



# FALL NEWSLETTER

# Bennett's Bulletin

## with Mr. Bennett

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Dear Concept Families,

It is hard to believe we are in the second marking period of the school year.

Time sure does fly when you're having fun! As I mentioned in the first newsletter, the year is going very well and we have a caring and supportive community of learners at TCS. It is so gratifying to see our students honor each other, regardless of their differences.

We had a great Halloween party with games and snacks, thanks to our wonderful parents and family members who donated items and/or were here to help with the festivities. It was nice to see pictures of how many students (and staff) dressed up that day.

Mr. Forte, a parent, brought in a local animal welfare organization for an assembly in mid-October as an early graduation gift for his daughter, Nor. The students loved seeing the different animals that had been rescued after being injured. There was a turtle, a snake, an opossum, and a crow, among others. We appreciate Mr. Forte's kindness.

We continue to search for funding sources for our capital campaign, The Concept Grows. The Board of directors recently contracted with a lobbying firm in Harrisburg to help us locate grants from the various agencies in the state government. We have also been visited by State Senator John Kane who was impressed by our mission. Please use any contacts you may have to invite state legislators to visit TCS.

I am pleased to tell you that English teacher Laura Griffith has returned to school! She brings a great energy to our school and everyone was happy for her return!

Finally, we have space for a few more students at The Concept School. Please recommend us to any potential students who you feel may benefit from our school. Word of mouth is our best source of new students.

Sincerely,  
Bill



# Dean's Deal

By: Mr. Schullery

This fall, Ms. Cuff and I have been visiting classrooms to lead counseling lessons centered on two important social skills: perspective-taking and active listening. These lessons are part of our ongoing effort to help students strengthen communication, relationships, and social awareness in everyday interactions.

During our perspective-taking lessons, students explored the elements that shape the way we see the world — including our experiences, background, family, culture, interests, and even social media. We discussed how two people can experience the same event but interpret it differently, and how being aware of those differences can help us better understand others and manage conflict more effectively. We showed the students images like this to support the lesson:



Our active listening lessons expanded on the ideas around perspective-taking by teaching students specific strategies for showing genuine attention and care during conversations. We introduced the key elements of active listening: making eye contact, staying focused, asking questions, limiting distractions, reflecting back what we hear, and discussed how these behaviors make others feel heard and valued. We talked about the many benefits of active listening, from improving communication and reducing misunderstandings to making and maintaining positive relationships with friends, family, and teachers.

Ms. Cuff and I have been quite impressed with the students' participation in these lessons. They are offering insights and having extended conversations about the topic beyond what we've presented. We plan to visit more classrooms throughout the year and work with the students on a variety of other social skill areas. Our hope is that they apply these tools to their everyday lives, both at school and at home.



# Transitions Updates

By: Ms. Cuff

## Student Spotlight



This summer, one of our seniors, Dylan, took initiative to explore his passion for cooking by attending a three-day Summer Institute at Walnut Hill College in Philadelphia, an opportunity he discovered during our Transitions class last year!

We are excited to share that his dedication paid off: ***Dylan was accepted into Walnut Hill's Culinary Arts program and even received a scholarship!*** We're so proud of his hard work and follow-through, and we hope his story inspires other students to seek out opportunities that align with their goals!



## Transitions Tip



**Start early!** Help your student build independence at home by encouraging them to take the lead in small, everyday tasks:

- Manage their own schedule or set reminders
- Plan an outing or organize a family activity
- Prepare a simple meal
- Keep their space organized

These small steps strengthen confidence, responsibility, and self-advocacy, which are key skills for success in post-secondary life!



# Transitions Updates

By: Ms. Cuff

## New Transitions Website

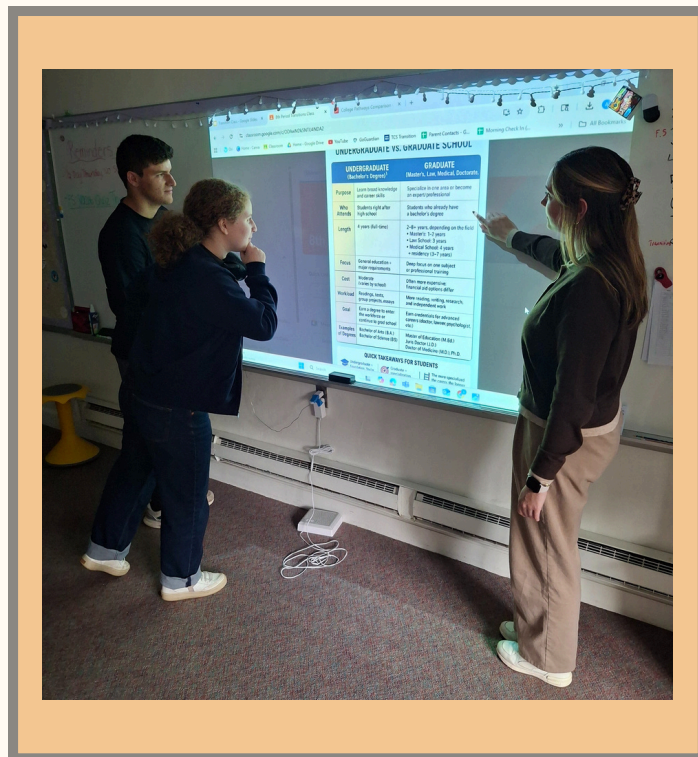
Our Transitions Website is designed to help students and families navigate post-secondary resources in one place! The site includes guides that explain the transition process, information on college and vocational pathways, programs for students with disabilities, and resources for local supports. You'll also find career exploration tools, financial aid information, and a list of upcoming events. It's a great tool to use to start conversations at home and explore all the opportunities available after graduation. Scan the QR code to check it out!

SCAN ME



## Classroom Updates

In Transitions class, students have been exploring post-secondary options through our *Future Path Project*. Students are researching potential college, trade, or workforce opportunities that aligns with their interests and strengths. In the photo, we are reviewing a chart that compares undergraduate vs graduate programs to help students understand the different levels of education and the time and commitment different careers require.



# History of Classic Cinema

Ms. Tilmon & Mr. Burtch

The Classic Cinema course is off to a good start. The class began with an exploration of silent-era comedies. But why study movies that may be one hundred years old? Answer: We study these movies because they offer insights into approaches to movie making that originated at the beginning of movie making. These movies also challenge students to understand how the world was different a century ago.

We started with Charlie Chaplin's *The Kid* (1921). This was Chaplin's first feature length film, and showcased his talent as an actor, director and composer. It revealed Chaplin's genius for communicating complex human emotions without spoken dialog. We followed this with Buster Keaton's last movie, a short entitled *The Railrodder* (1965). It was made near the end of

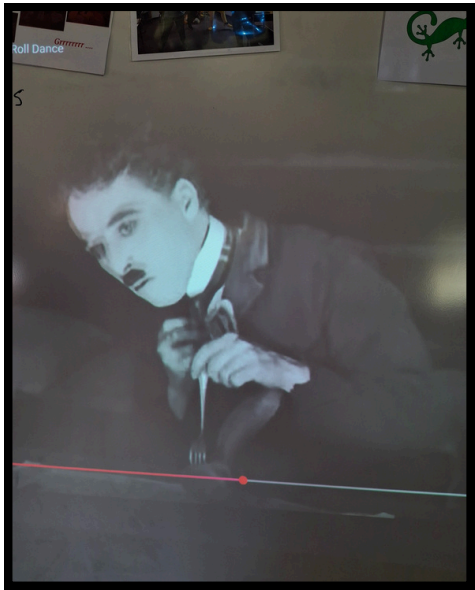


Keaton's life and revealed that he still had "the touch" for silent comedy. *Benny and Joon* (1993), starring Johnny Depp, provided students with an opportunity to see a modern-era movie that borrowed heavily from the giants of the silent era.

We made the transition from comedy to scarier films with Frank Capra's 1944 classic, *Arsenic and Old Lace* (a dark comedy). Then, we prepared for Halloween by viewing the classic silent horror movie, *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925) starring Lon Chaney.







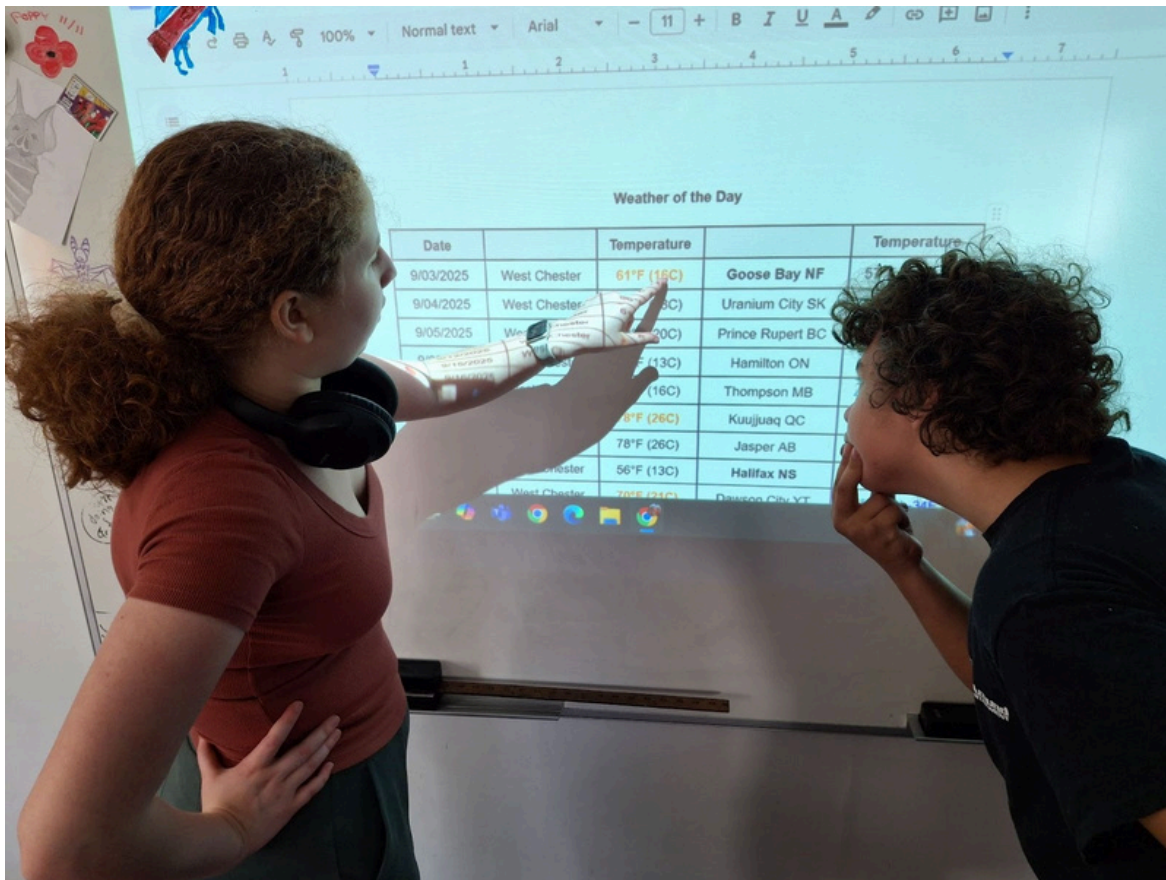


# Geography

Mr. Burtch

This class is a fusion of an earlier class called America's Closest Neighbors and an exploration of Geography as a stand-alone subject. The class began the year by discussing the breadth of how one might define Geography as a subject separate from History. Now, the class is learning about the surface features and processes that define our physical world (e.g., landforms, waterforms), in other words, Physical Geography.

Our initial "laboratory" is Canada, a country with lots of varied physical geography. Eventually, our focus will shift to Mexico. Why are we using these two countries as our "laboratory"? Simple - TCS already offers courses on U.S. and European Geography. So, we will try to expand students' frame of reference by learning more about our countries closest neighbors.



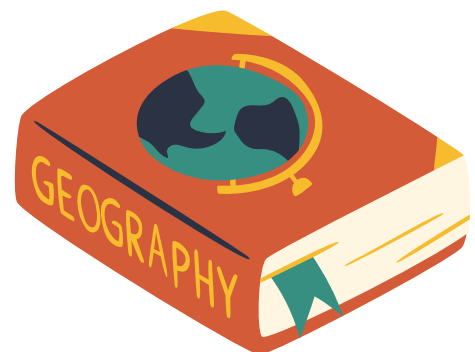
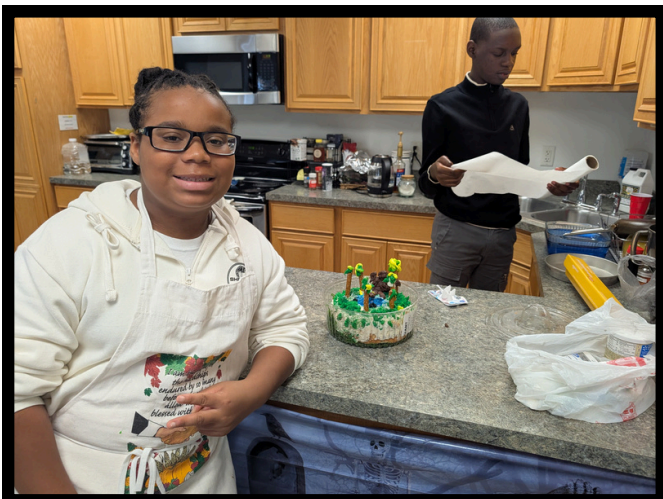
Students comparing daily temperatures in West Chester with various communities in Canada in Celsius (Centigrade) and Fahrenheit



# American Geography

Mrs. Culler

Our students are studying American Geography, including myths and folklore from each state. Students were asked to create dioramas featuring their favorite PA myths and folklore and turned out great pieces for Bigfoot, Raytown Ray, and the Jersey Devil!

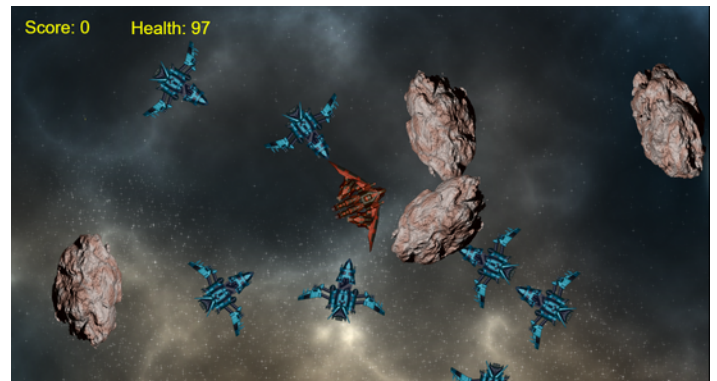
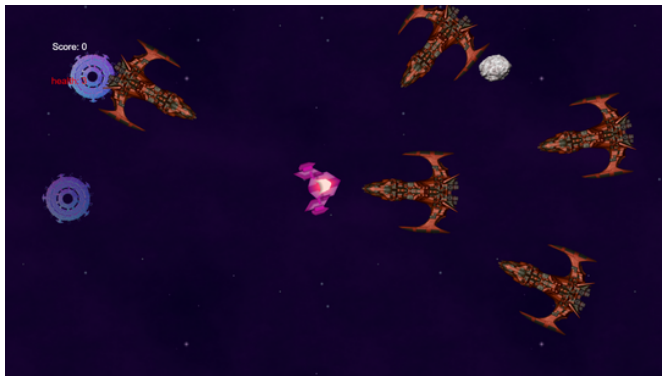


# Game Design

Mrs. Fredericks

In Mrs. Fredericks' Game Design class, students are learning to create games using Construct 3. They have completed a space game where they started with pre-made sprites and a basic layout, then added their own programming to make it playable.

Currently, the class is developing a platform game. Students are designing their own animated characters and learning to program their actions using "Events," which are similar to "if-then" coding statements.

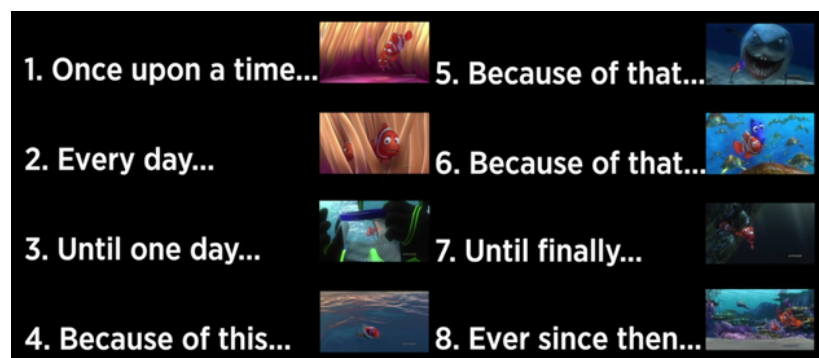


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## Pixar

Mrs. Fredericks

Mrs. Fredericks's Pixar class is currently studying Pixar's storytelling techniques, focusing on the "story spine" and the structure of a story's acts. The film "WALL-E" is being used as a model for how these elements, which include phrases like "Once upon a time," "until finally," and "ever since then," fit together. As part of the curriculum, students are also developing their own stories.



# Video Editing

Mrs. Fredericks

Mrs. Fredericks's Video Editing class is currently exploring fundamental editing techniques.

Students have learned to cut video clips, integrate music and narration, and apply transitions. For their initial project, titled "Let me introduce myself," each student produced a video utilizing a mix of their own media and found footage. The latest assignment involved adapting a Halloween or scary story into video format, using all the tools they learned. The class will soon advance to a new topic focusing on copyright and fair use principles.



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# Photography

Mrs. Fredericks

Mrs. Fredericks's photography class has been studying many composition techniques, and just completed the "Rule of Thirds" and "Leading Lines". Students then applied these principles by taking their own photographs. Students are also learning photo editing. For a recent Halloween project, they used editing tools such as filters, levels, and saturation to transform a picture of a castle into a haunted-looking one.





## ELA & Theater News

Mrs. Wright

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It is hard to believe that the first marking period of the 2025-2026 school year has come to pass; it feels like the year just began! From our first days of writing and posting our "Summer Stories" for our Instagram page to our literary journey with MC, Scott Hudson, in *Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie*, students have had a busy start to the school year! Students reviewed, learned, and demonstrated their literary analysis skills, and the ever-present poetic devices we find in all literature, making the unit even more enriching.

In addition to our book unit, many students were introduced to several of Edgar Allan Poe's works: *The Tell Tale Heart*, *Annabel Lee*, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *The Mask of the Red Death*, and *The Bells*. Students loved discussing Poe's gothic themes leading up to Halloween. What a wonderful start to our year in ELA!







**The TCS Players** proudly presented “The Working Dead” to the students and staff on Friday, October 31st. The Working Dead was an original play written by the students in the theater class. The idea for the play was Alex’s! Congratulations to Alex, Umar, Gavin, LeSabien, Grace, and Ryan for their spook-tacular performance on Halloween! We are now preparing for our annual Shakespeare Festival on **Thursday, December 18, 2025 at 7:00pm**. Be sure to be on the lookout for a letter/permission slip on all things Shakespeare!



# Stained Glass

Mrs. Daniels

So far this year at TCS, our Stained Glass students have been learning about and participating in the start-to-finish process of creating a stained glass work of art. Through careful study combined with hands-on activities, we began the year learning about colored glass of all types, as well as the many tools in our glass studio. Then each student used those tools to create their own mini works of stained glass art, with a focus on practicing and refining their skills, learning all the while. The pieces they created are pictured below – check out what a fantastic job they all did on the cutting and soldering!

Now we are delving into the history of glass and leaded glass, from the very first glass beads ever created (over 3,000 years before any of us were born), through medieval times when Gothic architecture first allowed for the creation of gigantic windows of colored glass, across many developments in style and technique, all the way up to the turn of the 20th century when Louis Comfort Tiffany led fellow artisans in a whole new kind of glassmaking.

Along the way, we designed our own Rose Windows like the ones we learned about in countless cathedrals across Europe, and we are gaining inspiration from studying these early masterpieces. We will be using what we have learned through this historical overview as we begin designing our own original works – what an exciting time to be a Stained Glass student!





# German 1

Mrs. Daniels

The students in German 1 this year have been working hard, and have already learned so much! We began with greetings and introductions and moved on to talking about ourselves in German, focusing on where we come from, where we live, how old we are, and what our favorite activities are. We've learned all about hobbies, sports, and free time activities, and we can speak about the ones we like best, as well as those that we are not so interested in.

We've mastered numbers up to six digits – no easy feat when writing them out in German requires that they look like this: *ehnhundertsechszwanzigtausendneunhundertachtundsiebzig* (that's 126,978, to the uninitiated)! We have proudly ensured that all students at TCS have by now at least *heard* how to say “six - seven” in German, even if they can't pronounce it quite correctly yet. (It's “*sechs - sieben*,” roughly pronounced /*zekhs - zeeben*/, for those who are curious.) Now we are starting to learn more about the German school system, and will soon be inventing and talking about our own made-up students – complete with classes, grades, and teachers. Then we will talk and write all about what those Phantomschüler think about their classes and their teachers! Project-wise, we've used humor and creativity to demonstrate our fantastic understanding of how verbs and subjects work in German. Check out some of the great projects that students in our German 1 class have created so far this year!



# German 2

Mrs. Daniels

Our German 2 class, albeit small, is proving itself to be quite mighty!

We started off this year picking up where we left off at the end of German 1 – with body parts and a hefty dose of helping verbs like “to be supposed to” and “to be allowed to” as well as “to want to”. We’re practicing using direct and indirect objects – both nouns and pronouns – and we’re diving deeper into the Dative case, especially through use of prepositions like “with” “to” and “after”. We learned how to talk about injuries and illnesses as cold and flu season approached, and invented all kinds of excuses in German using the glorious word “*deshalb*” (roughly translated as “that’s why”). We learned about transportation and housing and can now talk all about living arrangements and where and how people typically live in German-speaking countries. Special focus during that unit was on nouns and the importance of learning the gender of each one.

Now we’re heading into our unit focused on seasons, holidays, weather, and the clothing that we wear all year round. Nicely dovetailing with those themes are the separable verbs in German that require use of the Dative case, so we’re really digging into the applied grammar this year! Take a look at the great projects that have been created so far!

### Kapitel 9 Projekt

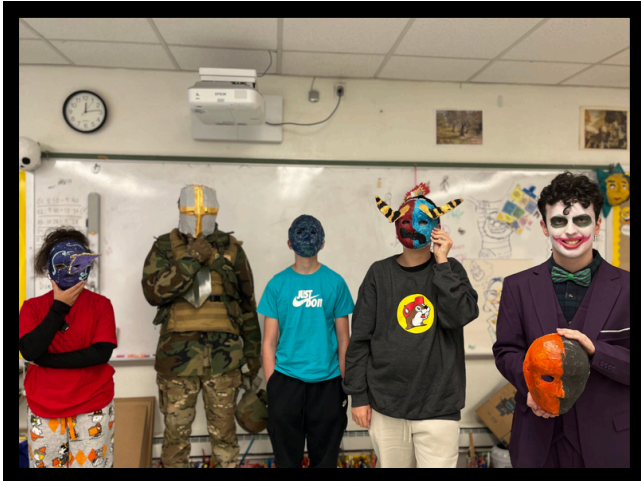
Das ist das Haus. Es hat fünf Zimmer: der Flur, die Küche, das Wohnzimmer, das Bad, das Kinderzimmer, und das Schlafzimmer. Ich denke der Flur ist ok, aber nicht fantastisch. Die Küche ist wo ich koche und esse mein Essen. Im Wohnzimmer sehe ich fern, und ich finde das gut. Das Bad ist sehr nützlich. Das Kinderzimmer ist ein gut Schlafzimmer und hat einen super Schreibtisch. Mein Zimmer ist das Schlafzimmer, ich schlafe, zeichne, schreibe, und lese gern dort.

Die Menschen stehen Schlange. Eine Frau sagt, ihre Schulter tut ihr weh, aber der Arzt (er ist unterqualifiziert) sagt, er hat kein Interesse. Eine zweite Frau ist die nächste, und sie sagt, ihr Bein tut ihr weh. Sie sagt auch, der Mann hinter ihr ist lästig, und immer noch kein Interesse, deshalb sagt er, die Frau ist lästig. Der Arzt zeigt und seine Augen tun ihm weh, und er weiß nicht warum, deshalb ist er besorgt. Er möchte Hilfe, und ausnahmsweise hilft der Arzt ihm einmal aus. Er sagt, der Mann braucht keine Brille. Der letzte Mann sagt, er ist verliebt, deshalb tut sein Herz ihm weh. Der Arzt ist abgespannt und sagt, er hat Kopfschmerzen.





# Picture Gallery





Thank you to The Forte's for letting us join in on the fun! As an early Graduation present to Nor, the Forte's set up a Wildlife Program Experience. Here are some of the friends we had the pleasure of meeting



Stained Glass  
Hard at Work!



# Staff Highlights

Mr. Schullery has always had a love for film and creativity. Last year he started developing a short screenplay script which he submitted to a film competition over the summer. His Script "Squeak" brings horror and comedic relief together. Out of several submissions, Mr. Schullery's script was chosen and he was invited, along with 200 others, to take part in the Richmond Film Festival. Mr. Schullery won the award of "Best in Screenplay".



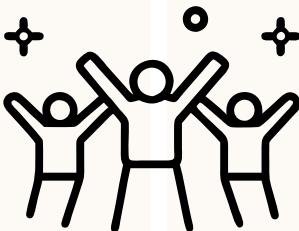
# Student Highlights

First Quarter Honor Roll  
& Outstanding Citizenship

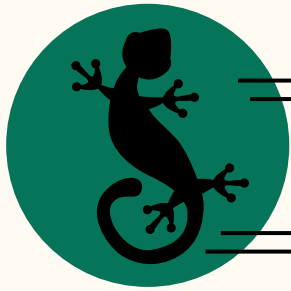
Mikey  
William  
Daniel

Perfect Attendance

Payton  
Lucas  
William  
Mikey  
Emily







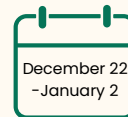
## What's Next at TCS...



Thanksgiving Break-  
No School



Shakespeare Play



Winter Break



## Follow TCS

@theconceptschool1972



Our school's Instagram is monitored  
to ensure a safe and positive space.  
We ask that students engage  
respectfully and appropriately with all  
content.