Dear Friends and Families of Center School,

One of my favorite movies growing up was Disney’s *Pinocchio*, and my favorite character was Jiminy Cricket. I loved the promise that Jiminy showed in guiding Pinocchio to achieve his dream of becoming a real boy. As a child watching the movie I learned that when we wish upon a star, our dreams can come true. What I didn’t understand back then, however, was that Jiminy worked extremely hard to make sure that Pinocchio achieved his dream; wishing upon a star was not enough. As Center School moves into its 31st year, many dreams have come true, but it wasn’t because our community wished upon a star. It was because they have demonstrated hard work and dedication, and have fully embraced our mission.

Our students arrive at Center School with a dream to reach their potential, and each day students open themselves up to learning and sometimes failure which can be difficult and frustrating. It takes effort, grit, and courage to face one’s challenges and leverage one’s strengths. Our students use learned strategies and tools to improve their reading skills, hone their math skills, and identify their own needs to grow as learners and citizens of our community. Their parents are instrumental in ensuring the success of their child, and of Center School, with their support and guidance. In the pages of this newsletter, we feature one of our students and his mother on the “Student Spotlight” page to show how they both have embraced Center School’s mission and have achieved great accomplishments.

The success of our students is also made possible because of our incredibly talented and dedicated teachers and their dream of continuing to grow Center School as a school of excellence. Their planning reflects a true understanding of pedagogy and of the academic and social-emotional needs of the students under their care. The completion of a MakerSpace, made possible by Center School math and STEM teachers, enhances all curricular areas with high-tech and low-tech learning and exploration materials. As further evidence of their dedication to the success of our school and its students, every reading teacher is Wilson or Orton-Gillingham certified, some dual certified, and many of our teachers have been here for over five years. One of our teachers has just celebrated her 30th year of teaching with Center School, and her story and perspective of our school’s journey are highlighted in the following pages.

The commitment and efforts of Center School’s staff, administration, and board of trustees should be recognized as well because with their insight Center School is continuing to move in a positive direction. As you read through our newsletter, you’ll learn about new and established community partnerships, stories of personal and professional growth, and the impact that Center School’s mission has had on so many people. These incredible achievements are all possible because the entire Center School community has worked extraordinarily hard to make their dreams a reality. I invite you to channel your inner Jiminy and wish upon a star, but remember that it is hard work and dedication that make dreams come true.

Sincerely,
Mindy Wawrzyniak
Head of School

Center School’s mission is to provide children who learn differently with a personalized education to realize their potential and reshape the way they view themselves and their future.
Forging Your Path: Your Road to Progress and Possibilities

Forging Your Path: Your Road to Progress and Possibilities is Center School’s theme this year, and it supports our Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum. Our theme is the vehicle through which we teach concepts and strategies to help our students become their best selves. Forging paths and eventually roads to progress are not easy tasks! The roads will be bumpy and curved and many times involve a hill or two. Students will come to forked roads often, and one of our goals is to empower them to make the best choice. If they find themselves going down the wrong road, they learn that they have options to get back on track. We do not expect our students to do this alone as they have a whole roadside assistance crew for support. From teachers, coaches, counselors, and families they are encouraged, when needed, to advocate for assistance. As our students build roads to new learning, they will be empowered to be gritty and persevere when their road is bumpy.

According to CASEL, SEL is “a process of understanding emotions, managing emotions successfully, demonstrating empathy toward others, creating and sustaining positive relationships, and acting responsibly in all settings”. Our Motto: We are Respectful, We are Responsible, We are Ready to Learn is the foundation from which our theme, communication, and behavior guidelines are built. The SEL curriculum is designed to support students’ challenges, leverage their strengths, and guide students in developing the skills necessary to manage their learning, themselves, and their relationships. Integrating SEL into the classroom is an integral piece of our school program. Its focus on Mindfulness, Brain Plasticity, Demystification and a Growth Mindset allows students to maximize their learning so they can take full advantage of our academic program.

Center School’s educators integrate the SEL curriculum into their everyday teaching. Teachers have adopted Responsive Classroom, an evidenced based approach to creating a positive learning environment and community in which students can attain academic success. Students have leadership opportunities as they strive to be their best selves. Through mentorship and ambassador programs, students are explicitly taught the importance of greeting adults visiting our school with a firm handshake and eye contact. Our middle school and ninth grade students are encouraged to become role models for our lower school students and also A Step Up Academy visitors. Developmental guidance lessons are taught school-wide and provide an effective educational approach which focuses on interpersonal skills, metacognition, emotions, character education, grit, a growth mindset, and executive functions as well as self-advocacy. Small groups provide opportunities for students to come together in an intimate setting to practice social skills and experience positive interactions. Typically led by the counselor, they include lunch bunches and individual or small group meetings, and may be teacher, parent, or student initiated. An important component of our SEL curriculum is supporting students in understanding their need to regulate their minds and bodies and expand their learning. The Student Break Room (SBR) is a teacher-supervised room where students can visit for short periods of time when they require a mind or body break. The goal of the SBR is to help students regain focus and attention and return to the classroom as quickly as possible to receive instruction and maximize learning. The room is designed so that it can support the evolving needs of the students.

As we move into the 2019-2020 school year, we will continue to empower our students to forge their paths to learning, guiding them to understand that when challenges and obstacles block their road to progress they have the skills, strategies, and tools to persevere to be their best selves.

Linda Jarrett-Armiger
Guidance Counselor
Celebrating 30 Years of Teaching:
Derri Benbow

Recently, we sat down with Derri Benbow, veteran Center School teacher, to understand her journey with Center School since 1989.

What influenced you to become a teacher?
I actually wanted to be a guidance counselor because I wanted to help people. When I signed up for courses at college, they recommended I start in education. When it came to choosing a major, I chose English Education because I love to read so much. (I don’t know if that was a very good reason but that was my thinking!) After college there were zero English teaching jobs, so I took a job as an aide with the Title I program. It was there that I worked with a reading specialist named Betsy, working in the parochial schools with students who had difficulty reading. I fell in love with helping kids learn to read, quickly got my Master’s in Reading and have been helping students ever since. It perfectly blends my love of reading and my passion for helping others. My favorite part of teaching is when students discover the joy of reading and more importantly, the joy of lifelong learning.

What do you like most about teaching at Center School?
So many things...first, the small classes so if someone doesn’t understand something, I can catch it and students feel more comfortable to learn and advocate for themselves. Second, I always say I get to teach students, not a curriculum. If something comes up, we can take time to learn it, without worrying about completing a certain amount of material by the end of the year. Third, I’ve always loved the camaraderie among the faculty and staff, learning from each other and helping each other. And, of course, the best part is the students! Each one of them has something special and figuring out how to unlock learning for them, and then seeing that light bulb go off is so special!

Describe a successful lesson with a student?
I love it when students come in and say, “I hate to read” or “I can’t write.” I always challenge them. For example, when students can use their Wilson or OG skills to figure out a word, they realize they can read it! Or when they predict the ending of a book and can say that they liked that book. Or in the beginning of the year, I tell students they are going to learn to write an essay, and they tell me they can’t. I explain the writing assignment, and we brainstorm together using a graphic organizer. I show them how to use their notes to write the essay and all of a sudden, they’ve written an essay! I often hear, “I never knew I could do that!” No matter what the lesson is, scaffolding it until students understand the process and can achieve each step themselves is so important. Then they have that “aha!” moment. That’s a successful lesson!

What are some of the most important things you learned over the year?
We are a team of students, parents, teachers, counselors and staff. We work together to help students learn how to learn. It’s so important to break a lesson down and teach it one step at a time so students can build on what they already know. And I’ve learned that I still have a lot to learn! Each student is so different that I’m always looking for new ways to teach them.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2019-20

James Bickley, Chairman  
Edward Hayes, Vice Chairman  
Timothy Hilbert, Treasurer  
Susan Floyd, Co-Founder  
Carol White, Secretary  
Mindy Wawrzyniak, Head of School  

Stephen FitzPatrick, Trustee  
Terry Quinn, Trustee  
Morris Zimmerman, Trustee  
Marylee Mundell, Trustee  
Wylie Thomas, Trustee
Megan Stalker,  
*Director of Institutional Advancement*  
Megan Stalker, formerly our Director of Admissions, has moved up to take on the new role of Center School’s Director of Institutional Advancement, bringing all of our external engagement missions – admissions, marketing, alumni relations and development – into one department. In her time leading Admissions, Megan has spearheaded an organized and focused department which has resulted in several years of increasing growth and stability. Her previous background and experience in development and marketing has allowed her at the same time to contribute significantly to the success of our outreach, alumni engagement, fundraising and stewardship. In recognition of her achievements in all of these areas, as well as our belief in her abilities to continue to move Center School into the future, we are thrilled that she accepted our offer to take on this newly expanded role and to play an integral part in taking our admissions, marketing, development and engagement work to the next level.

Tiffany Getz,  
*Admissions Associate*  
Tiffany Getz, formerly our Administrative Assistant, has moved into the newly developed role of Admissions Associate, supporting Megan Stalker. For the past two and a half years, Tiffany has approached her work with enthusiasm, dedication, and motivation. She also brings with her personal experiences that prepare her incredibly well for this next step. Tiffany’s daughter attended Center School for four years, and her son is a current student. These qualities and experiences have led her to play a larger role in admissions, bringing relatability to families who are seeking out an appropriate setting to better support their children and help them succeed. Tiffany’s skill in responding to families, both prospective and current, and her love of and passion for our school makes her the perfect choice for the Admissions Associate role.

Catherine Clauhs,  
*Development Associate*  
Further supporting the Director of Institutional Advancement is Catherine Clauhs. As the Development Associate, Catherine will be promoting Center School through marketing, fundraising and community building and will be supporting the coordination, planning, and implementation of events for fundraising and community building. Catherine Clauhs has held several leadership positions in volunteer organizations, is an integral part of Abington Moms Club, has coordinated events and speakers, has organized local fundraisers and most importantly has a personal connection to Center School’s mission. We are pleased to welcome Catherine to the Center School community.

Tyanna Davis,  
*Reading and Support Teacher*  
Tyanna Davis has joined Center School as the Reading Teacher and Support Staff in Lower School and Middle School. Tyanna’s experience includes classroom assistant, literacy support teacher, and a court-appointed special advocate. She combines data-driven lessons that target skills necessary for successful learning for students. Tyanna will be teaching reading in the fifth grade and sixth grade, and be supporting both the fifth grade and a variety of middle school classes. We welcome Tyanna warmly to our community.

Darren Fenice,  
*Middle School Science Teacher*  
Darren Fenice has joined Center School as the new middle school science and STEM teacher. Darren has an undergraduate degree in environmental science and a graduate degree in science education with a STEM endorsement from Arcadia University. His experiences as a horticulturist and entomologist bring a new dimension to his teaching. He is thrilled to be a part of the Center School team, and we are happy to welcome Darren to the Center School community.

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHT
Omaree Porter

Student Omaree Porter and his mother, Agnes Butler, embody the Center School mission, and we are happy to highlight their story. Omaree enrolled in third grade at Center School in 2016 and is a current sixth grader.

Omaree Porter

*Why did you come to Center School?*
I came to Center School because I had a problem with being able to write and read. At my old school, I couldn’t catch up with the reading and writing program. I had to have someone dictate to me.

*What are some of the things that you have learned that have helped you the most while at Center School?*
Some things that helped me the most were learning how to tap the words out and how to make my work neater. I’ve learned the strategies of being able to take a walk if I’m frustrated with work, or if I’m having a hard time to go take a breath. I learned how to use context clues so if there is a word that I don’t know then I use the context of what I’m reading so I know what that word means. I know that I can ask the teacher or look around for keywords that can be helpful when I’m reading. I’ll reread and see if I can understand, and if I still don’t I will ask for help.

*What would you tell a new student coming to Center School?*
I would tell them that you are going to love it here. The teachers are always standing by and ready to help.

Agnes Butler, parent

*Tell a little bit about your journey to Center School.*
My journey started from Germantown Friends when I found out that my child, Omaree, was having difficulties with reading and writing. I was in denial and when they told me that he needed special help, they recommended Center School. The teachers that he had at Germantown Friends came to look at Center School, and they made me feel that this would be the best place for Omaree.

*What would you tell a prospective parent?*
If you find out that your child is having difficulties, I would recommend Center School because they find out where your child is having difficulties. The teachers, faculty, and the Head of School work closely with you. They support you in decisions that you have to make for your kid, and they are honest.

*What do you like most about Center School?*
It’s a community.

*What changes have you seen in Omaree?*
I have seen Omaree’s confidence grow. He advocates for himself, and he wants to make sure that he gets 100’s or A’s. He wants to make sure that he is studying to get 100% on his exams. He is comfortable here.

*What are your hopes and dreams for Omaree after Center School?*
My hopes and dreams are that he gets into a good public school or private school that will continue to meet his needs like Center School does, and that he’ll be able to take what he’s learned and use it.

*Is there anything else you want to share?*
I want to say that the elementary school teachers Ms. McGeady, Mrs. Perreault, Mrs. Cunnane, and Mrs. Lux really showed the kids how they can be successful in doing their assignments and work. They make the students feel proud by building their confidence. They were the best elementary school teachers that you can ask for.

Is there anything else you want to share?
People who go to Center School are going to be very happy because it’s really fun and everyone here is nice. You’re going to learn a lot from the teachers. You’re going to learn a lot from the lessons they have planned and you will learn a lot about them, and it’s going to be a really fun time.
Community Outreach

A Step Up Academy
Center School is pleased to announce a partnership with A Step Up Academy school in Jenkintown. A Step Up Academy provides additional supports, such as Occupational Therapy and enhanced speech and language therapy, that Center School may be able to access on behalf of our students. Center School and A Step Up Academy are unique communities with diverse learners, and we are both looking for supports and ways for our learners to be successful, which can include transitions. We want to share our proven educational program with more students so they can experience the success that so many of our students have had.

Reading Buddies
We’re in our third year of participating in the Reading Buddies program with residents of Rydal Park Retirement Community. Every other week residents from the senior living community come visit Center School students who practice their reading skills with their Rydal Park partners.

Rotary Club of Jenkintown
Students graciously volunteer their time at the Rotary’s Annual Pancake Breakfast to the neighboring community. Students are enthusiastic about their assigned tasks, whether setting out place settings at the tables, making food in the kitchen, or cleaning up the event.

Aid for Friends
Each year, our students assemble breakfast bags for Aid of Friends. The organization provides food and friendship for homebound Philadelphia area residents. Students include handmade cards in each package intended to warm its recipient’s heart.

Toys for Tots
Center School families and faculty are proud to support the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program each holiday season. We’ll have a drop-off bin in the school lobby to collect donations. Please feel free to drop yours off and pop in the school to see some familiar faces.

Nor’Wester Therapy Dogs
Each week, special canine guests from Nor’Wester Therapy Dogs visit our lower school classrooms. The program provides registered therapy dog teams who work to support and build student motivation, enhance focus, and increase task persistence. The presence of the dog teams also offer emotional support and a stress free learning environment to improve academic achievement, student self-esteem and confidence.

Integrate for Good
This year we’ve partnered with Integrate for Good as part of our “Caring Community” service learning project. This group takes plastic bags and, on a loom, weaves them into sleeping mats for homeless people. Our students will also be weaving mats and supporting the work that Integrate for Good does.

Kids Help Fund
Center School is one of four schools selected to participate in the Kids Help Fund. This fund was created more than 10 years ago by a donor who wanted to encourage our students to become educated and interested in philanthropy.
Giving Opportunities

Every dollar benefits Center School programs that support children who learn differently. There are many ways to donate to Center School, and donations are tax deductible. We are grateful and thankful for your support.

Annual Fund

All gifts contribute to the ongoing success of Center School. The Annual Fund provides immediate and flexible funding to support important initiatives such as enhancing academic programs, technology, and leadership programs. Tuition funds alone do not provide the funds necessary to cover the costs associated with these educational opportunities.

Scholarship Fund

The Scholarship Fund provides opportunities to students whose financial situation may otherwise prevent them from attending our school. This fund is supported through the generosity of individual donors, contributions through EITC and OSTC tax credit programs, and designated foundation grant funds.

Leave a Legacy

From bequests to annuity plans, talk to us about the may ways to ensure the long-term stability of Center School while you receive tax credits and other benefits through endowment and planned giving.

Matching Gifts

Companies offer gift programs to match your contribution. This is a great way to increase the value of your gift.

United Way Donations

Our United Way Donor Option Number is 009850.

Gifts of Appreciated Securities

Center School gratefully accepts gifts of appreciated securities. Please consult your financial advisor, attorney, or accountant for assistance with your philanthropic plans. To transfer eligible securities, please give the following account information to your broker:

- Broker: TDAmeritrade Clearing Inc.
- DTC Participant ID#: 0188
- Client name: Center School
- Account #: 427-601338
- Please include donor’s name in memo section and notify Lsteiert@centerschoolpa.org of the transfer.

Pennsylvania Tax Credit for Corporate Donors

Pennsylvania’s Education Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC) and the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTC) enable businesses to redirect PA corporate taxes to an approved scholarship organization, such as Center School. Scholarship funds are directed to eligible families based on income (EITC) as well as those residing within the boundaries of low-achieving schools (OSTC). For more information, visit www.newPA.com. If you know of a business willing to participate, please contact Megan Stalker at 215-657-2200. New EITC applications are due July 1, 2020. OSTC applications can be submitted now.

For more information on giving opportunities or donor options, call 215-657-2200 or visit www.centerschoolpa.org
The following is a list of individual, business and organizational donors from August 1, 2018 to July 31, 2019.

**ANNUAL FUND**

**FRIENDS CIRCLE $1-$100**
- Derri Benbow
- Michael Bookman
- Colleen Chapman
- Alex & Paula Chernoff
- Alice Childs
- Jacqueline Childs
- Rita Cloud
- Julie Coopersmith
- Thomas Copeland
- Barbara Cunnane
- Sherri Cunningham
- Christine Dacier & Sue Peirce
- Mercedes Davis
- Gregory & Marie Davis
- Kelly Detweiler
- Marge Donahue
- Mary Duffy
- George Dugan
- Patricia Fischer
- William Fitzgerald
- Gayle Fors
- David & Nancy Gansky
- Richard & Ann Gebert
- Edward Henry
- Zoa Hill
- Ralph Hirshorn
- Quince & Sharon Hunt
- Pete & Kathleen Jarema
- Linda Jarrett-Armiger
- Lee & Lori Kaplan
- Rochelle Krevitz
- Brian & Alicia Mahoney
- Linda Martin
- Michael McAnally
- Diana McGeady
- Carole McManus
- Patricia McNamara
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- Budd Mildenberg
- Mary Neidt
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- Christine O’Reilly
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- Sondra Rayfield
- Steve & Marcella Ridenour
- Terry Shaner-Wade
- Stanley Todd
- Christine Trageser
- John Walsh
- Ronald & Kathleen Watkins
- Mark & Lina Weidner
- Elaine Weldon
- Jeremiah & Dana White
- Merle Wolf
- Elizabeth Young
- Kiah Young and Family

**TEACHERS CIRCLE $101 - $250**
- Agnes Butler
- Stephen & Suzanne Cassidy
- Mark Comerota
- John & Jennifer DeLuca
- Maxine Field
- Lou Gilmore
- Norman and Lesley Greenspan
- Deborah Kowalchuk
- Wilfred & Karen Kushto
- John Lagnese
- Cynthia LaLone
- John Brady & Susan Lowry
- John & Marjorie Mantas
- Karen Neyer
- Jonathon Roth
- Kent & Diana Seinfeld
- Megan Stalker
- Lisa Steiert

**READERS CIRCLE $251-$500**
- Rich & Jeannie Hood
- Robert & Gail MacFarland
- David & Patricia Robison
- Caitlin Straub

**PARTNERS CIRCLE $501-$1,000**
- Deborah Albert
- Mark Benoliel
- Lisa Delaney
- Stephen & Darlene Fitzpatrick
- Megan Floyd
- Robert & Tiffany Getz
- Tom & Karen Getzen
- Chris & Crystal Gore
- Mark & Colleen Schlegel

**LEADERS CIRCLE $1,001-$2,499**
- Dan and Mindy Wawrzyniak

**FOUNDERS CIRCLE $2,500+**
- Joseph Bavaria, MD & Kimberly Bavaria
- James & Virginia Bickley
- William & Susan Floyd
- Edward & Mary Hayes
- Timothy & Debra Hilbert
- Katz Family
- Patricia Lux
- Terry & Jeanne Quinn
- Wylie Thomas
- David & Carol White

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- Covenant Bank
- PEI-Genesis
- Philip Rosenau Company
- RichardsApex, Inc.
- Timothy Hilbert, P.C.
- UHS of Pennsylvania, Inc.
- Utica National Insurance Group

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- Child Development Foundation
- Genuardi Family Foundation
- Johnson Controls Charity Trust Account
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Rotary Club of Jenkintown
- Thayer Corporation
- The Lovett Foundation
- The Willow Foundation
In Memory of Robert Lux
Patricia Lux

In Memory of Catherine Forrestal
David & Carol White

In Memory of Janice Zwick
Kent & Diana Seinfeld

In Honor of John & Kathy Hood’s 50th Anniversary
Kent & Diana Seinfeld

2018-19 BY THE NUMBERS
• ANNUAL FUND RAISED $75,207
• RUN TO READ RAISED $76,685
• SCHOLARSHIP RAISED $94,376
• DESIGNER BAG BINGO & QUIZZO RAISED $13,270

FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019

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<td>Donations: 12%</td>
<td>Administration Expense: 23%</td>
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<td>Ancillary Revenue: 5%</td>
<td>Fundraising Expense: 2%</td>
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Congratulations to our June 2019 Graduates: (left to right) Xavier Lucas, Justin Hearn, Isaac Rodriguez, Kevin McGinn, Janey Dacier-Pierce, China Butler, Cerenity Riddick, Isabella Wilmore and NaySean Brothers.
Our 4th Annual Run to Read Color Run and Community Festival was a success thanks to supporters, donors and participants like you! It was great to see current families, students, alumni, friends and the community enjoying a day of activities, games, music and food. A special thanks goes to Bob Kelly for spreading the word about our event, the Philly Phanatic for motivating our runners and walkers, and to Hurricane Schwartz for telling us his story and personal connection to our school. We hope to see you at our spring event, so save the date!

Run to Read
Saturday, May 9, 2020
RUN TO READ 5K SPONSORS

5K COLOR RUN \ 1 MILE FUN WALK COMMUNITY FESTIVAL
SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2019

Sponsors List: Various companies and organizations with logos.
Dates to Remember 2019-2020

NOVEMBER 26  
Grandparents & Special Friends Day

NOVEMBER 27-29  
Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER 3  
Giving Tuesday

DECEMBER 13  
Barnes & Noble Night

DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 5  
Winter Break

FEBRUARY 4  
Open House

FEBRUARY 14-17  
Presidents’ Weekend

FEBRUARY 22  
Quizzo

MARCH 18  
Open House

MARCH 25  
Speaker Night

APRIL 6-10  
Spring Break

APRIL 21  
Open House

MAY 9  
Run to Read

MAY 25  
Memorial Day

JUNE 12  
Step Up Day

Memberships & Partners