Just what kind of school is Colorado Academy?

I am asked that question a lot.

This is a place that pulls you in, that engages you, excites you, and endears you. Every day on our campus, you can see our commitment to our mission to educate, nurture, and challenge the whole child. We offer an innovative and rigorous curriculum rooted in the liberal arts and sciences.

We do it with innovation and creativity and by encouraging students to think outside the box. We do it with an incredible staff of dedicated teachers who spark students’ intellectual curiosity. We want students to ask “why?” and also to have the freedom and courage to ask, “why not?”

We are a school that understands that children’s formative years are profoundly important to who they become; we push students to grow as artists and athletes. We encourage their development through inclusivity and through service to others, and we ask them to take a hard look at their strength of character…to test and discover their own mettle.

One student described CA as “a small school made up of big people”—people with big hearts, enormous ability, and unbridled promise.

Please visit our campus and see for yourself what makes this school an extraordinary learning community.

Michael G. Davis, PhD
Head of School, Colorado Academy
Why We Chose Private Education

The Guo Family

Vicky Chao was an educator in Taiwan before immigrating to the United States, so it’s no surprise that she considered choosing a school for her son, Yowei, as an extremely important decision. When Yowei was very young, she began researching schools to find one that would be the best fit for him. “It takes a long time to do your due diligence,” she says. “I wanted a school where he would be challenged in a positive, encouraging environment.”

“Our child’s core values must come from us,” adds her husband, Wei Guo. “But his peers and school will also influence him, so we wanted a school that would share our values, principles, and vision. We took this decision seriously.”

After years of considering their options, Vicky and Wei decided to enroll Yowei in Pre-Kindergarten at

(continued on page 5)
The Acuff Family

As Erin and Jon Acuff began looking for a school for their two daughters, they hoped that both girls would be able to attend the same school. And yet, they knew that might be a challenge, because the girls are very different.

Annabelle, who is in Pre-Kindergarten, shows aptitude for science and math and gets excited about coding and robotics. Elliotte, who is in Grade 1, is creative—whether it’s visual or performing arts—but she also loves sports.

At Colorado Academy, the Acuffs say, they are “thrilled over the moon” to have found a school where the interests of both children will be nurtured.

“We aren’t sure what direction their passions will take in the future,” says Jon. “But CA seems to be a great place, where they can explore the world and have a variety of experiences in a safe environment.”

“I was impressed by CA from the start,” says Erin. “When we interviewed there, the focus was on our children and not on us, the parents. I liked CA’s emphasis on social and emotional learning and developing resilience, because that is such an important part of education.”

Both Jon and Erin grew up in Orange County, Calif., one of the most affluent areas in the country. They intentionally left their home state and moved to Colorado, because they wanted a different quality of life for their children. They also wanted to find a school that was consistent with their values. When they talk about their experiences visiting CA throughout the admission process, they mention feeling a sense of community and a focus on student well-being.
The Guo Family (continued from page 3)

CA in 2019. “It’s not very often that your impression of something gets better and more positive with each experience,” Wei says. “Every time we visited CA, we liked it more and more.”

Vicky brought Yowei to multiple “Explore CA” events, including classes in music, PE, technology, and visits to the library. “The books in the library talk about being kind,” says Vicky. “The teachers are engaged and patient, the classrooms are filled with natural light, and the children in the computer lab are coding! CA is amazing and will open Yowei’s eyes at a young age.”

Wei was impressed by CA’s emphasis on the “whole child”—a focus not just on the brain but also on the heart of a child.

“We want to expose him to as much as possible—sports, arts, academics—so he can find his passion in life,” Wei says. “I don’t want to limit his focus or force him to specialize, because what if I make a wrong choice for him?”

Vicky and Wei have family overseas and hope their son will grow up to be a “global citizen.” They attended “Taste of CA,” an event which celebrates diversity within the school community and loved that CA showcases many different cultures—especially international food. “The world is not just limited to cheeseburgers, chicken nuggets, and fried rice,” says Vicky. “CA shares the value of diversity with us.”

“It’s important to us that our son learns tolerance and acceptance,” says Wei. “At CA, he will meet people from different cultural backgrounds, and he will understand that all cultures have good people.”

Vicky and Wei took their school research one step further and met CA alumni, teachers, parents of current students, and current students. Consistently, they were impressed by the people they got to know, finding them to be respectful, self-possessed, confident without being arrogant, and polite. They are thrilled that Yowei is now at CA, and they have joined the CA parent community. But they have not lost sight of their first and foremost goal. “We just want our child to be happy, healthy, kind—an all-around good person,” Wei says. “Those are our guiding values, and we see CA as a strategic partner in helping us raise our child.”

Jon and Erin say that CA’s efforts to create a diverse environment—cultural, racial, socioeconomic—is “so very important to us, and something that we were seeking in Colorado.” When they met CA students, they were impressed by their social skills, and the CA parents they encountered described the school community as “warm, welcoming, and relaxed.” And so, at CA, the Acuffs are delighted to have found a place where not only can their children learn and “be kids,” but they also can join a community consistent with the values that brought them from California to Colorado.

The Campus and Facilities

Colorado Academy, located on a 94-acre campus in southwest Denver, is comprised of three divisions to meet the developmental and learning needs of its 990 students. Each division has its own principal, faculty, dedicated building, and science and technology laboratories.

- CA’s new Ponzio Arts Center opened in January 2017, providing

(continued from page 4) advisory time, class meetings, and US
Town Halls. Class sizes range from 6 to 20, depending on the hour of the day, with average class size at 15.

Student Profile

Highly motivated students of above average to exceptional ability seeking academic challenge.

100% of our graduates are accepted to four-year colleges and universities; 151 new students from throughout the metro area, across the country, and internationally began the 2019-2020 school year.

A diverse student body (racial/ethnic diversity: 25%) comes from throughout the metropolitan and suburban areas.

Faculty Profile

119 faculty members;
71% have advanced degrees

Faculty average is 17 years of classroom experience and 9 years at CA.

A full-time faculty member at CA teaches a LS grade-level homeroom or specialty subject area; or, in the Middle and Upper Schools, four sections of their subject area expertise, plus an advisory. Many teachers also coach a sport, lead a school-sponsored trip, or sponsor a student club.

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(continued on page 8)
The Ayala Ramirez Family

For the Ayala Ramirez family, having the opportunity to send their son Alexis to Colorado Academy in the Sixth Grade is truly a dream come true. “It is a blessing,” Laura Ayala Ramirez says. “I would have loved to follow my dreams, but I never had the chance. Now, he has the opportunity to achieve what I couldn’t.”

For Alexis, who speaks Spanish and English, the opportunity to attend CA comes through financial support offered to select students by The Challenge Foundation. When he won a Grades 3-5 math contest in the Third Grade, his school counselor suggested to his parents that he had the potential to become a Challenge Foundation scholar. After 18 months of rigorous and competitive evaluation, writing, and a Challenge Foundation summer program, Alexis learned in Fifth Grade that he was one of two (out of 20) applicants in his school who had been chosen for the Scholarship. “When my mother heard, she started crying,” Alexis says. “But I felt proud and really happy, because it was my dream to go to a good school.”

His parents considered only one school for Alexis—CA. His father, Juan, was impressed by the beauty of the campus and the kindness of the people they met at CA. Laura’s concerns about transportation to school were immediately allayed by the school’s extensive bus system. Alexis, who loves to draw and hopes to someday become an architect, was delighted by all the art supplies he found when visiting an art class. He was also excited by the opportunity to play sports, impressed by the English class he visited, and thrilled, he says, “to have my own desk for the first time.”

“CA is a place where you can have fun and learn at the same time,” he says.

The Ayala Ramirez family acknowledges that Alexis will be entering an environment different from the one he came from. Juan believes this is the very reason Alexis should attend CA. “He can gain skills from connecting and networking with people who have different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds,” he says. “This will help him work with all kinds of people and respect everyone he meets.”

Alexis knows that he may face challenges in a new environment. “I will not give up,” he declares. “From my grandpa, who cannot read or write, I learned math. From my mom, I learned to read. From my grandma, I learned writing, and from my dad, I learned to work hard.” And now, he and his family have an entirely new dream—for Alexis to be the first in the family to go to college.
The Skinner Family

When it came time to think about high school, Peter Skinner found himself with a difficult choice.

Denver’s East High School was his neighborhood school, he had a lot of friends there, and he liked the big, bustling feel of the school and its large classes.

When he visited CA, he loved the small classes where there was an opportunity for students to engage in discussion and interact with other students and the teacher.

“He felt invigorated by the academic environment at CA, because there was no right or wrong answer in the class he visited—just the opportunity to exchange ideas,” his mother, Patricia Skinner, says. “He visited two schools with completely opposite experiences, but he enjoyed both, which made his decision harder.”

The family let Peter make the final decision, and he chose CA. “He said, ‘This is a school that is going to help me succeed and grow academically and socially,’” Patricia recalls. “He thought there were so many resources available to him at CA, and he liked that.”

Patricia was drawn to CA’s wide-ranging variety of interesting classes and electives, the school’s emphasis on the arts, and what she sees as pedagogy that does not just “teach to the test.” She liked a school that is “less anonymous” and “more nurturing.”

“CA’s emphasis on social and emotional health was really important to me,” she says. “We want our kids to be the adults of tomorrow who are accepting of others, inclusive, living with character and kindness. Who you are as a human being is the most important. That’s the message that we have emphasized at home, and I know that at CA that message will be reinforced.”

Patricia was also impressed with CA’s system of Advisories where a small group of students stay together with one Advisor for all four years of Upper School. “We felt like CA will not let students—including Peter—slip through the cracks,” she says.

She feels CA sets the tone for the school at the top levels of leadership, reinforces that tone through its lecture series SPEAK and with the hard work of the school’s teachers and counselors, and she believes students absorb those values.

Finally, she is delighted that students get to know their teachers and can turn to them for college recommendations. “CA’s College Counseling Office will make our lives easier,” she says. “CA has a national reputation among excellent colleges and, when that time comes, I’m looking forward to handing the whole college application process over to CA’s College Counselors!”
The Inclusion Initiative

“You can focus on being good or focus on being better.”

For many years, those words from Dave Mochel, the Mindfulness Coach who has often worked with CA faculty and students, have inspired Colorado Academy faculty, staff, and students to work at “being better.”

Over the last year, CA focused on being better at embracing inclusion and diversity. Being better has meant talking honestly, listening to experts and each other, trying new approaches, attending events, hiring new faculty, and being willing to change.

What began with an autumn meeting for parents of students of color and for any parent interested in these topics evolved in many ways throughout the school year. The Inclusion Initiative culminated with a morning-long March gathering of a variety of stakeholders, ready for substantive discussions about how CA could and will “be better.”

At the March “Designing for Inclusion” strategy session, Head of School Dr. Mike Davis did not mince words.

“We are here to think about our future as a school and the nature of our community,” he said. “No matter the institution, everyone has work to do in this arena. Today, I hope we can all be inspired to do more to honor the dignity of everyone on this campus.”

Designing for Inclusion

For the next three hours, faculty, staff, students, parents from Lower, Middle, and Upper Schools, and CA’s new Director of Inclusivity, Sarah Wright, followed Davis’s charge, brainstorming ways that members of the CA community can be more mindful about being inclusive in the future. As Davis put it, “How can we operate together and be our best selves?”

The participants were smoothly guided by Dr. Liza Talusan, an educator, speaker, leader, and writer. Talusan, who has more than 22 years of experience in PreK-20 education, proved herself to be a skillful facilitator of conversations about diversity, racism, unconscious bias, privilege, and power. She praised CA for tackling tough issues and for including students and their world view in the discussion. She cautioned that creating equality in educational opportunity means continuing a long-fought battle, and embracing diversity and inclusion is hard work. There is a need to “design for inclusion.”

“The best communities engage in difficult conversations,” she said. “We can’t rely on hope and happenstance for good things to happen. To keep going in the right direction, we have to plan for goodness.”

Definitions

Talusan began the morning by defining terms. What is Diversity? Equity? Inclusion?
Diversity, she said, is the different categories that people might identify with, including gender, race, age, class, ethnicity, religion, political beliefs, and sexual orientation, among others.

Equity, she went on to say, is the different conditions an organization creates to assure that all people can be successful.

Finally, she added, Inclusion means taking steps to create a more diverse and equitable community.

We design for inclusion, Talusan said, for three reasons. First, it helps children learn 21st century skills—innovation, agility, global understanding, emotional intelligence, and the ability to work effectively with others. Second, we design for inclusion so that we can engage in difficult conversations that stretch our learning out of our comfort zone. Finally, Talusan added, we design for inclusion because “hope is not a strategy.”

Sarah Wright, Director of Inclusivity

For Sarah Wright, MEd, who assumed her new position in August, the morning affirmed her decision to join CA. “It was motivating for me,” she says. “The parents, faculty, and students may have all had different experiences at CA, but they want the same thing. They want people to feel welcome and included.”

Wright comes to CA from Miami Country Day School, where she has worked as a Lead Teacher for the Fifth Grade and was founder and leader of the school’s Global Equity and Inclusion Board. She acknowledges that her passion for working with young people might be in her DNA. “I was the kid who came home from school and wanted to “play school,” she says. But she always had one foot in the world of equity issues. In high school, when budget cuts eliminated guidance counselors, she was the one to start a petition to restore the positions.

After stints teaching in Cincinnati, at the Logan School in Denver, and in Miami, Wright was delighted at the opportunity to return to Denver and CA. She found CA to be “welcoming and transparent.”

Wright sees the challenges at CA to be no different from those in any environment today. “CA has a culture of kindness, but that can be a breeding ground for avoidance,” she says. “People are afraid they might say something offensive and be perceived as a ‘bad person.’ But you can have the courage to speak out and still be nice.”

She also wants to raise the question, “How young is too young to begin discussions about equity?”

“In order for institutions to have a cultural shift,” she says, “I think we have to have the courage to start as young as possible to develop a culture of empathy.”

She acknowledges that she will grow and learn in the job. “I will have to keep working on myself,” she acknowledges. “But I am so looking forward to creating magic with the students.”

The work never stops

Throughout last school year, CA continued to be mindful of ways to be better in the areas of diversity and inclusion. For the entire school, three events reminded the community to honor and respect differences.

- At “Taste of CA” in January, students, parents, faculty, and staff shared food and enjoyed performances from various cultures and customs from around the world.
- At an All-School Assembly in February, students watched a live performance of “At the Table with Dr. King.” Through music, poetry, historical video footage,
and Dr. King’s own words, “At the Table” teaches students valuable lessons of equality and respect learned during the American Civil Rights movement and challenges students to engage in creative acts of service and leadership in their own communities.

**In April**, Upper School students led the planning of PlatFORUM, an annual event where students and faculty present on a wide range of inclusivity topics. Discussions from that day spawned even more work, including a series of talks with musician, band member, and pop culture “expert,” Stephen Brackett of the Flobots. He met with groups of Middle and Upper School students over a two-day period.

At the division level last year, Inclusivity Coordinators worked to incorporate respect for all people into daily activities.

**In the Lower School**, teachers worked with Fifth Grade Inclusivity Mentors to cultivate inclusivity. Students read books that celebrate differences and encourage students to be courageous. Students also attended assembly presentations with Diversity Trainer Rosetta Lee, who talked about how to be curious about other people in a friendly way.

**In the Middle School**, Inclusivity Coordinators initiated a new, monthly gathering “TableTalk.” During these sessions, Middle and Upper School students met to share and discuss their personal experiences, providing both mentoring and support, as well as increased understanding.

**In the Upper School**, activities included ongoing work and support for students in the FACES of Diversity and GSA clubs. Inclusivity Coordinators also created the First Annual Diversity/Inclusivity/Equity Workshop in Denver, which brought together 60 students and faculty from multiple independent schools for challenging group work as well as meaningful self-reflection.

**For parents**, CA’s annual survey included questions about inclusivity and diversity. The survey data will help inform CA’s ongoing work internally and with external consultants.

### Recommendations for the future

By the end of the March meeting, Dr. Talusan invited everyone in the group to offer recommendations. Up went the white boards and out came the sticky notes, as students, parents, faculty, and staff wrote candidly about changes to programs, policies, and practices they believe would benefit the entire Colorado Academy community.

- **Hire more faculty of color** so students can see themselves in their teachers and mentors. (More than one-third of CA’s new hires for 2019-2020 identify as faculty/staff of color).
- **Teach students** from an early age to refrain from judging others superficially.
- **Develop strategies** to support students who do not feel like they “fit.”
- **Provide opportunities** for difficult conversations with and among students.
- **Find ways to combat** political divisiveness so students can discuss issues freely.
- **Hold more sessions** like Designing for Inclusion and include more people.
- **Continue the school’s mission** of kindness and inclusion.
- **Learn from mistakes.**

Talusan watched the enthusiastic engagement of the group with a smile. Clearly, these were people who wanted to focus on “being better.”

“CA is doing great things with inclusion,” Talusan said. “We want to make sure that is your strategy, not just your hope.”
CA by the numbers

In addition to their iPads, MS and US students have access to a broad and varied Computer Science/Engineering & Design curriculum, taught by faculty in the sciences, technology, arts, and humanities. These courses take place in computer science labs, an innovation/design studio, and the Anderson Innovation Lab, which features 3D printers, laser cutters, and other programmable tools.

The school’s Digital Media center has 32 workstations with full curriculum in digital photography and video production for Grades 7-12. The 10-station Digital Music Composition lab for students in Grades 1-12 is complemented by CA’s professional-level sound recording studio.

All faculty members have laptops and iPads and employ interactive projectors in their teaching.

Global Studies

Foreign travel and global studies opportunities are available to students. Recent destinations have included Québec, Belize, Costa Rica, Chile, Peru, China, Haiti, Senegal, Cuba, Spain, Tanzania, and England.

CA offers a 5th Grade and 11th Grade student Scottish Exchange Program, a student exchange in Colombia and Spain, and CA faculty and students collaborate with schools in Rwanda and Haiti.

Experiential Education

- Annual 3rd Grade trip to the Plains Conservation Center
- Annual 4th Grade mountain hike
- Annual 5th Grade spring overnight Crow Canyon trip

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College: One Family’s Journey

Mona and John Ferrugia sent both their sons to school at Colorado Academy. Jonathan Ferrugia graduated in 2004, and Justin Ferrugia graduated in 2019. Recently, Mona Ferrugia reflected on the process of choosing a college at CA—twice—over a period of 15 years.

You have had a long journey at CA!

Yes, our first son, Jonathan, came to CA in the Ninth Grade, transferring from Ricks Center for Gifted Children. In March of Jonathan’s Freshman year at CA, our second son, Justin, was born, so I was driving my teenage son to high school with a baby in a car seat! (Laughing) When Jonathan applied to college, the opening line of his essay was “I am a recovering only child.” At that point he had a three-year-old little brother!

When did Justin come to CA?

Justin started at Bromwell, our local public elementary school, but we knew we wanted to come back to CA because of the wonderful experience we had with Jonathan, so by the Fifth Grade, he changed schools.

Why were you so committed to CA?

We already knew that CA was a fantastic school, and Justin would get an excellent education. But one of the most important factors was the knowledge that, at the end of the road at CA, he would be guided by the counselors in the College Office. We had been through that process with Jonathan, and we had learned so much.

What had you learned?

First off, we were just relieved that CA had college counseling resources on campus, because we were overwhelmed by the task of choosing a college. It was confusing, nerve-wracking, stressful, and we didn’t even know how to begin, much less finish successfully. We had also heard many stories about the challenges of hiring outside consultants, and that worried us.

When it came time to apply to colleges, Jonathan met with his CA counselor, who helped him focus on who he was, reflect on his values, and create a list of colleges that could be a good fit for him. We are both graduates of University of Missouri in Columbia, near our hometown. CA’s college counselors helped Jonathan realize his potential to attend schools we had not even considered.

What did that tell you?

It told us that the counselor really knew Jonathan well—maybe better than we did! With her extensive experience, she suggested those colleges to him, because she knew they were in the range of the possible. We started to breathe out and trust CA’s college process, because the school was just as invested in Jonathan’s success as we were.

What was your experience when you visited schools?

The CA College Office is so well known. The counselors have developed long-term relationships with College
Admissions Deans, and the CA counselors are highly respected.

**So after breathing out, how did the whole college application process change?**

It took the pressure off the relationship with Jonathan. We weren’t editing his essay, monitoring whether he was doing his application, and nagging him. It was clear that the College Office would not let anything fall through the cracks, so we had the opportunity to support him emotionally from the sidelines.

**Fifteen years after going through this process the first time, you did it again in 2018-2019 with Justin!**

We so appreciate the gift of coming full circle that life has given us. This time, we could stand back from the start and know that Justin would find the college and community that was right for him. Much of the college process had changed in 15 years, but what had not changed was the way CA’s college counselors knew our child and guided him down the path to his future.

It was a huge gift to come back to CA—this time without a baby—and become more involved. And every time I would lead an admission tour around campus, I would stop by the College Office and say, “This is one of the many reasons you come to CA. This office will make applying to college less stressful for you. Relax, enjoy your child, and just let these counselors do their job.”

**Interestingly, both your sons ended up at the same college.**

We actually went out of our way to tell Justin he should go wherever he wanted. We even put away all Jonathan’s college-branded gear when Justin was growing up! If you look at the list of schools where CA students go, you see the variety. And behind the many different choices that students make are counselors who know that every student is different. They ask, “What is the best place for this individual child?” The focus for CA and the College Office is making sure every child finds a place where they fit.

A Conversation with the new Lower School Principal

Angie Crabtree will be the new Principal of Colorado Academy’s Lower School Division, beginning with the 2019-2020 school year. She comes to CA from the Webb School in Knoxville, Tenn., where has worked for more than 20 years as a teacher, Assistant Lower School Head, and Division Head. We talked to Angie recently about her passion for teaching and nurturing Lower School children.

Why have you preferred to work with Lower School students throughout your career?

Lower School children fill my tank every day. They create unbelievable stories from the moment I open their car doors in the morning to the moment I say good-bye to them at the end of the day. They give me joy, and I love providing them with teachable moments. From ages 4 to 11, there are so many opportunities to develop and nurture a child as an individual, leader, and person. They recharge my batteries every day!

You have special expertise in differentiated instruction. What exactly does that mean?

Differentiated instruction means a teacher understands the needs of each learner and thinks about the right way to teach content or a skill so the learner can understand and apply it in multiple ways. For a teacher, this means developing strategies that reach and teach a wide range of learners.

For example, if you are teaching the concept of telling time, you must understand the knowledge level of every student, their learning style preferences, and what ability they already have at performing this skill. You create a lesson with different levels of complexity that reaches all the students in the class through content, process, or product.

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How do teachers achieve that level of knowing their students?

Teachers gather information from the beginning of the year. They talk to parents, they observe their students, they gather information from surveys, they interact with their students, and they encourage students to reflect on their own learning. It’s an on-going dialogue from August to June, and as teachers know more about each student, they can help children know more about themselves as learners.

When people hear “student assessment,” they think about standardized tests. What do you think about?

When talking about student assessment, I always use the phrase, “it’s not a snapshot; it’s a photo album.” From August to June, you look at the standards you must attain, but you also look at the big picture, evaluating the overall performance of a child. When you gather data, you don’t just take it in. You use it to determine an action plan for each child’s development as a learner.

What appealed to you about relocating to Colorado?

Five years ago, my husband and I decided that we wanted to be open to change in our lives, and so I had been talking to different schools for all these years, waiting for the right opportunity. My husband and I are enthusiastic campers, and we had often camped in Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado, so we were very interested in this area. Then this opportunity came along, I talked to Dr. Davis on the phone, and I was hooked. He was already thinking 10 to 20 years into the future about what education should feel and look like. We were ping-ponging ideas, and I knew I had to learn more.

When you visited CA, what did you notice?

There is such a sense of community on the campus; everyone was so friendly and kind, and that kindness permeated every building and action I experienced. Students were shooting rockets off in the middle of campus, and Fourth Graders were learning about National Parks, and I could see how enthusiastic students were about learning. It was clear that teachers are invested in their students and go above and beyond to make sure they are successful. I could feel the energy on campus, and it felt comfortable; I felt my skills would be helpful, and I would be nurtured as a leader.
CA by the numbers

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CA’s goal is to compete at the highest level possible in each sport and to provide students with the opportunity for growth through individual and team participation, emphasizing positive group involvement, fun, good sportsmanship, a strong commitment to student effort, and respect for coaches, officials, fellow team members, and opponents.


Five athletic fields, two gymnasiums, a field house, rock climbing and bouldering center, outdoor swimming pool, fitness center, cross-country trail, eight tennis courts, two full-time athletic trainers, and a full-time strength and conditioning coach.

Competitive options include:
- baseball
- basketball (boys and girls)
- cross country (coed)
- field hockey (girls)
- golf (boys and girls)
- ice hockey
- lacrosse (boys and girls)
- rock climbing (coed)
- soccer (boys and girls)
- swimming (girls)
- tennis (boys and girls)
- ultimate Frisbee (coed)
- volleyball (girls)

(continued on page 18)

Learning About Fake News

The term “fake news” has entered the vernacular in recent years, but there is nothing phony about the study done by distinguished researchers at Stanford and New York University titled “Trends in the Diffusion of Misinformation on Social Media.” Those researchers recently published their findings after studying 570 fake news websites and 10,240 fake news stories on Facebook and Twitter over a three-year period.

Not too far behind them in the study of fake news are Colorado Academy’s Seventh Grade students studying digital literacy in their “Outside the Box: Critical and Creative Thinking” course.

Digital literacy

Outside the Box is a yearlong social studies course designed to help students examine contemporary social issues from a variety of perspectives. Digital literacy is just one of many topics students tackle. “Our students are inundated with an enormous amount of information,” says Middle School social studies teacher Forbes Cone. “We have an obligation to give them the tools to make sense of that information.”

Teachers introduce the concept of digital literacy by asking students to consider key questions: What is news? What makes news newsworthy? What is bias? What is the role of news as democracy’s watchdog? How can you recognize a fake news story?

“There was a time when you would read something and have reasonable confidence in the editorial process,” Cone says. “There was possible bias, but at least the content was not made up. Now anything can be published and look authoritative, so how can students filter between reliable and fake information?”

Fake tweets and First Amendment test

Working in small groups, some students created surveys with examples of fake and real tweets and asked respondents—including younger students, older students, faculty, and staff—to distinguish the real from the fake. They had to design the survey, figure out how to deliver it, collect and analyze their data, and present their findings to their class. Fraser Smith’s group titled their survey “Ridiculous or Real?” One example in the survey appeared to be a tweet from Carolina Panther Quarterback Cam Newton: “Participation trophies are a joke and encourage kids to be lazy.” Another appeared to be from Los Angeles Chargers QB Geno Smith: “I been studying this whole flat earth vs. globe thing…and I may be with Kyrie on this…b4 you judge do some HW but what do you guys think?” So which of those tweets is real, and which is fake? Keep reading to find out.

For the students, having to create fake tweets created a whole new understanding of how easy it is to fool people. “Students have to switch positions from being the student to the teacher,” Cone says. “That requires a much deeper understanding.”

Fraser confirms his teacher’s observation. “It made me
more aware of fake news, verifying sources, knowing that what I am reading may not be true, and it helped me look at news in general."

Another group of students did a survey researching how well students in different grades, as well as faculty and staff, understand their rights under the First Amendment. Basing their questions on research of Supreme Court decisions, they asked respondents to decide whether the First Amendment protected students’ right to peacefully protest at school, their right to buy violent video games without parental consent, and the right of a news organization to publish false information that damages someone’s reputation if it is done unintentionally. How would you have done on that survey? Again, keep reading if you are curious.

**What students learned**

The Seventh Grade collected data from their surveys and analyzed it by grade, gender, role at the school (student, faculty, staff) and learned, in general, that students who had already taken CA’s course in digital literacy were best equipped with the tools to spot fake news.

How well would you have done? In the case of the First Amendment survey, all three of the examples are protected. In the case of the tweets, only the tweet from Geno Smith is real.

And the distinguished researchers in whose footsteps CA students are following? Their research led to this conclusion, among others:

“User interactions with false content rose steadily on both Facebook and Twitter through the end of 2016. Since then, however, interactions with false content have fallen sharply on Facebook while continuing to rise on Twitter…”

It’s a conclusion that reinforces CA’s commitment to develop students’ evidence-based reasoning skills—especially in the midst of an environment in which falsehoods can masquerade as truth. □
Extreme Physiology

Ever since her Freshman year at Colorado Academy, Senior Lena Schneck has wanted to become a physician. Her parents and her extended family are doctors—and she is fascinated by neuroscience, physiology, and learning how the body works. “My parents have taught me that through medicine you can advance science,” Schneck says. “I love the idea that I will be able to serve my community and help people.”

Her CA classmate Mac Behrhorst also wants to study medicine, with a focus on trauma and critical care. When Schneck and Behrhorst signed up for Upper School Honors Physiology, taught by veteran instructor Dani Meyers, both found that they had discovered a path to their passion, a course that offers an introduction to pre-medicine curriculum at the high school level.

“I absolutely love it, because it’s so interactive,” Schneck says. “Rather than just learn philosophy, you learn about real-life experiences.”

“I knew from the first day that I would love it,” Behrhorst adds. “On day one, we dissected a sheep pluck, which includes the heart, lungs, and trachea, to learn about different pulmonary disorders and diseases. Sheep have systems like we do, so this was real!”

That lab on day one provides a foundation for the entire course, which is based on the medical consequence of exposing human beings to extreme conditions. What happens to the circulatory system when a person is deprived of water in the desert? What happens to the digestive system if someone is stranded in the ocean? How does human respiration change in very deep water and at high altitude? How does the immune system respond to jungle diseases? How do humans react to the extreme cold of the Arctic?

Meyers wants students to study physiology in the context of stories. “I taught anatomy out of a textbook to college students for years, and I felt like I was teaching a vocabulary list,” she says. “You remember a story so much better than anything else, so I teach this course through the stories of real people.”

‘Working with their hands’

In place of the typical heavyweight physiology textbook, Meyers’ course focuses on labs, with background reading on human experience: Surviving the Extremes: A Doctor’s Journey to the Limits of Human Endurance, by Kenneth Kamler; Phantoms in the Brain: Probing the Mysteries of the Human Mind, by Sandra Blakeslee and V.S. Ramachandran; and The Man who Mistook his Wife for a Hat, by Oliver Sacks.

Visit the class on any given day, and students will likely be working on a lab. For their study of lung function, they traveled to the top of Berthoud Pass, and at 11,306 feet, they tested their own lung function, checking how long they could hold their breath and also doing cardio activities for three minutes to check the vital capacity of their lungs. Then, they repeated

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the same activities on the CA campus to compare the data.

During the sheep blood lab, students learned how osmosis affects red blood cells by creating an intravenous solution for a sheep. “We were looking at an isotonic solution with a salt or sugar molecule to create an IV that would be effective in a sheep,” Behrhorst explains. “You learn how IVs are effective in humans.”

In their “fish lab” the students studied how much oxygen fish need to absorb to stay alive and compared their data to human beings. They also tested their own blood to study their blood type and the ratio of red to white blood cells. “Blood was the basis of everything we studied,” Schneck says. “It was really cool to learn about my own blood.”

In the course, students built their own spectrometers, created natural antibiotics, and designed their own experiments. “I want them to walk away from their computers,” Meyers says. “The goal is to have them working with their hands.”

‘I will remember what I learned for a long time’

The course serves as a cautionary tale for students who might find extreme challenges enticing, particularly in the unit that looks at respiration underwater. Behrhorst explains how, if you surface too quickly, you can experience decompression sickness (“the bends”) even in relatively shallow water. Schneck talks authoritatively about how staying underwater too long can result in nitrogen narcosis, which causes irrational euphoria or anxiety.

While Schneck and Behrhorst are looking ahead to a future in science, they emphasize that the course would be interesting for any student. “It is one of the best science classes I have ever taken,” Schneck says. “You learn so much, and I know I will remember what I learned for a long time.”
Writer’s Workshop makes writing fun!

When Andrew Esposito began working on a personal narrative in Jessica Ohly’s Fifth Grade Writer’s Workshop, his first effort was titled “My Small Incident.” Here’s a short excerpt from his story about a wheelie gone wrong.

I was biking. I like biking. I also like popping wheelies, so that’s what I did. I’d been practicing my wheelies for a month now, and I thought I was pretty good. So there I was, popping my wheelies. Then I tried to take it to the next level (emphasis on ‘tried’).

Within the next few weeks in Writer’s Workshop, it was Andrew’s writing that moved to the next level, developing in ways that would be obvious to even a casual reader—he painted scenes with words, he tried new techniques, he experimented with dialogue, and his language and sentence structure evolved in complexity. Take a look at an excerpt from his final piece in the unit, “The Bad Valve.”

I’m in the zone, playing well and focused on nothing else. I hit the E nice and strong, slamming down on the first and second valves, immediately moving on to the next note, a B, but it turns into a weird A because the first valve is sticking.

“How am I supposed to practice like this?” I ask my trumpet as I watch the first valve rising slowly…. 

Now I’m worried because my grandma and grandpa are coming and my grandpa also plays trumpet. Also, guess why they are coming? My first trumpet recital. So yeah, pressure’s on…..

I say a little prayer to whatever almighty force might be out there in the hopes that when I get home, my trumpet will be fixed and run out the door.

The evolution of Andrew’s writing didn’t happen by accident. It was part of the systematic program of writing used in the Lower School, the Lucy Calkins Units of Study for Teaching Writing, developed at the Teachers College at Columbia University. The method has sparked great enthusiasm from Colorado Academy Lower School teachers, many of whom have received special training in this curriculum.

“Every student can be successful with this approach, and as a result they blossom,” says Second Grade teacher Jessica McCoy. “When I tell them that writing is on our schedule for the day, they all cheer.”

“Students are naturally writers,” says Ohly, who first learned about the Lucy Calkins method in graduate school. “This methodology makes them very independent. They are not waiting for a teacher to give them a prompt. They learn that writers are their own job captains.”

How the Lucy Calkins method works

The Calkins method identifies a variety of types of writing that all Lower School students, starting in Kindergarten, can do: personal narrative, information/expository, persuasive, essays, poetry, and fiction, among others.

Each day, a teacher presents a mini-lesson introducing
a singular writing skill, a teaching point, or a strategy students can use in their writing that day, every day, and every year. The lessons are wide-ranging—anything from punctuation or ways to look for evidence in a text to support an opinion. Students take the lessons and move straight to independent practice with guidance from their teacher, writing for as long as an hour every day. Some students will take the new lesson and challenge themselves during the writing session. Other students will be practicing previously taught skills.

At the end of their writing time, students gather to share and offer peer reviews of each other’s work, often working with writing partners.

“It’s an approach that is very not teacher-centered,” Ohly says. “You start off assuming they will forget the teaching points, and then you come across a student who is using a new technique days later, because it stuck with them, and they are integrating it into their writing.”

Try to interview the students during Writer’s Workshop, and you have a sense you are interrupting some fast-flowing creative juices. In Ohly’s class, Claire Prior is working on a story about a world where the color of someone’s eyes determines what they will do for their entire life. Her main character, Aspen, has deep indigo eyes and does not want to follow the rules that have been predetermined for her. “I really like writing fiction,” Claire says. “I like to be able to create what’s going to happen.”

And at another desk, Andrew Esposito is working on his next piece. “Ms. Ohly gives us teaching points and those really help,” he says. “I start writing, I critique myself, that gets me into the flow. I just tweaked this story and changed the moral I had in mind. I followed a plan, and that made it better.”
Big Data

Who was most likely to survive when the Titanic crashed into that iceberg on its ill-fated maiden voyage? And who was least likely to survive?

Colorado Academy Senior Ben Freeman can answer those question confidently, and not because he has a hunch or is guessing. He knows the answers because he has studied the Titanic’s passenger log and dissected the data of who lived and who died by gender and age. He couches his answer in the context of Director James Cameron’s Titanic, which it turns out, was historically accurate.

“Rose would have been the most likely to survive, because when we looked at women in first class between the ages of 15 and 18, 100 percent survived,” Freeman says. “But males traveling in steerage were the least likely to survive—so that’s Jack in a nutshell.”

Freeman’s Titanic research was just one of the data study projects done by students in Austin Harvey’s Upper School course, “Business Intelligence, SQL, & Data Visualization.” The class takes students deep into a world of data, gives them the training and tools to ask the right questions, prepares them to analyze the answers, and helps them find the true story data tells in any context—business, science, accounting, human behavior, world events.

“You cannot spin data,” Harvey says. “Students should learn how to let the data speak for itself, because data can put truth into the world.”

‘Oh, my gosh, I got it!’

Visit Harvey’s class on a typical day and you will find students staring earnestly at their computers where there might be hundreds, or thousands, of rows of data. What might seem overwhelming is just another day’s challenge for students in this class. Using publicly available data sets, students analyze national park attendance, retail sales in Iowa, NFL player statistics, cats vs. dogs in different states, even movie data.

By the end of the course, students can move smoothly among three different data analysis tools: Excel, SQL (Standard Query Language), and Tableau. Harvey points out that students who know those three software tools have a high degree of job preparedness. He reminds students that someday in a job they may be asked, “How are sales in Colorado?” and being able to answer that question accurately will have real-world ramifications. But even more important to Harvey than career goals is the fundamental education in data his course provides. “Our world is inundated with data,” he says. “This course helps students become smart consumers of data and develop a sense of the right questions to ask and the right interpretation of the answers.”

The path to the answers is not always without roadblocks. As students work in small groups in the class, there are plenty of furrowed brows as real-world and computational thinking collide. Harvey moves from group to group gently coaching students who may be stuck.

“That code may need an extra line.” “Add a filtering command.” “Drill down; you’re really close.”

Then you hear a student exclaim, “Oh my gosh, I got it!” and you can see frustration produce persistence and learning.

‘You can analyze data in any field’

Harvey emphasizes that this course is “exactly for students...”
who have no experience coding.” That was good news for Junior Adeline De Leeuw.

“I thought I would never code, but now I understand coding, and that is very helpful,” De Leeuw says. “This course is a good fit for everyone, both beginning coders and students with experience.”

For her project, De Leeuw and her classmate Genevieve Howard analyzed popular baby names from 1915 through 2012 by state and looked at how name choices had changed. She discovered that during that period, popular girls’ names evolved so that no 1915 popular name remains today except one—Mary. In contrast, several boys’ names maintained their popularity through the years including “William” and “James.”

“The subject matter I was analyzing wasn’t really serious now, but it will be very serious in the future,” says De Leeuw, who plans to study nanobiotechnology in college with an eye on a career in business or economics. “As long as you have the tools, you can analyze data in any field.”

Freeman also sees the usefulness of this course for his future. “My other passion is science, where there is a good chance I will have large data sets to work through,” he says. “Now I can recognize what story the data will tell, finding the important trends in 12,000-plus data sets that I wouldn’t otherwise have been able to find.”

“What students are learning is how to deconstruct a simple idea that appears complex on the surface but has a scaffolded, understandable structure to it,” Harvey adds. “Data is the way students can acquire this skill.”
CA by the numbers

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project linked to a student’s areas of interest. Upper School students also run the annual Students H.O.P.E. event, which provides food, clothing, holiday gifts, supplies and immunizations to nearly 2,000 low income people annually.

Of 25 active clubs in the Upper School, 15 are service-based.

Annual Community Leadership Team retreat for approximately 22 seniors selected to mentor younger students in the Upper School.

Advisory System

Each Upper School advisory averages 10-12 students and remains together all four years of Upper School; Middle School advisory groups range from 10-15 and change at each grade level.

Both Middle and Upper School advisories meet daily, share snacks, information, and insights, and examine character education and social and developmental issues; Counselors are on staff for all three school divisions.

Unique Programs

- Pre-K–12 assembly program
- Kindergarten-Senior buddy program
- K–12 Computer Science/Engineering & Design
- Intentional Pre-K–12 character development program
- Lower and Middle School ThinkingLAB Projects
- 7th Grade “Outside the Box” Creativity and Problem-Solving Course
- 9th Grade Global Perspectives course based on Design Thinking
- REDI Lab: a 12-week self-directed learning experience for Juniors

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STEAM is cool

No matter which mini-course students, parents, and grandparents chose at the annual STEAM night, they found themselves deeply and joyfully engaged in science, technology, engineering, art/design, and math.

Students and their parents learned about the eye by dissecting cow eyes, tried eating bugs, created wearable works of art, completed design challenges building ramps and pathways, met a variety of reptiles, coded with Dash and Dot, blew giant bubbles, and smashed rocks to find the crystals inside. After a night of discovery, everyone agreed—STEAM is cool! □
Teaching for Artistic Behavior

What do you remember from art class in elementary school? Odds are, you recall receiving a hand-out of a drawing (a leaf in October, a turkey in November, a snowflake in December, and a flower in May), and your creative experience started and stopped with the colors of crayon you chose.

But if you walk into Stashia Taylor’s Lower School art class at Colorado Academy, you will observe something quite different. Students are gathered in half a dozen small groups. They are busy preparing for a collaborative music and art project—their original play “Elemental Dreams” about earth, water, fire, and wind explored through dream-inspired images, sound, and works of art.

Fifth Graders Cooper Martin and Henry Cowperthwaite are part of one group creating artistic masks that performers will wear. Macey McKean is sewing accessories for a costume and bemoaning that her needle isn’t sharp enough. Keren Laizer and Piper Morris wield paintbrushes as they create props. Evi Sorensen is rolling cardboard to create scenery. Pritika Lingam-Nattamai is sketching, designing a costume and proud to show off the filmy materials she plans to use in its creation.

As for Taylor, there seems to be half a dozen of her as she floats around the room from group to group, helping and demonstrating, but also prompting students to solve their own problems. “What do we need for the cape?” she asks one group. “What material would be best to create movement?”

This is what is known as TAB in action. TAB is the acronym for “Teaching for Artistic Behavior.” Taylor sums up the philosophy simply: “It means students have a choice in how they develop as an artist.”

What is TAB?

Taylor was working as a graphic designer when she started volunteering for a Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado youth program and discovered she had a passion for mentoring and teaching young people. “As an artist, I loved the conceptual development and problem solving with each piece,” she says. “I wanted to help kids discover their own passions.”

She studied a variety of methods for art education with one question in mind: “What is the role of art education in a school today?” She believes that the answer is to understand that different students have different needs from art, and the methodology that best meets those needs can be found in TAB, a concept that originated in Massachusetts classrooms more than four decades ago. Students in TAB programs experience artistic thinking and making through self-direction, and teachers respond to their progress with a flexible curriculum that adapts to their emergent ideas.

“So many people say I’m not an artist, I just can’t draw,” Taylor says. “But drawing is just one tiny piece of a much larger world of creating. I want to expand on what it means to be an artist or a creator and TAB helps with that.”
**TAB in action**

What TAB looks like in action varies from day to day. Traditionally, students learning how to paint with watercolors might study a Georgia O’Keeffe painting and then imitate it. But Taylor points out that great artists are pioneers; teaching students only to imitate inhibits that pioneer spirit. When she introduces paint, she gives students a day where they can take time to explore the new medium. Maybe they will paint with a brush—maybe they will paint with a different tool, maybe they will discover an entirely new style. Students share their discoveries and apply newfound techniques unbiased. Only then does Taylor bring contemporary artworks into the classroom for students to evaluate and gain inspiration from.

When Sixth Grade students explore the techniques of surrealist artists like Dali, Picasso, or Magritte, they start by asking the same questions and playing the same games these pioneer artists used to spark their ideas. “Exquisite Corpse,” in which drawings are created by a group of people with each person unaware of what previous players had created, is a classic game played by Surrealists—and in CA art classes. Students look at the same ideas Surrealists explored about fantasy, reality, and the subconscious. They then develop their own pieces; choosing their media, subject matter, and techniques they want to focus on. “They learn skills and concepts without losing their own style,” Taylor says. “Artists have so many unique ways to create work about things they care about.”

**What is artistic behavior?**

A TAB-based curriculum outlines specific behaviors, “habits of mind,” that are encouraged no matter what media, content, or subject the artist uses.

- **Develop your craft** – improve technique, composition, and skill
- **Engage and persist** – problem solve when you encounter frustrations
- **Envision** – picture mentally where you are headed
- **Express** – create a work that conveys an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning
- **Observe** – look at the world more closely
- **Reflect** – talk with others about your work
- **Stretch and explore** – reach beyond your capacities
- **Understand the arts community** – interact with other artists and become familiar with contemporary art

Taylor points out that these behaviors, while learned in an art studio, cross over to many different disciplines. “Engaging, persisting, reflecting—these are universal skills in an art studio, science lab, sports field,” Taylor says. “Whatever their path is, these skills are universal, and in our studio, students are encouraged to look at a problem from many angles and envision multiple solutions.”

Taylor’s Fifth Graders may know nothing about the origins of TAB, but they know what they like about art class and they can’t wait to tell anyone who asks.

**Philip Foreman:** “In art you get to do what you want to do. That’s so different from math where there is only one right answer.”

**Piper Morris:** “Art is where you can do whatever your imagination dreams of.”

**Luis Rodriguez:** “Art is a place where you can be free.”

With TAB, Taylor believes she is setting the foundation for artistic behavior in Lower and Middle School that will continue as students progress. “Students develop their own way of thinking and explore a lot of different media,” she says. “As they mature creatively, they will have discovered their creative strengths and be able to communicate their incredibly unique perspective.”
Early on a snowy Saturday morning at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in Aurora, the doors have just opened, and already a large group of Colorado Academy students have gathered in the main reading room.

At one table, CA Senior Bennett Liu sits with 15-year-old Wah Ya, a Freshman at Aurora West High School, under her mother’s watchful eye. Wah Ya wants help as she prepares to take college entrance exams. “Which do you prefer, ACT or SAT?” Liu asks her. “SAT,” she replies. “That was my favorite, too,” Liu says, and they get down to work with a thick SAT manual.

At another table, Sophomore Catherine O’Halloran is helping a young woman who is preparing to take an American citizenship exam. At other tables, Sophomore Mackenzie Wagner, Junior Hayden Wolfe, and Freshman Wyatt Rubey are helping children learn to read.

Instead of sleeping in on a weekend, the CA students have traveled from far corners of the Denver Metro Area to fulfill the mission of Project KARE, a CA Club founded by Liu to educate Karen refugees displaced by political unrest in their homeland.

Except for Liu, none of the CA students had even heard of the Karen people before their experience with Project KARE. Now, they are committed to helping these refugees achieve success in a new country.

‘I definitely have more appreciation for my teachers’

The Karen are indigenous to the Thailand-Burma (Myanmar) border region in Southeast Asia and are one of the many ethnic groups in Burma. Decades of war and ethnic cleansing have driven hundreds of thousands Karen people from their homes, many into refugee camps. Liu first heard about the plight of these people when, through his uncle, he met local refugee families who were able to come to the United States with lottery visas.

“What intrigued me about them is that they didn’t take anything for granted,” Liu says. “We take freedom for granted. They do not.”

When Liu received CA’s Jennifer Wu Memorial Fellowship, he decided to use the opportunity to do summer volunteer work at a school which serves the Karen refugees at the Mae Ra Moe Refugee Camp on the border of Thailand and Burma.

“English grammar was very difficult for them, and only the teacher had a textbook,” Liu says. “I would say and write a word and they would repeat it.”
If he assigned homework, he was the one who suffered. “With 5 classes and 100 students in each, homework hurt me,” Liu says. “But they really needed to hear feedback. I definitely have more appreciation for my teachers!”

‘Yet they can find hope’

Liu knew when he returned from the Mae Ra Moe Refugee Camp that he might not be able to go back because of the uncertain political situation in the area, but he still felt connected to the people he had helped. “The trip was transformative for me,” he says. “I wanted to find a way to give back.”

He found a way by creating a new CA Club, Project KARE, which is a local arm of the international organization Project KARE, Karen Alliance for Refugee Education. He made a Town Hall announcement at CA, and to his astonishment, more than 150 CA students signed up to help.

On that early Saturday morning, Wagner had left her friends behind at a sleep-over to tutor. “I can go to CA, which is such a good school,” she says. “Helping others makes me more grateful for the education I am provided.”

Liu, who is bound for Stanford University next year, hopes the club will continue after he leaves CA. The club’s mission has allowed him to give back to people who educated him for one summer, a people whose language he does not know, and yet who were able to teach him a very important life lesson.

“They are caught between two worlds,” Liu says. “And yet they can find hope.”
Global Water Challenge

You could travel the globe without ever leaving Colorado Academy’s Middle School if you were lucky enough to attend the 14th Annual Sixth Grade Global Water Challenge. As students journeyed from Mozambique to Malawi, from Madagascar to Mali, with stops in Uganda, Afghanistan, Haiti, Ethiopia, and Vietnam among others, they became change makers, passionately invested in helping countries that otherwise might just be a pin on a world map. Everywhere they traveled, students focused on one problem—water. Ultimately, they invented myriad solutions to the problems many countries have accessing, treating, and distributing clean, sustainable water.

With research in hand, the students develop 10-minute skits to illustrate the challenges and solutions for water issues in their country. The skits demand costumes, make-up, props, even audio of a baby crying. A total of 17 teams presented skits twice to 6 panels of judges. The 31 volunteer judges come from varying backgrounds, including medicine, nursing, and international sustainable water experience. “The judges love creative storytelling in the student skits,” Counterman says. “It shows that the students can have fun while they are learning.”

The judges quizzed students on the practicality, economics, sustainability, and political implications of the water solutions they demonstrated in their skits. “The Question and Answer time is my favorite part of the Global Water Challenge skits, student teams learn firsthand about a real-life challenge in many countries—finding water. They practice good team membership using LARC (leadership, agreement, responsibility, and communication).

Again and again, students echoed the words that Sixth Grader Leah Blake told the judges: “I am just so super grateful that I have clean water.”

end they wow me by how eloquent they are.”

In the course of creating their Global Water Challenge skits, student teams learn firsthand about a real-life challenge in many countries—finding water. They practice good team
How to Apply
We welcome your interest in Colorado Academy!

We are currently taking applications for the 2020-2021 school year. On our website, www.coloradoacademy.org, you will find a link to our application portal, videos that highlight different aspects of our community, answers to the most frequently asked questions, as well as testing registration and information on applying for financial aid.*

For your planning purposes, here is a checklist for the Admission process:

☐ Attend Admission Parent Preview on October 25 or 30, 2019.
☐ Schedule a Campus Tour (if unable to attend Parent Preview)
☐ Submit online application form as soon as possible
☐ Schedule a Student Visit Day & Parent Meeting
☐ Arrange Applicant Testing
☐ Request Transcripts and Teacher Recommendations be sent directly to CA

The best way to get to know CA is to visit. Please call the Admission Office at 303-914-2513 to schedule a personalized campus tour. Other opportunities to see CA in action include: SPEAK lecture events, music recitals, theater productions, and athletic contests. We start taking applications for the 2020-2021 school year in mid-September.

CA is a community that values and honors difference and seeks to be a place where students of all ages, and families of all backgrounds, are understood, represented, and highly regarded. Many people visit our campus and immediately notice our welcoming atmosphere, our engaged and engaging students, and the multi-age interaction that is fostered through our Pre-K through Grade 12 student body.

*How to make CA affordable for your family? Apply for financial aid. Applications for Financial Aid are considered separately from the Application for Admission. A link to the financial aid portal can be found under the Admission tab of the CA website.

Colorado Academy Mission Statement

A dynamic liberal arts and sciences program that challenges students ethically, academically, artistically, and athletically creates the foundation of Colorado Academy. Teachers, students, parents, and staff foster trusting and respectful relationships, enhancing our thriving school family. Students pursue excellence and seek to become life-long learners and contributors in our local and international communities.

CA is an independent, coeducational, college preparatory day school.
Colorado Academy does not discriminate in any of its programs, procedures or practices on the basis of age, color, disability, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, political affiliation, race, religion or creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or other protected classifications defined by applicable law.