



Newsletter Date: October 2023



MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL:

Dear Concept Families,

We have had a great start to the school year! Thank you to those who were able to attend our Open House/Back to School Night on September 27th. I hope you enjoyed meeting your students' teachers and learned about the classes they are taking.

We recently received a large amount of money from a federal COVID relief grant. We were able to purchase new projectors for each classroom, a new swing set, an additional pavilion for the playground, a kiln, new classroom chairs, a new transformer to be placed outside the building, a painting refresh for the building, and many other smaller items. We are excited about these improvements and will do our best to minimize disruption during the school day.

The Board of Directors approved the feasibility study completed by FIFTEEN Architects and Design. I am excited about their proposal, and we will begin working on securing the needed funding for the project. Please see the drawings for the amazing new look we hope to give TCS. Please let us know if you are aware of any funding sources for the project. This is an exciting time for The Concept School.

Sincerely,
Bill



October 19 – Parent/teacher conferences – 12:00 dismissal
October 20 - Teacher in-service – school closed
October 26 – School pictures
November 7 – Election day – school closed
November 10 – End of 1st marking period
November 22-24 – Thanksgiving holiday



The students are off to a great start! The Gecko slip box has been full every week with good deeds and positive behaviors throughout the community. It has been wonderful to see students connecting and engaging with each other during lunch and recess. I believe this is, to some extent, the result of our new phone policy which the students have cooperated very well with. Thanks, Mr. Bennett!

As the year continues, I remind students to reach out to me with any issues or concerns. No issue is too small. We discussed as a community on the first day of school how it is up to all of us to make the year positive with our choices. The students have certainly done a great job of that so far!

Mr. Schullery



Greetings from Bear (with Jasper in the wings!)



The Concept School's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is a voluntary group that provides support to our students and the school. The PTO has been active in supporting our Strategic Planning process, setting up evening speakers for parents on relevant topics, providing meals for students on special evening activities, coordinating donations for our annual Thanksgiving Lunch, recognizing our staff during Teacher Appreciation Week, supporting Graduation activities, and the list goes on.

Chair for the 2023-2024 school year will be Mrs. Gina D'Angelo, new to our TCS community this year. Co-Chair will be Mrs. Silvana Medico, a second year TCS parent. They are both excited to lead this important group. If you have ideas for programs, or want to get involved, Gina can be reached at ginamarialive@gmail.com and Silvana at sbmedico3@varizon.net.



Mrs. Culler's Classes:

American Geography:

Students in Mrs. Culler's class have been learning about the northeast region. We began with TCS' home state of Pennsylvania. Kids had a wonderful time making traditional Pennsylvania Dutch recipes at the end of the unit.



Students in Mrs. Culler's **History of the Renaissance classes** have been learning about the origins of the Renaissance and the leading figures in the Italian Renaissance, such as Cosimo De'Medici. Students will begin a study of specific Renaissance art and literature soon!

Mrs. Culler's class and Mr. Fredericks enjoyed a fun-follow-up to our trip to Linvilla Orchards by making homemade applesauce!



Mr. Burtch's Classes:

TCS has six seniors taking Financial Math this year. The course has evolved over the years. But it is designed for students who will graduate soon and move on to the challenges of adulthood. The course covers a wide variety of subjects including expenses, pay, budgeting, taxes, inflation and interest (and maybe even foreign exchange), banking, borrowing (including credit cards) and investing. In addition to learning and developing math, finance and economics skills, students also will learn how to use spreadsheets and some of the behaviors they will need to succeed in the working or college world after graduation. The students' first big project will be an in-depth analysis of real-world expenses tied to a week-long trip to Chicago.

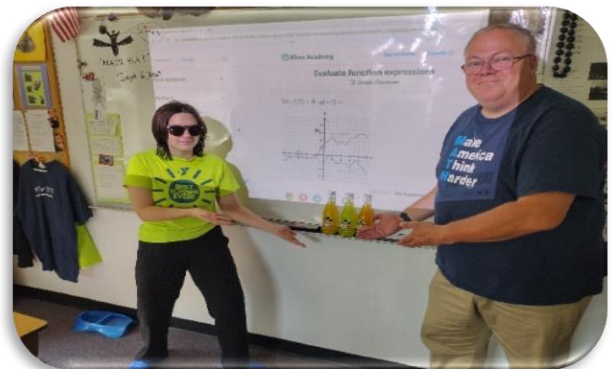


These photos with real life usage of math may change a student's way of thinking about learning math.

Jarritos Madness...



Day 3 and Nora is the second student to win a Jarritos, make that three Jarritos in one day!



A Winning Attitude

Thanks go to Sam Mandell for his generosity towards Ms. Tilmon and Mr. Brady. So far this year, Sam has won several delicious, fruit-flavored Jarritos sodas by scoring A+ on several geometry quizzes. Sam has kindly donated some winnings to these two teachers. Gracias Sam for helping to stamp out teacher thirst, one educator at a time.

Callie earns her first Jarritos for 100% on a Functions quiz. Her preferred flavor - watermelon. Jasper congratulates her.



Mrs. Zoccoli & Mr. Burtch's Math Classes:

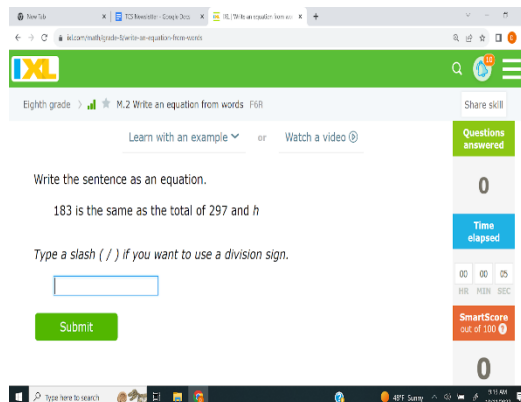
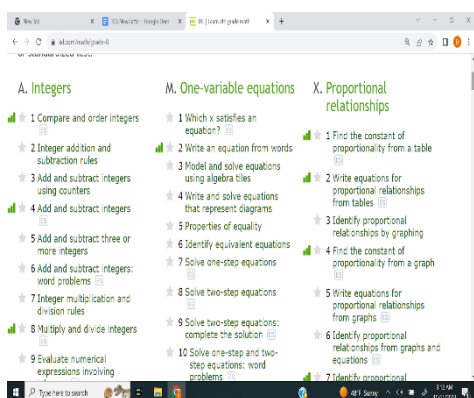
NEW ONLINE MATH SYSTEM!

TCS has purchased a one-year subscription to the online Math System, IXL. This tool will help to enhance our students' abilities to apply, practice, and reinforce many math skills.

IXL augments the online Khan Academy Math Learning Modules, which TCS already uses, and the DESMOS graphing system. IXL problems come in a variety of formats: multiple choice answers, move tiles around, fill in the blanks. Correct answers are rewarded by awarding points to students. As they build their way to 100 percent, they receive affirmation ribbons along the way.

Incorrect answers pull up descriptions of the steps necessary to calculate the correct answer to that problem. IXL then drops the accumulated score by a reasonable amount, and the system assigns more questions of the same topic to evaluate the students' continued understanding. IXL may be accessed from home using the student's log-in information, once the student's personal account is set up.

This is an example of the skills included in a typical eighth grade curriculum.



Mrs. Griffith's Classes:

Students in Mrs. Griffith's classes are off to a super start!

We began the year in epistolary manner by writing, identifying main ideas, and narration; we learned reciprocity, and students were excited to receive hand-written letters at their homes!

Jamboards, black-out poetry, illustrations of "The Tell-Tale Heart", "The Cask of Amontillado", as well as deep dives into "The Raven" and "Annabel Lee" were all fun activities designed to create rapport and to get back into the swing of literature as we head into spooky season!

We are all excited to visit Hedgerow Theater for the Edgar Allan Poe Festival this month.

Creative Writing students introduced themselves through Meme as Writer presentations as well as "Poetic Hellos", acrostics, and zines. They are writing daily and learning to challenge themselves through using different voices, synonyms, and point of view.

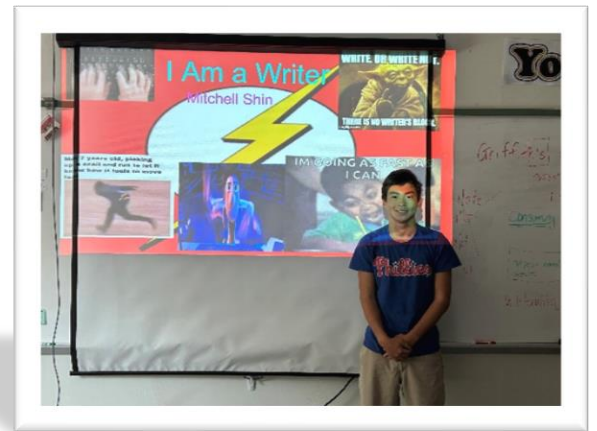


A special shout-out to LeSabien Brown who took an intensive weekend audition course at Hedgerow Theater! Way to step out of your comfort zone, LeSabien!



Mrs. Griffith's **Creative Writing Class** introduces themselves by creating a slide of memes to represent themselves as writers! Check out her class's bulletin board containing zines, acrostics, and poetic introductions.





Mrs. Wright's Classes:

ELA with Mrs. Wright

What a wonderful start to this school year we have had in ELA! Students brought their "A" game to kick off the 2023-2024 school year at TCS. It has been great fun reacquainting with students and getting to know new students. New friendships have been forged and connections have occurred within the walls of RM 9 through our study of the works of Edgar Allan Poe, as well as exploring such writing genres like Zines, Six-Word-Stories, and Haikus.

Spotlight on POE:

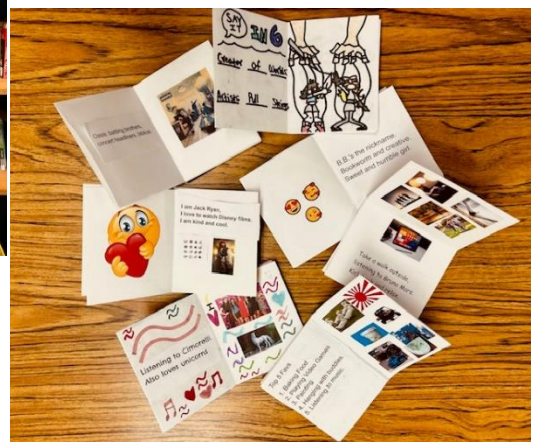


Our current literary learning unit is centered around some of E. A. Poe's most read works, and a few that aren't so well known. Titles that we have analyzed and enjoyed so far are: the short story *Tell-Tale Heart*, the poem "Annabel Lee", the poem "The Raven", the poem "The Bells", the short story *The Mask of the Red Death*, and the short story *The Cask of Amontillado*. Students have learned the concept of "Unity of Effect" that Poe believed in and have discussed that there is an "invisible" string, or motif, that connects every piece of literature that Edgar Allan Poe wrote. We have been enjoying rating each text that we read as we move through our unit as well as looking for connections to other texts or artistry. Students will be Poe experts for our upcoming field trip to Hedgerow Theater to see their Poe Festival!

Student work

ZINES & SIX-WORD-STORIES

Students learned about the pop culture writing genre, Zines, at the beginning of the year. Not only did they learn about a writing style and technique that derived from magazines and became wildly popular in the 1970s, students also had a chance to express themselves. I would say making Zines was a hit from the first step of folding paper to its completion! TCS students are no strangers to writing a Six-Word-Story and jumped right into doing so. We added a visual arts aspect this time around by using Canva to illustrate their stories. Take a look at these works of art and self-expression!

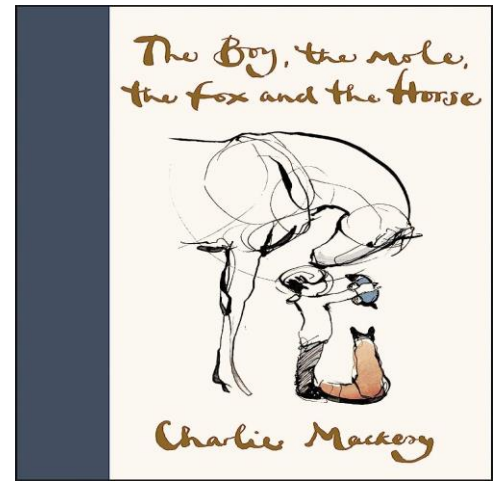


Mrs. Phillips' Transition Class:

Book Recommendation: For Students and Parents

***The Boy, the Mole, The Fox and the Horse* by Charlie Mackesy**

A few years ago, a dear friend and colleague gave me the book, *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse* as a gift. I was perplexed because, at first glance, it looks like a picture book for children. I immediately changed my mind after the first few pages. This book is about life, friendship, kindness, struggle, and connection. It is thought provoking and an inspiration to read. I too began giving it as a gift.



The author, artist Charlie Mackesy, says the book started out as a series of pen and ink drawings that he would share with friends and on Instagram. People responded to the drawings and their written words of kindness, vulnerability, and wisdom. His work made a difference in the lives of people who needed inspiration, especially during the pandemic, and his Instagram account has grown to 1.8 million followers. Contacted by a publisher, his drawings were turned into a book that has sold over 8 million copies worldwide and is on multiple bestsellers lists.

Today, Charlie's book is used in schools, mental health settings, yoga classes and everywhere kindness is spread. It has become an animated short film and won an Academy Award this year. You can find the movie on Apple+ along with a documentary about Charlie Mackesy. We also use it here at TCS in Transition class.

The Chester County College Fair

October 16, 2023

5:30 - 8:00 PM

@ The United Sports Training Center

1426 Marshallton Thorndale Road

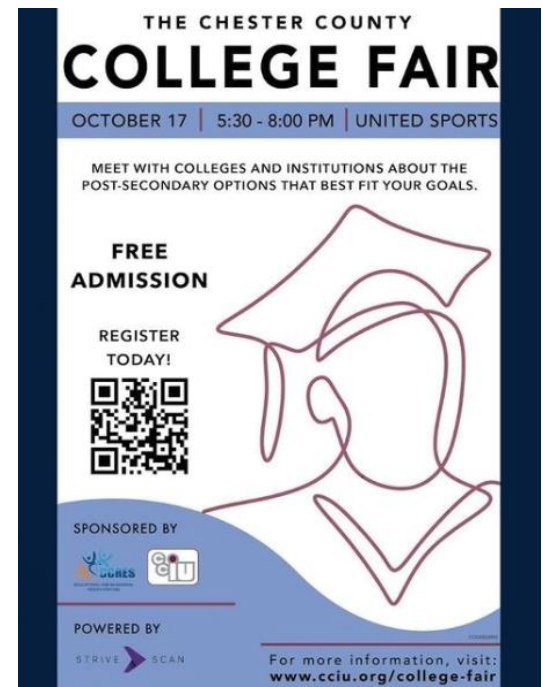
Downingtown, PA 19335

Come and meet with colleges and institutions about the post-secondary options that best fit your goals!

Free admission - more information visit: www.cciu.org/college-fair

October 23 - Angelica Webster from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation will be at TCS to work with transition students with the Pre-Employment Transition program during transition class.

October 30 - Mark Sholds from the Automotive Training Center in Exton will be here to discuss careers in the automotive industry with our students.



Mrs. Frederick's Technology Classes:

Mrs. Frederick's **coding classes** are learning to code for the web. They're learning HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) to set the structure of the page, and CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) to set the style of the page (such as color of text).

Mrs. Frederick's **STEAM class** just finished learning about AI (Artificial Intelligence). We learned about the pros and cons of AI, how it can be used both now and in the future. We explored creating poetry in the style of different writers, such as Edgar Allan Poe. We created music with a program, "Blob Opera," and created AI images by typing in text describing the image. Finally, we discussed why you shouldn't use AI to write your papers!

Mrs. Frederick's **Game Design class** just finished learning the basics of creating games using a program created by MIT, "Scratch." This program uses block coding to simplify creating the games so students can learn the structure, such as If, then statements, forever statements, loops, variables, etc., without learning both the code and structure at the same time. We are about to start a new program using a game engine called, "Construct 3." This is a more advanced program where they can make more complicated games.

Ms. Tilmon's Science Class:

In the first period **Environmental Science class**, students placed mesh bags filled with leaves from four different species of tree in the creek in our nature center. In three to four weeks, we will collect the bags and leaves and sort through the leaf litter, looking for aquatic animals, such as dragonfly naiads maturing in the water. The leaves are from a Kentucky coffee tree, a red maple, a red oak, and a swamp dogwood. We will analyze the data to determine if certain aquatic animals have a preference for the leaves from a certain tree species. Photographs courtesy of DJ Tedrow.





Ms. Schwind's Art Class

Cut paper in **portfolio class** featuring work from Joey and Nora



Art
classes focused on value in form featuring Callie and Grace



Bracelet Sale!

I attend Delco's Original Let There Be Rock School, where I play drums and keyboard. A fellow rocker, Sean Long, has been diagnosed with brain cancer and has been working for months to get better.

Our rock school is raising funds to help Sean's fight. Between October 1-14, I will be selling bracelets: 100% of the money will be going to Sean and his family.

Here are examples of what I will be making:

Floss or Rainbow Loom: \$1 EACH, 6 FOR \$5.00

Beaded Bracelets: \$2 EACH, 3 for \$5.00

Custom Beaded Bracelets- can have your name or team or whatever on it: \$3 each

Custom Orders: \$3/\$4 EACH, depending on how much you need on it.

Step 1 - Determine the approximate length of the bracelet(s). Use a tape measure, or send in a length of string in an envelope, which we will measure in school.

Step 2 - Decide the type of bracelet(s) you want, and suggest or specify the colors(s) you would like. Decide If you would like a word or several words to be included on the bracelet. If you would like Faith to choose bracelets for you, that is also possible.

Step 3 - Decide if you would like to include any donation to further help to FIGHT CANCER.

Step 4 - Fill out the order form (below), put it into an envelope marked "Fight Cancer" and give it to Mrs. Piccone.

THANK YOU MY CONCEPT SCHOOL PEEPS - IT MEANS SO MUCH TO HELP OTHERS !!!!

-Faith



HELP FIGHT CANCER!

BRACELET FUNDRAISER ORDER FORM

Your name: _____ (leave blank)

ORDER NUMBER

Length of your wrist: _____ inches or (Check) ____ string included

Describe each bracelet and separate each description with a comma.

FLOSS OR RAINBOW LOOM BRACELETS:
(1 or 2 colors) \$1.00
each



BEADED BRACELETS: \$2.00 each



CUSTOM BRACELETS: \$3.00 or \$4.00 depending on how many letters will be needed.



Field Trips

Linvilla Orchards



TCS Picture Gallery

...just for fun!



Callie & Willa



Ethan & Jasper



First day of school assembly



Celebrating a special birthday for our special volunteer, Mr. Fredericks.



Recess Fun!

