



**Newsletter Date: April 14, 2021**

**The Gecko**



## **MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL:**

Dear Concept Families,

It is so good for us to be all together (most of us!) as we move into the spring season at TCS. I am so proud of the resiliency our students (and parents and staff) have shown over the last 13 months. The entire staff has been vaccinated and several of our students have been, as well. I hope that as the age limit is lowered more of our students will get vaccinated.

We recently mailed copies of the Enrollment Contract for the 2021-2022 school year. The Board of Directors left the tuition rate the same as last year in recognition of the economic hardship families may have faced. Please take a moment to sign and return the contract so we can begin planning for next year. Your early commitment is greatly appreciated.

We will be holding our graduation ceremony in June. However, the date has changed from Friday, June 11th to Thursday, June 10th. This means that we will dismiss students in grades 6-11 at 12:00 on Thursday, June 10th instead of Friday, June 11th. June 11th will be a full-day. Transportation providers have been notified of this change. We are not exactly sure about what the ceremony will look like, but we hope to make it meaningful for all involved. Our plan is to hold graduation ceremonies at **1:30 p.m.** on June 10th, meaning that underclass students will not be in attendance due to social distancing requirements. While I wish all of our students could witness the ceremony in person, we will be live streaming it on our Facebook page!

We recently had school pictures taken. It would be too costly to schedule a make-up day for our students, so Mrs. Fredericks will be taking pictures of those students who were absent for inclusion in the yearbook. We will let you know when that will occur.

Our Board of Directors recently approved a plan to divide two of our large classrooms in half, creating four instructional spaces. The new rooms will have their own doors and should allow us more flexibility in meeting the needs of our students. This work is scheduled for the summer.

That is all for now - please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions.

Sincerely,  
Bill



**May 13<sup>th</sup> - Parent Meeting - Transitions**

**May 18<sup>th</sup> - School Closed - Primary Election**

**May 31<sup>st</sup> - School Closed - Memorial Day**

**June 10<sup>th</sup> - Graduation Day**

**June 17<sup>th</sup> - Last Day of School**





## Self-Care TIPS

**When we don't have school, it's still important to keep a routine of positive activities.**

- **Like taking a walk outside, enjoying nature...  
...or just getting some sunshine.**
- **Of course, it might rain...  
...but you can still cozy up with a book.**
- **Be sure to take care of your hygiene...  
...and maintain good sleep habits. (*put your phone away!*)**
- **If you start feeling stuck...  
try taking a deep breath...talk to someone...or play with your favorite toy or game.**
- **Do something that makes you LAUGH!**

**And remember...**

**We still need to follow all social distancing guidelines! Have a great day!**

### **Article for Parents:**

"Encouraging Optimism: Help kids navigate the last uncertain phase of the pandemic"

<https://childmind.org/article/encouraging-optimism/>

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### **Special Parent Meeting - Transitions (Virtually)**

**Thursday, May 13, 2021 at 7:00 PM**

**(Please contact Martha Phillips if interested – [mphillips@theconceptschoool.org](mailto:mphillips@theconceptschoool.org))**

Preparing for your child to transition to beyond high school can be a very uncertain time. Come and meet Beth Roberts, Director of the Social Enrichment Center who will be speaking about her own daughter's transition and can answer parent questions. All parents from TCS are invited no matter what grade your child is currently. It is never too early to think about the future.

**Beth Roberts** is a licensed professional counselor (LPC) with a passion for providing therapeutic services to children, adolescents, and families. After Beth's daughter was diagnosed with global developmental delay and autistic tendencies, she was uncertain about how to best help her. She decided to both receive training in and administer a home-based program called Son-Rise. Utilizing her educational background, professional training, and evidence-based research she has expanded her passion to include all individuals who seek the benefits of therapy. Beth earned her Master of Arts degree in Counseling Psychology at Eastern University and has her license as a Professional Counselor in Pennsylvania. Most recently Beth earned her graduate certificate in applied behavior analysis from Capella University.

Currently, as Director of the Social Enrichment Center, Beth provides a variety of direct services including: individual psychotherapy, individual social skills therapy, and small group social skills therapy.

## SPRING 2021 ISSUE OF IVEY'S ALUMNI MAGAZINE, *INTOUCH*...

### AN INTERVIEW WITH ALUMNI AND TCS MATH TEACHER, MR. STEVEN BURTCH:

#### Staying Engaged

Steven Burtch, MBA '90, is a math, business, and geography teacher for grades 6-12 at The Concept School (TCS) in Westtown, Pa. He explains that TCS is a small school where they educate students who learn differently and benefit from a smaller, relaxed, and more personalized environment, including students with autism, ADHD, and anxiety disorders.

Burtch says faculty had a lot of concerns when the school had to shut down and move to online learning due to COVID-19.



“Most of the students here have struggled for various reasons to be successful at a larger school. Teachers here work really, really closely with the students. So initially we asked, ‘How are we going to do this?’”

—Steven Burtch, MBA '90

Burtch says that at first, the staff decided the goal would be engagement, not mastery, “to keep kids coming, keep them engaged, and not have them just disappear into the night.”

In September, his school implemented a hybrid model. Students did virtual education Monday to Thursday on a shorter-than-usual schedule doing synchronous online classes with teachers through an online meeting platform. On Fridays, one of four different cohorts would spend a half day in person at school, with the activities all focused on socialization in a safe, distanced way, followed by a free pizza lunch.

“We have things like electronic escape rooms, where students are sitting with masks on in the school, six feet apart or more, playing virtual games in a room together with their teachers,” Burtch says. “Our history teacher is big on trivia, so he runs knowledge and trivia games. And we’re working on building an outdoor garden.”

# NATIONAL HISTORY DAY®

National History Day at TCS in 2021 was a day in which students presented their hard work in a new way that was safe for everyone. Instead of creating trifold poster boards, students created virtual presentations using Google Slides. Students then recorded themselves using Screencastify. Their projects related to the theme of Communication in History. Students were placed in small groups, and each took turns playing their recordings, while the audience took notes and prepared questions for discussion. The day was filled with healthy historical dialogue and teachers and students learned about each other's interests and discussed well researched historical arguments.



John Krajicek, Nick Moscufo, and Justin Simeone advanced to the Regional competition in the Senior division, while Arden Lisnoff and Sam Van Duyn advanced to the

Regional competition in the Junior division. They were judged by NHD judges and competed against a wide range of students from high schools across Delaware and Chester counties.



John Krajicek was awarded an Honorable mention for his project on Admiral Robert Fitzroy's Weather Communication.

Every student adapted well to completing this project both virtually and in person. It was a new process that required flexibility and adjustment. We are very proud of all the hard work that the students displayed, and they should be proud of themselves!





# Classroom News

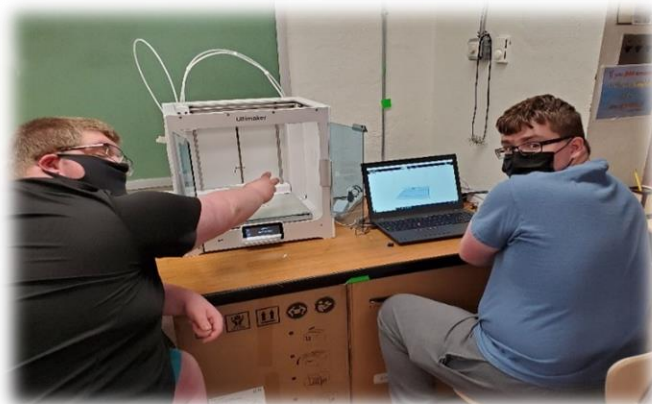
***We are back in person and look what we've been doing!***

**In Ms. Riggio's Art class:**

This beautiful chalk pastel was done by TCS student Nate!

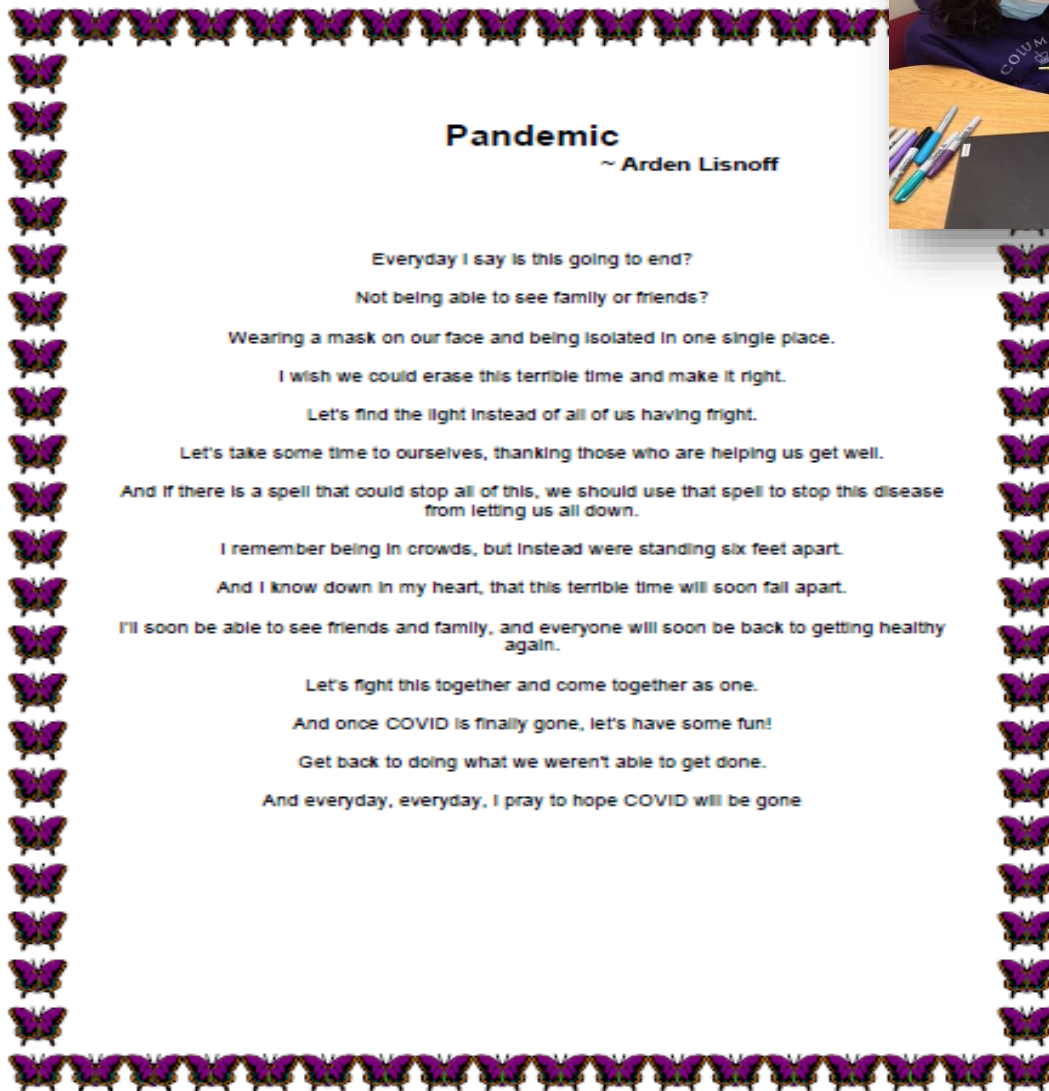


**Mrs. Frederick's 3D Printing class** has been learning about "how to print," how to convert our projects completed in OnShape software to the software for the printer and learning more aspects of Onshape software. We've printed a few items. Recently, we printed an item found online, and recreated it with modifications.



## In Mrs. Phillip's English/Language Class:

Arden's creative mind at work.

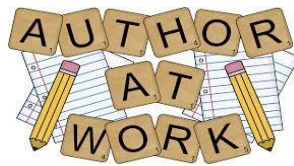


## In Mrs. Griffith's ELA classes:

6th period

Addie channeling her inner "Pax" (a novel by Sara Pennypacker).





### *Sprouting in the Spring* - Kade Morin

When I think of the quote it's quarantining. Isolation (like the coronavirus pandemic.) Feeling like you're an infection and wanting to be away, Closing yourself off, and most importantly losing your confidence shell. Nobody wants to lose a fabulous opportunity. They feel like not taking the chance, not wanting to feel hurt again, what's even more hurtful is not having anyone at all and being alone. It is not healthy to be a pessimist too yourself. It takes courage to gently come out of your shell and put one foot in front of the other to meet people. It can be very risky for some depending on the experience they've had. For some people it's hard and others it's easy, but it's the matter of getting the courage to blossom like a flower in the springtime like a hero's journey. For everyone it's nearly impossible to avoid. The journey isn't the easiest, it's like building up to run or learn to lift a 57 or 34 pound object and have to work and the more to do the easier it'll come. One way to start all this is set SMART goals (S: Specific M: Manageable A: Actionable R: Realistic T: Timely.) If you can do this, whoever you are, you will have it in no time.

Christopher is related to this quote in many ways by him taking on the train station to go see his mother in London. Christopher has to go through seeing waste on the train but he has to face the disgusting texture because he needs to go to the bathroom. Next, he hides in a cabinet in the bathroom in a tight space to calm him down being isolated. Another fear he needed to face was finding Toby his pet rat and, in the process, losing his backpack he packed. The most dangerous feat he showed was saving his rat at the cost of his own life being in the line of a potential train. Christopher had to continue containing his anxiety by taking deep breaths groaning, doing math etc. Christopher Boone has yet to show his potential in the storyline to show some more growth and we might see the rest of it with his early mother in London to see. Anais Nin's quote shows similar relations to Christopher and to real life.

Not only did Anais Nin create a great and inspirational quote, she wrote one that talks about Christopher. When I think about Christopher Boone, he was scared of the world and liked hiding in tight dark places to control his anxiety. Now Christopher is facing a new challenge: a train station full of multiple crowds. That is how he's slowly opening up and blossoming. Nin describes it may be a painful risk, but he didn't have a choice to change in his mind because of the incident of his father killing Wellington, Mrs. Shears dog. Christopher felt safer with his mother in London than living with his father. Christopher is so similar to Nin's quote and shows how powerful he really is.

### Anais Nin – Golden Wind – Romeo Gonzalez

It's evident that this quote: "And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom" by Anais Nin, is a metaphor for fear and change. It shows that change isn't bad and in fact it could be better to change. Say if something you were doing was harmful, whether emotionally or not, you would want to change and not have it happen still. However, if you are scared, you could keep hurting yourself more than what has happened than if you own your fear and change. Like if you keep staying stuck in a cycle and repeat bad decisions, it could get worse than if you did the hard thing and tried to stop, which is blossoming and changing from your decisions and surroundings. This relates to me because of how I need to learn about how to let go of fears. I am scared of small things like if something around me has poison in it and so I have to let it go and not get scared from it. I still need to learn this and learn how to control my overthinking, but hopefully soon I can. I have been making some progress.

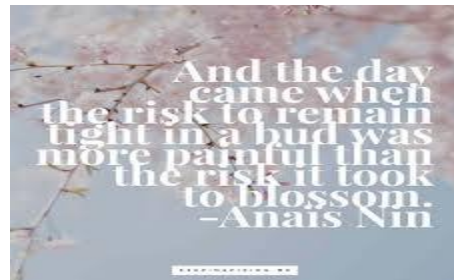
This quote relates heavily to Chris. I explained what the quote means above me but, it's growth and development and how it can hurt more if you don't change. Chris had to change when he decided to leave his home. He would have been scared of his dad so he chose to leave for his mom. He thinks he will be safer with his mom so he left his home. When leaving he does what the above quote says. He leaves which is change instead of staying terrified and unhappy. Although he is scared, he leaps at the opportunity. He now has to face a whole world of uncertainty as he has to navigate the train station and a new chunk of the world. He is scared since it's new and filled with people. On page 131, he brings up his unfortunate circumstance. "Normally I would have got more and more frightened if I was walking to school, because I had never done it before. But I was frightened in two different ways. And one way was being frightened of being far away from a place I was used to, and the other was being frightened of being near where Father lived and they were *inverse proportion to one another*, so that the total fear remained a constant as I got further away from home and further away from Father like this **Fear total = Fear new place X Fear near Father = constant**" (136). This explains everything I have been saying. We can assume traveling will be hard knowing what we know about Chris. He did some strategies like making a map in his head for the city and covering his ears and it made it not as bad so we might see that here as a prediction or he will meet someone friendly even though he doesn't like strangers. But in the end Chris had to change and he has taken the first step to do so. It would have been more painful for him to stay in his house which is like the bud, than it would be for him to change and leave, which would be the blossom. He has gone through a lot since the guy at the start. He is a lot more independent and has grown.



## Starting To Blossom - Zada Campbell

When times are tough and complicated it's easier to hide. It's easier to curl up where you feel comfortable. Because in that place and state of mind you're peaceful, safe and where you want to be. Being in this bubble you created for yourself mentally people around you start to worry, they start asking if you are doing fine and if you need help to seek them. So realizing that it might be scary to face reality you open up because that's what's going to help you grow to become a better person.

This quote is relevant to Christopher's story because when he left his home and the only parent he's ever known he wasn't aware of what he was getting himself into. While traveling to London to get to his mother and tell her that his father killed Wellington. Christopher faced many complications during the time he left. While on the train he had to hide himself from an officer trying to take him back to his father. When Christopher was hiding on the train he hid inside of a cupboard. He had to focus and distract himself from what was happening outside the cupboard. By going to the train station and getting on the train Christopher is showing that he's brave and can overcome his anxiety. Even though nothing went as planned he faced what scared him and arrived safely to his mother. Christopher is the bud and he blooms and starts to blossom when he overcomes his fears.



## First Period Beowulf Creations





## Mrs. Culler's Life Science Classes:

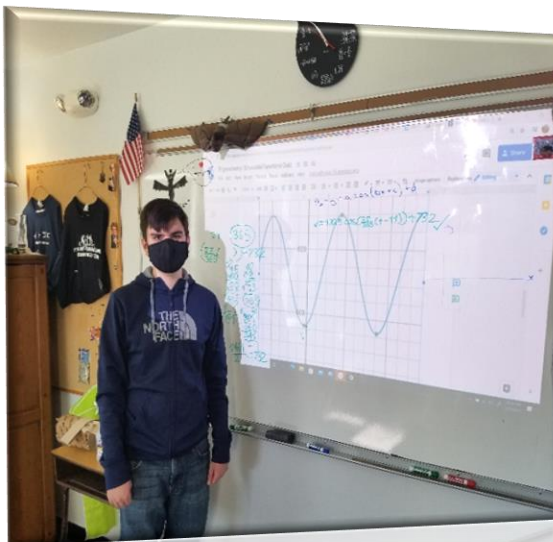
Students are learning about pollination and reproduction in plants. They recently did a hands-on lab to examine flowers and dissected daffodils. They were actually able to see the ovules inside the plants' ovary!

In Ancient Civilizations, students are learning about the fascinating world of Ancient China. Students created beautiful geographical maps to illustrate the natural barriers that surrounded China.



## Mr. Burtch's Math class:

John is seen here after doing the heavy lifting to find the key characteristics of the trig function that describes the daily hours of sunlight at TCS over the course of a year.

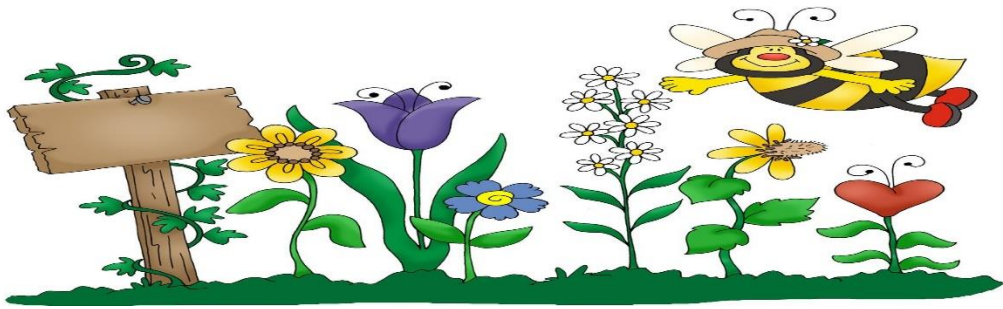


"Kids are not taught the basics anymore. But keeping yourself sharp on the basics is food for your brain." Elena Whitman

## Everyone looks forward to Tuesday, Music day with Mr. Giess.

Faith's version of "Music in the Park"!





# Garden Power

It's that time of year! Volunteers John Fredericks (Mrs. Fredericks husband) and grandson Valen are enjoying the sunshine and preparing our school garden beds for spring planting.



Spearheaded by Ms. Liz Riggio, plans for our school garden are underway with plants and seeds ready to go!





## ***TCS Picture Gallery***

