I loved to learn and show off how much I learned. I always felt cared for by my teachers. School is **still my Happy Place because of these two loves: love of my students and love of my subject.**

I love science. When I was six years old, my mother predicted I would be a scientist because of

the number of insects, rocks, and leaves I collected. In school, each new **science class was a different awesome world to explore.** As a junior in high school, I fell in love with chemistry (followed closely by physics the next year). I loved getting to use mathematical equations to describe physical phenomena. I loved the tedious, precise lab work and the exciting demonstrations. I also loved learning about a world we really cannot see but about which we have plenty of evidence. I am **thrilled to get to share that same awe and wonder** I experienced as student with my students today. If you ask my past students what they remember best about chemistry class, many will say the labs and demos: tie-dye shirt, chemiluminescence, gas law demos, etc. The many "oohhs and aahhs" I hear during a lab or demo make all of the preparation worth it. I even get students who say they enjoy chemistry or physics because they like seeing **how algebraic equations can be used outside of math class. Staggering revelation, I know!** Whatever their reason for enjoying chemistry (or physics), I hope my students see that I love the subjects I teach.

I love my students. I would hope this tops every teachers' list of best things about our job. **I get to interact with fun, quirky, kind, and smart teenagers every single day.** One year, one of my physics students asked another student to prom using a line



(continued from page 3) inspired by Newton's Second Law of Motion ($F=ma$): **"I don't mean to sound FORCE-ful, but would you like to ACCELERATE your MASS with me to prom?"** The line worked! I smile at the student who reaches out to the quiet student in the class who needs a lab group. I am touched by the notes I receive from students at the end of the year saying they liked my class and knew I cared about them. (They were actually listening!) A common misconception is that the teacher should "know-it-all." **I have learned to appreciate the moments when my students stump me and I can admit it to them.** Usually, that student is beaming with pride! I love my students and I like my daily interactions with them. They bring a lot of laughter and light to my life; I can only hope that my class is a Happy Place for them too.

Perhaps school is my Happy Place because teaching is my vocation. I love that word: vocation. It means that **my job has a higher purpose than just making a living.** It means that I get paid to do what I love. I teach so that I can love my students well by showing them I care and showing them the wonderful world of science. If that is what I get to do, **here's hoping I make it to 50th grade before I graduate!**

Jennifer Smith, HS Science



WHY I TEACH: Stories from the Classroom

My parents were back in the U.S. after a four-year term as missionaries to Indonesia. It was my kindergarten year.

"Why doesn't she know her letters?"

"Her parents are college-educated, right?"

Four concerned faces side-eyed me, talking as if I was not there, as if the black and white flash cards had created a sound barrier. I remember the room being dark, matching the gloom that settled in on me.

I AM NOT SMART.

I suspected it then and had it reinforced in the years to follow. After that kindergarten year in the U.S., I would return to the small elementary school in Kalimantan, taught by American missionary teachers. **It's difficult to hide one's struggles** in a class of eight, but I did my best. Longingly, I would gaze out at the jungles through the screen windows of our missionary school.

The river impatiently waited for an adventure. **The vines on the banyan tree called to me.** Each year I became further behind like a lame, mangy dog racing for scraps of food in the villages I visited with my dad. **I developed coping skills**, watching my classmates and using clues to help me keep up.

In those days, teachers lectured from textbooks and assessed our understanding with multiple-choice bubble sheets. Since I couldn't decode many of the words, I often made interesting patterns with the bubbles. This usually earned me a D or an occasional C in anything language arts related.

I learned how to hide my grades and more importantly, my face. **When tears filled my eyes, I brushed them away.** When they threatened to spill over, the restroom was my safe place. By 4th grade, I still wasn't able to read a chapter book.

My hunger was real. My friend, Julie, would check out stacks of books from the library, recounting the stories she had read, with excitement and animation. **Longing to enter into the adventure** of reading, I checked out a tall stack of books. All summer the novels slumbered in my room collecting dust.

I can write, I thought. In fact, I often had my friends laughing, crying, and regularly entertained with my storytelling. But, my papers came back to me,

bleeding with red ink, to the point that I couldn't decipher my own words. The story was no longer mine.

To this day, I still don't know who figured out my deficiency, but **a caring mom named Joyce Sheeley** heard about it and volunteered to tutor me. I was not sure what I was in for. After lunch, it was a three-minute stroll along dirt paths lined with jungle foliage from the school to her home. I stretched it out to a ten-minute walk. "Aunt Joyce" worked with me for several months. She was **a young mom, and used her children's naptime to help me.** I can clearly remember the painstaking hours I put in, and the uphill battle I fought.

And then, one day, I read the last sentences of a chapter book I had clawed and sweated my way through. The book was one in a series of *The Sugar Creek Gang*. It was a marathon race, but I had crossed the finish line. **I felt seen and loved.** I was victorious, and then painfully aware that I was still so far behind my peers.

A few years later, I attended boarding school in the Philippines. I stumbled my way through each class, soliciting help from friends. Some would read difficult texts to me while others helped me study. I earned decent grades by figuring out ways to remember lists to do well on tests. Acronyms, stories and mnemonic devices became my tools to improve my scores. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough for the SAT. I don't remember my score, but **the college and career counselor was not impressed.**

"You are not college material," Mr. Smith stated, leaning back in his chair. He had an irritating smile glued to his face. "You should seek a different career path."

I AM NOT SMART.

Mr. Smith was also my softball coach and decided to bench me my senior year in favor of playing his sophomore daughter. Perhaps that is why I never took his advice and **enrolled at Biola University with a major in biology.**

I had to work part-time to get through college. I discovered I was particularly gifted at multi-tasking while I

What greater or better gift can we offer the republic than to teach and instruct our youth? - Cicero -

(continued from page 4) waitressed. I was fast, efficient, and entertaining. I also made friends quickly and often organized social events. I had endless energy, and this came in handy, as I still had learning disabilities to deal with. I completed my general education courses and soon realized that a biology major was too challenging. As I **asked myself “How can I make a difference in the lives of others?”** I considered my newfound strengths along with my weaknesses that developed my character and began to look at other options.

One day, observing in the back of a 2nd grade classroom, **I spotted a little girl, struggling to read.** I saw how frustration filled her, as she could not make sense of the letters that danced on the page. **In my mind I heard her say, “I am not smart.”**

Two years later, I graduated Cum Laude with an Elementary Education degree.

Over the years, I have learned that “being smart” does not just mean getting excellent grades or high scores on test. Being smart can mean the way a person communicates or interacts. It can involve a wise decision or “out of the box” thinking. A smart person can visualize the bigger picture and make connections.

My educational journey has been a muddy, sticky, difficult path rather than a stroll through a lush jungle. Teaching is an adventure comparable to swinging on vines and diving into rushing rivers. There is always a new, creative way of communicating concepts, new brain research to delve into, and the joy of watching children succeed. Those that don’t struggle academically can have other concerns. **These difficulties are similar to the knots that provide handles to climbing a banyan tree.** I often remind my students that it is the challenges in this life that become our strengths and allow us to bless others.

Why do I teach? I want children to believe in themselves and succeed. I teach because children need to be seen and loved.

Sonja Daum, 1st and 4th grade Language Arts - Cottage School Program



Sonja (in the pink) with her dad and sister. The skulls she said is a different story for another day.

WHY I TEACH: Stories from the Classroom

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

For Staff:

Alicia Raymond
HR Generalist/Employee Liaison
975 Stout Road, Room 2200
Colorado Springs, CO 80921
719-488-6232
araymond@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.



Click on the image above to donate now!

SOCIAL MEDIA EXPLAINED

	TWITTER	I AM EATING A #DONUT
	FACEBOOK	I LIKE DONUTS
	FOURSQUARE	THIS IS WHERE I EAT DONUTS
	INSTAGRAM	HERE'S A VINTAGE PHOTO OF MY DONUT
	YOUTUBE	WATCH ME EATING A DONUT
	LINKEDIN	MY SKILLS INCLUDE DONUT EATING
	PINTEREST	HERE'S A DONUT RECIPE
	LAST.FM	NOW LISTENING TO "DONUTS"
	GOOGLE+	I AM A GOOGLE EMPLOYEE WHO EATS DONUTS



PLEASE RESHARE! JEFFHESTER.NET