

Dear Parents,

I would like to remind you of our upcoming “Coffee with Nancy” on **Thursday, October 26th at 8am in Greenwood Commons.**

Continuing our series on health and wellness, we will be hearing from Ted Lewis, Executive Director of Side by Side. With the increase in teenage mental health issues, we feel that it is important that our community learns as much as we can in order to best equip our students for a happy, productive adolescence and adulthood. We know students with learning challenges face a higher rate of anxiety and depression. We also know that the LGBTQ+ population is at greater risk for these same mental health issues. There are students who identify as LGBTQ+ or who are struggling with their identity in any school, including TNCS. Our goal is that we be supportive faculty, families, and friends to all of our students.

One of our main guiding principles at TNCS is providing a safe learning environment. As it was when the Gallagher Foundation visited with our students earlier this year, our goal is to help our students stay safe and equip them with tools necessary to be a healthy member of a diverse community. We hope to provide our students with strategies on how to be respectful of people’s differences of all kinds, how to avoid words and actions that can hurt, and how to be a friend to someone who may be struggling.

Ted Lewis came to speak to our faculty this past August about issues facing LGBTQ+ students. We found it to be a very informative and helpful program. With that in mind, I asked Side by Side to return this fall to speak at a “Coffee with Nancy”.

We have also invited them to speak to our students. We will have three different presentations on this day. Each will be developmentally appropriate for the age group.

- Our 5th/6th grade students will have an elementary school program about identity (I am an artist, athlete, dyslexic, etc.). There will also be an emphasis on bullying prevention, focusing on being inclusive and watching our words that may hurt others.
- Our 7th/8th grade students will be given tools for what to do if they need to talk with someone about LGBTQ+ issues and ways to be a good friend to others who may be living with this. The students will be given scenarios to discuss in small groups, followed by whole group discussion and strategy sharing.
- Our 9th – 12th grade students will experience a program that centers on the importance of maintaining healthy relationships, including friendships, relationships with trusted adults, and dating relationships. It will also include information on the complexities faced by those who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community.

I encourage you to come to our “Coffee with Nancy” to hear Ted Lewis and to ask any questions you may have. We will be videotaping this parent presentation for those of you whose schedules do not permit you to attend. Like the assessment presentation at our last Coffee with Nancy, this presentation will be posted to the parent tab on our TNCS website.

In order to allow time for parents to view the video and discuss this important topic with their students, we are postponing our student programming until December 4th.

Please contact me if you wish to have your child opt out of the student program.

As always, we appreciate your partnership and support.

Fondly,  
Nancy