



# REFLECTIONS

Special Edition: Founders Hall

Winter 2018 | Volume 35 | Issue 1





## First Event in Founders Hall

The annual Senior Dinner was the first event held in Greenwood Commons.

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Please direct questions or comments about this publication to [info@tncs.org](mailto:info@tncs.org) or 804.266.2494 x2229.



# Founders Hall Impact Felt Schoolwide

by Nancy Foy, Head of School



On our first day of school back in September, we officially cut the ribbon on Founders Hall. This was the school's first ever purpose-built academic building and the first new construction on campus since the Activities Center opened in 1996. It is difficult to overstate what a profound impact Founders Hall has had on our entire TNCS community. It has helped us grow, not just in size but in the scope and quality of our programs. I have been so happy to see how quickly our students embraced Founders Hall. As soon as they set foot in the door they made it their own.

New academic classrooms have given us the room we needed to expand our program. Teachers from every academic subject are teaching in Founders Hall and are enjoying these flexible learning spaces. New LF rooms are also a highlight and include write-on walls so that students can make use of every inch of learning space.

The Sharp Arts and Innovation Wing is helping our students embrace their unique gifts. Our new music and drama classroom has allowed Mr. Keevil to add a new Drama Skills class, while Mr. Humphrey and Mr. Roy have taken advantage of the new space to teach their Introduction to Guitar at both the Middle and Upper School levels. I look forward to more music offerings as our program grows. The dedicated Innovation Studio is the new home to Middle and Upper School Robotics and will welcome a sewing elective this semester. Our new art studios have helped expand our visual arts program as never before, housing both 2D and 3D classrooms. Our first Honors Art class is being taught by

Mrs. Webb and an Introduction to Watercolors class is taught by Mr. Lancaster.

The Julia Ann Greenwood Commons has quickly become the social hub of our school. It is exactly what we hoped it would be when it was designed: a gathering place for students to eat, learn, and socialize. It provides us with newly expanded room for our Parents Association meetings, Admissions Programs, faculty gatherings, Coffee with Nancy programs, and so much more. Outreach programs have a new home in the Commons as well. In October we welcomed Encorepreneur to the Commons to learn more about our school and for their monthly meeting of more than 200 community business leaders. Additionally, we hosted close to 100 people for our annual Dyslexia Simulation outreach program.

All of this is due to the extraordinary generosity of the investors who supported our *Building on Strengths* capital campaign. More than 360 investors from across the country helped us raise more than \$5.8 million to construct Founders Hall and to provide an endowed fund for its care. Those investors included students, parents, alumni and their families, current and former faculty, and friends alike. I am grateful to everyone who believed in the potential of our students and helped make this dream come true.

Founders Hall is everything that we hoped it would be and more. It offers our students new opportunities and gives our faculty new tools to help them grow. I cannot wait to see where it takes us in the future. •



## Student Investor Spotlight

Olivia Oley '18



Why did you choose to make a gift to *Building on Strengths*?

I made a gift to *Building on Strengths* as my own choice to help the school I love. TNCS has been helping my family since my father was a student and now my brother and me. I wanted to be able to use my own money and help the school and community that has helped my family the most.

What do you like best about Founders Hall?

My favorite part about Founders Hall has to be Greenwood Commons. The Commons is a great place for all students to gather together and although it may be loud, it is one of the most interesting places on campus. Before Founders Hall, there wasn't a place for all of the school to gather except Massey Hall, which isn't large enough to hold even all of the Upper School, but now the Commons is the place to be and is always lively with students.

How has TNCS helped you the most?

TNCS has been one of the best communities I've been a part of and it has helped me so much. The relationships that students develop with our teachers is my favorite part and is the reason that I get the grades I do. It's the reason that I fell in love with this school. I feel comfortable going to my teachers to ask questions for help on homework, tests, or really anything. That has made TNCS amazing for me and has helped me the most.



# Founders Hall Reflection

by Amanda Little Surgner, TNCS Board Member  
Daughter of founders George and Anne Little



In the early seventies, four families shared a similar experience. Their children were struggling in school, and no one in Richmond seemed to be able to help. Their motivation was pure, and their unconditional love for their children inspired a powerful effort. The dedication of Founders Hall is a testament to their vision and perseverance.

The journey from a grass roots effort in 1974 to today is remarkable. The New Community School currently holds a unique and prominent place in Richmond’s educational landscape. Its academic reputation is highly regarded, its enrollment is strong, and it successfully completed a \$5.8 million *Building on Strengths* campaign. Its campus has dedicated spaces for the visual arts, the performing arts, innovation, and athletics. Most importantly, its faculty is devoted to the academic and personal success of each child. I don’t think the founding families ever envisioned that their leap of faith would provide momentum for the school that thrives today.

While much has changed over time, Gita Morris says it best: “The core of who we are and what we are trying to do has not changed. And when I think back to my students those first few years, the kids are the same. They are bright. They are creative. They think outside of the box. They genuinely want to learn. And they genuinely need good teachers.” The founding families would be proud that the School they envisioned has remained true to its mission of supporting bright, dyslexic students.

The most vivid lesson for me as I reflect on the legacy of the founders is that really good things come from really hard things. What defines us the most is how we deal with life’s challenges. The Horgans, Littles, Schmidts, and Siffs didn’t give up and, just when they thought all of the academic doors were closed to their children, the door of The New Community School opened. They would all be so proud today. •



## DEAN BRAGONIER VISIT Inspires Students, Faculty, & Community Alike

On October 13th, the TNCS community was treated to an inspirational visit from Dean Bragonier, Founder and Executive Dyslexic of NoticeAbility. NoticeAbility is a nonprofit organization based in Cambridge, Massachusetts dedicated to helping students with dyslexia identify their unique strengths and build their self-esteem. Throughout the day, Mr. Bragonier shared his message that people with dyslexia and related learning differences have the gifts inside of them to do great things.

During the school day, Mr. Bragonier spoke with both the middle school and upper school. As a dyslexic himself, he said he knows that it takes hard work to succeed. But with hard work comes reward. “Eat your vegetables,” he told the students. “Eat your vegetables now, so you can enjoy dessert later.”

“Watching the students connect to his story was moving,” says Kim Harley, middle school math teacher. “His message was realistic and inspirational. I loved how he motivated the students by calling them to accept the charge to work through the challenges of school and maximize their strengths to succeed.”

At the end of the school day, he shared his message with the full faculty, and later that evening he was the special guest at the dedication celebration of Founders Hall. He thanked the faculty and guests for their passion and dedication and commended all for seeing the potential in TNCS students.

The New Community School has been working with Mr. Bragonier and NoticeAbility to develop new curricula to help our students embrace their strengths, including lessons this year on embracing their entrepreneurial spirit. Beginning next year, the school will also be working with NoticeAbility to continue to enhance our visual arts curricula.

“From the moment I stepped on campus, I could tell there was something special about The New Community School,” says Mr. Bragonier of his visit. “Every student I met looked me in the eyes and shook my hand with sincerity and authenticity. It was clear that the faculty and board are committed to both the student body and the learning differences movement at large. Remarkable things are happening at TNCS.” •

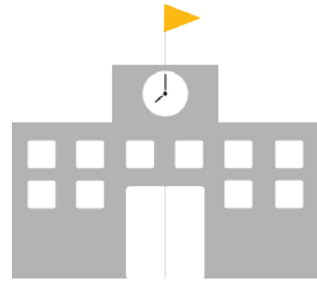


building on  
STRENGTHS  
by the  
**NUMBERS**  
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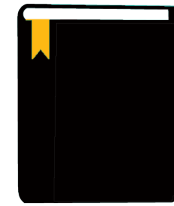
8 academic  
classrooms

15,7000  
square feet of  
learning space

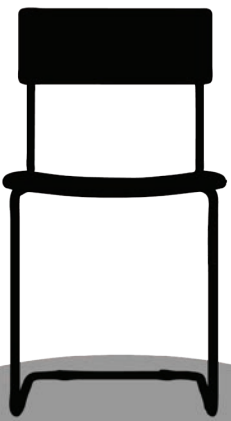


4

dedicated arts  
& innovation  
rooms



4 LF  
classrooms



26 height  
adjustable  
desks &  
258 chairs



\$5,834,616  
raised



368  
investors



Donations came  
from 20 states



# Building Dedication

## October 13, 2017



Gita Morris visits with Patti Fuller and Sally Richardson in the new Visual Arts Studio.

Manuel and Carol Loupassi with longtime TNCS Trustee George McVey.

Caroline and Marshall Morton enjoy touring Founders Hall with Kay and Richard Clary. Caroline and Richard serve on the school's Board of Trustees.

The portrait of Julia Ann Greenwood by Loryn Brazier, which now hangs in Greenwood Commons, was unveiled.

Images by Meg Eastman.

Bob and Sonja Kees test out the new furniture in one of the rooms in the new Language Fundamentals Suite.

TNCS President of the Board Michael Bland addressed guests. Michael also served as Chair of the Buildings and Grounds Committee during the building of Founders Hall.

Over 200 guests attended the dedication.

TNCS was honored to have several members of the founding families in attendance.



# 2017-18 Saber Scenes



Michael enjoys the ropes course at Triple C Camp during the 5th and 6th grade bonding trip.

Henry and Phil paint pottery in the new 3D Art Studio.

As is tradition at TNCS, the senior class serves as Field Day team captains. Teams consist of a mix of students from grades 5-12, giving the seniors a chance to lead younger students by example, demonstrating sportsmanship, teamwork, and the Saber spirit.





Sami, Carson, Charlie, Jacob, Fox, Gabe, Thomas, Halle, and Max enjoy go-karts and more at the 8th grade bonding trip to Windy Hill Sports Complex.

Mrs. Webb assists Kate during a 5th/6th grade project during exam week.

Student Advisory Board members Will and Vee help serve dessert at the holiday lunch.

Davis enjoys the art at Westminster Canterbury Richmond during one of the Middle School's visits.



Seniors Tara, Ella, Madison, Jordan, Berkeley, and Mackenzie at the annual Senior Leadership Beach Retreat.

Faculty took a break from meeting during their annual retreat to watch the solar eclipse.

During the fall season, TNCS took representatives from our largest XC team yet to the VISAA state XC meet at Woodberry Forest, including senior Wyatt, pictured with Coach Carmichael.

Timmy, Audrey, and Julie playing construction workers in the Middle School production *The Misadventures of Romeo and Juliet*.







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## Helping our students trust and try.

At The New Community School, **Trust and Try** is our motto.

- ...Trust you can learn.
- ...Trust you can succeed.
- ...Trust your teachers and fellow students.
- ...And try your hardest.

The Annual Fund ensures every student has the support they need to

*Trust and Try.*

Make your gift today at [tncs.org/support](http://tncs.org/support).



**ART FOR A CAUSE: ART SHOW & SALE**  
regional artists supporting students who learn differently

## MARCH 23-24, 2018

FRIDAY 7-9pm, \$45 | SATURDAY 10am-4pm, free

*at* The New Community School

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