

# Academy of Classical Studies Newsletter

February 2023

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## Important Dates

3/1: Juniors take SAT at AHS

3/13 - 3/17: Spring Break

4/15: [All In for Austin High Event](#)

3/23: [ACS Speaker Series](#) - PAC

4/10 - 4/17: [Senior trip to Italy](#)

## The Academy of Classical Studies 2022-2023

### ACS Parent Board Update

The Academy of Classical Studies parent board works closely with **ACS Assistant Principal, Elizabeth Jenkins**, as well as **Director of Academies, Lacy Blakley**, in planning and supporting the staff and students of the Classical Academy.

**ACS Parent Board leadership**    *Next meeting: Thursday, February 16th @ 11:30am (via Zoom)*

President - Jacy Donovan

VP PTSA liaison - Leslie Davenport

Volunteer Coordinator - Lauren Whelan

Parent Mingle - Lily Lloyd, Megan Sink

Teacher Appreciation - Elise Bridges, Molly Jones

Speaker Series - Denise Belkin Anderson (**seeking co-chairs**)

Fundraising & Community Partners - Jacy Donovan, Robyn Malloy

Senior Breakfast - Shelley Kilday, Jennifer Foucher, Amy Corbett

Newsletter & Secretary - Amy Beisenherz

### Membership

We are always welcoming new members! Additionally, to continue our popular [Speaker Series](#), we are looking for **co-chairs to assist Denise Belkin Anderson** in securing speakers and coordinating the webinar with our Academy Director. Please reach out to board president Jacy Donovan [j.donovan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:j.donovan@sbcglobal.net).

## ACS Fundraising

### 2022 Community Partners Campaign

Community Partners is an annual fall fundraiser that brings AHS families and local businesses together to raise funds for travel scholarships, field trips, and curriculum-based learning expeditions. **More than 25% of our students require financial assistance** and Community Partners donations help to ensure **equal opportunity** for all students, regardless of a student's ability to pay. WE ALL TRAVEL, OR WE DON'T TRAVEL AT ALL!

☀️ **THANK YOU ACS COMMUNITY!** ☀️

Stay tuned for an update on total funds raised thanks to your generous donations!

It's not too late to contribute & make a tax-deductible donation now **CLICK HERE:**

**[ACS COMMUNITY PARTNERS](#)**

<https://form.jotform.com/212635159776162>

#### 2022-2023 Academy-based Travel for Academy for Classical Studies

- \* **9th Grade:** Truth, Beauty, & Goodness Scavenger Hunt; Pillar Project Field Experience
- \* **10th Grade:** World Religions Field Experience and Humanity's Connection with Nature; Overnight Learning Expedition in Marfa, TX
- \* **11th Grade:** Students enrolled in AP US History/American Studies travel to New Mexico
- \* **12th Grade:** ACS Culminating Learning Expedition to Italy

**All IN For Austin High** AHS parents, alumni, faculty and community supporters are invited to join us at the ALL IN for Austin High Party & Fundraiser to celebrate our beloved school and raise funds to promote academic excellence in all academies and for all students!

#### **All IN for Austin High Party & Fundraiser**

Saturday, April 15, 2023 6-9 p.m.

Lions Municipal Golf Course

2901 Enfield Road

\*This event will be held outdoors



Ticket sales & sponsorships for this adult-only event support the Austin High Excellence Fund, which funds:

- Our innovative and inclusive four academy structure
- Travel and field trip opportunities
- Challenging and diverse academic experiences
- A wide variety of electives and extracurricular opportunities

***Mark your calendars and look for more event and sponsorship details soon!***

Shannon Grethel and Lauren Whelan - ALL IN for Austin High Chairs

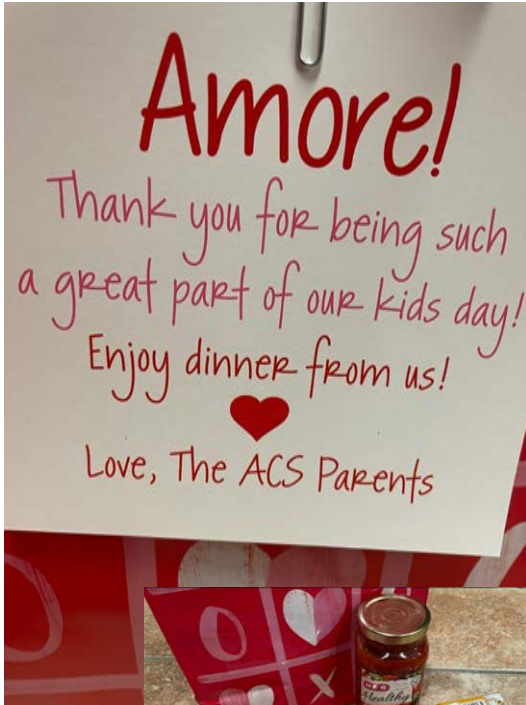
## Teacher Appreciation

Our ACS Parent Board plans teacher appreciation events throughout the year to show our Classical Academy teachers and staff how grateful we are for their hard work and dedication.

★ **THANK YOU!** ★

Our ACS teachers and staff would like to thank ACS students and their families for thinking of them!

*Valentine's Day ACS parent surprise!*



*Appreciation luncheon for ACS teachers & staff*



## ACS Speaker Series

**THANK YOU** to **Jeremiah Kuria** and all the students that joined us for our last [Speaker Series](#) event. We were honored to learn about the impactful work of the **Ubuntu Life** partnership that uses the power of global commerce to create social impact for mothers and children in Kenya. If you are curious about the organization, please check out their online shop with beautiful handmade gifts at <https://www.ubuntu.life>.

If your student attended, remind them to make sure their civic engagement points are logged. If you were not able to join, a recording of the webinar is available on our ACS website [here](#).

Please join us for our next **very special** event - an onsite documentary film screening and live Q&A with the film's writer and director, Ben Masters!

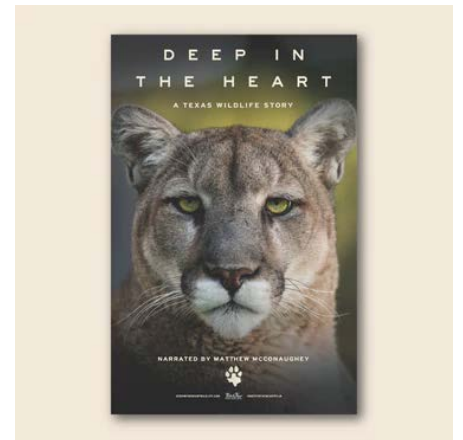
**Thursday, March 23: A Texas wildlife story - [Deep in the Heart](#) with writer/director [Ben Masters](#)**



**Ben Masters** is a filmmaker and writer specializing in wildlife and adventure stories. He is most known for directing the feature-length documentary *The River and The Wall* (SXSW 2019 award winner) and for producing *Unbranded* (Mountainfilm 2015 Audience Award winner). Masters studied wildlife biology at Texas A&M University and founded [Fin and Fur Films](#), a production company specializing in short films featuring wildlife research, conservation, and activism. A proud Texan, Masters loves riding a good horse through new country, filming wildlife stories that haven't been documented before, and using movies to help conserve wildlife and wild places.

**Official Trailer:** [Deep in the Heart](#)

[Deep in the Heart](#) is a visually stunning celebration of what makes Texas unique — its diverse landscapes and remarkable wildlife behavior that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. Told through the eyes of wildlife species ranging from the mysterious blind catfish to the elusive mountain lion, the story follows our ever-changing relationship with the natural world and showcases our ability to destroy, conserve, and recover wildlife and the habitat we mutually depend on.



Narrated by Matthew McConaughey and featuring state-of-the-art cinematography, this family-friendly film journeys from the highest peaks in West Texas, through our aquifers, rivers, and bays, and deep into the Gulf of Mexico. Deep in the Heart aims to conserve our remaining wild places, to show the connectivity of water and wildlife, and to recognize Texas' conservation importance on a continental scale.

[Click here to sign up or scan QR code!](#)

A promotional graphic for the film 'Deep in the Heart: A Texas Wildlife Story'. It features a tiger walking through a forest. The title 'DEEP IN THE HEART' and subtitle 'A TEXAS WILDLIFE STORY' are at the top. Below the title, there are two columns of text. The left column is titled 'On-Campus Field Trip!' and lists two bullet points. The right column is titled 'Thursday, March 23rd - During 5th and 6th Period' and lists two bullet points. A QR code is located in the bottom left corner of the graphic.


**DEEP IN THE HEART**  
A TEXAS WILDLIFE STORY

**On-Campus Field Trip!**

- Join us to watch a visually stunning celebration of what makes Texas unique!
- Filmmakers aim to conserve Texas' remaining wild places and recognize the importance of conservation

**Thursday, March 23rd - During 5th and 6th Period**

- ACS Students have priority for sign-up
- Scan the QR code in the bottom left corner to sign-up!



Classical Academy students will receive **3 civic engagement points** for attending this event added to x2vol.

Thanks to **Denise Belkin Anderson** for taking the lead on the ACS Speaker Series. **Denise could use the help of one or two additional co-chairs to assist** in securing speakers and coordinating the webinars with our Academy Director. We are always working on scheduling more speakers. Please forward recommendations to Denise at [denisebelkin@gmail.com](mailto:denisebelkin@gmail.com).

## ACS Travel

### Class of 2023 Italy Trip

April 10-17th: The Italy trip is booked for ACS Seniors to Florence & Rome. Stay tuned for a travel meeting to be announced soon!

### Class of 2024 Italy Trip

Current ACS Juniors, reserve your spot for April 2024! Starting payments now is a great way to make this more financially feasible. Follow this link to sign up today! [www.eftours.com/2556770vb](http://www.eftours.com/2556770vb)

Find more pictures of our last trip on the ACS Website  
<http://www.austinhighclassical.org/italy.html>

Additional travel information for sophomores heading to **Marfa** & juniors traveling to **New Mexico** will be coming out shortly.

General questions about ACS travel may be directed to ACS Assistant Principal, **Elizabeth Jenkins** at [elizabeth.jenkins@austinisd.org](mailto:elizabeth.jenkins@austinisd.org) , 512-414-7207.



## 9th Grade News

### Geometry

Students have been working on proving triangles congruent. We will be moving into right triangles next and then into similar figures. We will have a project with similar figures that will tie into the virtue project that the students have started in ELA.

### English

Students have finished the study of The Four Agreements and are moving into the play Twelve Angry Men, focusing on bias, the agreements, characterization, and analytical writing. Students will also participate in a simulation of the United Nations researching and advocating as a delegate of a country. Topics include reproductive rights of women, the ethical repatriation of artifacts, and ethics of cults. Students begin prep upon their return from Spring Break and will participate in the simulation Thursday, March 30 during 5th and 6th periods.

Students are also in the midst of their virtue project. They have chosen a virtue to track throughout the literature we've read and in other pieces of lit, film, songs, blogs, videos. etc. and will create a digital piece as well as a maker piece. Parents will be able to enjoy the students' virtue projects and creations on the evening of May 17 during our annual parent showcase night.

## World Geography

Geography is in the middle of our 4th Unit, Europe. The students are working on their Passion Projects where the students get to choose their topic of research as long as they can relate it back to Europe. They will then teach the class about it in a video presentation that will be watched in small groups for discussions. They've chosen some really cool topics and I'm excited to see what they come up with for it! We have about two weeks left in Europe and then will be moving on to our Africa Unit in February! Keep an eye out for the World Geography Update emails for more information!

## 10th Grade News

We are constantly engaging our Classical Academy sophomores to expand on their discoveries of Truth, Beauty and Goodness as they learn to think logically, write persuasively, speak eloquently, and live ethically.

### English

Students are in the process of finishing the play Antigone. They are looking at how a play written 500+ years B.C.E. is still relevant and how the issues they grappled with in some of the first plays ever written are the same issues people deal with today. They will be required to **Think Logically, Write Persuasively, and Speak Eloquently** in group projects to connect the ancient play to modern issues. Students will later start a biography/autobiography unit with a book of their choice, as well as read the graphic novel *Maus*.

### World History

Students just finished learning about World War I through class lectures and a trench warfare simulation (paper balls only!). They will soon be engaging in a "Paper Cranes for Peace Project" by making origami paper cranes to **Live Ethically** in the hopes of never experiencing nuclear war.

### Algebra II

Students are **Thinking Logically** about polynomial functions, and next unit they will study rational functions. Mr. Fudge will later introduce the Archeological Dig Project (where students will be able to show off their expertise with half-life problems and carbon dating by playing archeologists).

### Chemistry

Students are **Thinking Logically** by exploring the different ways that atoms come together to form materials and the impacts of these bonds on material properties. Students are able to differentiate between materials, such as crystals and metals, and explain why it's unsafe to swim during a thunderstorm. For extra credit on their upcoming exam, students are able to research why some cities salt their roads before an ice storm much like the one we just had here in Austin. They will explain their findings by connecting what we have learned in class about atomic bonding to this specific and important real-world application. They will be moving on to molecules and their structures in the near future.

### Aquatic Science

Students have been challenged to answer the question, "To what extent is Austin's Barton Creek Greenbelt an environmental success story?" Students are diving into the history of the ecosystem and working to identify and describe the various environmental threats to the wildlife inhabiting the area using the Barton Creek Time Stream website.

## 11th Grade News: American Studies

**American Studies** is available for the Academy for Classical Studies and the Academy for Global Studies students only. The English and US History curriculum is similar to the traditional humanities core courses at AHS as far as rigor and learning objectives, but has a more interdisciplinary pedagogy that allows for content alignment, project-based learning, and curricular connections to the ACS and AGS pillars of learning. Students will explore the American experience by analyzing literary and historical texts in order to develop a sophisticated understanding of American history and culture while growing into critical thinkers who effectively use language to communicate ideas.

## 12th Grade News

Seniors do not take ACS-specific courses, but many students are taking electives to help them qualify for the Graduation Distinction from the Academy for Classical Studies. To be eligible for the **Graduation Distinction**, 2023 graduates should:

- Complete 1 year of Latin and 3 Fine Arts/Humanities electives (see approved courses on [ACS website](#)), OR students may take 4 ACS-approved Fine Arts/Humanities electives if they opt out of Latin
- Document 70+ [Civic Engagement Points](#) (this number is adjusted due to Covid), and
- Complete a Senior Seminar Experience

The **Senior Seminar Experience** includes several options: the Service Learning Design Project, the Research/Thesis Track, or completion of an Internship (on-campus and off-campus internships are offered). Seniors who are hoping to earn the Graduation Distinction who are not currently enrolled in a Senior Seminar course for the fall should double check schedules and/or meet with counselors to be sure the Senior Seminar Experience is added to their schedule for the spring.

## Did You Know?

### Civic Engagement Points

[Civic Engagement Points](#) are awarded for civic engagement tasks and activities that align with the Classical Academy pillars of truth, beauty, and goodness. **Check out the list of activities that can earn you points on our Academy website:** [Truth points](#), [beauty points](#), [goodness points](#).

***To earn an ACS Graduation Distinction, civic engagement points must be logged, verified, and approved by May 1 of senior year.***

The goal for civic engagement points is typically 80 points, but the numbers needed for distinction eligibility have been adjusted due to Covid/pandemic issues. Here's a timeline of how we are adjusting back to that expectation:

- Class of 2023: 70 points
- Class of 2024 and beyond: 80 points\*

\*subject to change if we are unable to plan some of our typical experiences that lead to points

For all groups, an additional award (certificate + medal) is given to students who earn 120+ hours. In ACS, this is called the ***Classy Award***. This number did not change, even during the pandemic, because it's an "above and beyond" award.

Keep in mind that the points are only one eligibility requirement. To receive the ACS Graduation Distinction, students also need to have academy-specific **coursework** and complete the **Senior Seminar** Experience:

- Coursework = 3 Fine Arts/Humanities electives + 1 year of Latin OR 4 Fine Arts/Humanities electives, if students opt out of Latin. Those approved electives are listed on the [ACS website](#).
- Senior Seminar for ACS = Thesis, Service Learning Design Project (collaborative), or Internship

For further information, watch this loom screencast explaining Academy graduation distinctions that was recently shared in all senior advisories: [Academy Distinctions](#)



## Fundraising Facts

**Fundraising** at the high school level can be confusing and parents may feel like they are repeatedly being asked for money. Check out [AHS Fundraising 101](#) to understand all the options for supporting our school.

**Donations to ACS Teacher Appreciation efforts** are accepted on an ongoing basis!



## ACS Communications

Newsletters will be sent out via email to all ACS families as well as posted to the ACS website and social media. Please reach out to [Amy Beisenherz](#) with information you would like included in the next newsletter.

Check the [ACS Website](#) for the latest newsletters and information on speaker series, travel, and fundraising.

Make sure to follow [The Academy for Classical Studies at Austin High](#) on Facebook!