



# LCA

## NEWSLETTER

## Welcome to LCA's first newsletter!

In case you haven't heard, there's lots of exciting news from LCA!

We have a new Academic Dean, [Greg Markowitz](#); some new teachers; new programming; and so much more.

In this, LCA's first Newsletter, we hope to catch you up on all of these developments. Learn about how Mr. Markowitz understands classical education and its value and hear his vision as Academic Dean; meet our new teachers; see how our music program is growing; get to know our most recent graduating high school student, Joly Lo; learn how to get involved in LCA's Parent Association; and meet our Board.

We look forward to staying in better touch with you moving forward!

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# My Vision For LCA

by Greg Markowitz

I'm Greg Markowitz, Academic Dean of LCA, and I teach Latin, history, and mathematics. I have previously taught at two classical schools and also have taught PE and English. I've had students from 2nd to 12th grade, and I love to teach students of every age in whatever capacity I'm needed.

As Dean, I am singular in my vision: I want to keep the school classical.

I think LCA's classical education is not only its best selling point, but also its identity, its soul, even its being. But "classical" is an adjective, not a noun. The claim that a mere adjective is substantial enough to hold together a place, a community, a happy school of children, etc., requires elaboration.

What is this "classical" that is the center of Louisville Classical Academy?

An easy, in-hand definition of "classical" is this: the careful reading of very good books. I often feel that these are the best books, but taste is somewhat subjective, so I'll just call them "fantastic, extremely, wildly good books" or "really, quite good books that you remember as being that good and in fact, upon repeated visitations, do remain really, quite good". But I'll just refer to them in shorthand as very good books.

Now of course, practically every school in the country claims to teach its students to carefully read very good books, but if I'm being churlish, I'd retort, "Well, of course, every school wishes to be a classical school." In a far more thoughtful mood though, I'd say, "Well, yes, that's the challenge. The question is not so much whether or not every other school in the country is classical, but whether or not LCA is classical. Do we live up to our own ideals? Do we actually read very good books, and do we actually read them carefully?"



Now, since both my dream job and my economic livelihood depend on an unequivocal answer in the affirmative, you are likely to be skeptical of my reply. "That man has too much to lose if he says no." Fair enough. You are certainly not wrong.

I therefore propose that you test out this proposition empirically. Go ask your children and their peers. "Did you read a very good book lately, and did you read it carefully?" Interrogate them. Be merciless. After all, there are many good schools in this town. You have alternatives.

Don't forget that children often confuse the idea of books with the idea of fiction. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is a book, but so is the math textbook. Ask them: "Is your math textbook good? Did you read it carefully?" Probe. Children are very good at avoiding direct questions. Don't let them dodge this one.

Now, if for whatever reason you are still interested in my answer, I will volunteer it. At LCA, do students read very good books carefully? Yes, obviously, yes. I had to say that, but I also think it's true. I didn't have to write on this theme after all. And I think that any school where children read very good books carefully is a happy and a healthy school with a bright future.

As dean, I want nothing more than to safeguard that future.

# Meet our new teachers



## Leann Thompson

*first and second grade*

I was born and raised in Michigan, where I graduated from Michigan State University. I obtained my Bachelor's of Music in Music Education and taught for five years before realizing that teaching music wasn't my natural call. I was able to convert my music certification to an elementary focus and found a classical academy in Arizona to teach in. I loved it and I found it to be my "natural habitat."

I believe that school is something that children should love attending. The basis of that love will come from forming relationships with one another. In my classroom, the students, the learning community of teachers around us, and I will work together to make it a fun and safe place to learn. George Evans said, "Every student can learn, just not on the same day or in the same way." I am dedicated to learning about all of my students so that I can create a learning environment best suited to their individual needs. I also like to encourage parents to be partners of our learning community by communicating with them frequently and working together to help my students be successful in and out of the classroom. My goal is for them to leave the classroom with a love for learning!

I am happily married to my husband, Nick, and we have four fantastic children, and the cutest little Italian Pomeranian from our 2+ years of living in Italy. We enjoy spending time exploring the outdoors, playing games, and building puzzles together. We are also active in our church community.

I am grateful to have this opportunity to teach at Louisville Classical Academy and to work with your children!



# Meet our new teachers

## Gabby Spenneberg

*third and fourth grade*

Ever since I was little, I've wanted to be a teacher. There were no tea parties for my stuffed animals; instead they learned everything I did at school and always had homework. I knew as a teacher I could continue my passion for learning while facilitating a safe and creative space for my students to do the same. I originally wanted to be a high school French teacher, but after I graduated from the University of Louisville with a BA in French, I ended up exploring other career avenues. Nonetheless, I still found myself on a windy road that led back to teaching.



I had the amazing opportunity to work in film and television as a production assistant after graduation but soon realized that wasn't my true passion. I knew I still wanted to be a teacher but was unsure where I fit best. So, I started nannying for a wonderful family with triplet boys. I loved watching them grow and learn but knew that I needed to be in a classroom, so I started substitute teaching. Through subbing in elementary, middle, and high schools around Jefferson County, I really honed in on what subjects and age groups best fit my interests and personality. I took a long-term position at Bloom Elementary which is where I fell in love with elementary-aged students, where I knew I belonged.

I've always wanted to teach at a school where students are valued and given opportunities to be the best versions of themselves while growing academically. Classical schools have always caught my interest because of their emphasis on academic and moral virtues, content-rich curriculum, and their seminar-style classrooms that meet around a common table. I was especially drawn to LCA because of their secular classical education ideals and small class sizes. As much as I loved my time in public schools, it was challenging to give each student the attention they deserved with large class sizes; LCA will provide me with this opportunity.

# Faculty in Focus

## Interview with Sarah Cleary

*music director*

### What is your favorite part of LCA's music program?

What is so special about the music program at LCA is the fact that it's a fundamental part of our students' learning. Too many schools are having to cut their arts programs and the students suffer, but not at LCA! We are instilling a love and appreciation for music in all of our students at every grade level and it's enviable. It's also been freeing to have the flexibility to use pieces and parts of many different curricula to ensure a wide variety of techniques and creativity which the students have absolutely loved. The opportunity our students have to explore instruments, different styles of music, singing techniques, music history, student composition, how music is used in movies and video games, working to sing together in a choir – and my favorite, collaborative musical efforts – are all part of a well-rounded education.



### What was the highlight of the 2021-2022 Academic year?

There are so many moments this past school year that have made me so very proud to be the music teacher at LCA, but here are six that really stand out. The first is how well our students played and sang for the end of the year program. You would never know that they had not been on stage for two years, they were a true team from start to finish...I'm still beaming from what they were able to accomplish!

The second is our students' ability to make beautiful music in spite of a lack of instruments and/or broken instruments that we had to work around. The students and I worked together creatively to come up with ways to use what we had and still make it sound professional.

The third is having the middle school chime choir invited to play at the big Lessons and Carols service downtown at the Cathedral and watching them play and act so professionally that they were immediately invited back for this year!

The fourth is the collaborations that our students participated in (i.e., the choir being accompanied by a group of students on an instrument and two different instruments playing together...both of which are very difficult for elementary students).

The fifth is the number of instruments I was able to get donated to the school just by asking around (4 piano keyboards, 2 small desk metallophones, and 3 ukuleles).

The last is the relationships built between LCA and UofL music school and Bellarmine University Music School which will now be ongoing.

### **What are your goals for the music program for the upcoming academic year?**

My goals for 2022-2023 are big. My favorite saying is "go big or go home" so I always shoot for big!

This past year, I had to borrow a lot of things from colleagues and friends to make sure our students had an amazing first year with me. We borrowed a 2-octave hand chime set for our middle school students and they fell in love with playing them. However, only being a 2-octave set, we had to get creative and add block bells and metallophones so that every student had a bell to play.

One goal for this year is to purchase a 3-octave set which allows every student to play two chimes each which is the minimum for a chime choir.

Another goal is to fix all of the broken instruments I inherited and to be able to purchase the remaining instruments needed so that every grade can have an instrument they are learning and playing.

I want every student who graduates from LCA to have played at least five different instruments during their time with us. I would like to have our students perform at least two gigs in the community every year to get LCA's name out in the public eye and to give our students a chance to perform what they practice and goals to achieve. I would also love to grow our school enough that we can create an auditioned choir of older students that meet as an elective class that goes out in the community to sing for special events.



# Student Profile

## Joly Lo

When I came to LCA in the 6th grade, I was thrown into a rigorous education above my level. And I loved it! This love for LCA stuck with me despite challenges and changes. It was this passion that caused me to choose to stay with LCA for seven years to complete my high school education there.

Because it was my choice to stay at LCA, I often seriously considered my “why” for this decision. I was often directly and indirectly confronted with the question “why LCA?” by friends and relatives. Equipped with my growing arsenal of classical tools of thought, I set out again and again to answer this question.

The conclusion to this ongoing inner dialogue came with my experience teaching classics to 6th and 7th graders at the West End School for my senior project. This experience compelled me to draw on my classical background, to teach it, and to defend it.

Throughout that class, my goal was to share what I had been given by LCA. I did not seek to give clear answers to students or force them to simply memorize facts. Rather, I wanted to instill tools in my students. Tools of the mind can be used in a multitude of situations. You can call upon them even when outside of school or without the authoritative voice of a teacher. Tools, such as deep pattern recognition and critical thinking or any of the great “habits of mind” I was taught, allow a student to grapple with an unfamiliar situation, and to have the ability to face it. How do you prepare students to embark into the daunting world? You equip them well to face oncoming challenges. When reflecting on my time at LCA, I can confidently say I have been well equipped.

At LCA, I learned to appreciate my ignorance, rather than to fear it. The growth of wisdom requires a recognition of ignorance upon which to build. A recognition of ignorance allows us to value the words of others and to be critical of our own biases. At LCA, I learned the value of dialogue. That magical word from the roots *dia* and *logos*, meaning the logic between. This word implies a pulling in different directions. Rather than one interlocutor giving a clear answer, it requires two to exchange ideas and challenge one another. I find the best realizations are in that tension rather than at one of the poles. Along with this, I learned to appreciate the different beliefs of others while holding my individuality. The ideals of LCA run deeper than identity, religion, or bias.

I am planning to attend St. John’s college in Santa Fe New Mexico in August where I will study Liberal Arts in their Great Books program. I am so very grateful for all the support and wonderful relationships I’ve gained from LCA. I will carry it all with me as I venture West.



*Joly graduated from LCA's high school in June 2022. He will begin St. John's University (New Mexico) in the fall.*



*Joly with LCA Founders Amanda and Gerald Proietti and Marcy Cassidy*

# *LCA Parent Association*

## **What is the LCA Parent Association?**

The LCA Parent Association is a volunteer organization of parents and friends of Louisville Classical Academy (LCA) who serve to support the school's mission and vision, welcome new students and families, build community, and foster school spirit. In the past, the LCA Parent Association was known as PAX. As we reorganize after a long hiatus due to the pandemic, we will be seeking leaders and consider a new name.

We will gather after school begins to decide on leadership roles and to plan events for the school year. Lots of ideas are in the works and there are many ways to plug in and join!

For more information, look out for upcoming announcements or contact Bernadette Nunley at [Bernadettenunley@gmail.com](mailto:Bernadettenunley@gmail.com) or Christy Hoke at [christyhoke72@gmail.com](mailto:christyhoke72@gmail.com).



# Meet the Board of Directors

**Michael Buckman** (he/him) Michael J. Buckman (he/him) is the Major Gifts Officer for Family Scholar House here in Louisville. He completed his undergraduate work at Murray State University, holds a M.Ed. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and is completing his doctoral work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research is in education policy. Michael has more than 15 years of nonprofit experience including working in higher education. He and his wife, Janet, are very proud parents of Alex Buckman, 5th grade. LCA faculty have lit and fanned the flame of curiosity for Alex. He loves learning. The opportunity to bring my enthusiasm and skills to the board is greatly humbling and appreciated. LCA is the perfect school for Alex. It encourages students to pursue the why, how and who of ideas and decisions in addition to the what, and helps develop young people who own their power to enrich their lives and the lives of others.

**Tiffany Calvert** (she/her) is an exhibiting artist and educator. Her paintings which integrate traditional oil painting and digital media have been shown in the US and abroad including at the Speed Museum in Louisville. She is Associate Professor of Art at the Hite Institute of Art & Design at the University of Louisville. Her daughter Esme is a second-grader at LCA.

**Jamie Cox** (she/her) is a founding member of Vice Cox & Townsend PLLC, a boutique transactional law firm in Louisville, Kentucky, where her practice focuses on commercial real estate. She earned a BA in Philosophy from UNC-Wilmington, an MA in Philosophy from Duke University, and a JD from University of Louisville.

**Lauren Freeman** (she/her) has a BA in Classics and Contemporary Studies from the University of King's College (Halifax, Canada), an MA in Social Sciences from University of Chicago, and a PhD in Philosophy from Boston University. She is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at University of Louisville, where she also is Director of the M.A. in Health Care Ethics. Lauren has always been committed to education and is proud to be a Board Member at Louisville Classical Academy. Her two children have been flourishing at LCA for the past six years.

**Christy Hoke** (she/her) is the founding partner and Chief of Operations for the DevSmart Group LLC. Christy began her professional career with UNICEF, working in Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, and Somalia. Since founding the DevSmart Group, she has supported humanitarian and development agencies on five continents through project management; resource mobilization; and by supporting coherent, transparent, and accountable programming. She holds a BA from Trinity Western University and an MA from the University of Leicester. Christy has two adult sons and a daughter, Adelaide, who is entering the second grade at LCA.

**Kristan Milam** (she/her) is a general internist/primary care physician and is Treasurer of the LCA Board. She attended the University of Kentucky for her undergraduate education and obtained her medical degree from the University of Louisville School of Medicine. Kristan was on faculty at the University of Louisville for 10 years where she taught both medical students and residents in internal medicine. Kristan and her husband, Michael Schissler, have two children who are both students at LCA. This is their fifth year as part of the LCA community.

**Rebecca Siegel** (she/her) is Chair of the Board. She has a BA in Psychology from Amherst College and an MS and PhD in Clinical Psychology with a Specialization in Children and Families from the University of Miami. She works as a Clinical Psychologist specializing in women's mental health. She is originally from New Jersey and lived in Massachusetts, Florida, and North Carolina before settling in Louisville. She is the proud mom of LCA students Lily and Maya. She and her family have loved being part of the LCA community for more than 5 years.

# Meet LCA's Advisory Board

*Louisville Classical Academy also maintains an Advisory Board of previous members of the Board of Directors or other affiliated people in the Louisville community.*

**Andrew Rabin** (he/him) holds a B.A. from Grinnell College and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He joined the English Department of University of Louisville in 2005, and his research examines the law and literature of early medieval England. His published books include *Crime and Punishment in Anglo-Saxon England*, *Wulfstan: Old English Legal Writings*, *The Disputatio Puerorum: A Ninth-Century Monastic Instructional Text*, and *The Political Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan of York*. He is a proud parent of Eli and Ari, two happy LCA students. Professor Rabin is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

**Becky Ruby Swansburg** is CEO of Stonewood Financial. She brings to LCA's Advisory Board years of experience in marketing, public relations, and communications across a range of industries in for-profit, non-profit, and government sectors. Becky holds a BS in Political Science from Middlebury College and an MS in Public Relations from Boston University. She was named to Business First's prestigious 'Forty Under 40' list of community leaders, and is a Bingham Fellow through the Leadership Louisville Center.



**Louisville Classical Academy**

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**Notice of Nondiscriminatory Policy as to Students:** *Louisville Classical Academy admits qualified students of any race, color, gender, identity of expression, religion, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded to students at the school. Louisville Classical Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or national ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, financial-aid program, or any school-administered program.*