



# CONNECTION

*A newsletter for the Thomas Academy family*

*Keeping connection through communication*

November 2017 Edition

## *Piano lab enhances music education*



It was a simple conversation at a social event one Friday evening at Lake Waccamaw that resulted in a new music experience for the students at Thomas Academy.

“I was chatting with an acquaintance from Raleigh who is also a professor at NC State,” said music teacher Patty Lyerly. “He mentioned having a friend in his 80s who was looking to donate to an arts cause.”

That generous friend, Dr. Judson Spalding, provided the funds to purchase five Casio electric pianos to create the piano lab. Music books, headphones and benches completed the setup. All students have the opportunity to learn piano during music classes, providing a different kind of musical education experience.

A growing number of studies explore the relationship between music education and academic performance, including a Cambridge University study showing young people playing an instrument between ages 11 and 16 “showed greater progress and better academic outcomes than those not playing with the greatest impact for those playing the longest.”

“One of the wonderful things in the books we received is the duet component,” Lyerly said. “I had really underestimated the connection that the duets encourage being so valuable. The kids really enjoy the opportunity to play songs with me. They get to hear themselves doing something and having success.”



*Music teacher Patty Lyerly provides piano instruction to Thomas Academy students in the lab created through the generosity of Dr. Judson Spalding after he learned of the desire to bring a new element to the school's music education program.*

## *Dates to Remember*

Nov. 13 - Veteran's Day Holiday (Observed)

Nov. 22 - Early Release 12 p.m.

Nov. 23 - 24 - Thanksgiving Holiday

Nov. 28 - Open House 3 - 6 p.m.

### *Basketball Schedule*

Nov. 10 at Alpha Academy 3 p.m.

Nov. 14 at Trinity Christian High School 6 p.m.

Nov. 20 at Columbus Christian Academy 6 p.m.

Nov. 28 vs. North Brunswick 6 p.m.

**Saturday Academy began Nov. 4**

## From the Director's Desk

Dear Thomas Academy Family,

As I begin my second month serving as the Director of Thomas Academy, I wanted to take some time to share a little about myself.

Although I am a native New Yorker, my heart now lies with North Carolina. I began working at Elizabethtown Middle School in Bladen County 13 years ago as the Parent Involvement Coordinator and Administrative Assistant. It was during this time that I obtained a Bachelors of Science with a specialization in Human Services Management from the University of Phoenix. The love of children and the need to assist students drove the desire to complete a Master of Education with a specialization in School Counseling from University of North Carolina Pembroke. I am fortunate to have worked with a Charter School, Early College, and Bladen Community College. I am bringing those experiences to be utilized at Thomas Academy.



I am presently in the dissertation phase of a Doctorate of Educational Leadership Degree, with a conferred date of March 2018.

A quote by Nelson Mandela “*Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,*” has been my driving force for many years, longing to “even the playing field for all students” by preparing them for our ever-changing global world. In keeping with Thomas Academy’s school motto, I will connect with our students through compassion while exhibiting character.

I practice an open door policy for students, staff, and parents. If at any time you have a question or concern, please call me. I can be reached on my cell phone at **910-874-1456** or by email at **geraldine.bradshaw@thomasacademync.org**. The best time for a focused conversation is after 6 p.m. as I will be able to give you my full attention because during school hours my focus is on the children.

Thank you to all involved in giving me the opportunity to grow our children.

Yours in service,

*Geraldine Bradshaw*

*The Thomas Academy educational experience is a partnership between the teachers, students, and parents/guardians.*

*Parental/guardian involvement means participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication regarding student academic learning and school activities.*

### *How can you get involved?*

- *Sign up for the Remind app*
- *Volunteer to help at the school*
- *Attend the monthly parent/guardian meeting*
- *Serve on the Parent Advisory Committee*
- *Talk with your child about their classroom experiences*
- *Log into Powerschool to check your child's grades*
- *Reach out to teachers directly with any questions or concerns*
- *Attend awards ceremonies or events*

**Connection** is the newsletter for Thomas Academy designed to uphold the commitment to connection through communication. It is distributed once a month during the academic year to provide continuing updates on the happenings of the school. To remain connected between issues, visit the website at **www.thomasacademync.org** and become a fan on Facebook: **www.facebook.com/ThomasAcademyNC/**



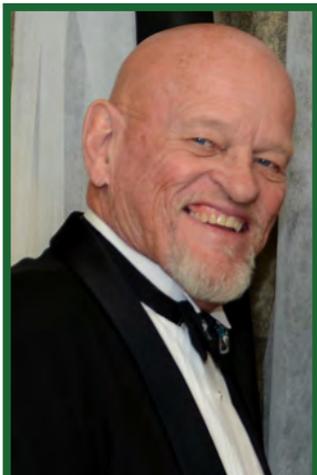
### *Rye Foundation provides warm ups for basketball teams*

A \$1,000 grant from the Rye Foundation was provided to purchase of new athletic warm ups for the children at Thomas Academy.

The grant was submitted through the annual Champions for Children Day. According to the Rye Foundation this event “is an excellent way for leaders of the Rye Foundation to meet with multiple organizations in a single day.”

“Athletics can be such a significant part of a child’s life,” said Dr. Tom Simmons, vice president of education. “Our children picked the Eagle mascot to represent the opportunities in their lives. They are able to soar over and beyond the problems they previously faced. There is no limit to the heights they can reach. Having new uniforms shows these kids that other people believe in them and are willing to invest in many aspects of their educational experience.”

### *Doc’s Corner*



*“Don’t ever let a glass ceiling steer you away from your dreams. Break through those glass ceilings for your future and those who come after you. You will be a positive force in the world. Just make me proud.”*

Dr. Tom Simmons  
Vice President for Education

### *Walmart Community Grant supports classroom technology*

Thomas Academy received a \$2000 Walmart Community Grant from the Whiteville Walmart Facility to purchase 10 document cameras and 10 laptop projectors for the Thomas Academy staff.

“Our goal since the school opened has been to use technology to enhance the education of our students,” said Vice President for Education Dr. Tom Simmons. “A big part of that is providing the teachers with the technology they need to put the materials in front of the kids in engaging ways. This equipment takes the next step in that process.”

Whiteville Walmart store manager Jeff Hughes approved the grant for the equipment which will allow the teachers to print less materials by using the document cameras for projection of hard copy materials. Teachers will also be able to utilize their laptops for teaching by having full time access to a classroom projector.

*Did you know...  
Thomas Academy enrollment is capped at 120 students. This is part of our commitment to keep class sizes small and provide the individual instruction needed by our students.*

## *Students of the Month*

The students of the month are selected by the faculty. They are chosen not only for their performance in the classroom but through demonstrating their commitment to the Thomas Academy motto of Connection, Compassion, & Character.

The November students of the month are:

*Conner Hege*  
*Middle School Student*

*Rachael Winger*  
*High School Student*



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## *Staff of the Month*



*Shanita Troy*  
*Office Manager*

Ms. Troy is the smiling face in the office to provide the administrative support for our school. She is the one who keeps things going on a day to day basis and is always willing to go the extra mile to support our staff to educate our children.



*Jonathan Crawley*  
*Behavioral Support Specialist*  
*and Athletic Director*

During this time of transition Mr. Jonathan has served as a calming presence for our children and staff. He is constantly on the go to provide support for the educational process throughout the school. We are truly appreciative to him for all that he does for us.