



# REFLECTIONS

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Cover: Ross, Tyler, Phil, Douglas, and Odin gather for photos prior to graduation.

Above: On the last day of school, seniors led their houses in the first House Olympics with several group activities including flag tag, volleyball, frisbee, and more.

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# A Note from the Head of School

Nancy Foy



As I write this, my heart is full of pride. The class of 2019 accomplished so much during their time at TNCS. Individually, they have each transformed in many ways and collectively, they have helped to transform our school. A theme in senior exit interviews this spring was seniors sharing that they were able to find or know themselves better due to attending TNCS. One senior said, “I grew outside myself; when I came to TNCS, I was closed like a turtle. I have burst out of my shell and I like myself because of this school.”

Another theme was confidence and pride in what they had accomplished. “I have gone from not being able to write to getting an A on an English research paper. TNCS has instilled the confidence I need to go forth into the world and be the difference I know I can be.”

As I mentioned, these students are also transforming our school. With their help, we

- launched our House System this past semester. Through the House System, students in grades 5-12 form relationships with students in the various grades. The seniors led the houses and the initiative;
- added AP Calculus for this class to better prepare those who will be going on to college majors in math, sciences, and engineering;
- a senior (Odin, right) led our first athletic team to a VISAA state championship competition; and,
- along with our juniors, they represented our school so well during our first week-long internship program this spring.

Just a few years ago, many of these students would have transferred out, thinking they would have a better shot at getting into good colleges from another school, but this is the group who stayed. Our hunch was they would be even more prepared, having additional time to add to their toolkit, and learn more about themselves as learners and young adults.

We were right – their college acceptance list is very impressive! Many are blazing the trail for future Sabers, being the first of our students to attend a specific university. Of these 21 graduates, 20 applied to college. They collectively earned 53 acceptances to 31 different colleges and universities. They not only were accepted into good schools, but many are receiving academic and leadership scholarships! One of our graduates did not apply to college at this time because she is already pursuing her passion of fashion and can be found on photo shoots for advertisements around the world.

We are beginning yet another program with this class. This fall we will be launching our College Support Program for alumni as they transition to college. TNCS faculty members will serve as coaches to any graduate who enrolls in this new opportunity.

It is always hard to say good-bye and close a chapter, but we do not plan on losing contact with these young adults. They are unique, talented, passionate individuals who made our school stronger and who are about to make the world a better place. •



## College Acceptances

Campbell University\*, Christopher Newport University\*, Coastal Carolina University, Ferrum College\*, George Mason University, Hampden-Sydney College\*, High Point University\*, James Madison University, Juniata College\*, Longwood University\*, Louisiana State University, Lynn University\*, Newberry College, North Carolina State University\*, Old Dominion University, Penn State University, Radford University, Randolph College\*, Randolph-Macon College\*\*\*\*, Roanoke College, Savannah College of Art and Design, Shenandoah University\*, Southern Methodist University\*, The University of Arizona, University of Lynchburg, University of Mary Washington\*, University of North Carolina Asheville, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University\*, West Virginia University\*, Xavier University \* attending

Above, Odin at the VISAA state championship, where he led our first team to participate in this competition.





# Innovation Week: Students Take Charge of Their Learning



When The New Community School adopted our new strategic plan in early 2019, one of the essential questions we asked was “How does TNCS design an enhanced, comprehensive experience that prepares our students for their future?” Exploration of this question has resulted in some remarkable initiatives this year that gave our students new opportunities to explore their interests, igniting sparks that could develop into future careers.

Just before spring break, The New Community School paused regular classes to hold our first ever Innovation Week. This new program gave students in grades 5-10 the opportunity to take charge of their own learning, engaging in projects that ignited their individual passions.

Students in grades 5 and 6 spent the first part of the week working together to imagine, design, build, and test Rube Goldberg devices, complicated machines designed to accomplish tasks. They then developed individual “passion projects” designed to make TNCS a better place. These ideas, ranging from a new library to new specialty electives to the health benefits of “campus cats”, were shared with school leadership in a formal presentation. “I was blown away by

the thoughtfulness that went in to each idea,” shared Dan Stackhouse, Director of Development. “It was clear that every student had taken the time to research and develop their passion project and how it might help us improve our school.”

Many of our 7th and 8th grade students divided into two groups. One group created Masked Revelations, a project that allowed students to explore masks from different cultures and ultimately make their own. These works reflected their inner person and their “outer mask” that they show to the world. The second group participated in a Hackathon, allowing students in small groups to “hack” an app that uses music and then create their own app while incorporating art and design and entrepreneurship into them. They then presented these apps to potential “investors” in a *Shark Tank* style panel.

Freshmen and Sophomores, along with some 7th and 8th graders, were also given the opportunity to design their own passion projects on a larger scale than their younger classmates. Individually, in pairs, or in groups, they worked on projects that developed their skills in a variety of ways. The

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Mitch, Class of 2023, explains his mask *Iron Feelings* (opposite page, top left):

“*Iron Feelings* is a representation of what we do and what happens in middle school. The metal gray outside shows that we hide behind a false personality that is tough, tougher, and stronger, made to take what middle school throws at us. The red dots scattered across *Iron Feelings*’ face is a representation of verbal and emotional injuries. You can see on the back of the mask the dots have deeper internal scars. The missing eye represents how we turn a blind eye to too many things. The missing mouth is to represent how we don’t speak what we really feel, we say what others want to hear. The rivets (black dots protruding from the face) are a sign of sealing, our feelings are trapped inside of us begging to be released, but we rarely do. The numbers 74 on the head are supposed to represent how we act tough and cool truly just seeking approval from our peers.”



While exploring architecture, Halle created a replica of Founders Hall, Charlie made a Victorian house, and Lincoln and Ryan crafted a modern space.



Innovation Week, continued from page 7

passion projects were wonderfully diverse and were grouped into pods:

- Film (including a TNCS documentary styled after *The Office*)
- Architecture and Design
- Art
- Books and Language
- Rocketry and Technology
- Cooking
- Music and Audio
- Woodshop
- Auto (where a team modified and built their own go-kart)

“Innovation week provided the opportunity for students to begin to develop or further develop the soft skills that we

desire in our young adults. The hidden gifts of this project were the unexpected talents that surfaced in a number of our students”, says Middle School science teacher Jennifer Morgan.

While our 5th-10th graders participated in Innovation Week, Juniors and Seniors were exploring possible careers in our newly expanded internship program. As our college and career counseling program continues to grow, internships like these provide our students with an invaluable opportunity to “try on” careers in a low-risk, high-reward setting, teaching our students important life skills including job-search strategies, networking, time management, and professional writing.

Sabers pursued internships in a wide variety of disciplines ranging from animal services to health care, from politics

to engineering. They worked beside firefighters, sports broadcasters, educators, investment bankers, entrepreneurs, lobbyists, and golf professionals, just to name a few. These local professionals provided our students with a well-rounded understanding of the daily life of a professional in that field.

“Innovation Week and our expanded internship program are perfect examples of how we are living our new strategic plan”, says Head of School, Nancy Foy. “The students took their own learning seriously, showing true leadership as they designed projects that furthered their interests and inspired their passions. The faculty came together and supported them in ways that kept the students in charge of their learning. I’m so proud of what the teachers and students accomplished!” •

Kate, Audrey, and Hannah composed original music in our new recording studio.

Wilson and Leona work on their VEX robot. Photo by Joni Hopkins, '22.

Sam demonstrates his Rube Goldberg machine, which is aimed to complete a simple task in a complicated way.



Emma, pictured with intern host Jena Northern at Spot on Therapy Group.





# Saber Updates

**P.J. Gorrell, G’12** has accepted a job with Wake Orthopaedics in Raleigh, North Carolina where he will be working primarily with the soccer club North Carolina FC.



**Caroline Blades, G’13** graduated from Marshall University this spring with a degree in Psychology.



**Svetlana Sachs, G’14**, became engaged this summer to Kelsie Decker. The couple reside in North Carolina where Lana is a police officer and Kelsie is a lab tech.



**Randy Harris, G’15** graduated from Lynchburg College this spring with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and a minor in Communications. Randy is finishing a short-term internship this summer with Swift Creek Theatre and has landed his first job working at Henrico Theatre.

**Eli Cramer, G’16**, currently attending the University of Lynchburg, completed the 2019 Korean Studies Summer Program at Hannan University in Daejeon, South Korea. He finished the language and culture class, followed by teaching English for a week.



**Brandon Pruitt, T’19** will be attending Stevenson University this fall to pursue his 5-year masters program in forensic science, after spending time with family in Ireland over the summer.



**Ashton Simmons, T’19** is currently working as a dancer and choreographer, traveling often to be on sets for films and auditions and teaching choreography.

**Do you have updates to share?**  
**Send them to [alumni@tncs.org](mailto:alumni@tncs.org)!**



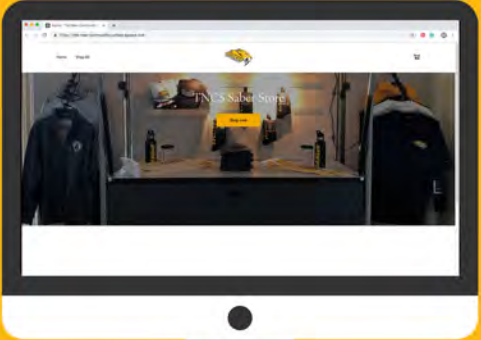
This year, each 8th grade science class picked a nearby municipality and spent the better part of the year developing an environmental action plan for that municipality. The goal of the plan is to prepare for and mitigate environmental issues that are happening or projected to happen during the remainder of the century. Their science exam included making a presentation to members of that municipality’s local government and nonprofit officials. We welcomed representatives from Petersburg, Virginia Beach, Tappahannock, and Colonial Beach. Above, Colonial Beach’s Vice Mayor, Robin Schick, left, and Town Councilwoman Vicki Roberson, right, heard a presentation from Maggie, Elliott, Mitch, Timmy, Jack, Grace, and Hannah.



In February, TNCS hosted 16 teams competing in two divisions of VEX Robotics at the first TNCS VEX Invitational. This was the last tournament before the State championships. With a 5th place ranking after qualifications, Error Code, our TNCS Robotics team, set an all-time team record, shattering their previous 11th place ranking from an earlier tournament.

Team Error Code: Tyler, Andrew, Benjamin, Cole, Fox, team volunteer Luke, Gabe, and Matthew.  
Photo by Reade Stallings, G’19.

## SABER STORE!



**the-new-community-school.square.site**

The Saber Store kiosk is open at select events throughout the school year - but you can also order online any time!

The Saber Store is where you can purchase t-shirts, sweatshirts, Nike golf shirts, hats, socks, drinkware, and more! We hope you find something you like to help you show off your Saber pride!





Drew, Harper, and Elizabeth help guide Emerson in assembling a puzzle during the "Blindfold Olympics" activity in the Middle School.

Jacob and Mrs. Taylor worked together to plant underwater grasses in the James River during a Careers in Science trip. The class started growing the grasses in February in order to help improve the water quality of the James River and provide habitat for marine animals.

Chloe and Maggie proudly complete their painted storm drain. Maggie recruited and led several Upper School classmates to help her complete a project to raise awareness about pollution in the James River. They painted a monarch butterfly on the storm drain by the Cottage with a reminder that pollutants that enter the drain end up in our river.



Porter, Luke, and Julian enjoy time together at Camp Friendship during the Middle School's Year-End Celebration Trip.

Jack shows off his catch while fishing at Bryan Park with the Middle School Fishing Club.

Jacob, Emery, Matthew, Chris, Ms. Latta, Benjamin, Mr. Foulger, and Charlie spent a Sunday afternoon in May hiking the Jones Run Trail in Shenandoah National Park.

We are very proud of the Class of 2023 as they finished their last year in Middle School. Their accomplishments were celebrated at an 8th Grade Moving Up Ceremony. The Upper School looks forward to welcoming them in the fall.







Kate, Lela, Alex, and Vee enjoy a stop at Krispy Kreme during a Drama Exploratory field trip to Virginia Repertory Theatre.

Morgan and Emma enjoyed a fun night of dinner, dancing, and fellowship with friends at the Junior-Senior Prom.

Emma, with her parents and Coach Savarese, is honored at Senior Night at one of the last soccer games of the season.

Harper presented her project titled "Flower Power" to classmates, teachers, and families at the Middle School Science Fair.

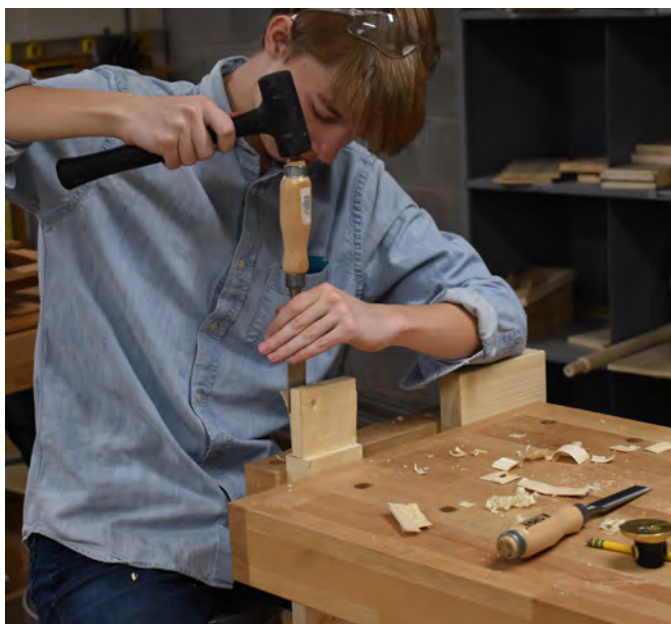


The Parents Association treated students to Kona Ice during lunch as thanks for collecting Box Tops for Education.

A game of flag tag begins during the first House Olympics on the last day of school.

During Innovation Week, Adam made a shave horse, a traditional work bench with a vice. Here, he makes a tenon for a mortise and tenon joint. Photo by Joni Hopkins, '22.

Abigail, Maddie, and Olivia enjoy canoeing during an Advanced PE outdoor exercise field trip with the James River Association's Lower James River Education Program.







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