

Thank you so much. When Andrew asked me to speak tonight, I felt so honored but also wondered what I had to offer. Then I flashed back to a special moment when I was 10 and attended a summer day camp. At the end of the camp, I, of all people in our group, was chosen for the award in music. I had no discernible talent in music then (and none has surfaced since), so I couldn't resist asking the counselor, "What made you pick me?" She said, "You have *enthusiasm*." I think that's why I am standing before you this evening.

Diego, our kids and I have lots of enthusiasm for Trinity at Meadowview, and it's a joy tonight to share with how the unique spirit here at TMV won us over.

TMV embodies and radiates something very distinctive. It's not easily captured in one word. **It's a genuine, confident, deeply rooted, broad-minded sense of good cheer.**

We observed it getting to know TMV, and we now experience it with our kids attending the school.

At the Information Night, several years ago, Diego and I came knowing almost nothing about this Christian school only twelve minutes from our house. Andrew did his thing—he calmly laid out this countercultural vision of a community of learners. He presented Truth, Goodness, and Beauty not just as a mantra but as woven throughout the mission and methods of the school. There were several compelling paradoxes: TMV upholds a beautiful, ancient, and Christian view of the dignity of each person —yet they offer no electives. They deliver a mind-expanding education by offering few subjects.

Single-sex classes, we heard, in a co-ed environment lead to camaraderie and authentic friendship.

We walked out past that display of truly beautiful student artwork and had almost the exact same reaction. “I want to go to that school.”

But that night did not close the deal. The process of choosing a school for me was very fraught and difficult after homeschooling, and we have good choices in this area. So Santiago and I took up the invitation to see the seniors’ spring play—*Nicholas Nickleby*. Dear Kay Yohe greeted us; Patty Whelpley was a one-woman welcoming committee. A teacher recognized Santiago from a local youth group event months earlier, and immediately engaged him in conversation. The play itself was difficult, but the actors wholehearted. They were *all in*. That special spirit again impressed us.

We also enrolled Nico in Trinity Classic Summer: Greece. It too bore the hallmarks of a TMV event: rich content and serious fun while learning it. TMV students were some of the counselors. I pressed one of them, a TMV graduate on his thoughts. “Did you enjoy your time here? Do you think this was a good place for high school?” He said, “I loved it here. I think this is the best high school *in the country*.” That was remarkable. He was happy and earnest and comfortable in his own skin. (Those are not the first adjectives to characterize the typical American teenager!)

Now, as TMV parents, we see this spirit of cheerfulness and magnanimity pervades both intellectual pursuits, Tempest sports, and every activity the students pursue.

Indulge me, please in a couple of verbal snapshots of this spirit that animates our school. At the end of last year’s Jeopardy tournament between the classes, the South Hall

was packed to the gills, full of cheering students, standing on chairs to get a better look at the action. When it was over, the boys from the winning team were hoisted on their classmates' shoulders for a ride into West Hall.

At the semi-finals in the State soccer tournament last November, a huge TMV contingent traveled to cheer on the boys—parents, teachers, classmates with their faces, chests, and hair painted blue. Stalwart Mr. Niklason literally waving that big flag, like a benediction, over the crowd chanting and stomping the bleachers for our team. When we lost, *you would have thought we won*. There was such an outpouring of pride and happiness from the bleachers as our team came and stood at the edge of the field celebrating their season. It memorably warmed up that cold night.

We often think in our house, no one here seems to have gotten the memo that this is actually a small school. There is so much largeness of heart.

The Bible says, from the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. I would suggest also from the overflow of the mind! The carpool ride home gives me another glimpse into how this TMV spirit manifests itself. We've heard spontaneous bursts of group psalm singing, windows down! to serious theological debates as if the Reformation weren't a day old, and as if these issues really matter. Most recently, Shakespeare quotes are being gamely backhanded into the conversation. Something of this True Good Beautiful curriculum, is helping to form them. One more part of their conversation that's noteworthy: the students also talk a lot about their teachers. They imitate them, comment on their lovable quirks-- they have genuine affection for them. Why would that be? I think a crucial part of this TMV spirit—they have real relationships with admirable teachers who care about them.

It would be easy to romanticize our school. Yet we know there's a common amount of teenage angst in the school, because we know there's teenage angst in our house. And it's just not an easy project to get from childhood to adulthood in one seamless straight line. But while the larger culture magnifies, even glorifies the unhealthy aspects of modern adolescence – the distinctive spirit here seems to mitigate them. The unique mission and paradoxical methods turn out to be sound—and we are grateful that our sons learn in this community. Lovely families, soulful students, engaged teachers, and a thoughtful administration. What a spirit! What a school. Thank you.