

# Warrior Express

A Publication of Trinity Christian School

## Principal's Perspective

Dear Friends,

*"Educating for Life" is a slogan we use to capture the essence of our mission. We desire to provide every student with relevant and challenging instruction that will prepare them for their future and what God has planned for them. I recently read a book entitled "You Haven't Taught Until They Have Learned" that expanded on this theme. Our focus this year is not on "What are we teaching?" but "What are the students learning?" A key to this strategy centers on assessing the students' understanding. Thus, in our instruction, we are intentionally placing the children and their needs at the center of the school.*

*In this first issue of the Warrior Express, we want to share this experience with you. You will hear from our staff as they share their perspectives on instructing and learning. Are our students learning what we are teaching? Are they making connections in their learning and life? Are we making a difference?*

*I pray you take the time to see how we are making a difference in your child's life!*

*Grateful for your continued interest,*

*P. Michael Staud*

*Administrative Principal*

## Bringing History to Life

### Veterans Day

A tradition that started at Alliance Christian School has become a key community event at Trinity. This past Veterans Day, instead of having the day off, the school teemed with activity focused on honoring the men and women who have sacrificed so much for our country. Following a buffet lunch served by the PSO, veterans and their guests were treated to a touching program presented by the student body. The program included preschoolers singing and enthusiastically waving flags, patriotic numbers performed by the Elementary and Secondary choirs and bands, and a video tribute to our servicemen and women compiled by the 11<sup>th</sup> grade Honors History class. Not only was the celebration a gift to the local Veterans, but it served as annual reminder to students that the statistics in their history books represent real people whose actions have shaped our lives today.



### Harriet Tubman: History Alive!

Ask any teacher and they will tell you that it is no small feat keeping the attention of your students for an entire hour. Throw in the fact that the students' grade levels range from 2<sup>nd</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> and the challenge grows exponentially. But, Illene Evans' portrayal of Harriet Tubman had approximately 250 TCS students riveted by the retelling of her exploits as a leader of the Underground Railroad. Her presentation, offered by the History Alive! program, included stories of Tubman's life interspersed with Evans singing spirituals

and inspirational songs. Evans also interacted with the students, encouraging them to ask questions and sing along at times. The performance was particularly intriguing to the third grade class, as each student must portray a historical figure as part of their curriculum. Thanks to the efforts of the History department and parent Tina Hammack, Trinity students

have a better understanding of the plight of African-American slaves in the 1800s and those that risked their lives to help them to freedom.

### West Virginia Trip

When you think of West Virginia history, what comes to mind? Glass factories and coal mines? Or perhaps the world-renowned Greenbrier Resort with its once secret bunker? Trinity eighth graders had the opportunity to experience these places and more on their weeklong tour of West Virginia. The trip included visits to the State Capitol, Moundsville Penitentiary, and the Green Bank Telescope. Former and present eighth graders would all agree that it is a memorable experience, bringing alive the rich culture and history offered by our state.



Colten Kovach and Rachel Hawkins perform a skit to "Letters from War" for Veterans Day

### Teacher Perspective

## Inez Hill: Secondary Bible and French

How do I know that learning takes place in my classroom? It's an interesting and mysterious dynamic.

I can list a number of individual lessons that have sown seeds of self-examination in my students; seeds planted by French grammar, history and bible lessons because the content I asked them to study challenged them beyond what they could understand at that moment. I assessed their momentary mastery (or at least progress) through oral presentations, written tests, dramatizations of literary texts, memory verse quizzes, etc. But ultimately, the mountaintop experiences of teaching over the past few years at Trinity, are found in a student's sense of fulfillment due to his/her long-term, tenacious dedication to the subject.

My learning success stories are embodied by Trinity alumni like Rachael Kelley, who after four full years of studying French language and culture, excitedly sent me a text from college this fall.

She found herself on a field trip at the Holocaust Museum in



Washington, D.C. and was asked to share her knowledge

of French by deciphering the memoirs of a French author on exhibit. As a teacher, I cannot put into words the blessing I received from her enthusiasm as she realized the level of proficiency in French she had attained over the years. She realized she had been equipped for a successful outcome and had, in a sense, "passed" the true-life application test.

I believe learning takes place all the time; in and out of the classroom. Many times, as teachers at a Christian school such as Trinity, we are afforded the privilege and opportunity to walk a ways with our students; to journey alongside them and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the most fruitful teachable moments. I LOVE the change I have seen this year in my ninth grade Bible students. At the onset of the year, I challenged them to "BE LIKE THE BEREANS" and never to take my word for what I contend the Scriptures to say. I challenged them to

become active "Participants in the Word" not just "Copiers of my Notes." As the semester has progressed, we have become true partners in learning as they make it their mission to look up verses to verify my teaching, even when I am not asking for it. It is a great thing to be on the Mount with God, and these experiences take me there.

So, in reflection of all this, what direction does my teaching take? What direction do my lessons take, my goals and objectives? What am I ultimately trying to achieve both personally and professionally? The apostle Paul says that his life will take no other direction than the emphasis on and exposition of the cross of Christ. God engineers circumstances to see what we will do. He does not further our personal or students' spiritual lives in spite of our circumstances, but IN them and BY them. Thank you for the honor of allowing me to walk a ways with your child.

### *Did you know...*

**The advanced level French and Spanish students recently attended Foreign Language Immersion Day at Fairmont State University.**

## TCS Honor Society

November 23rd marked the 10th Trinity Christian Honor Society induction. The Trinity chapter welcomed eleven new members, bringing the current membership to seventeen, comprised of Juniors and Seniors. To be eligible, Juniors must have a 4.00 grade point average, while Seniors must maintain at least an overall average of 3.5.

The Paul Michael Staud Chapter, named for our principal, was established in May of 2000 with 8 members. The first inductees chose the motto *in spiritu et veritate*, Latin for spirit and truth. The students received into the chapter acknowledge their desire to do everything as unto the Lord, as we are instructed by Colossians 3:17.

Current member, Kristie Liszka, was recently honored as a semi-finalist in the National Merit Scholarship Program. Only 202 of over 18,000 West Virginia seniors received this distinction.



### Teacher Perspective

## Linda McCoy: Impact of Instruction

The ultimate goal of a teacher is to promote educational excellence and to provide each student the necessary tools to succeed in this world. As a high school English teacher at Trinity Christian School, innovation and creativity are encouraged in my classroom using a variety of instructional methods. From analyzing literary works and the writing of Writers Workshop

Portfolio's to the study of sentence structure, I strive to encourage student learning and growth in the classroom...every day. While individual student learning is readily observed in my high school English classes, comprehensive class learning is not always as evident. A distinct "wow" moment occurred recently that actually brought tears of joy to my eyes. The English 9 Honors class had been reading and studying the George Orwell novel Animal Farm. After a lengthy discussion on the allegory depicting the Russian Revolution, we read a selection that would demonstrate the unity that had developed among the farm animals as they prepared for battle. In the story, the leader of the revolution, a wise pig named Old Major, exhorts the animals to action before his impending death using a song called "Beasts of England." The student that was reading this section of the text instinctively began reading as if he was Old Major. Clearing his throat, he began to sing the song to the tune La Cucaracha, as noted in the text. He quietly sang the first two lines... alone... with no other sound in the room. As he began to sing the next line, two girls joined in lending support. With each line, more and more voices joined in, and before the last verse, we were all singing enthusiastically...much like the characters in Animal Farm had done. The students were so captivated with emotion, that they continued singing the song through again without any coercion from me. As the song ended, there was a moment of complete silence, which led to an eruption of satisfied laughter. Unified learning had been demonstrated innately this day!

Moments like this are precious and encouraging to the students and teacher. It is exciting to realize when individual learning takes place, but it is doubly rewarding to all, when cooperative learning is achieved in such a powerful fashion!

### *Did you know...*

**Trinity's 4th and 5th graders competed in a Science Fair on December 15th. The winners will go on to compete at the upcoming ACSI Academic Day which will be held at Trinity this spring.**

#### **Teacher Perspective**

### **Patty Keller: Labs of Learning**

Proverbs 2

- 1 My son, if you accept my words  
and store up my commands within you,
- 2 turning your ear to wisdom  
and applying your heart to understanding—
- 3 indeed, if you call out for insight  
and cry aloud for understanding,
- 4 and if you look for it as for silver  
and search for it as for hidden treasure,
- 5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD  
and find the knowledge of God.
- 6 For the LORD gives wisdom;  
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Kindergarteners scramble to their lab tables - today's lesson: "Why do mittens keep us warm?" In small groups they place thermometers into mittens. Some are just on the table while others are on students' hands. I help the students read the temperatures and record the data on the board. The discussion

begins and the glow of understanding starts to fill the room. It is a simple lab, yet the impact is complex. In a few moments a child has had the rush of insight, and a passion for learning has been ignited.

Minutes later the same classroom is filled with 8th graders - today's lesson: "Newton's third law". I cover the needed background information in a lecture format then it is to the back of the room where teams of students are assembling balloon rockets for a competition. Fastest team to the ceiling wins. Teams choose their supplies from a common source, yet every rocket is unique. As one by one the rockets launch, teams beg for another chance to improve their design and willfully ignore the change of class bell.



Seniors from the Environmental Science class will not be denied their space. They are beginning the Watershed Unit and a four week hands-on soil and water quality lab. By the end of the term they will have fully evaluated the Harris Lake Watershed and submitted a college quality paper documenting their results. Real world science with real world applications.

Science labs at Trinity are designed to provide students with an accessible path to knowledge and wisdom at any age. It is taught with the joy of a hunt for hidden treasure: knowing that true understanding is a gift from God for all who seek it.

#### **Teacher Perspective**

### **Rose Ann Hagee: Preschool**

Teaching 4 year olds has to be one of the most rewarding jobs one can experience! Many ask me, "What can you teach a 4 year old?" My quick answer is "Anything you want to!" They are like little sponges soaking up information to store in the fertile garden of their minds.

When my present 4 year old class came to me this year, many did not know any letters or sounds. Some knew letter names but not their sound. Now, 15 weeks later the vast majority are reading three letter words! I am so proud of them!

I thank God for the privilege of teaching these little ones! I am watching them develop excellent class room behavior, demonstrate good manners, and best of all, show the Fruit of the Spirit to their classmates. Praise God for 4 year olds!

## AP Teachers Attend Training

During their junior and senior years, Trinity students have the opportunity to take four Advanced Placement courses. AP English Literature and Composition and AP English Language and Composition are taught by Susan Stinespring, while AP Calculus is taught by Michael Juliano and AP Chemistry by Debbie Dennis. In order to be eligible for college credit, the syllabus for each course must be submitted to and approved by the College Board.

This fall, the teachers attended training at the West Virginia Center for Professional Development. These training sessions, offered twice a year, are rich experiences. One of the benefits, according to Mr. Juliano, is the opportunity to draw from the resources of other teachers in the state. Equipping students with the proper tools to succeed on the exam was mentioned as a highlight for Mrs. Dennis. AP courses can have a great impact on students and their future college careers, but are perhaps just as rewarding to their teachers. Mrs. Stinespring said "it's a joy" to be able to challenge students at the collegiate level while they are still in high school.

### Fanning the Flame

NASA astronaut Paul Lockhart suggested a course of study for success in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics careers to a group of TCS 10th graders, who attended the Career in the Corridor event in Fairmont.

3rd graders hosted a Nutrition Fair on November 18th,

giving fellow elementary students, teachers, staff, and seniors a chance to sample their foods. As guests passed through the exhibit, each student presented the information on their assigned topic, encouraging everyone to be healthy physically and spiritually.

Beginning the second semester, 5th grade students can participate in an after-school Math Enrichment club, organized by Mrs. Evans.

Congratulations to the Middle School Choir! Directed by Mrs. Porter, the group was chosen as a finalist in WVAQ's "Get Glee with B.E." contest.

Look forward to an upcoming author visit and additional library books, thanks to a \$600 grant awarded to the PSO.

As any Student Government member can tell you, it is more blessed to give than to receive. They recently honored the Clay Battelle basketball fans by offering each of them free admission, along with a voucher for a food and drink item from the concession stand. Additionally, they shopped for gifts, wrapping and delivering them to 4 people identified by the Hoss Foundation, which organized the project.

A Technology grant of \$35,000 will be used to add and upgrade computers in the computer lab, according to John Barnett, Trinity's technology consultant. Thank you to our generous donor!



## TRINITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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*The NEW and IMPROVED TCS website is coming in January! A special thanks to Mr. Merrill for all his hard work.*

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