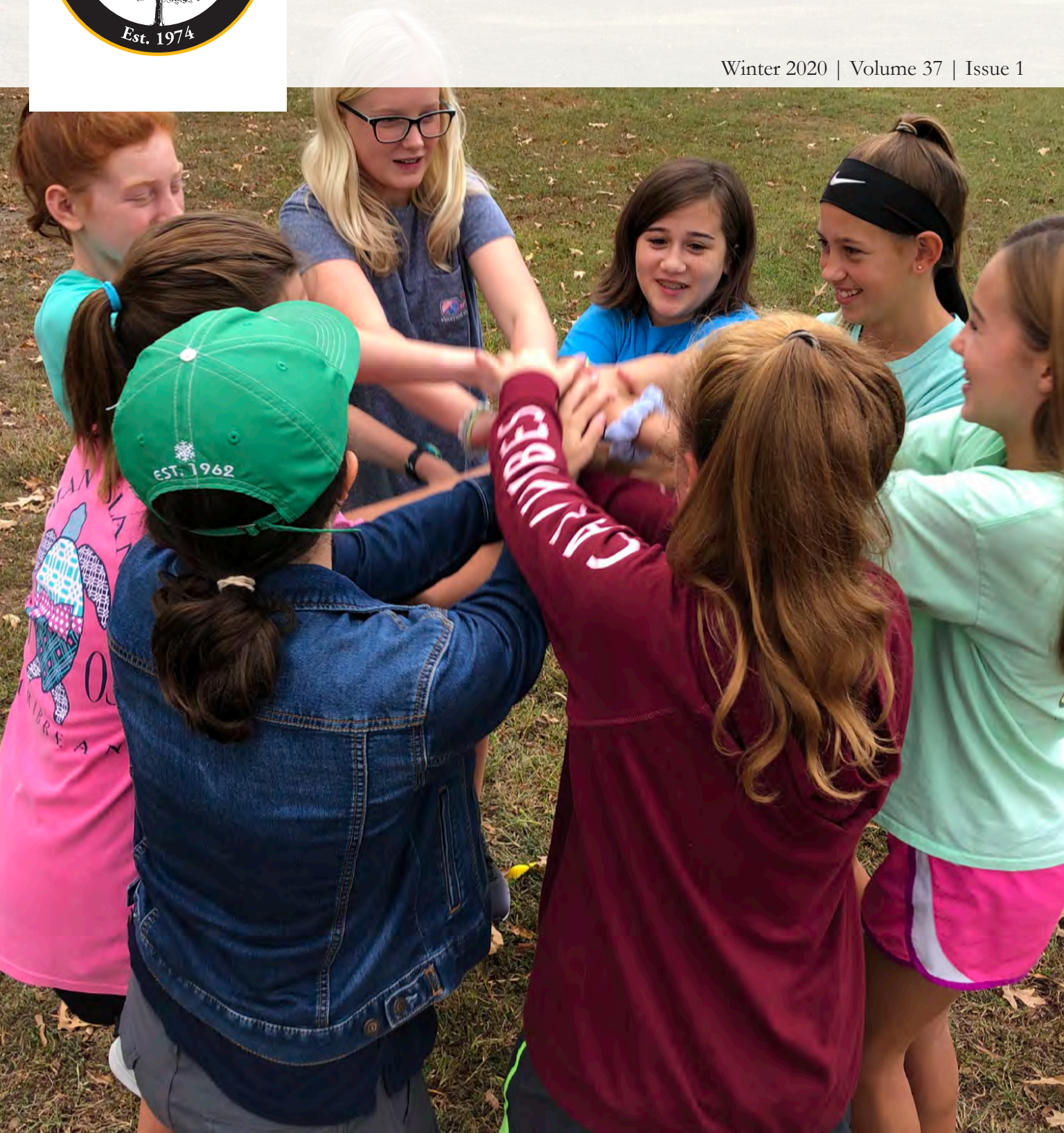




REFLECTIONS

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Saber Scenes



Cover: 7th grade students have fun while learning to work in teams at Challenge Discovery.

Above: Houses met several times during the first semester to get to know each other through bonding exercises. Here House Hawk is about to meet to begin developing their motto and logo.

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Please direct questions or comments about this publication to info@tncs.org or 804.266.2494 x2229.

A Note from the Head of School

Nancy Foy

As I reflect on the first semester of this academic year, I am excited about the progress we are making in many areas of our strategic plan. This time last year, we shared the recently approved plan with you. In this edition of Reflections, you will read two articles that speak to how we are implementing and living this strategic plan.

As part of our objective of delivering a comprehensive experience for our students, we added three key positions this year.

- In July, we welcomed Dr. Scott Bray as our Director of Teaching, Learning, and Research. He has led the charge with our department leadership and faculty, bringing our Portrait of a Graduate to life and aligning our curriculum to do so.
- Shannon Elkins was hired as our campus Wellness Coach. She has become an integral member of our community, working with individual students, classes, teams, and faculty.
- We also added Kevin DiFazio as our Social-Emotional Coach. He is leading our advisory system, creating a scaffold of curriculum, discussion topics, and resources around the pillars of social and emotional health. He also works with student groups and individual students as needed.

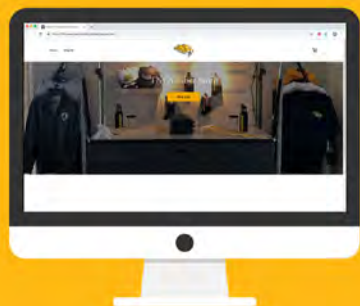
We knew these were areas that would strengthen our comprehensive program and culture, but their collective impact has been much more profound than imagined.

All of these additions are helping our students develop **GRIT**:

- **G**row – building academic, personal, and relational skills
- **R**espond – making connections and thinking creatively and critically
- **I**nquire – engaging and investigating for deeper understanding
- **T**hrive – developing healthy habits for a happy life

We have also hired a Coordinator of Special Programs, Margie Gray, who has given our summer program a thorough reflection and has rebranded our program as the **SABER SUMMER *spectacular***. We have many new course offerings this summer, including two options for a .5 semester of credit for upper school students. Our catalog has been posted on our website for your convenience.

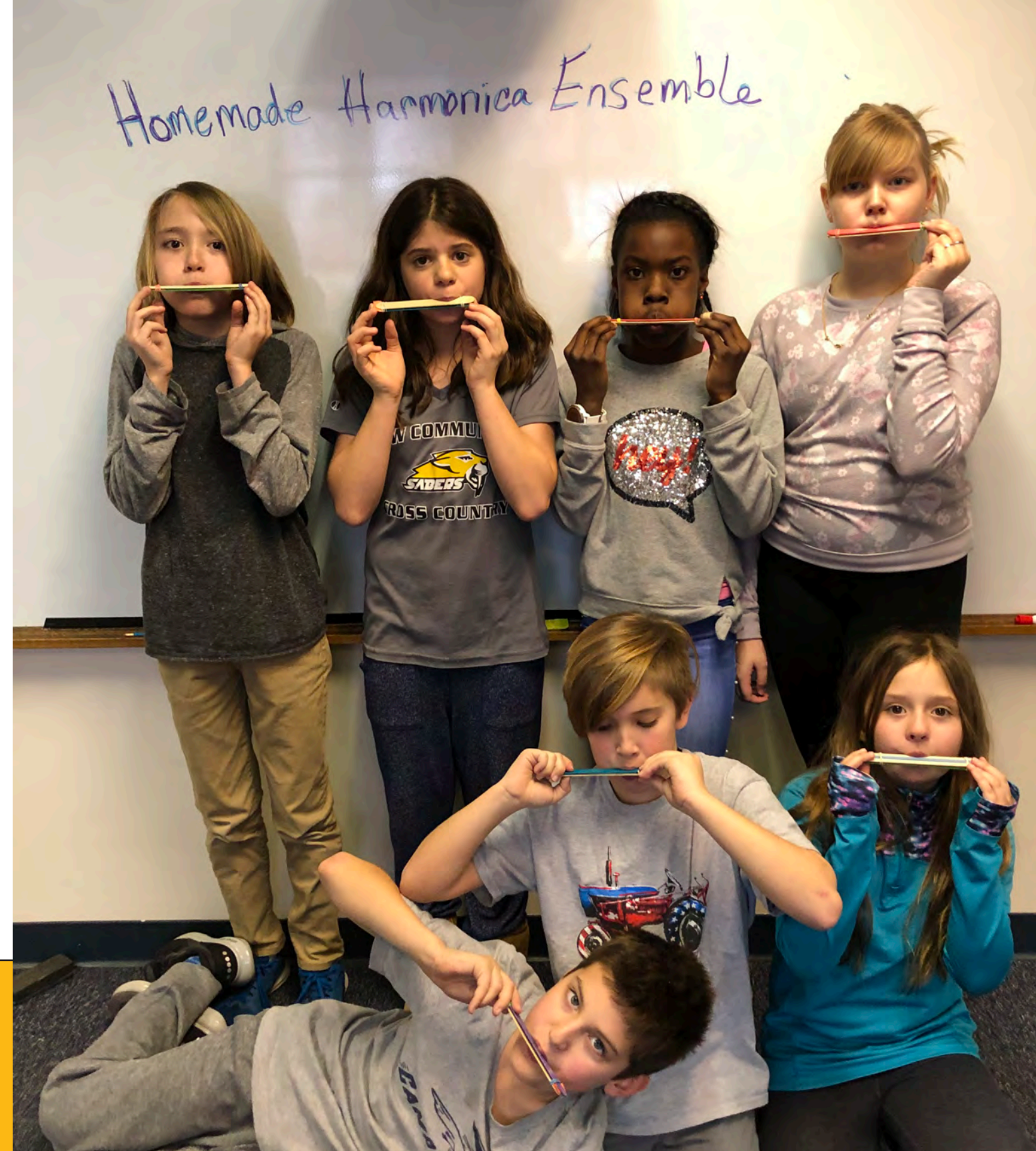
As always, we welcome your feedback and would love to show you our work in action if you would like to come to campus. •



SABER STORE!

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!

the-new-community-school.square.site



Our Integrated Arts Class is a 9-week class for 5th and 6th graders where they learn basic music terminology and theory. They also create instruments and music-inspired art. Above, Sage, Peyton, Chloe, CJ, Abram, Zachery, and Kate show off their first instrument creations.

Portrait of a 2024 Graduate

By Dr. Scott Bray, Director of Teaching, Learning, and Research

In 2024, The New Community School will celebrate its 50th year of empowering bright minds who think and learn differently. As we look toward that time, we have been working on a summary document that encapsulates the values, attributes, and characteristics we believe will best position a TNCS graduate for success. We are calling this a Portrait of a TNCS Graduate.

A new paradigm confronts the nation and America's students. During the 20th century, the economy of the United States transitioned from being primarily based on agriculture to industry and eventually, at the close of the century, to information. In his book, *The World is Flat*, Thomas Friedman calls the current era Globalization 3.0. Globalization 3.0 is characterized by the power of individuals living around the world to communicate, collaborate, and compete.

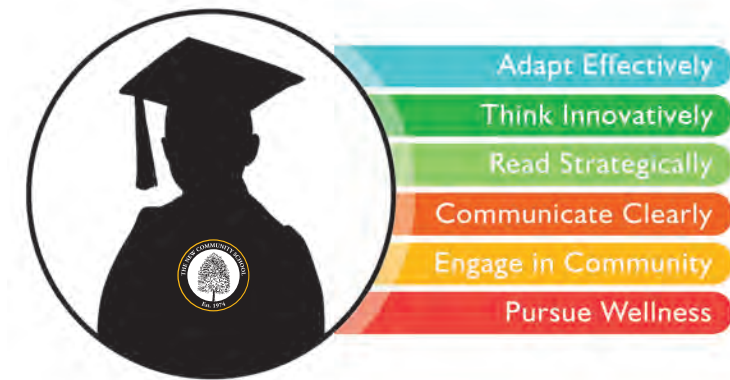
Recognizing the changing landscape, The New Community School engaged in a strategic planning process that spanned multiple years. The result was a robust strategic plan that provides a sense of direction for the school, informing both our day-to-day decision-making and our larger long-term initiatives.

This strategic plan, adopted in January 2019, seeks to address three essential questions, the first of which is "How does TNCS design an enhanced, comprehensive experience that prepares students for their future?" When answering the question of a comprehensive experience, we are looking at the best ways to build a program that meets our students' needs academically and personally, and builds a supportive, cohesive school culture.

One essential strategic driver aligned to the comprehensive experience was the development of a Portrait of a TNCS Graduate. This Portrait is meant to serve as a guide for both students and teachers in order to develop the skills necessary for success in a rapidly changing, increasingly diverse and interconnected world. Led by the Head of School and a team of teacher leaders, the faculty engaged in broad-ranging discussions around the development of a Portrait of a TNCS Graduate. During the summer of 2019, an initial

draft of the Portrait of a TNCS Graduate was created. The draft was shared with faculty for input prior to the start of the academic year and has become a guiding focus for their professional learning during the fall semester.

The Portrait of a TNCS Graduate has six main "attributes." We believe that a successful TNCS graduate will be able to:



Each attribute is defined by corresponding resources that further articulate the outcomes. These include 'I can' statements, detailing characteristics that students can work towards, as well as links to underpinning research to help educators and parents learn more. Additionally, the work of our faculty has helped create a Learner Progression for each attribute. The progression reflects a scaffolded approach and our commitment to meet each learner where they are in their academic journey. Taken together, the Attribute Pages and Learner Progressions help to facilitate individual student reflection and growth.

The vision set out in the Portrait of a Graduate is consistent with TNCS's core mission and values. Already there is evidence of the Portrait informing instructional practice and shaping our school culture. Moving forward, TNCS will continue to seek feedback from stakeholders while looking for additional opportunities to connect our curriculum and learning experiences in authentic ways - allowing students to question deeply and explore their passions. The world demands that students have a diverse skill set to succeed both inside and outside of the classroom.

Like our strategic plan, this Portrait is a living document that will grow and change with time as TNCS remains committed to making sure each of our students is prepared for future success. As we continue to invest time and resources in growing our comprehensive program and this Portrait, we welcome the feedback of our community. To explore an interactive version of the Portrait of a Graduate, please visit tncs.org/academics/gradportrait. You can also contact me at sbray@tncs.org or 804.266.2494, ext. 2263. •



The Junior Class enjoyed the annual college trip in the fall. They visited Longwood University, Lynchburg University, and Virginia Tech. The trip allows them to experience different types of schools, practice the touring process so they are more confident to do it on their own, and enjoy bonding time with their classmates and teachers.

Planning for the Next Phase of Growth

By John Chambliss, TNCS Board of Trustees Buildings and Grounds Chair

When we cut the ribbon on Founders Hall in 2017, it was a transformative moment in the history of The New Community School. It changed dramatically the number of students we could serve, the way we teach, and the way our school interacts as a community. Today, the Board of Trustees and school leadership are hard at work planning the next transformative step for our TNCS campus.

It is widely known that when schools support social and emotional well-being, students can focus more on schoolwork and can develop better communication skills. This can translate to improved academic outcomes and better health later in life*. Physically active students tend to have better grades, cognitive performance, and classroom behaviors^. This is particularly true of students with dyslexia and related learning differences such as ADD and ADHD.

In honor of our school mascot, we refer to this strength of body, mind, and spirit as being “Saber Strong.” Saber Strong is much more than how you perform on the athletic field, how many pounds you can lift, or how fast you can run.

“Being strong and healthy is much more than a series of measurements,” says Eric Gobble, TNCS Director of Athletics. “It’s about self-image: your mind, your body, your state of being. Wellness is about feeling good and feeling good about yourself. Wellness here is of even greater importance. When you are strong in mind, body, and spirit, you are more ready to learn; more ready to Trust & Try.”

A comprehensive wellness program is one of the key points of the school’s strategic plan. Bringing this program to life has included new course offerings, a focus on mindfulness, new staff positions including a Social-Emotional Coach and a Wellness Coach for our students and faculty, new clubs, such as yoga, and an overall increased focus on the wellness of every person in our community.

Our current Activities Center was completed in 1995 and has served us well for many years. It was built at a time when enrollment at TNCS was less than half of what it is today. As our student body has grown, so has our understanding of their needs. With a full roster of sports, including soccer, basketball, volleyball, golf, and cross country, more students are taking part

in Saber athletics than ever before. Participation in wellness electives is at an all-time high. Put quite simply, we have outgrown our space, both in the number of students we serve and in the programs we offer. Our health and wellness program cannot continue to grow to meet the needs of our students without additional space.

To accommodate the growth of our student body and wellness program, The New Community School is planning the creation of a new Wellness Center on our campus. Inside this center is a chance for every TNCS student to be Saber Strong. This new ~10,000 square foot facility will be built behind the existing Activities Center. Much more than just an addition to the building, it is an opportunity to completely rethink the way TNCS approaches wellness, demonstrating our commitment to the health of our students and faculty.

This new Wellness Center will include

- dedicated learning spaces for health and wellness courses;
- expanded and enhanced facilities for athletic teams;
- expanded space for physical education;
- dedicated teaching spaces for non-ball related athletics such as yoga, cardio fitness activities, and more;
- a new student clinic and an office for the Social-Emotional Coach;
- an outdoor physical education classroom;
- increased spectator seating for indoor athletics such as basketball and volleyball; and
- improved spectator seating for outdoor athletics such as boys and girls soccer.

The increased focus on strength of mind, body, and spirit is particularly important for the distinctive needs of our student population. Many of our students come here having been made to feel “different.” They have been in schools where their teachers and classmates have not understood the way they learn, and their self-esteem and self-worth may have suffered accordingly. By giving our students the same quality athletics and wellness facilities that they would have at any other school, we are signaling to them that their dyslexia does not put them at a disadvantage.

Poole and Poole Architecture, headed by TNCS parents Michael and Nea Poole, are serving as the lead architects on the project. They have worked closely with us to ensure that the design of the Wellness Center meets the needs of our specific population.

*Kaiser Permanente
^CDC

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Wellness activities like yoga, already a part of our growing curriculum, need a dedicated home to thrive.



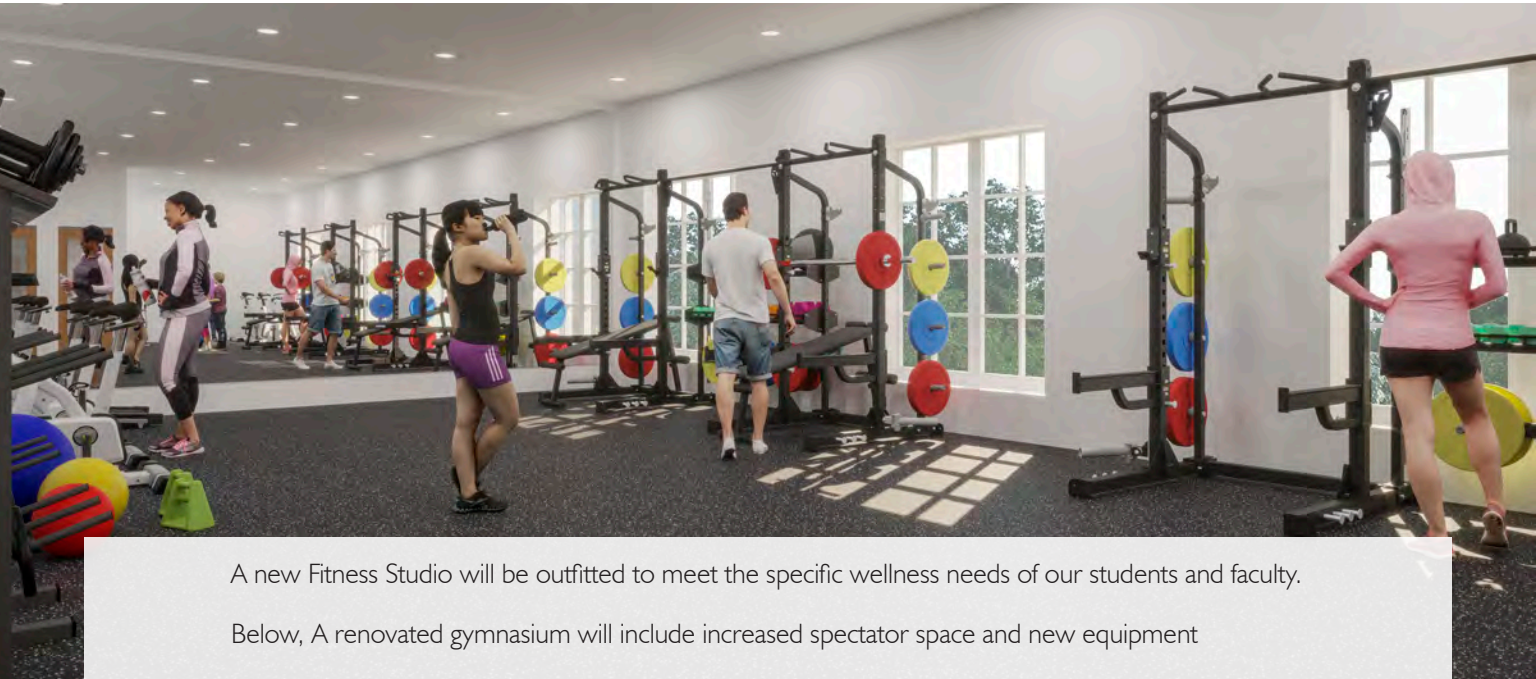
View of the proposed Wellness Center from the TNCS Soccer Field.

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KBS Construction has been selected as our contractor for the project. We have assembled a top-notch team as we put the finishing touches on the design of the building and look toward construction.

As we did with the construction of Founders Hall, the school has been hard at work raising the support needed to begin construction. Thanks to the generosity of early investors, we are making good progress. We will continue to reach out and work with additional donors. With their support, we hope to be able to announce a groundbreaking date soon.

If you have any questions or would like to find out how you might be involved, please contact Dan Stackhouse, Director of Development at dstackhouse@tncs.org or 804.264.3276. •



A new Fitness Studio will be outfitted to meet the specific wellness needs of our students and faculty.
Below, A renovated gymnasium will include increased spectator space and new equipment



SABER SUMMER

spectacular

helps students
explore, expand,
and experience.

By Margie Gray, Coordinator of Special Programs

Summertime at TNCS is a time for rest, relaxation, and reflection for many of our students, families, and faculty. More and more, though, students and families are choosing to use the summer to explore a new passion, discover a skill, or brush up on their academics through our summer program series we’re calling the **SABER SUMMER spectacular**.

This summer we are expanding our offerings to meet the needs of students, families, alumni, and the community. Featuring a broad new series of classes that make learning fun, the **SABER SUMMER spectacular** is open to all middle and upper school students, whether you attend TNCS or not. In fact, many current students got their first taste of TNCS through their summer program experience.

This summer we are excited to be able to offer Fishing, Music Technology, Exploring the James, and many more classes designed to explore new passions. Students can build on their academic success with courses such as IMPACT Math, Creative Writing, Language Fundamentals, Research Skills, SAT/ACT Preparation, and more. For those looking to learn a new skill, a variety of classes are planned including Coding, Cooking, Public Speaking, certifications from the American Red Cross in babysitting and adult and pediatric first aid, and much more.



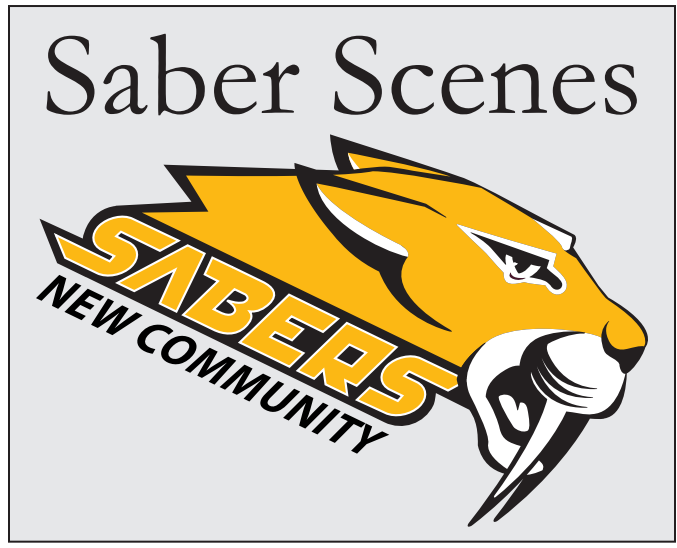
Additionally, summer is a great time for students and recent graduates to return to TNCS to help brush up their skills through one-on-one tutoring. Whether preparing for the next grade in school or for the transition to college, summer tutoring is an opportunity for students to improve and strengthen academic skills through instruction tailored to meet individual needs and delivered on a schedule that is flexible and convenient. Tutoring is offered in the areas of Language Fundamentals, Reading Comprehension, Written Expression, Math, Executive Functioning, and Study Skills.

Summer program classes begin June 15th and run through mid-July. Availability of summer programs is based on enrollment, so not all courses mentioned here may end up being taught.

For more information about the **SABER SUMMER spectacular**, visit tncs.org/academics/summer, call 804.266.2494 x2329 or email mgray@tncs.org. •



For the course catalog and to register, visit:
tncs.org/academics/summer



During the Biotech elective class, Ryan participates in a simulated forensic immunoassay to solve a fictitious case to determine whether a farmer is innocent or guilty of harming a neighbor's livestock. The results proved the farmer's innocence.

Paul, Benjamin, Olivia, Morgan, Sam, and Cole were among the alumni who came back for a visit in January. They sat down with school leadership to share their current college and career experiences and how TNCS helped prepare them. Four alumni then participated in a panel about college with the Upper School and finished their visit having lunch with the seniors.

Josh shows off his rock climbing skills at Triangle Rock Club. This is the second year TNCS has offered rock climbing as a winter sport. It is a popular option with 30 students across all 8 grades participating.



Ned is in the process of writing an original song for his Recording Studio elective. He is currently in the demo stage where he records a rough version of what the final song will be.

Seniors were tasked with researching, learning, and teaching a single study strategy prior to exam week. Then they all participated in a study strategy "speed date" where each student rotated after a 3-minute chat to exchange strategies so they all could be exposed to the the strategies their friends had learned. Here Emma shares her strategy with Peter.

Parents Association President Riki Altman-Yee presented Greta and Finn their prizes for selling the most raffle tickets. The PA's Fall Raffle raised over \$12,500 this year to support TNCS.

Elliott, Porter, Seven, Megan, and Maddie (not pictured) are the charter members of the school's first swim team. Elliott will represent TNCS in the state competition.





Davis, Madeline, Emerson, Sage, and Matthew were the winners of the Tacky Sweater contest during the annual Holiday Breakfast before winter break.

Upper School teachers gather for an all-day Progress Review where they discuss the progress each student is making. Having each student's teachers and coaches join together for this process is an invaluable part of the TNCS program.

Thomas represents his House in the Sorting Assembly to determine the animal that will represent their House. Thomas drew a panda from the sorting hat.



2nd annual *Grandparents and Special Friends* Day

After the success of Grandparents and Special Friends Day last year, the Grandparents Association decided to continue the tradition. The second annual day was again very well attended. It was a full program which included fellowship time with their grandchild, a Health and Wellness activity, student speakers and musicians, and a preview of the Middle School play.





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