



The Grammar School's curiosity of observation meets at the Patterson Library windows.

THE NEWSLETTER OF
NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS

QUID NOVI

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TO SCREEN, OR NOT TO SCREEN, THAT IS THE QUESTION

by Bridges Spiva, Grammar School Principal

Oh, how freeing it must have been to parent in the time of Shakespeare and to have only been responsible for wrestling with the existential question of being versus the modern dilemma of parenting in the digital age. Of course, I say that tongue-in-cheek, as I do not wish to make light of Hamlet's charge to humanity nor do I think parenting throughout the Middle Ages and the Industrial Revolution was free from its own challenges. However, I jest in order to acknowledge the unique complexity of raising children in a society dominated by information technology.

At New Covenant, we are intentional about providing students with an environment free of digital distractions not only because we believe

teacher-directed instruction, quality books, and good old-fashioned paper and pencil are developmentally advantageous for students, but also because by limiting technology during school hours, we provide support to parents in their struggle to establish boundaries for children in the digital world.

While some families allow their children unlimited access to screens and others ban it outright, most parents fall somewhere in the middle and struggle to determine how much digital access is appropriate and at what age. Generally, when this topic is discussed, it pertains to older adolescents and specifically addresses the correlation between social media and increasing rates of anxiety and depression. Historically, the impact of digital

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WHAT'S NEW?

A Men's Retreat for New Covenant Dads

Marriage.
Parenting.
Being a good husband.
Being a good dad.

It's never been easy, but it's quite likely that it's never been this difficult.

Be encouraged. Come to the men's retreat on **Friday and Saturday, November**

15 and 16, at Bold Branch Farm, hosted by Headmaster John Heaton. This gathering offers you the opportunity to meet other dads, eat great food, and enjoy the outdoors. Our guest speaker this year is **Keith McCurdy** of Total Life Counseling. He'll discuss building sturdy children and be ready to answer your

questions. It all starts at 4:00pm with early arrivals and dinner served promptly at 6:00pm. The cost is \$33 and will be charged to your FACTS account. Reserve your spot today by signing up here: bit.ly/mens_retreat2024.



H O N O R A R I A

GS POETRY WINNERS



The Grammar School poetry recital was held on October 11 in the Moomaw Center. Parents, families and friends experienced a delightful display of characters and rhyme.


KINDERGARTEN

-  **Hadley Moore** – *Ladybug, Ladybug* by Aileen Fisher – **Also won cup**
- **Millie DeRise** – *My Family* by Marchette Chute
- **Clara Steed** – *Window Boxes* by Eleanor Farjeon
- **Audrey Quaranta** – *The Falling Star* by Sara Teasdale
- **Sutton Walker** – *Halfway Down* by A.A. Milne
- **Evelyn Rochow** – *To Be a Butterfly* by Amy Lowell

1ST GRADE


-  **Felicity Pavalonis** – *Undersea* by Marchette Chute
- **Annie Rutledge** – *My Dog* by Marchette Chute
- **Charlotte Harris** – *Fairies* by Marchette Chute
- **Daniel Liu** – *The Hippopotamus* by Ogden Nash

2ND GRADE

-  **Bracken Nichols** – *I Meant to do My Work Today* by Richard Le Gallienne – **Also overall lower GS winner**

- **Amelia Gunn** – *I'd Love to be a Fairy's Child* by Robert Graves
- **Addie DeRise** – *The Plain Facts: By a Plain but Amiable Cat* by Ruth Pitter
- **Lydia Whorley** – *The Dandelion* by Vachel Lindsay

3RD GRADE

-  **Trey Robbins** – *A Plea* by Edgar Guest
- **Deacon Moore** – *The Trout* by Amy Lowell
- **Isla Van Wynsberg** – *The Hen* by Lord Alfred Douglas
- **Bree Lentz** – *The Animal Store* by Rachel Field

4TH GRADE

-  **Cameron Wertz** – *The Microbe* by Hilaire Belloc – **Also overall upper GS winner**
- **Noelle Deyo** – *Puzzled* by Carolyn Wells
- **Adalynn Lee** – *The King of Yellow Butterflies* by Vachel Lindsay
- **Lucy Seckman** – *At Coney Island* by Carolyn Wells

 **Grade winner**

SPORTS SCORES



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15

VARSITY MEN'S SOCCER

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| New Covenant..... | 2 |
| VES..... | 0 |

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17

VARSITY MEN'S SOCCER

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Hargrave..... | 0 |
| New Covenant..... | 6 |

JV GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| New Covenant..... | 1 |
| Covenant..... | 2 |

VARSITY WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| New Covenant..... | 0 |
| Covenant..... | 3 |

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18

VARSITY WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| New Covenant..... | 3 |
| Carlisle..... | 0 |

VARSITY WOMEN'S TENNIS

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| North Cross..... | 7 |
| New Covenant..... | 2 |

FINANCIAL STRATEGIES FOR FUNDING EDUCATION

Would you like to know more about the VA 529 Savings Plan and the VA Educational Improvement Tax Credits Scholarship Program? These programs offer ways for you to pay school tuition with tax-free savings or make a bigger impact with your charitable gift. Join us for breakfast **Wednesday October 23 or 30 at 7:45am** to hear from our Director of Development on how these programs work. You may reserve your spot here: bit.ly/FundingEd2024.

E T C E T E R A

GRAMMAR SCHOOL

GS FALL DRESS DAY

On **Thursday, October 31**, Grammar School students are invited to wear jeans, fall colored/themed shirts (orange, yellow, red, brown), and Friday shoes. Students will be visited by Smokey the Bear for Fire Prevention Month and will enjoy fall activities and popcorn in the afternoon.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

A LATTE POETRY

The Middle School will have their final poetry recital this **Friday, October 25 at 7:00pm** in the Moomaw Center. All are invited and welcome to attend. An email was sent from **Natalie Olenik** to all Middle School parents on **October 16** with additional information. Please refer to that email for instructions regarding your Middle School student and what they should wear and bring.

8TH GRADE PARENT BREAKFAST

Parents with a student rising to 9th grade for the 2025-26 school year are invited to join **Dr. Uminn** for breakfast on **Friday, October 25 from 8:00-9:00am**. Come and hear about what awaits your student in 9th grade and beyond. Please email your RSVP to **Eliza Olson** at eolson@newcovenantschools.org.

SCHOOL OF RHETORIC

SOR TESTING

The SOR will have testing on the following dates:

- **Tuesday, October 22:** PSAT for all Sophomores
- **Tuesday, October 29:** PSAT for all Juniors

Please ensure no appointments or absences are scheduled on these dates.

BARN BASH

The SOR Barn Bash, hosted by House Wittenberg, will be held **Saturday, October 26 at 6pm** on the front lawn. There will be a chili contest! See **James Brophy** for details if you want to enter. Students should wear boots, flannels, or warm fall attire.

EVERYONE

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

There will be no school on **Friday, November 1**. We will hold parent/teacher conferences that day from 12:30-6:00pm. A link will be emailed later this week to sign up for a conference with your student's teachers.

WINTER ATHLETIC REGISTRATION

Registration is now open for 5th-12th grade for the winter sports season. **Students must be registered in order to participate.** Click on the following link to register for winter sports: Athletic Sign Up Form>New Covenant Schools. The deadline to register is **today Monday, October 21**. All students participating need to have a physical form on file. Students only need one per academic year, so if they played fall sports or have one on file for the 2024-25 school year there is no need to submit another one. The form can be found here: bit.ly/winter_sports2024-25. Please reach out to **John Maynard** with any questions at jmaynard@newcovenantschools.org and see the attachment with the QUID NOVI email on **October 7** to see start dates for practices and more information.

TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The tuition assistance program (TAP) for 2025-26 school year will accept applications beginning on **Friday, November 1, 2024**, and will remain open until **January 15, 2025**. **There is high demand for assistance, and it is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis**, so do not delay! Be looking for a separate email on **Monday, October 28** with more detailed instructions.

YEARBOOK ORDERING

Each family will have one yearbook automatically ordered and designated for your oldest student. Families' FACTS account will be charged \$45 for the yearbook. If you do not want to receive the automatically ordered yearbook, please email **April Andrade** at aandrade@newcovenantschools.org before tomorrow October 22. To order EXTRA yearbooks, use the following Sign-Up Genius: bit.ly/NCSYearbook2025. Additional yearbooks cost \$35 each and may be ordered through **October 31**. After October 31, additional yearbooks must be ordered directly through our vendor, Varsity Yearbook, and will cost \$50.

SCHOOL PHOTOS RETAKES

HJ Photo returns to campus this **Thursday, October 24** for picture retakes. Students absent on picture day are automatically rescheduled. Proofs were emailed last Thursday and Friday. If you didn't receive yours, please contact **Eliza Olson** at eolson@newcovenantschools.org. If you received your proofs and would like to schedule retakes please use the following link: bit.ly/Retake2024.



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technology on younger children has been largely overlooked.

In 1990, when television viewing and video games were the primary concerns for parents, Dr. Jane Healy in her book *Endangered Minds* hypothesized that “children who were surrounded by fast-paced visual stimuli may be expected to arrive at school unprepared for academic learning, to fall further behind, and become increasingly unmotivated as the years go by.” Healy shared anecdotal evidence from education professionals and parents regarding students’ increased inattentiveness and limited executive functioning capacity but acknowledged that there was a lack of definitive research on media and the brain.

Considering that I read Healy’s book three decades after it was written, I expected to readily discover large swaths of research pertaining to digital media’s impact on the developing adolescent brain, but instead it required quite a bit of digging through professional journals and internet resources before finding relevant research to support (or refute) Healy’s original hypothesis.

A November 2023 issue of *Science Daily* contained an analysis of 33 studies conducted between January 2000 and April 2023 that used neuroimaging to measure the impact of digital technology on the brains of more than 30,000 children ages six months to twelve years. The objective was to identify how digital screen time affected the brain’s

plasticity during critical periods of development. Participants in the studies were found to engage in a variety of screen-based media, games, virtual images, video viewing, and pad/phone use. Ultimately, 27 of the studies concluded that screen time leads to negative changes in the shape and functioning of children’s brains including the prefrontal cortex (directs executive functioning), parietal lobe (interprets input from senses), temporal lobe (responsible for memory, hearing, and language), and occipital lobe (deciphers visual information). In particular, tablet users exhibited worse brain function and problem-solving abilities while intelligence scores and brain volume decreased in video game/internet users. These are staggering findings given that a crucial time for visual development is before the age of eight and language acquisition primarily occurs before age twelve.

The fact that this study failed to consider or report on factors such as the type of digital content (educational or entertainment), context (solitary or supervised use), or duration points to what I feel is most concerning: our children are part of a grand social experiment, the effects of which we may not know for years to come.

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Clearly, it is not realistic to have a school environment that is anti-technology, but we believe in being intentional with its use as a tool in the upper grades, as opposed to relying on it as a source of convenience or entertainment. We also place high value on the parent-school relationship

and acknowledge the family as the primary influence upon children. Families will naturally vary in their approach to technology, but I ask you to reevaluate yours, and when your child is faced with academic, behavioral, social, or emotional challenges, take a hard look at how screen time could be playing a significant role in the struggle.

Each generation faces unique difficulties in the realm of parenting. Technology use is not the first nor will it be the last ill to plague our youth; however, for now, it is ours to manage. For the sake of our children, I pray we handle it well.

| FUNDRAISING REPORT | | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| | GOAL | RECEIVED | |
| Annual Fund | \$80,000 | \$19,346 | |
| General Scholarship | \$10,000 | \$1,000 | |
| Scholarship Foundation | \$300,000 | <i>Pledged</i> | \$117,300 |
| | | <i>Received</i> | \$23,818 |

Please consider New Covenant Schools in your giving. All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent that the law provides. Donations may be given through cash, check, stock transfers, or IRA distributions. Contact **Dayna Renalds** in the Development Office for more information.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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OUR MISSION

New Covenant Schools is an educational community serving families of Central Virginia, providing an exceptional education in a classical curriculum within the framework of historic Christianity, furnishing the student with the tools of education and the inspiration to be a lifelong learner.

NEW COVENANT SCHOOLS