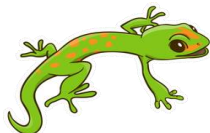




Newsletter Date: December 15, 2021

The Gecko



MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL:

Dear Concept Families,

As we approach the end of the 2021, I find myself being amazed at all we have been through the past two years. I am so grateful that we have been able to be in school this year, although we are wearing masks and using more hand sanitizer than I would like. Our students have shown such resilience during this period of time, as have the staff at TCS.

The past few weeks have allowed me to observe our school community prepare for the Shakespeare play that will be performed on Tuesday, December 21, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. The growth that students have experienced through this endeavor is awe inspiring. They have learned the value of teamwork and cooperation, leadership skills, empathy, and hard work. I am so proud of the work they have done and hope you enjoy the show. Please remember that all guests will be required to show proof of vaccination and must wear a mask. We will be live streaming the play on our Facebook page if you are unable to attend. I hope to see you then.

Please accept my thanks for the support you have given to us as we work with your daughters or sons. It is a pleasure to spend time with them each day and watch them grow and mature. Thanks for sharing them with us.

Have a happy and safe holiday season. School will reopen on January 3, 2022.

Sincerely,
Bill



December 21 – Shakespeare Play

December 23-31 – Winter Break

January 3 – School Re-opens

January 17 – MLK – School Closed

January 21 – End of 2nd Marking Period

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF OUR STUDENTS WHO MADE THE 1ST MARKING PERIOD HONOR ROLL!

2021 FIRST MARKING PERIOD

HONOR ROLL

OUTSTANDING CITIZENSHIP

MARK MACK

JACK RYAN

JADYN SCANLON-SMITH

ALEXANDER VAR-KHUON

ALL A'S

ROMEO GONZALEZ

JOHN KRAJICEK

MARK MACK

SAM MANDELL

NICK MOSCUFO

SEAN O'HARA

JACK RYAN

JADYN SCANLON-SMITH

ALEXANDER VAR-KHUON

ELENA WITMAN

ALL A'S & B'S

NATE AGUILAR

LUKE ALANSKY

ADDIE ALTHOUSE

LESABIEN BROWN

ZADA CAMPBELL

CHRISTIAN CANTY

HENRY DEPUTY

JOEY DODSWORTH

JAMES HANSEN

JAVON HILL

ANTHONY KEHNER

ARDEN LISNOFF

FAITH MCAFEE

SARAH MILLHOUS

JUSTIN MOY

TOR MUNSON

MALIKI PETTIFORD

JESS SIMON

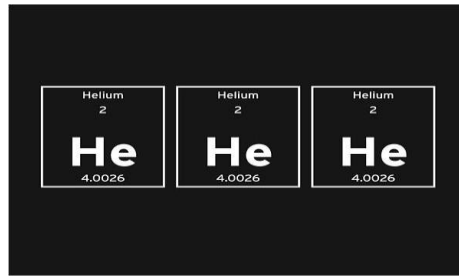
EJ SOTO



I am very proud of the TCS students for a great start to the school year! I have seen students work through various challenges, demonstrate kindness and support of one another, and self-advocate when they need help. Seeing growth in our students in just a few short months has been amazing to observe.

This time of year can often be stressful for a variety of reasons, so it is important to find positive ways to appropriately cope and de-stress. Here are 5 tips I've found to reduce stress as we approach winter break:

1. **Move your body.** It might be getting cold outside, but as long as you have a space in your home, you can move. Pushups, sit ups, squats, jumping jacks, yoga, planks, and plenty of stretches. And if those types of traditional exercises aren't appealing, maybe you could dance to your favorite song. A few minutes of energetic dancing can be great cardio!
2. **Clean up.** Whenever I'm feeling stressed or overwhelmed, I clean my living area. Pick up, throw out, organize. It won't take long before the room starts looking better. A clean-living space can help clean our minds. Cleaning up also means cleaning yourself, so practice good hygiene!
3. **Be grateful.** We all have things to be grateful for. With so many negative stories in the news, find time to express gratitude to those in your life you care about (and who care about you). You can even **SHOW** your parent/guardian that you care by helping around the house – dishes, laundry, pet responsibilities, vacuuming, cooking – these are skills you'll have to learn anyway, so why not start practicing?
4. **Limit screen-time.** I challenge you to put your devices down for an extra hour a day. Use that time for something else. You could read, exercise, talk with a family member or friend, play a board game, draw, or do something creative, etc. Screen-time can affect our moods, our sleep, and our ability to interact with others. Give it a shot and report back on how it went!
5. **Laugh.** I know that all of you laugh uncontrollably at the morning pun-of-the-day, but when you're on break you won't have them to keep you laughing, so find other things that make you laugh – a funny movie, skit, joke, or even a memory. Who doesn't enjoy a good laugh? Even forcing a smile when you're feeling down can trick your brain into making you feel a little better.



I hope you find these tips helpful!

In other news, each morning our students are asked to complete the Morning Check-In to start their day. The following students are this semester's Morning Check-In Champions who have completed the survey consistently every single day!

Javon
Anthony
John
Arden
Mark
Sam

Sarah
Nick
Justin
Jack
EJ
Alexander

Congratulations to these 12 students!

And another congratulations to my counseling assistant Bear who recently got his TCS staff badge. With his newfound confidence in the counseling field, Bear hopes to get his PhD (Pup Helping Dad) credentials. Dad is proud of you, Bear!



I hope everyone has a safe and peaceful break. See you in the new year!

- Mr. Schullery



In Mrs. Griffith's English Classes:

After studying the essays in the non-fiction piece collection *This I Believe*, students in Mrs. Griffith's English class were asked to write their own credo. This is Nick Moscufo's.

This I Believe Essay

I believe in the power of perspective. Perspective is the frame surrounding our experiences; this intrinsic positive, neutral, or negative bias subconsciously influences our outlook on life. Reality is harsh, and if we wish to maintain our sanity, we must look at the objective truths of life with a positive lens. There have been many hard truths in my life. For example, at fifteen, I was diagnosed with arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy. ARVC can cause irregular and life-threatening heart rhythms, so learning that I had this disease was very... disheartening. My week-long tenure at the hospital, which consisted of all sorts of poking and prodding, humbled me to the highest degree. The act of being a patient stripped me of my pride. I was no longer able to take care of myself. Even after my discharge, I still couldn't live the same life I had grown accustomed to living. In fact, for a while, I felt as if I wasn't living at all. I had to give up most of my hobbies: martial arts, biking, and eating way too much. The easy thing to do would be sit in my room and play video games, but this wasn't the life I wanted. To ensure a healthy and fulfilling future, I had to take the initiative and find ways to work around my disease. First, it turns out that I could do a lot of the things I loved if I made some minor tweaks. It took some time to build trust with the people who cared about me and earn my independence again. After a while, my parents let me go on bike trips alone; I just had to make sure that I was mindful of my heart rate. I attached a warning sticker over my no-grab zone, so my fellow aikido practitioners could help keep me safe. I changed the way I was eating. This dietary change improved my overall health despite not being able to engage in rigorous physical activity anymore.

Life is a canvas, and we are the paint; however, we do not choose where the brush takes us. What we can decide is how the frame will affect our piece. Will it merely be the backdrop to life, or will it be a stand-alone artwork in itself? I decided that despite my misfortunes, I would always frame my experiences positively. This conscious change in mindset enabled me to endure the hardships caused by my heart disease.

A Note from Mr. Loux:

Hi everyone! As we approach winter break, students are starting to narrow down possible topics for their National History Day project relating to the annual theme of Debate and Diplomacy in History. The goal is for students to have a topic by the start of winter break. This allows students to contemplate their topic during the break and also think about possible visits to museums or other related resources that could be helpful. Winter break is an opportunity to watch documentaries and search for sources that could be useful towards the project. We will begin focusing more on the project in January and especially in February as we approach the due date in early March. Good luck and Happy Holidays!

In Mrs. Phillips Transitions Class:

How to Become a Surveyor

We were lucky enough to have a surveying team from NaveNewell come and speak to us about the surveying profession. The students got to see and look through the equipment as well as ask questions about surveying as a career. The team even showed us how to use a drone to survey property. Many thanks to Matt Kelly and his team from Nave Newell!





Alumni Returns

Alumni Alex Miller, Class of 2021, returned to TCS to talk to the students about his college transition. Now a freshman at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Alex took time out of his Thanksgiving break to answer questions about what it is really like to go to college. He was a wealth of information and talked about his classes, taking notes, college professors, living arrangements and making friends. We are so grateful that he took the time to be with us and share his experience.



Transitions Parent Meeting

Dr. Rachel Sobel presented to the parents at a virtual meeting on December 7th. She discussed different types of college support and programs for students. Rachel is an Educational Consultant and has an expansive knowledge of how to best match students to programs. One of her recommendations was to use the *K & W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Differences - 15th Edition* as a guide in college searches. This book is updated every two years and the 15th edition is the most current. Here is a link to Rachel's website, College Possibilities - <http://www.collegepossibilities.com/>

Coming in January - Job Interviewing

Students in Transitions class have been working on interviewing skills. We are planning to hold mock interviews in January.

In Mrs. Frederick's Classes:

STEAM

Mrs. Fredericks's STEAM class is creating a replica of the school in MinecraftEdu. Why would I use MinecraftEdu in school, you might ask? Minecraft enhances life skills! Minecraft enhances creativity: Minecraft is a world where students can literally create anything that they can imagine; Minecraft is great for problem solving; Minecraft enhances self-direction skills; Minecraft helps develop collaboration skills, and more. Because students enjoy MinecraftEdu, they put more effort into the assignments.

Environmental Awareness

Mrs. Fredericks's Environmental Awareness class finished their study of The Spotted Lanternfly and are studying endangered animals in PA and in the world. We explore several endangered, threatened, recovered, extinct, and extirpated species in PA. Students are now researching the Aye-Aye lemur, and Amur tiger.

Photo Editing

Students in Mrs. Fredericks's Photo Editing class recently studied Copyright Laws having to do with images, and we had a fun lesson using clipping masks. Currently, students are learning how to edit human faces. We are working with several different tools including the healing brush, and the clone stamp to fix facial blemishes, scars, etc. Next, we will further enhance the image with blur, sharpen, and transparent brushes, as well as, applying other techniques that we learned earlier this semester.

Video Editing

Students in Mrs. Fredericks's Video Editing class finished their Thanksgiving videos, and they did a great job! We are just starting to work on a project with Stop-motion Animation! The theme is winter, and I think they will have fun with it!

Photo Editing

Mrs. Fredericks's Photo Editing class is learning the basics of photo editing this marking period. We're using an online photo editor: Pixlr. The students learned how to crop images (free and constrained crop); change brightness/contrast; change hue & saturation; and straighten an image. They're now learning how to do multiple steps in an image: the basics we already know, and vibrance, saturation, tint, exposure, highlights & shadows, sharpen, clarity, vignettes, and dehazing. The students are using images that I took, so there are no copyright issues. For example, we transformed this image.

Video Editing

Mrs Fredericks's Video Editing class is learning the basics of editing a video. We've taken a video that was 6 minutes long and cut various segments to decrease the video to 30 seconds to 1 minute long. We added a title before the video. The students learned the importance of music in a video, and how it changes the "feel" of a video. It can change the whole perception of a scene. We muted the video's soundtrack and added music that showed what the student's perspective was. Our next step is to add transitions between clips and edit audio tracks.



At TCS, All the School's A Stage!

Parents, take heed!

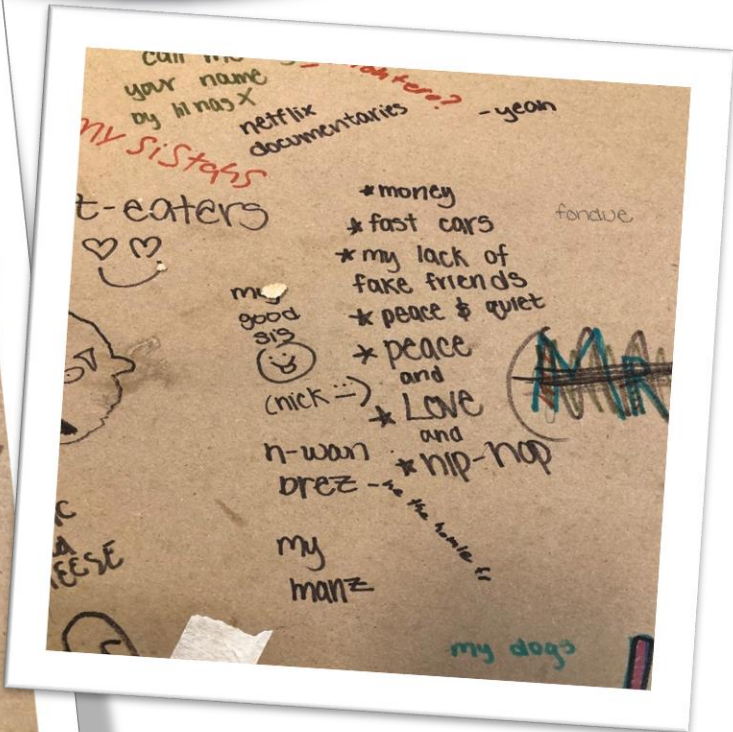
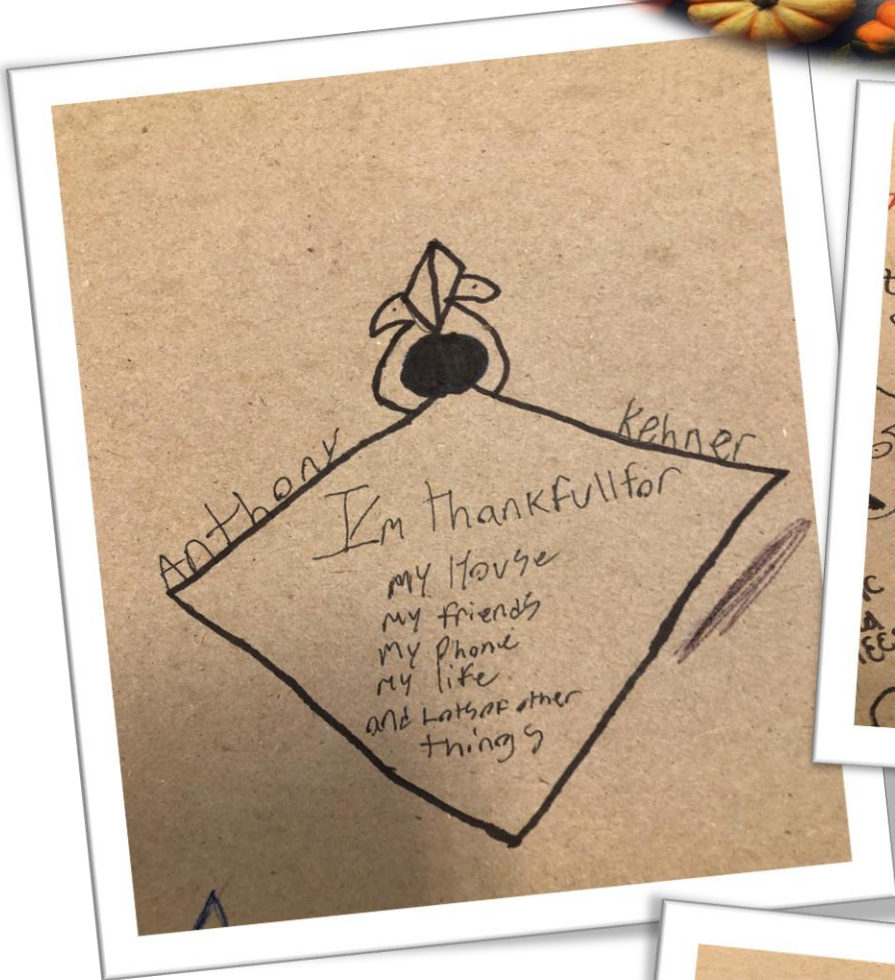
Shakespeare is approaching! For several weeks now, students have been busy preparing for this year's Shakespeare Festival, *Shakespeare Under the Stars*. Roles have been cast, scripts printed, props and scenery are coming to life, and lines are being memorized!

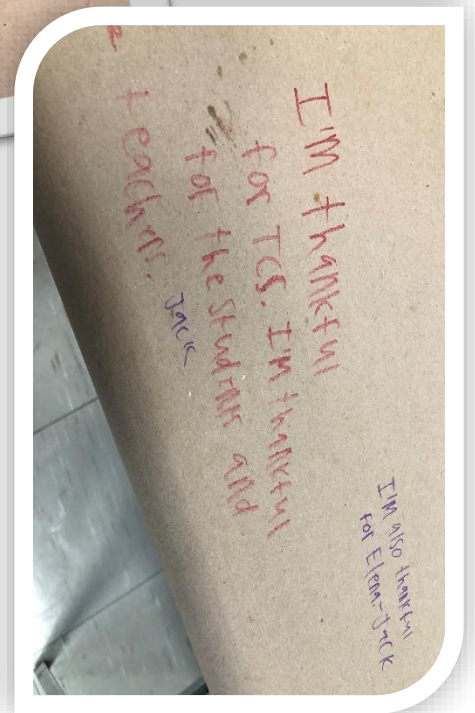
Important Reminders:

- All actors and stage crew members will need to wear *black pants* for the performance on Tuesday, December 21, 2021, at 7:00pm.
- By chance, if a student is not staying after school the afternoon of the performance, they will need to report back to school by 6:15pm.
 - Students who remain will continue with practicing their scenes and have dinner prior to the evening's performance.
 - Dinner items include: cheese lasagna, penne pasta tossed in olive oil, chicken tenders, salad, and a simple dessert.

We are looking forward to putting on a spectacular and star-studded production!

Our Students Give Thanks





Tabletop Game Club

Tabletop Game Club Continues in December!

Our NEXT meeting is:

Wednesday, December 15th, from 3:30-5PM

Students remain after school and must be picked up by a parent or carpool promptly at 5:00 PM. (Please note: Parents must contact their district transportation to inform them of changes to your student's bussing schedule.) Permission slips will be distributed at school.