Dear Center School families and friends,

It now has been several weeks since we began Center School’s 28th year and our faculty, staff, and students couldn’t be happier to be back together as a community. The start of a school year for each of us is an exciting time when we look forward to seeing old friends, meeting new ones, and learning more about the world and each other. I think the first few weeks of school might be the time when facing change is least intimidating to adults and children alike!

There certainly has been a lot of change at Center School over the last few years, and it is always a good idea to take a look backwards to recognize how far the school has come. We have strengthened our academics by creating a comprehensive and structured curriculum. We have invigorated our reading instruction by increasing the number of days per week that Orton-Gillingham is taught. The math and STEM curriculum is sequential and integrated. The instruction of the whole student has been enhanced by adding Suzuki violin in the lower school and now in the early middle school, and our students’ participation in Mindfulness and Movement has expanded. The year was capped with a very successful event: the Run to Read 5K/1Mile Fun Walk and Community Festival.

While there has been much change, we do not believe in change for change’s sake. We are quite happy with where we are academically. So, the coming year will be one of consolidation and refinement in which we all-faculty and staff alike—look to be better at doing what we do. New initiatives will seek to bolster current activities rather than replace them.

All of these changes have improved the education our students receive, and they come at a price not covered by tuition alone. The amount of financial assistance we awarded to qualifying families also placed significant demands on the school finances. Though tuition increased again this year, and understandably placed extra demands on families, that increase alone was not sufficient to fund the enhancements we’ve made to our curriculum. Without the contributions we receive from many of our benefactors, our students would not receive an education of such high quality.

As we look forward to 2016-2017, we expect these financial demands to continue to increase. We therefore hope that we can continue to benefit from the generosity of many fantastic donors so that scholarships may be available in greater number and funding for instructional improvements can be increased.

I hope to see you at Center School soon and often. Thank you for your continued support of Center School’s students!

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Nick
Head of School
Got Grit?

by Mindy Wawrzyniak, Assistant Head of School

This year, Center School’s theme is Gotta Have Grit. Grit is a word that is used to describe determination, perseverance, and an understanding of how to overcome obstacles. It is a life skill and involves the ability to rebound after experiencing adversity and frustrating challenges. Grit is not a new idea, most notably brought to light by Angela Lee Duckworth a few years ago, and is directly related to success. In her research, Angela Duckworth found that the most successful people showed “gritty” personalities. This begs the question: Can grit be taught?

At Center School, we believe that it most certainly can. It involves teaching students about the various factors that influence grit. One of those is the development of a growth mindset, an idea developed by Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck. A growth mindset is just what it sounds like: opening your mind to growth. It prompts students to reset their thinking in how they view hurdles, setbacks, and obstacles. For example, when a student makes a mistake, instead of saying, “I’ll never learn how to do this!”, students are taught to think and even verbalize, “This is just a step in my learning process.” A fixed mindset, on the other hand, does not allow for growth to take place, thereby limiting the student in developing the grit necessary to identify and address their challenge areas while leveraging their strengths.

As a school for students with language based and other learning differences, the focus of learning revolves around identifying challenge areas and appropriately addressing them. However, an important component in the development of grit in Center School students is teaching students how to identify their strengths. When students learn that they are not the sum of their challenges but the sum of their strengths, this newfound knowledge allows them to open themselves up to learning and therefore face adversities, understanding that they have their strengths to rely upon. When students are taught about their strengths, this creates a resiliency in them that lends itself to the development of grit.

Most importantly, students must learn strategies to support their challenge areas. This truly is the cornerstone of Center School learning. A strategy, as explained and taught to Center School students, is a tool that is cognitively used to support a challenge area. In learning and utilizing learned strategies, confidence is built because students have a way to address their challenge area and face it head on. This ultimately is what encompasses the idea of grit.

Center School students are learning how to be “gritty” and to use that determination and perseverance to achieve their goals. Center School’s philosophy is to teach students to be independent thinkers and learners, and guiding students in developing grit is a priority so that they can be successful in school and beyond. We’re not claiming that this is easy, but it is essential in students learning how to overcome their challenges and experience success.

STEP-UP DAY

Center School’s Step-Up Day was June 10th. We celebrated students’ achievements and welcomed them to the next grade. We recognized our transitioning students and said farewell to our graduating students. We are extremely proud of everyone.

Congratulations to our graduates Sam Deacon, Zander Dhondt, Sam Levin, Michaela Lieberman-Burak, Henry Nichols, Kyle Schlegel, Jonathan Durham, Darrell Moten, Vision Johnson, and Malena Davis.
Science Explorers is an engaging, hands-on, interactive science company that provides opportunities to children ages 4-11 to experience the wonders of science. Center School is hosting this after-school club to our Lower School students in grades pre-1st – 5th. Topics include Wacky World of Science, Rock Docs, Crime Scene Capers, and Kitchen Chemistry. This runs from October through April and meets each Tuesday.

The drama program at Center School is not new, but this year Center School is offering drama through a local theater company that specializes in education programming. Theater Horizon provides professional actors as teachers who have had years of years of experience teaching youth and teens. This 17-week program for students in grades 5-8 culminates in the production of a play on the evening of Thursday, April 27, 2017. Drama practices are held after school each Thursday beginning in November.

Musicopia is an organization dedicated to bringing music and the arts to schools in the local Philadelphia area. This year, the eighth grade will experience an in-school, music training program under the guidance of Rebecca Graham, a veteran musician and music educator whose philosophy on music education is making it improvisatory, student-centered, and interdisciplinary. This class meets weekly and begins in January, lasting through the end of the year.

This year, Center School brings LEGO® MINDSTORMS® to Middle School students in grades 6-8 as an after-school program. Using principles from STEM, students experience computer programming through hands-on, interactive learning. This 12-week class is held every Tuesday beginning in January.

Center School is pleased to welcome new members of our faculty and staff.

Diana returns to Center School and is teaching second/third grade. Diana holds a bachelor’s degree in Early and Elementary Education from Temple University as well as a master’s degree in Education from Holy Family University. She is certified in Early Childhood, Elementary Education, and is a Reading Specialist.

Joann joins us as our Administrative Assistant and Transportation Coordinator. She has over 10 years of experience as a school receptionist. She enjoys working with the students and their parents. Be sure to stop by to say hello!

Alex is teaching middle school Social Studies. Alex holds bachelor’s degrees in History and Education from Temple University as well as a master’s degree in Secondary Education in Social Studies from Temple University. He is certified in Social Studies (6th to 12th).

Ami is teaching pre-first/first grade. Ami holds a bachelor’s degree in Early Education and Special Education from Arcadia University. She is pursuing her master’s degree in Literacy Studies at Arcadia University. She is certified in Early Education (pre-k to 4th) and Special Education (pre-k to 8th).

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Center School • 3
Back-To-School Picnic

Thank you to everyone that joined us for our annual Back-To-School Picnic! We had a great time playing games, doing crafts, and bonding with our Center School families. Students and families enjoyed a delicious barbecue and beautiful weather. A fabulous time was had by all!

Run to Read 5K

Thank you to everyone that supported our First Annual Run to Read 5K Run/1 Mile Fun Walk and Community Festival. It was an amazing sight to see all of our friends and families come out to celebrate what makes Center School so special. Your generous contributions raised close to $40,000.

Special thanks to everyone that helped make the event possible! We’re looking forward to another successful year! See you all in May!

Welcome Back!

Center School faculty and staff welcomed new and returning students on August 29th. Everyone was excited to dive right into the 2016-2017 school year. It’s sure to be another fun-filled year!

Summer Reading Program

Center School and LaSalle University’s partnership for our Summer Reading Program reached its 10th year. Students joined us for a 4-week reading enrichment program that coincided with the Summer Olympics. This year’s theme was Going for the Gold: An Olympic Adventure. They learned about Ancient Greece and the start of the first Olympic games. Students closed the program with a presentation for their families and friends.

Our program ensures that children retain the skills they have developed during the school year while enjoying their summer vacation. Our 2017 program will run from July 5th through July 28th. For more information about Center School’s Summer Reading Program, contact Megan Stalker at 215-657-2000 or mstalker@centerschoolpa.org
Pennsylvania Tax Credit for Corporate Donors

Many corporate donors take advantage of a unique opportunity to support Center School’s scholarship program through the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) program. Other business donors, who pay Pennsylvania state income tax, may also be eligible for these generous tax credits. One-time donors receive a Pennsylvania tax credit of 75%, and donors who commit to two-consecutive-year gifts qualify for a 90% tax credit. These programs are available to a wide variety of corporate entities. It is easy for your business to participate.

Qualifying Businesses and Income PA businesses
Subject to PA Corporate Net Income Tax, Bank and Trust Company Shares Tax, Personal Income Tax of S and LLC Corporations, partners in GP or limited partnerships, and others.

No matter who big or small the size of the business, you can provide education scholarships to Center School students through OSTC.

An Easy Way for Businesses to Direct Their Tax Dollars
The OSTC tax credit donation allows companies to support their non-profit local schools, at minimal cost. All it takes is a one-page application. Simply follow the State of Pennsylvania three-step process:

1. Go to www.newpa.com/ostc
2. Under “Where to Apply”, click OSTC Business Guidelines
3. Complete the online application

To Receive Tax Benefits
The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) will send a letter to the applicant approving the eligibility for the OSTC. Within 60 days of DCED approval, a donation must be made. Request a gift acknowledgement from Center School and fax a copy of this to the DCED within 90 days of the DCED approval. The DCED will send an OSTC eligibility letter to the applicant and the PA Department of Revenue (PADR). The PADR will send an acknowledgement. Include copies with the applicant’s tax filings.

Giving Opportunities
Thank you for your support of Center School. Every dollar benefits Center School students which is why your help is so important. Whether you are an individual, a family, or a business, you can donate to Center School in a variety of ways. Your donations are tax-deductible.

Annual Fund
Active participation in Center School’s Annual Fund gives us all the opportunity to take a role in continuing the education we all so strongly believe in. As we prepare our children to lead the next generation, we must also lead with our efforts to help establish a strong foundation for them to succeed.

All gifts contribute to the ongoing success of Center School. Your past contributions have made it possible for us to launch new programs this year. The Annual Fund provides immediate and flexible funding to support important initiatives such as enhancing academic programs, technology, leadership programs, and so much more. Tuition funds alone do not provide the funds necessary to cover the costs associated with these academic opportunities for advancement.

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

Please visit the Donate to Center School tab on the Center School website, or return the enclosed envelope to make your gift. Thank you for supporting Center School. For questions on more ways to give, please contact Center School at 215-657-2200 or email Jeff Nick at jnick@centerschoolpa.org.
The following list of individuals, businesses and organizations have supported Center School from August 1, 2015 – July 31, 2016.

**ANNUAL FUND**
- Deborah Albert and Glen Feinberg
- Anonymous
- Kimberly and Joseph Bavaria
- Derril Benbow
- Steve Berg and Scott Nichols
- James and Virginia Bickley
- Michael Bookman and Maria Pia Platia
- Jerome Caplan
- Stephen and Suzanne Cassidy
- Robert and Amy Charles
- Stephen Christian
- Gina Collier and Patricia Hamill
- Elsa and Anthony Comerota
- Thomas Copeland
- Barbara Cunnane
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- Elizabeth David
- Martha Davis and David Dimmack
- Mercedes Davis
- Michael and Shereia Davis
- Lisa and Patrick Delaney
- James Denyer
- D. Andre Dhondt
- Mary Duffy
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- Patricia Ingleby
- Linda Jarrett-Armiger
- Francis Kleine
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- Deborah Kowalchuk
- Rochelle and Kenneth Krevitz
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- Stacey and Robert Latronica
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- Jody and Mat Marks
- Charlene and Nathaniel Mayer
- Michael McAnally
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- Walter and Regina Thompson
- Stanley Todd
- Pat Watselchuk
- Kathleen Watkins
- Melinda Wawrzyniak
- Carol and David White
- Merle Wolf and Barry Wolf
- Joseph Zagacki
- Rebecca Zaslav

**FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016**

**PTO OFFICERS 2015-2016**
- Jung Lee, Co-President
- Steve Berg, Co-President
- Stacey Latronica, Treasurer

**EXPENSES**
- Tuition and Fees: 89%
- Scholarships: 14%
- Administration Expense: 25%
- Occupancy Expense: 10%
- Depreciation and Amortization: 4%
- Fundraising Expense: 4%
- Interest Expense: 2%

**SUPPORT & REVENUE**

**FOUNDATION, TRUSTS AND SPECIAL GIFTS**
- Child Development Foundation
- Dollinger-McMahon Foundation
- Genuardi Family Foundation
- Home for Orphans of Oddfellows of PA
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Rotary Club of Jenkintown
- Silicon Valley Community Foundation
- Thayer Foundation
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Resurrection
- Tyco Inc. Charitable Trust
- Wells Fargo
- Willow Foundation

**SCHOLARSHIP**
- Derrill Benbow
- Jennifer DiGiovanni
- Peter and Susan Licari
- Ellen Willems

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2015-2016**
- Susan Floyd, President/Board Chair
- Jim Bickley, Vice President
- John Mantas, Vice President
- Tim Hilbert, Treasurer
- Carol White, Ed.D., Secretary
- Jeffrey Nick, Head of School
- Wylie Thomas, Trustee
- Terry Quinn, Trustee
- Charlene Mayer, Trustee
- Kimberly Bavaria, Trustee

**MATCHING GIFTS**

Does your employer have a matching gift program? If so, for every dollar you donate to Center School, your employer will donate a specific percentage which increases the value of your gift.
Thank you to all of our Run to Read 5K sponsors and donors. We are grateful to have friends and supporters like you to help us ensure a brilliant future.

If your name has been inadvertently omitted or listed incorrectly, please accept our apologies and notify us at 215-657-2200 so that we may correct it in the future.
### Dates to remember

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<td>MAY 6</td>
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#### Save the Date!

**Run to Read 5K Run/1 Mile Fun Walk & Community Festival!**  
May 6, 2017

Walk, run, enjoy live music, food trucks, carnival and activities for the kids!  
Sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information contact Caitlin Straub at cstraub@centerschoolpa.org or 215.657.2200.  
www.centerschoolpa.org/specialevent

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**Run to Read**  
Center School students are enjoying our new Science Explorers program.