

Newsletter Date: March 2025



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

Dear Concept Families,

Time really does fly when you're having fun. We have had lots of fun since before winter break at TCS. Our Shakespeare Festival was a big success, and we had a packed house for the play. Mr. Giess, our music teacher, asked if our students could play some music for the student body in February. Everyone loved it and was impressed by the talented students. Thanks to PTO moms, Sylvana Medico and Kim Wolff, 18 students enjoyed a Saturday afternoon bowling at Sproul Lanes. It was great to see so many TCS students and families together. Finally, our National History Day presentations were well received, and many families were able to stop by and learn interesting facts from history.

As warmer weather approaches, things will get even busier at TCS. We have several field trips coming up, starting with the Philadelphia Museum of Art on March 27. Please make sure to return your student's permission slip and payment by March 25<sup>th</sup>. Here are some other dates to keep in mind:

April 14-18: Spring Break April 23: Trip to Winterthur

April 29: Trip to Marshall Steam Museum

Finally, to be sure everyone knows, Mrs. Piccone is retiring at the end of the school year. Camille has done an amazing job over the last five years and will be missed by students, staff, parents, and mostly me! We will be interviewing potential candidates in late March and hope to have someone selected in early April. Thank you, Camille!

Please be sure to reach out if you have any questions or concerns. Thanks for your continued support.

Sincerely, Bill



March 28 – End of 3<sup>rd</sup> Marking Period

April 14-18 – Spring Break

May 7<sup>th</sup> - Spring Arts Festival - 7:00

May 13th - Primary Election - School Closed

May 26th - Memorial Day - School Closed



#### Recess For All!

All TCS students have recess after lunch. Although it's standard for students to get recess in elementary school and maybe middle school, it is rarely if ever scheduled for high-school students. I imagine this is due to the belief that recess is only useful to younger children or that "playing" is something kids should grow out of by the time they reach a certain age. Or, maybe some actually believe taking a few minutes to sit quietly and do nothing amidst a 7-hour day of academics is a waste of time, especially when there are standardized tests to prepare for...

TCS' philosophy strongly challenges these misguided beliefs, as we observe the many benefits of

recess every afternoon.

A walk around the track gives a chance to move, stretch, and converse. It can provide low-level cardio and high-level mindfulness. JT and Faith are always down for a stroll!



Some students join to play organized games. Today, it was kickball. Other days may include football, basketball, soccer, or GaGa Ball. This play encourages kids to work together, problem-solve, and socialize. Nice kick, Mitchell!



Some prefer to swing. It can provide a sensory break, some exercise, and a deep breath of fresh air. Sophia's swinging can sometimes give us heart palpitations, but we trust her!

Some students prefer to stay inside and may join different clubs in teachers' rooms, like Dungeons and Dragons or Writer's Club. Others may get creative and work on an art project. And some students may opt to just sit quietly in the library and listen to music.

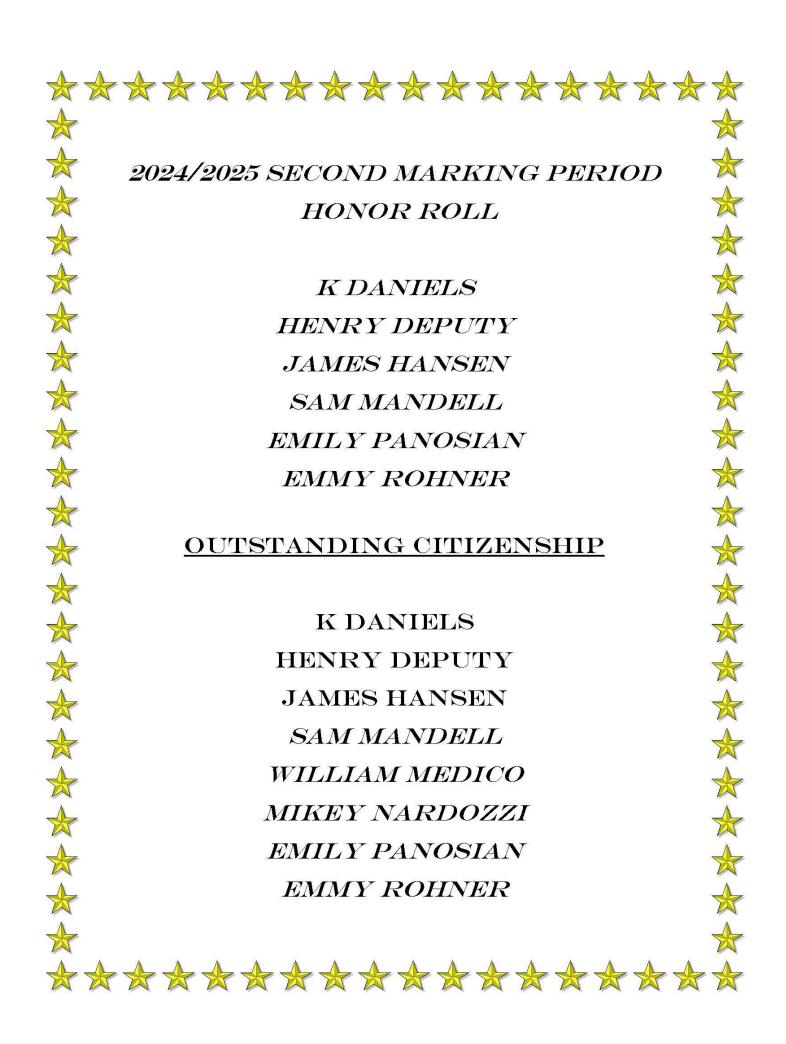
In writing this, I've been tempted to call recess a "break," but I think that would be a mistake. It would imply that recess is merely a stalled period between more important daily activities and does not hold value unto itself.

I would argue that recess is one of those important daily activities. It teaches, soothes, connects, and facilitates personal growth. Whether it's on the path, in the grass, on the court, or atop the swings. To deny this would be to deny students a wonderful opportunity.

I think they would agree.

-Mr. Schullery

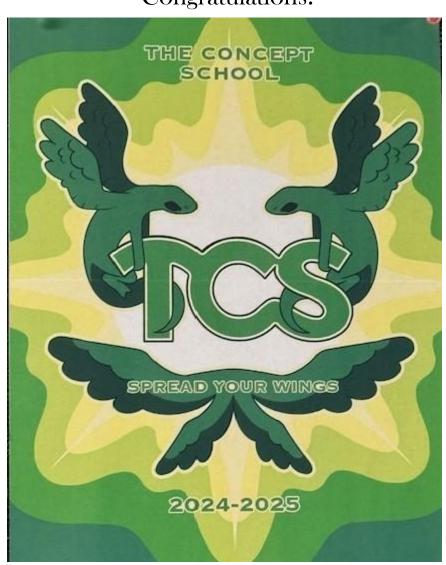






The Art department held our annual yearbook cover contest showcasing all the creative talents that our students possess. But unfortunately, there can be only one winner. For the second year in a row, voted on by her peers, Nor Forte was our winner.

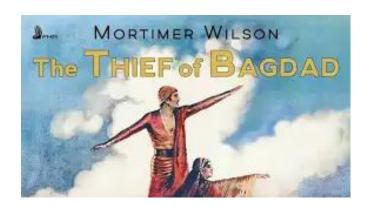
Congratulations!





#### Ms. Tilmon and Mr. Burtch's Classic Film Class:

Classic Cinema has started a new series of movies focusing on the genre of Fantasy. The first movie was the 1924 silent classic, *The Thief of Bagdad*. For a 101-year-old movie, the class found it to be captivating. The next movie is the 1937 classic, *Lost Horizon*, by the great 20th century American director, Frank Capra. "Roll 'em!"





Classic Cinema students unwind to the Banana Boat song as the class prepares to watch The Defiant Ones (1958)

#### Mr. Burtch's Math Class

A happy math student "glows" with pride at a quiz well done!





#### Mrs. Griffith's English Classes:

Mrs. Griffith's **first period** English class, after several years of longing, is finally reading George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Students are reading this novel independently and are given focal points prior to reading each chapter. They are responsible for keeping a double entry journal, and sharing their thoughts in discussion, using their own notes as a guide. While some students seem to know facts about 1917 Russian history which Orwell allegorized, I encourage them to make connections to the history in which they are living currently. Additionally, we studied the rhetorical strategies of ethos, pathos, and logos in advertising



(Tom Brady and Snoop Dogg!) to be able to recognize the way language is utilized (manipulated?) and the way the rules (in the novel and in our zeitgeist) are ever-changing.

**Second period** English class just completed a study of S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*. They enjoyed reading this narrative frame novel and realizing that we are all pretty much the same. Societal norms, loss of innocence, living with trauma, and masking feelings have been hot topics during this study. Writing is therapeutic, as Ponyboy learns. We analyzed Robert Frost's poem "Nothing Gold Can Stay"

and enjoyed the film version of the novel. One student did an independent study of S.E. Hinton's *That Was Then, This is Now* and prepared and presented a Google Slides book presentation! Go Emily! Next up, we will study the poetry of the musical *Hamilton* and do a deep dive into the history of hip-hop, rap, and figurative language. Then, we will watch how

ourselves for motivation!

the historical story comes to life on screen.



Ran Wasses

**Third period** English class continues to ponder what it means to survive during difficult times. After finishing *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl*, we pivoted to Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet*. We are exploring Mr. Pepich's (Brian's English teacher) lesson: "You are your most valuable asset. Don't forget that. You are the best thing you have" (47). Brian might be the lone survivor of a plane crash having to stay alive using his own wits, but the lessons he learns can be seen as a metaphor for all of us. We are our most valuable assets and more often than not, have to dig deep within

**Fourth period** Creative Writing class has been playing catch up, utilizing its time working on National History Day, various writing assignments for other classes, and college/post TCS tasks. All of this IS writing. In between, we are beginning to explore a multi-genre project which will last the duration of the last two marking periods. Students have selected a topic of interest and are working toward writing in varying modalities to create a passion piece on a platform of their choosing.

**Seventh period** Reading the World class continues to look through the lens of film. Students held me to task from our first marking period anime project, and we recently studied the art, culture, messages (and the way they were delivered) in Studio Ghibli's *Spirited Away* and *Ponyo*. We read and discussed informative non-fiction articles about each. Now, we are on the science fiction cinematic journey of Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar*. The story of Lazarus, the concept of Murphy's Law, and even Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* each play a part in how we are reading this movie. Fate vs. free will

and the idea of sacrifice for the good of all are also themes we are discussing. They are teaching me just as much as I am teaching them!





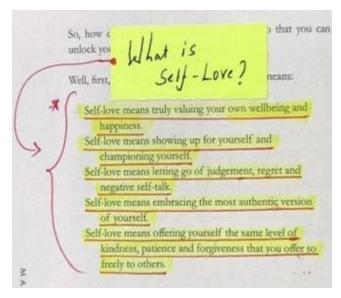


#### **Ms. Cuff's Functional Strategies Class:**

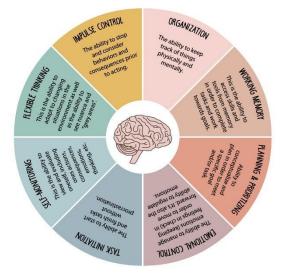
In honor of Valentine's Day, our Functional Strategies classes covered an incredibly important but often overlooked topic: self-love. This concept is all about nurturing a positive relationship with ourselves, which is crucial for personal growth and well-being. When we care about ourselves, we set the foundation for a healthy mindset that supports self-improvement. Just as we nurture friendships with others, it's important to nurture our relationship with ourselves! Valentine's Day, a time to celebrate love, has been a perfect opportunity to reflect on how self-love connects to our daily lives, especially when it comes to executive functioning.

Executive functioning skills, such as planning and prioritizing, organizing, time management, and impulse control are key to success in school and beyond. Improving these skills requires dedication and self-awareness. When we take the time to understand our strengths and challenges, we become more open to making the necessary adjustments to improve ourselves. A healthy relationship with ourselves encourages us to acknowledge our potential, work through difficulties, and celebrate our successes along the way!





# EXECUTIVE FUNCTION WHEEL



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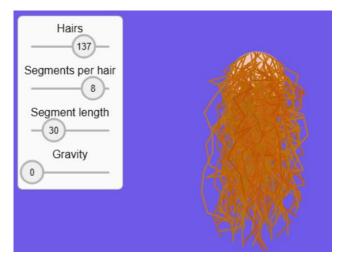
#### Mrs. Daniels's German Class:

You may be wondering what our fantastic students have been up to in German 1 so far this year. We started with the basics of introducing ourselves and talking about who we are and where we come from and have moved on through topics like hobbies & favorite activities, school subjects & items in the classroom to our favorite (and least-favorite) foods and meals. We have learned to tell time in German (and also in English, incidentally ), and have gotten a firm grasp on such grammar concepts as subject-verb agreement, word order in German sentences, the Nominative and Accusative cases, coordinating conjunctions, and modal verbs. We've been having full-class discussions in German asking and answering questions of all kinds, and we practice both writing and reading German every day. We've learned how to incorporate our own humor into our writing, and how to express ourselves clearly. Take a look at some of the awesome projects our students have created so far this year!



#### Mrs. Fredericks' Technology Classes:

Mrs. Fredericks' **Pixar** is learning about what it takes to create Pixar movies. Some of the animations require "virtual camera settings" and can be quite complicated using quite a bit of mathematics. Students are learning about the "Art of Lighting," "Color Science," "Virtual Cameras and Camera Lenses," and "Effects." We will soon be learning about "Patterns" and "Rigging" before we start "Animation" and "Modeling." We recently had a lot fun learning about "Hair Simulation."



**Game Design** is creating a platform game. The students created their own sprites in an online application, "Piskel." Now, they are creating layouts and doing some code with a game design program called, "Construct 3."





**Photography** class is finishing the Exposure Triangle and learning about shutter speed. They are learning how to take pictures so that the action is stopped and learning how to convey motion.

Video Editing class is finishing a "Disaster Green Screen" movie. Students take the part of a meteorologist. They research a weather disaster or phenomenon. They find videos, videos, and pictures of this disaster. They create a script then stand in front of the green screen as if they were part of the actual disaster. The intro of the video is "animated text" which they created separately. They're doing a great job! Our next project is about National Parks.



#### Mrs. Wrights's English/Language Art Classes:



**Periods 2 and 5** Students were immersed in a study of figurative language early in the third marking period. We played clips of songs and looked at lyrics of songs with copious examples of figurative language. Students then put their practice and knowledge into action by writing a creative essay answering the question, "Have you ever wondered if your

favorite color was a person"? Students used personification, metaphor, simile, repetition, and sensory writing to personify colors. The creativity seeping from their pages was palpable! Check out some of their writing below! Period 2 will begin reading *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton and period 5 has begun the emotionally gratifying read of *PAX* by Sara Pennypacker.



**Periods 3 and 4** have been hard at work reviewing writing conventions and building writing stamina. Both classes have jumped into new literature units highlighting the following book: *Ghost* by Jason Reynolds. Throughout the unit, students will be learning about and identifying examples of figurative language and discussing main character journeys and discussing static and dynamic characters.

#### Check out our Writers!

Name: Chris Segarra Class: ELA Writing Date: March 4, 2025

#### **Black is Creative**

The color black is like a dark tunnel: empty, trapped and like there is no exit. Black is like rain falling onto the ground. He has a broken heart. Black is also the feeling of becoming a man. Black is the shadow that always follows you, never leaving you alone. Black is there for your highest and lowest points of your life. He is a quiet place where you can forget about everything and just exist. Black is like your mind: always playing tricks on you, telling you you're no good, and that it's all hopeless. He has learned this. He knows a lot of people may not tell you this often or even ever, but you are loved and important and you bring to this world things that no one else can. Black wants you to keep holding on. He goes to school every day with a smile on his face, no one questions it because everyone thinks he is okay. As soon as he gets home, he feels as if he has no purpose. Black is hurtful but hopeful, quiet but aware, expressive and depressive, scared and lonely. He is ready and never looks back. Black is life. Everyone has a different color in life; just remember yours.

Name: LeSabien Brown Class: ELA Period 2 Date: March 4, 2025

#### **Maroon is Confident**

Maroon is standing on a stage: positive, strong, and projecting. Maroon is the opportunity to be somebody else. Maroon takes your breath away just as the curtain opens. Maroon pushes me to show that I can be strong in stressful times. Maroon is the spotlight guiding me to tell stories. Maroon is like the color lights highlighting my story. Maroon is like the costume that boosts my self-assurance. Maroon understands what it feels like to be in the shadows hoping to someday come into the light. Sometimes Maroon pulls me into the dark even though I fight him for the part. Maroon is like having too many stage directions, overwhelming me. Maroon is the brand-new script pulling me into a different life. Maroon is feeling and living, proud and loud, knocking down and standing back up, controlling and moody. Maroon pushes you out of the dark and into the light.

Name: Sophia Bubnis Class: ELA literature Date: 2-25-2025

#### Brown is Everything

Brown satisfies with the taste of the sweetest milk chocolate. Brown is the adventurous spirit you feel when you read an awesome book. Brown is the satisfactory sensation someone feels when they follow their dreams and obtain their desires. Brown is the feeling of getting cozied up to your preferred person in your favorite blanket, with one of your treasured plushies. Brown is the accomplished feeling you get when you finish doing work that you enjoy. Brown is an enjoyable, peaceful stroll through nature. Brown shows all that Earth has to offer and take in. Brown is like eating a delicious meal. Brown doesn't care what age you are, how your life is, or any of that... Brown just wants you to enjoy your life and be grateful for the small things, as well as what you have. Brown is like warm baked goods. Brown is like getting an excellent sleep. Brown is like the most exquisite dreams. Brown is like the love

Name: Lilith Florent

Class: ELA Literature Period 5 Date: February 27, 2025

#### Green is Healing Beauty

Green is a peaceful beauty that is healing. It is everywhere yet not overwhelming; a place to feel at peace and a thing of growth. He brings the end of winter and cold. Green is a sign of life and comfort. He is the beauty of nature that calms all. Green is like nature; it is unpredictable and has become a rarity in the modern day. He is as warm and welcoming as a sip of tea in the morning. Green is what brightens up a room and makes the air breathable. Green is the reason we exist in this world. He is as beautiful and valuable as emeralds and peridots; you have to remove the ugly things to see the beautiful inside of it all. He is the healing, nurturing, freshness, helpful, calming, lively, peace and guiet we all need. Green is the world we should all be in. Green is there for you even if you don't know.

you may get from your family. Brown is like the warmth of the sun on a lovely day. Brown is simplicity, complexity, steadying, stabilizing, mixed, encompassing, warm, and comforting. There is SO much that brown is and that's because brown is the amazing blending of every color.

This is BROWN, the hidden rainbow.





Theater Spotlight: On Friday, February 28th our theater troupe performed LeSabien Brown's play, *Find the Duck*, featuring a kidnapped duck, mobster lobsters, and a bumbling detective who may or may not be based on our very own Mrs. Culler! LeSabien has been attending Mrs. Culler's Writers Club every week since it began. Last year he began writing a mystery story and then it developed into a play shortly after Mrs. Griffith mentioned there was a play writing competition for students through The Kennedy Center of Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Under the mentorship of Mrs. Culler, LeSabien applied for the competition and sent his play in for review. LeSabien was one of a handful of students who had the chance to work with well-known playwrights and actors. Last summer, LeSabien went to The Kennedy Center and spent a weekend workshopping his play, gaining experience through mentorship and working with other kids, and celebrating his hard work. Our theater class wanted to celebrate LeSabien as well! As with any TCS production, we did multiple table reads in class and even had to add a character so that each actor had a part. All students memorized their lines quickly, brainstormed scenery and props, and most of all, had the most fun rehearsing! Mrs. Fredericks recorded this performance for all to see: https://www.youtube.com/@TCSWesttown.



















#### **Mrs. Culler's Senior Anatomy Class:**

Senior Anatomy students completed a glucose lab as they learned about the endocrine system. After studying how the pancreas functions to regulate insulin and blood sugar, students created a list of beverages and the total sugars in each drink. Students then created a solution to test how each beverage would impact blood sugar levels using test glucose test strips and wrote about their findings.

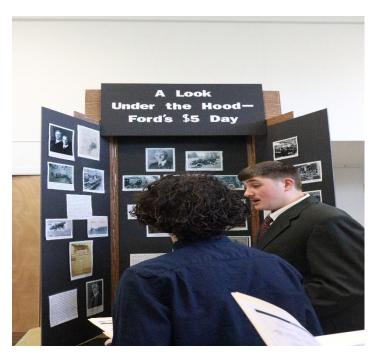




## NATIONAL HISTORY DAY

Congratulations to the following winners of The Concept School's National History Day 2025 competition! The students listed created a well written project, as well as presented their project with confidence and poise. They will be going on to compete in the regional competition located in West Chester at the Chester County Historical Society against dozens of other local schools, and hundreds of other students who created their own versions of the projects following this year's theme "Rights and Responsibilities".

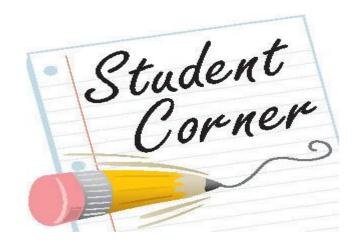
Sam Mandell - Exhibit Lucas Florent - Exhibit James Hansen - Paper Daniel Kampf - Paper











I really enjoy TCS. I've been here since freshman year and I'm in 10th grade now.

I like the way the teachers teach. It's nice to have a place to be happy at and to enjoy working!

I really think that TCS is great, and I hope others could agree with me. Mr. Bennett is a great principal and is welcoming! I have been doing the Flag everyday which I like to do.

I'm working on a Portfolio assignment on 18th Century art, and I'm super pumped to start it! That's all.

Mikey Nardozzi



One of our seniors, James Hansen, President of the TCS Do More Club, donated homemade bread to the West Chester Police Department.

## TCS Picture Gallery

TCS Bowling Outing Sponsored by our PTO









NHD Special Breakfast – Thank you, Dylan!







### 2024 Shakespeare Festival



Mr. Bennett, The Mya Whisperer

