

THE CLASSICAL ACADEMY EXISTS TO ASSIST PARENTS IN THEIR MISSION TO DEVELOP EXEMPLARY CITIZENS EQUIPPED WITH ANALYTICAL THINKING SKILLS, VIRTUOUS CHARACTER, AND A PASSION FOR LEARNING, ALL BUILT UPON A SOLID FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

# PALMARIUM

## Parent Surveys

The annual **TCA Parent Surveys** are underway *until Friday, February 28*. Last year we finished with over 1,400 parents participating in the survey - the sixth best in our history. Reaching 1,500 total this year would put us in the top 3 all-time. If you have not completed a survey yet please give consideration to doing so. We definitely value your feedback and our entire leadership team reviews the results. You should have received survey links from your respective principals. If not, contact the applicable school front office.



## Michele Borba Speaking at TCA in March

On March 12th and 13th, Dr. Michele Borba will be speaking to the TCA parent community and TCA staff in separate presentations. On **Thursday, March 12 from 6:30-8:00 pm** in the Brown Center (North Campus) Dr. Borba will be sharing with parents about her book **UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World**. There will be 100 copies of her book available, the evening of the event, for parents to purchase for \$10 each. Additionally, the next afternoon, TCA staff will hear from Dr. Borba on **Friday, March 13 from 1:00-2:30 pm**. Please mark your calendars to join us for these important events. [Click here to RSVP for the event](#). *Flyer included later in this volume.*

“This thought-provoking and practical book may very well tip over the parenting priority applecart—and rightly so.”

★ PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY (STARRED REVIEW) ★

JOIN THE #UNSELFIE REVOLUTION



In this month's **WHY I TEACH: Stories from the Classroom** series we have representation from the elementary, student support services, junior high, and high school levels. I encourage you to read the stories included on pages 3-5 to learn a little bit more about our staff and why it is that they do what they do. Additionally, there will be a **TCA Board Town Hall Meeting** on **Monday, March 2 from 6:00-8:00 pm** in the North Elementary Auxiliary Gym continuing the previous Town Hall discussion on **Digital Health at TCA**.

The Editor





## WOUNDED WARRIOR

Last year we started a TCA-wide fundraising effort for the same organization, across all school levels, for the first time in our history [the 2018-19 school year focused on **Children's Hospital** and we raised nearly \$75,000]. The organizations selected for the six-year period from 2018-2024 were determined by students across all campuses. For the 2019-2020 school year the TCA-wide school fundraising focus will be for the **Wounded Warrior Project**. Each school has an individual donation page. If you'd like to donate to TCA's overall effort [click here](#). **We have raised just under \$40,000 so far!**



**WOUNDED WARRIOR  
PROJECT**

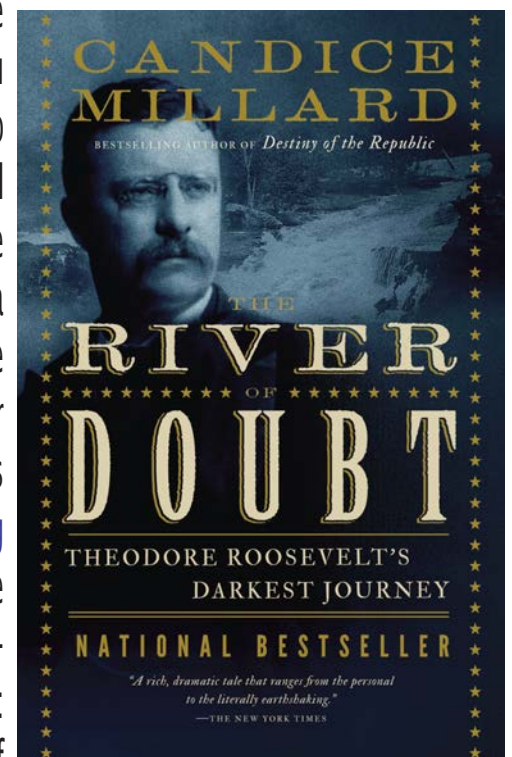
## Kevin McQueen Speaking at TCA

On **Thursday, April 16**, the Director of Respiratory Services at UC Health - Memorial Hospital, **Kevin McQueen**, will be speaking to the **TCA parent community** on the **dangers of vaping** - specifically as it relates to the rise in use amongst Colorado teens. This session is scheduled in the Brown Center for the Arts (North Campus) **from 6:00-7:30 pm**. Mr. McQueen has been traveling the state sharing his knowledge about vaping. As we all know this topic is of interest to many as evidenced by the cover story in TIME magazine back in September 2019 with the title "*The New American Addiction: How Juul Hooked Kids and Ignited a Public Health Crisis.*" A RSVP sign-up will be included in the March PALMARIUM and via the TCA website.



## ENGAGING MINDS:

The fifth and final book study of the school year with staff will be *The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey* by Candice Millard. The book study sessions last ninety minutes each (and you only need to attend one). Currently we plan on two sessions for the Millard book on **Tuesday and Wednesday, April 28-29** beginning at 4:00 pm (in the NE Library Pikes Peak Room). We may possibly add a third date if these two sessions fill up. Parents are also welcome in our studies. If you'd like to join us for this one or receive a listing of next year's studies (when published) send an e-mail to [wjolly@asd20.org](mailto:wjolly@asd20.org) and I'll add you to the RSVP list for April and include you on future book club invitations and announcements. Reference this book, one reviewer writes: "Americana buffs will be entranced by this account of Roosevelt's journey down the Amazon in 1913. It reads like a thriller."



Thinking about the reason I teach is difficult because there are really so many reasons. Teaching is hard and stressful. We are entrusted with the **care and education of precious little people**. I look forward to coming to work every day, knowing my students will be excited to see me. I teach because **I can make a difference** with a student who is struggling either socially or academically. Doing hard work with my students in kindergarten sets them up for success throughout their school career. **I teach because hard work is worth it.**

KINDERGARTEN

Several years ago, I started what I call my "happy box." This is where I keep treasured pictures from my students and notes from their parents. Here are a few of my favorite quotes from parents. "Thank you for the grace and the challenges and the love and the discipline and the fun and the freedom this year." "My child loves school so much she's sad that she won't be able to go for the whole break." From a parent whose child struggled all year, "He told me he didn't want school to end!" I'm not sure if the last one is because of me or recess, but I'll take it anyway.

On a lighter note, kindergartners are just funny. They sing in the bathroom. **They forget you can hear them when sound echoes.** They try to bring toys out to recess (as if I won't notice when we get outside.) I had a student use the toilet during a lockdown once. The entire class was squeezed into the small bathroom, but he needed to go, and the room was dark. To him, it seemed like a good time.

**Rochelle Richards**  
Kindergarten Teacher  
North Elementary

PAGE 3



**I absolutely love teaching, but it is not what I set out to pursue from the start.** By the age of seven, family trips to Sea World had **inspired me to believe I would someday be a killer whale trainer.** Despite being raised in Colorado Springs from third through twelfth grade, I pursued this dream and **studied marine science and psychology** at the University of Hawaii-Hilo. I spent countless hours in and around the ocean identifying fish and sea creatures, participating in Humpback Whale counts and marine mammal stranding networks, all while soaking up the beauty of the Big Island. After graduating, I applied for animal training internships and was able to **satisfy that childhood dream by training dolphins** at Dolphin Quest Hawaii.

Although the life I was living seemed hard to match, **there was something calling me back home to family and Colorado.**

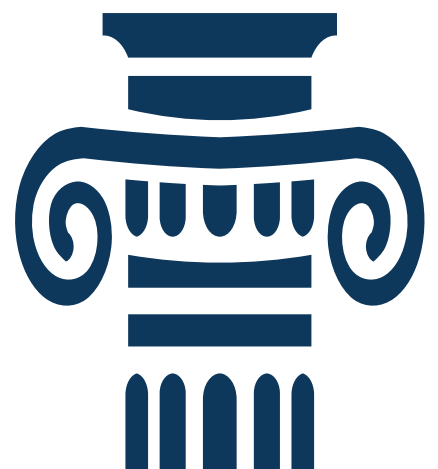
## WHY I TEACH: Stories from the Classroom

I had **grown up as a teacher's kid.** My mom taught elementary school for 32 years, so as a child I spent many summers helping her set up her classroom at Explorer Elementary and I filled my piggy bank with funds raised from cutting out her classroom items that had been laminated. I was fortunate to receive my mother's tremendous love and commitment at home as her child, but these same qualities were poured out upon her students. Her classroom was a place of great joy, discovery, and incredible learning, and **it was her passion that drew me out of the field of marine science and into teaching,** where I knew I could make an impact on the lives of others. I returned to Colorado, went back to school, and completed my degree in education. So, when asked why I teach, I would answer that **it's all because of my mom!**

**Michelle Heeter**  
First Grade Teacher  
Central Elementary

For the past four years, I have been given the gift of being a speech-language pathologist at Central Elementary. My role in this position is to **encourage, guide and inspire students** to be their best version of communicators within their educational setting. Communication skills encompass nearly every skill within every educational context, so it's an incredibly important role I've been given. Although increasing and improving students' communication skills are always my professional goals, my personal goal is broader and simpler. Truly, I believe the reason I teach is **to simply do my part in the world in helping individual students know that they are seen as insightful contributors** and are the only ones who can give uniquely to the world as they can. My hope is that when I finish my time with a student, he or she will embark once again in their day having grown in their communication skills, but even more importantly, having **been reminded that they are seen, known, and valued** for the incredible individuals that they are.

**Kristen Rorabaugh**  
Speech-Language Pathologist  
Central Elementary



# Teaching is the greatest act of Optimism - Colleen Wilcox

## WHY I TEACH: Stories from the Classroom

Why does Robert Thomason teach? Good question. Given my personal back ground, I believe many people would look at my occupational heritage and say, **Mr. Thomason teaches because his mother taught middle school English for 34 years, his father has been a school board president for 25 years, and his paternal grandparents were life-long secondary instructors. This is not the reason I teach,** but my family's influence has definitely helped accelerate my development as an educator.

Others, who know me a bit better, might posit that I have the personality for teaching; that I balance a tough and tender approach that encourages my students to be their very best. I am enthusiastic in the classroom. They might recognize that I am a developer at heart and I have a deep intrinsic motivation to **help people become something they did not realize was possible.** Again, **this is not the reason I teach,** though it does contribute. I could find opportunities to leverage my strengths in other professions.



Truth be told, one of the **chief reasons that I am in the profession of education is because of Dr. Lennon.** I do not remember Dr. Lennon's first name but that is not important. What is important is that through a simple statement, he planted a seed in my mind that would grow into a professional pursuit.

Dr. Lennon was my Cadaver Anatomy professor in my undergraduate degree. On the first day, he walked into our classroom—one that was buttressed on three walls with dry erase boards—and began writing out definitions and locations of bones on the board to my far left. Our class had around 30 students in it and after we sat and watched him fill the first board to the brim, he turn toward us and said, "If you have not yet begun, you should copy everything down I am writing, word for word." He moved to the board directly in front of us as we began to copy everything he had written. Over his shoulder, he called to the class, **"Oh, by the way, my name is Dr. Lennon. I will be your instructor for this class."**



Once the second board was full, he moved to the third board. My hand began to ache. We were writing furiously. Class was only an hour long. When he finished with the third board, he moved over to the first board and asked if we were all able to copy those notes. The class nodded and he erased that board and filled it again. In total, we copied six dry erase boards full of notes and that was just the first day. We repeated the process every time we met for the first two weeks.

At the end of the two-week period we had our initial test. My usual practice for tests was to study, though sparingly. My reasoning was that I would use the first assessment of the semester to gauge the difficulty level of the instructor's approach to evaluation and typically, this was a good method. **This test, however, was the most difficult I had ever encountered.** Dr. Lennon wanted us to regurgitate everything he had written on the board—everything in the initial two-week period.

On Monday of the third week, he requested that about 1/3 of the class stay afterward. He announced that since we were in that class, we were probably trying to enter the medical profession. He said that we needed to consider dropping the class because getting an A in the course at this point would be difficult—**we would need an A to pursue Medical School**—and since we were asked to stay after class, we all had scored below a B- on the exam. In fact, I had scored a C-. **He asked us to consider dropping and to determine by that Friday if we wanted to continue in the course.**

# WHY I TEACH: Stories from the Classroom

I wrestled with this decision all week. On the appointed day, I had made up my mind. At noon, as I was cutting across the quad and fortuitously ran into Dr. Lennon. He asked what I was going to do. I told him that I was going to continue in the course and raise my grade. He gave me some heartfelt encouragement and told me I had made the correct decision. I thanked him and we turned to go our separate ways.

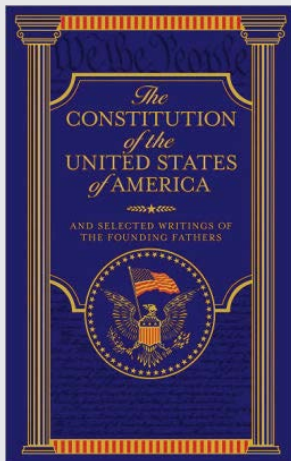
When we were about 50 feet apart, **he called out to me and said something I will never forget.** “Robert!” he shouted, as I turned around, **“I am your biggest fan and I am cheering for you! You can do this!”** Those words hit me with tidal wave force. In that moment, my entire understanding of the educational process underwent a monumental, seismic shift. That statement pulled back a curtain and allowed me to realize **what the profession of education could be.**

Up to that time in my life, my schooling had been an unspoken contest between teachers and me. They would give the test and I would triumph over their assessments with the grace of an antelope evading would be predators. But suddenly, my instructor was not my intellectual adversary; no, **he was now my ally.** He was helping me clear the hurdles, not throwing stumbling blocks in my path.

It would be several years later (and several important conversations with my wife), when I determined to take a closer look at the education profession. I know that I avoided the idea of working in the field. But as I think through those professional moments that mattered in my life, **I realize that Dr. Lennon’s encouragement was a deposit that would pay dividends in the years to come.** Dr. Lennon helped me see that education was a tool to inspire other people. He helped me, now I help others. **This is why I teach.**

**Robert Thomason**  
Science Teacher  
Junior High

My **passions in life have always focused around justice and patriotism.** This passion led me to study at the Virginia Military Institute, serve in the US Army, and then complete a career as Special Agent of the FBI. After retiring from the FBI, I chose to continue to serve the nation as a contractor employed in the national security field, commensurate with my experience. I felt I still had something to share and desired to continue to serve my country.



After serving approximately five years in the contractor capacity, I felt it was time to move on. Having two boys in the junior high school/high school age group I took a strong interest in their education. I had been a certified police instructor in the FBI, and it dawned on me that I should also seek a career in education. Some of my boys' teachers inspired me, with some I found disappointment. I developed a calling to **mix my deep content knowledge of US and world history with leadership skills developed in my career and attempt to teach and motivate students.**

After a year of teaching world history, I was fortunate enough to be able to teach civics and government. I feel that teaching this particular topic is the **perfect way for me to continue to serve both my community and my country.** I have been deeply concerned about the direction our country has headed due to the **lack of understanding of our history and government by many of our citizens.** I am not concerned about political leanings or philosophy, but I am concerned at how little most Americans understand regarding our history and constitution. I believe that I have made a difference in students' lives by helping them understand our history and constitution and participate in our political system as concerned and informed citizens. The positive feedback I have received from many of my students is my motivation to continue what I am doing.

**Bob Fricke**  
Civics and AP Government Teacher  
High School



# Dr. Michele Borba

Internationally-Renowned Educator, Best-selling Author  
Parenting, Child Developing & Bullying Expert

Educational psychologist Dr. Michele Borba is as world-renowned for her warm, down-to-earth speaking style as she is for cutting edge insights and research-based programs. Her informative and inspiring presentations leave audiences with immediately usable strategies and an actionable roadmap for transforming cultures and improving relationships. From raising socially and morally responsible children and teens to bringing the “Empathy Advantage” to any community or organization, Dr. Borba leaves audiences with the tools and inspiration to become catalysts for positive change.

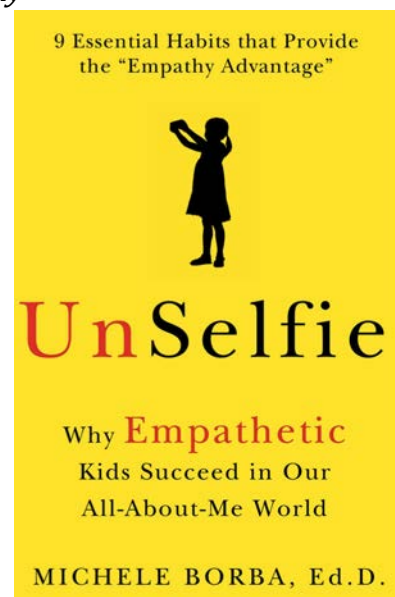


A sought-after motivational speaker, NBC contributor, and award-winning author of 22 books, Dr. Borba’s expertise comes from a career of working with more than one million parents and educators worldwide. Her latest book, *Unselfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About Me World*, presents a revolutionary new framework for activating empathy. Dr. Borba dispels the myth that grades, scores and IQ are the quickest road to achievement and happiness. Instead, the “Empathy Advantage” and the skills it ignites, are what we *really* need to succeed in school, the workplace and relationships. Best yet, her ideas always have immediate application.

Dr. Borba has brought her inspiring expertise and universal insights to parents, educators, child-focused organizations, and corporate and Fortune 500 events. As one prominent parenting expert wrote, “Her advice doesn’t only apply to our kids—we would all do well to follow Borba’s advice.”

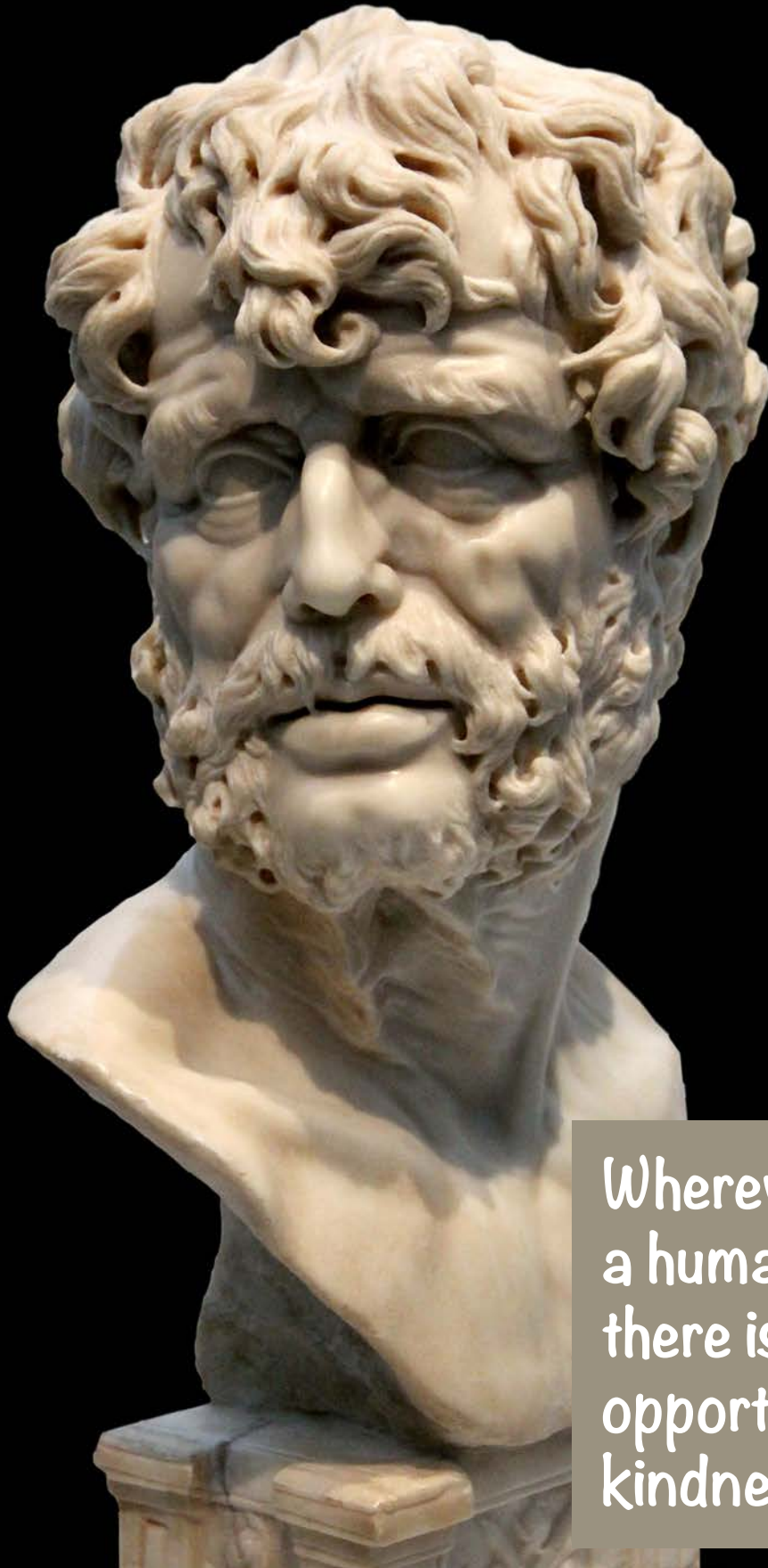
## About Dr. Michele Borba

Dr. Borba is an internationally recognized educational psychologist and parenting, bullying and character expert whose aim is to strengthen children’s empathy and resilience, and create safe, compassionate school cultures. She has spoken to parents and teachers on six continents and delivered keynotes to over one million participants including Harvard, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, USAFA, Common Ground, Character.org, Kaiser Permanente, Johnson & Johnson, Girl Scouts of America, Wall Mart, McDonalds, Santa Clara University, and at a soon to be TED talk. She is a regular NBC contributor appearing 135 times on the Today show, featured on three Dateline specials as well as Dr. Phil, Dr. Oz, Dr. Drew, The View, NBC Nightly News, The Doctors, Fox News, The Early Show, CNN and others. A best selling author of 22 books including *Building Moral Intelligence* and *The Big Book of Parenting Solutions* she is a former classroom teacher and a mom.



**DR. BORBA WILL BE AT THE TCA BROWN CENTER FOR THE ARTS - NORTH CAMPUS ON MARCH 12 FROM 6:30-8:00 PM. THE TOPIC - *Tools for Constructing Good Behavior, Strong Character and Resilience in Children: 9 Essential Habits of Empathy.* [CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP.](#)**

SENECA



Wherever there is  
a human being,  
there is an  
opportunity for  
kindness.