

The Neighborhood Academy is a faith-based, college preparatory, independent school whose mission is to break the cycle of generational poverty by empowering youth and preparing them for college and citizenship.



THE NEIGHBORHOOD ACADEMY

FALL 2022

NEIGHBORHOOD news

709 N. Aiken Avenue | Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Letter from The Head of School

To: The Neighborhood Academy Community



The moment you cross our school's threshold, you are welcomed by our friendly Administrative Coordinator, Ms. Rosetta Johnson, and The Neighborhood Academy's four pillars: Resilience, Belief, Transcendence, and Ability. Beginning our 22nd

academic year, we welcome 145 students ready to accept the challenge and hold these pillars firmly in their daily lives. These pillars are our 'true north,' a daily reminder that academic excellence, strong faith, and character forge success.

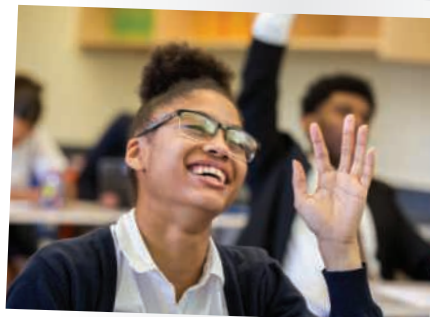
I am happy to announce that we are beginning our school's self-assessment for our 10-year Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools (PAIS) accreditation. The PAIS accreditation is important to The Neighborhood Academy to keep our establishment rooted in best practices, holding our school to the highest standards of quality, safety, and sustainability. In fall 2023, we will host our first official meeting with members of PAIS, to begin this strategic process. We look forward to keeping you updated on our journey.



University of Pittsburgh Law Professor, David Herring, and seven of his law students, are in their second year of teaching Constitutional Law to our students. Aside from examining the United States Constitution, our students participate in an internal competition where the top four students will travel to Arizona State University School of Law for the Marshall Brennan National Appellate Moot Court Competition. The second component of the course has students working together to define and implement a project in the community related to government and individual rights.

We have begun a mentorship program through Point Park University. Through "Rising Brothers and Sisters," professionals from the University meet with The Neighborhood Academy scholars to discuss topics related to academic, career, and financial success. In addition to these monthly assemblies, students are invited to Point Park for a day to tour the campus. Most importantly, the program will pair high school students with Point Park-based mentors, such as faculty or alumni with experience in the industries that interest them.

Through our cooperative sponsorship with Shady Side Academy in Varsity Football and girls Volleyball, we now offer Middle School football. As a former NCAA collegiate football player, myself, I fully understand that the sport teaches valuable lessons in teamwork that apply both on and off the field. I also realize the importance of never



putting the athlete in before of the student. We have always – and always will – instill in our students the value of a co-curricular education which will transform students into leaders in their families, communities, and nation.

Lastly, I am happy to report that in September, our Board of Directors unanimously approved that **The Neighborhood Academy will be opening a Girls Middle School in fall 2023.** The Boys Middle School program has been highly successful since its inception in 2017, and we recognize the benefits of extending our quality holistic education through a separate girls program. Not only will these girls in grades 6-8 be immersed in critical thinking and hands-on learning, but The Neighborhood Academy will be instilling new habits of heart and mind, and ensuring that all issues affecting girls will be addressed.

Anthony Williams

Dr. Anthony P. Williams
Head of School



Visit
theneighborhoodacademy.org
or our **YouTube** channel to
view our **21st Anniversary**
Documentaries!



Two TNA Scholars honored at 13th Annual Shyne Awards

7th grader, **Josiah** (fifth from left) and Senior, **Antonio** (third from left), were honored at the **13th Annual Shyne Awards at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center!** Josiah was awarded in the Service in Ministry category, and Antonio – with the Alumni Theater Company – received The Movement Award for work in empowering youth.

The Shyne Awards is a premier awards ceremony that celebrates and recognizes the positive achievements of all young adults in the Pittsburgh region.



Some Wheelie Impressive Biking

Kudos to TNA 10th graders, **Adam** and **Nate**, for earning their **1,000 Mile jackets!** They have successfully cycled 1,000 total career miles with Pittsburgh Youth Leadership, and are now eligible for a \$2,000 scholarship every semester at their respective schools.

Nate learned how to ride a bike with the team in 6th grade, and Adam has been involved with PYL for only one year! Quite an accomplishment for the young men.

Thanks to all who made this much needed gift a reality!



Mangia!

This summer, TNA's Chef, **Alfred Diggs**, rallied a group of **Middle School boys** to help pick fresh veggies for his meals! Al used cherry tomatoes for salads, larger tomatoes for pizza sauces, and incorporated zucchinis into a delicious stir fry!

Special thanks to longtime supporter and volunteer, **Dr. Tom Antos, MD**, and his **two grandsons**, for tending to our garden and this seed-to-table process!

Two (green) thumbs up! 👍👍



TNA's brand new Matt's Maker Space

Our Matt's Maker Space is officially open! Earlier this year, Noelle Conover (pictured below), co-founder and Executive Director of Matt's Maker Space, presented a check to renovate a space on our campus where students can explore science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) through experiential and hands-on learning. This space was also made possible through a generous donation from PPG.

"I am incredibly excited that the Maker Space is open and that all students at TNA Grades 6-12 will have countless opportunities to come in and explore the natural world and spark their imagination."

*-Max Cookinham
STEM Coordinator*



Shoutout to Pittsburgh Youth Leadership and TNA alumni, **Quinn Myers, Desmond Hargrove, and Andre Jones** for biking from Springfield, Illinois to Wyoming in the scorching heat. At the conclusion of their cycling journey, they embarked on a 14-day wilderness training excursion!



SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

In Summer 2022, TNA students, Joi and Fatimah participated in a 7-Week Internship at the **UPMC Hillman Cancer Center**. The students used scientific and computational methods to identify structures of molecules and improve drug discovery methods inside and outside of cancer research.

"Hillman allowed me to experience what it is like to work efficiently in a group and handle heavier workloads. It has deepened my love for science." -Fatimah

"This experience has allowed me to participate full time in a real research lab on a long-term project. It has further solidified my decision to major in Biology in the future." -Joi



"Let's build!" In mid-June, TNA students, Taniya, Neva'eh, and Caliyp participated in a week-long career exposure opportunity with **PJ Dick – Trumbull – Lindy** learning all about general contracting and construction management.

In June, TNA Junior, Erin, took part in **Point Park University's Accounting Career Awareness Program (ACAP)**: a one-week summer residency program that introduces minority students to the accounting and finance professions through an interactive curriculum.



Corporate Connection

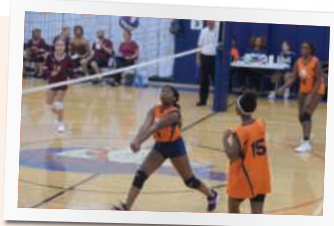
With deep roots in Pittsburgh, **89% of The Neighborhood Academy alumni return** to this region to live and work. Our dedicated and hard-working alumni are making a tremendous impact on the community and the workforce in Pittsburgh and have landed jobs in their field of real estate, construction, healthcare, education, marketing, and more.

Our corporate partners are not only providing much-needed **scholarship support for our students**, but are **benefiting from the workforce-ready skill sets** of our alumni by creating a pipeline for our students to meaningful careers.

Pennsylvania's tax credit program makes it attractive for businesses to invest in education and receive a **90% tax credit for their contributions**. To find out more about becoming one of our corporate partners, please contact Sheila Rawlings, Director of Development, Career Exposure, and Workforce Development.

SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

In September, The Neighborhood Academy hosted the **Lady Bulldog Volleyball Jam** against Propel Braddock Hills High School, Propel Montour High School, Redeemer Lutheran School, Aliquippa High School, and Calvary.



The **High School Bulldogs Football** Co-op with Shady Side Academy had their home opener on September 9 against Indiana Area High School.

TNA has extended the **cooperative sponsorship with Shady Side and now offers Junior Varsity Football and Middle School Football**.

On September 1, they had their first game against Apollo-Ridge.

Sports schedules can be found at
thenighborhoodacademy.org/athletics/



University of
Pittsburgh

School of Health and
Rehabilitation Sciences

In mid-July, students and faculty from the **University of Pittsburgh School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences** spent time engaging in **hands-on activities** to expose our scholars to the areas of Counseling, Athletic Training, Emergency Medicine, Physician Assistant Studies, Occupational Therapy, and Communication Science and Disorders.

Summer Career Exposure Speakers

Special Thanks to this summer's guest speakers for giving our scholars insight into the professional world!

Carol Cozen - Former Senior Vice President; PNC Financial Services Group

Gary Cozen - Former GM; KDKA

Frederick Douglas - President and Founder; Cosmos Technologies, Inc.

Holly Douglas - Vice President; Cosmos Technologies, Inc.

Kim Fleming - Chairman and Chief Executive Officer; Hefren-Tillotson

Dan Henderson - Chief Executive Officer; CooksonPeirce

Cindy Jampole - Principal and CEO; Trans Associates

Cherie Mosier - Interior Architect

Terry Roberts - Vice President for Employment Law and Chief Inclusion & Diversity Officer; American Eagle

Kendra Ross - Head of Social Impact; Duolingo

Tony Sanks - Vice President of Operations; UPMC Centers for Rehab Services

Glenn Smith - Senior IT Business Relationship Manager (Operations); Duquesne Light Company

Erica Snyder - President and CEO; Hunter Associates

Scherrita Thomas - Social Worker

Renee Tot - UPMC Nurse Registered Nurse; UPMC

Michael Watson - Global Chief Compliance Officer; Wabtec Corporation



ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT

Keenu Harmon

TNA Class of 2010



Keenu Harmon is in the business of helping people, and is proud to be taking her talents to Milton Hershey School – a cost-free, private, co-residential school and home for lower-income children located in Hershey, PA – as their new Transitional Living Assistant.

She is the first of her family to graduate with post-secondary education and the first of her family to move away multiple times. Having graduated from Edinboro University in 2014 with a major in Criminal

Justice and minor in Sociology, Keenu first had her sights set on law enforcement.

Considering herself a life-long-learner, she listens to many self-improvement podcasts to always better herself. Keenu's favorites are "7 Good Minutes Daily Self-Improvement," "The Jordan Harbinger Show Podcast," "Think Fast, Talk Smart," and "All Else Equal: Making Better Decisions."

Keenu credits her mother for her drive and for making her who she has become personally and professionally.

"I wanted to be a police officer for the longest time and even interviewed for a few positions... After working at Summit Academy as a drug and alcohol counselor with court-adjudicated youths, and The Neighborhood Academy as an Executive Assistant, I realized my passion for being a role model for students."

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Nathan

TNA scholar and Penn Hills native, Nathan, is living his senior year to the fullest through sports, creativity, and social life. With plans to attend college at either the University of Pittsburgh or Temple University, Nathan's number one focus is to get his degree in teaching (although he could also see himself pursuing financial advising or even real estate!)

As one of the inaugural 7th Graders, Nathan credits his passion to become a teacher to Brent Jernigan, Head of School for Middle School and Head of Academics at TNA.

Nathan is involved in many extracurricular activities such as basketball, track and field, flag football, and cycling, but he has a certain creative outlet that really captures his eye: photography and film.

"Taking photos of sports, nature, people – anything – has really come naturally to me. Anywhere there are good vibes, I love to capture the moment," said Nathan.

Nathan believes in taking advantage of every opportunity and carries with him a certain mantra from his current basketball coach.

"At the beginning of every season, Coach Jordan, ends his speech with 'I never want you to leave here saying 'I wish I would have,' or 'I wish I could have.'"

"This is how I want to live my life."



Visit our blog at theneighborhoodacademy.org to view the full articles on both Keenu and Nathan.

SUPPORTERS CORNER

Alan Citron



Alan Citron has been supporting The Neighborhood Academy since it opened its doors, and he is always staying up-to-date on the school's news and happenings.

Alan, current President and CEO of Tamco Tools in Monongahela, PA was introduced to TNA by Joe Massaro, CEO of Massaro Construction Group, and TNA Board Chair at the time.

"Today, I hear about the school and how well it is doing through a mix of people. Most recently, Charlie Ferrara, Former TNA Board Chair, gave me an update. Then the next thing you know, Jonathan Kamin, a member of the Board of Trustees at Shady Side Academy was giving me an update! The school does many good things, and the track record just gets better and better... Education is vital, and I am incredible impressed by these young students."

"It's important to me to give to a viable cause, and through the EITC Program, I know that when the check gets cut, it's going directly to The Neighborhood Academy as a 100% charitable contribution."

Today, Alan continues his support for The Neighborhood Academy through the PA Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program, where he can redirect his PA State tax liability to approved schools such as TNA and receive a 90% PA tax credit.



2022 CONVOCATION

On September 7, we held our annual Convocation ceremony to kick off the new school year!

After a warm welcome by TNA Board Chair, Ed Haller, and Head of School, Dr. Anthony Williams, Rev. Michael Arrington asked for a blessing of the newest members of the TNA community.

Rev. Dr. Asa Lee, President of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, was this year's guest speaker. He is a dedicated theological educator and believes strongly in education as the vehicle for expanding one's views of the world. Rev. Dr. Lee comes to the presidency after seven years of service as Wesley Theological Seminary as Vice President for Campus Administration and Associate Dean for Community Life.

"Where are you coming from? Where are you going?... Never forget who you are or where you've come from. You may not like it. It may not have been the best of circumstances, but don't ever lose the heart of who you are."



TNA OUTINGS



All-school Outing to Laurelville Retreat Center

We had an impactful day in late August at our all-school outing at Laurelville Retreat Center! New and returning students engaged in team-building exercises that encouraged problem solving, trust-building, and strategic thinking. This retreat was designed to foster personal growth among the students through adventure and friendly competition – all while learning the importance of keeping a healthy and active lifestyle.



An Outstanding Crew

Thanks to Three Rivers Rowing Association, our students have moved up to practicing their rowing technique and synchronization on the water!

TRRA runs safe, sustainable, inclusive programs, and events that teach and promote the benefits of rowing in the Pittsburgh region.

“Working with the students this past year has been incredibly rewarding! Starting indoors on the rowing machines last winter opened the door for on-water lessons this summer. The students picked up the skills very quickly, and we are incredibly proud of their hard work!” - Brittany Bell, Development Manager, Three Rivers Rowing Association



It's in the bag!

We send a heartfelt THANK YOU to Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church, Highland Park, and St. Michael's of the Valley Episcopal Church, Ligonier, for continuing their thoughtful tradition of donating backpacks to our students. Both ministries fill the backpacks with back-to-school needs so no student can say they left their notebook at home!

Dr. Diane Nutbrown's ACS-Hach Classroom Grant proposal was fully funded for \$1,500 by the American Chemical Society.

Dr. Nutbrown (pictured below) has purchased vacuum pumps, filtration equipment, glassware, and pipettes to be used by all science courses and the Junior Chemistry Research Project. These materials will expand the options for projects to include protocols that require the efficient filtration. This equipment will also contribute to reducing bottlenecks in the laboratory when completing analytical experiments. Each lab group will have access to a full set of volumetric glassware for preparing solutions.



Remembering

Kadiatou "Mama K" Conte Forte

Perhaps it was the exotic mixture of laughter and authority woven into her accent, or the bright colors she loved to wear, but whatever it was, when Mama Kadiatou walked into the room, the room changed. Graceful and grace-filled, she taught our students how to connect with their African heritage through the drums, the dance, and the choreographed storytelling of their homeland. She taught them discipline and perseverance and the joy of group performance. From her, and from the drumming and dancing so deeply rooted in African culture, our students learned to know themselves in new ways, growing in the confidence so essential to performing on stage...and in life.

Mama taught with that rare combination of demand for excellence and patience that brought out the best in her apprentice dancers as they moved in bare feet or drummed in powerful rhythms. One of my fondest memories was of Mrs. Jodie, responding to Mama's call to the audience, jumping up and trying to imitate the steps that Mama was dancing.

Frank McNutt brought Mama K to us when we were in the old building on Penn Avenue; the sound of the drums and the steps on the creaky floors drove the people who shared the building with us crazy, and there was more than one complaint from the landlord and the tenants. It didn't take long, but they either got used to it or simply gave up and stopped complaining. The reality was that drumming and dance had become part of our school culture, whether performed at Whole Foods, or at our Special Events, or at the Benedum or JCC or Kelly Strayhorn, or at art galleries, or even at our graduation ceremonies at Third Presbyterian Church.

I am not gifted with the artist's sensibility or the artist's special grace; I rely on others to bring that to life, but I know it when I see it, and Mama Kadiatou had it, shared it, and we, The Neighborhood Academy, were blessed by it. Slowed, and ultimately felled by a stroke, she has gone home to God; and, as happened so often here on earth, when Mama K danced into heaven, the room changed.

Her memory is a blessing to our school.

The Rev. Thomas E. Johnson Jr.
Headmaster Emeritus
The Neighborhood Academy



Remembering

Dr. Mary Means



Mary Means had a smile that, in the words of the late Harry Chapin, "could warm a winter's frost." Equally versed in Aristotle, developmental psychology, she sat in on my 10th grade Ethics course, admonished me to be more patient, mentored and guided students in decision making and SAT Prep. Mary loved baseball. On more than one occasion she invited The Neighborhood Academy into her home so that Jodie and I could share our vision and mission with those who did not know us. Mary was generous with her time, her considerable talents and her treasure to helping us become who we are now.

The photo album of my memory is filled with pictures of Mary bringing flowers to brighten the dining area, sitting at a table guiding students to wisdom, teaching in a class.

Mary Means was heavily into the Mom and grandmother business. When asked about her family, with ever widening eyes and smile, she would tell a detailed story complete with commentary as only a proud mother can. She made sure that her grandchildren were as much of a renaissance woman as she was. I hope that they will be blessed with and live out her caring and warm nerdiness.

The Prophet Isaiah says, "I have called you by name and you are mine." Mary called us, loved us, claimed us. Struck by a stroke, she is now with God. I'm sure there is a discussion about psychology and Aristotle and flowers going on as we speak. We are grateful for her life, the gifts she brought to us, and the way she touched our students. There is a Jewish blessing that says, "May their memory be a blessing." The memories she created here are that blessing.

**May God make his face to shine upon her,
heal her, and keep her for all the tomorrows to come;
indeed, forever more.**

The Rev. Thomas E. Johnson Jr.
Headmaster Emeritus
The Neighborhood Academy

HONORS AND TRIBUTES

IN MEMORY OF
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Ms. Kim Murray

IN MEMORY OF
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Stephanie M. Noel

IN MEMORY OF
Hans Fleischner
Ms. Patricia K. Gibbons

IN MEMORY OF
Rochelle Haines
Ms. Avis Kotovsky

IN HONOR OF
Brent Jernigan
Mr. Philip Roberts

IN HONOR OF
Carolyn Sanford
Ms. Elizabeth Hobbs

WISHLIST

All wish list donations are tax-deductible and can be made online visiting givetna.org

Computer case for a student	\$10	Push Mower	\$300
6-Sided Game Dice	\$10	iPad (6 needed)	\$329
Oil Filter Wrench	\$15	Epson Projector	\$750
Sport Cones	\$15	11-inch Apple	\$1,100
Bike Cleaning Wipes	\$15	iPad Pro	
Track Spikes	\$15	Instruments For Students	\$2,000
Track & Field Relay Batons	\$20	6 Ipads & 6 Ipencils	\$2,722.08
Parachute Speed Training Pack	\$20	Monthly food for a student	\$120/for a family: \$360
Art supplies	\$25		
Dvd Player	\$35		
Hurdles	\$35	One Chromebook	\$250 / for a classroom: \$2,500
Jack Stands	\$50		
Agility Hurdles	\$50	One-month tuition for a student	\$50 / 10 students: \$500
Javelin Carrying Bag with Tube	\$90		
Apple Pencil (6 needed)	\$100	One charging cord and accessories	\$50 / for classroom: \$500
Hydraulic Car Jack	\$100		
Wrench Set	\$100	SAT prep for a student	\$52 / for 10 student: \$520
Weed Trimmer	\$150		
Golf Clubs	\$200		
Track & Field Starting Blocks	\$230		

Join the Legacy Society!

Consider creating your own legacy of support by investing in our students' futures. The Neighborhood Academy's Legacy Society recognizes and honors those who have included TNA in their estate plans which sustain the school in profound and pragmatic ways. Consult with your financial advisor as you plan your legacy gift to the school.

CONTACT US TO LET US KNOW IF TNA IS IN YOUR WILL OR TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION.

Sheila Rawlings, Director of Development,
412-626-6851 or
sheila.rawlings@theneighborhoodacademy.org

Carolyn Sanford, Assistant Head of School
for Development, 412-362-2021 or
carolyn.sanford@theneighborhoodacademy.org

Take a student-led tour of The Neighborhood Academy!

On the first Thursday of every month, we are offering tours at 9:00 a.m.

Explore our campus with TNA's Dean of Student Affairs Shannon Prentiss and current students.

For more information, contact Jonathan Winkler at jonathan.winkler@theneighborhoodacademy.org or 412-203-0158



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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