



TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

Winter Edition

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How much are we really in control of our lives?

A journal entry by Stefano Corzo

In my opinion, I think that we are in control of our lives for the most part. Some people might say that sometimes they have no control over their life, or that some unknown forces are controlling their actions and their outcomes.

For the most part we are in full control of our own lives, except maybe, for childhood, where our parents or guardians look after our needs. But once we reach that state of self consciousness, moral judgment and awareness (all these vary from person to person), that we are in utter control of what the structure of our lives will appear to be.

The thought that sometimes you have no control over your own life, or that some other kind of forces are manipulating it is foolish. There are many things that could be considered to be these forces such as;

government, environment, social circle, habits and obsessions.

These are all seen as uncontrollable forces that have effects on our lives. For example, many people think that is they live in a bad environment surrounded by drugs, crime or famine they will grow up to be thieves , murderers, etc. This however goes back to saying that in childhood they grew up with no foundation to rely on. It is their duty to bring themselves out of that cloud of ignorance and realize that they do have opportunities and total control of their lives.

In conclusion, each human being is the architect of their own journey in life and the unknown forces are just factors or obstacles that we are surrounded by. We just have to learn how to avoid them, and in case we fall into them, we have to learn to get up and keep on walking. *

Winter Season Festivities

By Stefano Corzo

During the winter season many people think of *Christmas* (probably because of the exposure and propaganda it's given by the media every year) in spite of many other popular holidays celebrated by different kinds of people.

Hanukkah is an eight day Jewish holiday usually starting the 25th day of December or November. It basically consists of lighting the Menorah, a seven branched candelabrum, which is meant to symbolize the burning bush seen by Moses on Mount Sinai. Playing the dreidel game where a four-sided spinning top is spun and according to the inscriptions on each side, a player wins a certain amount of what they are betting on, usually chocolate gold coins.

Another popular winter holiday is *Kwanza*, a long secular holiday honoring African-American heritage, observed from December 26 to January 1. The main tradition is the wearing the traditional African clothing. Also the seven principals of Kwanza are observed; unity, self-determination, collective work, purpose, creativity, and faith.*



Being Detained

By Steven Castillo

Being locked it is nothing fun. It's hard when you're locked up and you can't see your family and loved ones. It is even harder when you're locked up during the holidays especially days like Christmas and New Years. These are days that you spend with your family and people you care for. When you locked up you just sit there and watch the time go by and go by. Things like this can make you go crazy. Juveniles are so used to having freedom and doing anything that they want and all that ended just like that. It doesn't feel good when you have someone wake you up or tell you when you are allowed to go to the bathroom or go eat. Unless you're the type that likes to get locked then go ahead, do your thing. Me, I am the type that likes to do whatever I want. I like to get up when I want and eat when I want. Its really hard for juveniles when they get locked up and they do not have their freedom.*

Special points of interest:

Students personal journal entries.



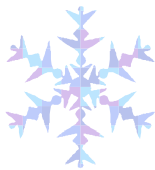
Are we in control?

A journal entry by Melissa Sampson

I think that very little of what happens in our lives is under our control. I feel that we are able to make simple decisions like what we eat, if we are going to take those drugs, or what time we want to go to sleep. Yes, these decisions do have some effects, sometimes major on our lives, but I feel that everything does happen for a reason. We make decisions, but what is it that tells us which way to go when we are stuck on the fence? I do not necessarily believe in god, but I do believe in a higher power greater than ourselves. I feel like that higher power does not know what is going to happen to everybody but he will give them exactly what they deserve in the end; and sometimes what they do not deserve while in the middle. I think they push us to make good and bad decisions. Maybe bad because they want us to learn a lesson or maybe

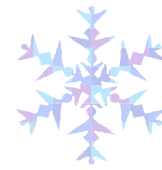
good decisions because we just cannot take another disappointment in our lives. I feel that when bad things happen to us, they are only to make us stronger, no matter how much they hurt. Also when those rare good things happen to us it is a reward for some type of good deed, or behavior. I also believe in karma, which is when you do something bad to somebody that something bad is going to happen right back to you. I have seen this happen in real life many times and that is why I try not to do anything immoral or hurtful to anybody. Sometimes I feel like my life is very out of control. I can't control the way my mother treats me, nor can I control the way anybody treats anyone else. Sometimes I feel that I can't even control the way I treat people. It just happens without me thinking. All I can do is try my best to have a positive effect on people so they do the same to others. When people die, I do not know who controls that. I

suppose the ones who die sometimes do choose their own fate. If someone were to run from the police and threaten a life they are basically asking to be killed. They probably feel that their life is just as out of control and they are just going to get what comes to them. Honestly, I do not think there is a better way to gain more control over my life. The best way is to just make good decisions so positive consequences come from them. Also just try to remember that when something bad happens to you, whether you deserve it or not, to just keep your head up and learn from your mistakes; they will make you a better person in the end.*



Other People

A journal entry by Donovan Wright



I think that other people's actions have a greater effect on our lives than we sometimes think. Many times have I gotten in trouble for things that I didn't do, or things that a group or people associated with me have done. A couple years ago, me and some friends went down to the junior high school and hung out in the wooded forest area behind it. Along with us we had these guns called Air soft pistols/rifles. We were shooting trees and rabbits and what not when one of my friends shot a student in the back of his neck. The rest of us didn't take much care on what he had done, so we went to the parks basketball court and began a game of basketball. After we finished shooting hoops we went back through the woods to go to a party at another friend's house. As we went back through the wooded area a police officer nearly shot us because we were carrying the realistic looking toy guns. Soon after we were all arrested and charged with assault with a deadly weapon. I didn't really mind the charge because I was never convicted

so I didn't really care.

Another more global instance of other people's actions affecting other people's lives would be stereotypes/racism. For instance, after the world trade centers had fell and the government identified the assailants as the Taliban from the middle-east, everyone began to look at every person who resembled that description as terrorists or they just showed hate to them because they are who they are. Things like this effect not only the people being hated on, but it effects their lives and they way we live ours. Another occasion would be the Latino American's in the United States and the illegal immigrants from Mexico or the southern American countries. All of the Latinos who are legit in the united states today, and the all of the illegal immigrants who are illegally crossing the border are making all of the legit people look illegitimate. So now some of us look

at the Latino Americans as people who are breaking the law and coming into our country illegally, but really they are hard working Americans who are just living their lives and have had their citizenship from the beginning.

"As we went back through the wooded area a police officer nearly shot us."

I usually deal with peer pressure by just going along with the flow, I've been asked to smoke, do drugs and drink various time throughout my life, but I always say no. When times like that happen I always just think that this is just the beginning of my life, and if I want to grow up and be successful I know that I can't be held back by addictions and bad habits. For me peer pressure isn't really a problem, when my peers want me to do things I don't, I usually just joke it off until we all forget what we were really talking about. Most people know me as a person who watches rather than takes action, because I don't plan on messing up my life at an early age.*

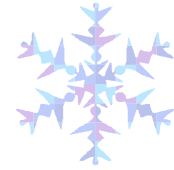


What it is like at the Tech Academy

By Donovan Wright

The Technology Academy is very unique from any other high school because it offers a safe environment in which students can learn and achieve their GED or even a high school diploma. From a student's point of view, I enjoy going to the tech academy. One of the things I like about going here is that we only go to school for 4 hours a day. Going to school for only 4 hours a day has its pros and cons, but overall if you pay attention and get your work done, you won't be sitting in a classroom for a regular 7-8 hours a day. Another good thing about the Tech Academy is that we go to school for 4 days a week, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Friday school is for students who are failing either 1 or more of their classes,

so if you work hard you won't have to go to school on Fridays, another great thing about the Tech Academy. One more great thing about the Tech Academy is that we aren't sitting in desk's listening to 6 different teachers give hour long lectures. At the Tech Academy we learn all of our courses from one teacher, and we are always participating in discussions, or doing more "hands-on" activities rather than just pretending like we are listening. Overall, I think that the Tech Academy is better than a regular high school for all the reasons above and more, I hope to graduate and get my diploma soon.*

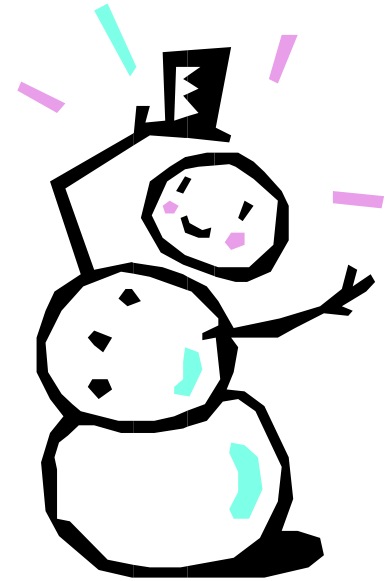


Most Important Thing

A journal entry by Jonathan Suthard

The most important thing that ever happened to me is when I was 12 years old, I've had a heart problem since I was 8 years old. I had to take prescription pills every 8 hours for 4 years. It was the worst time of my life. I couldn't play sports to my potential, because every time I would run a lot my heart would slow me down. Then I started gaining weight and it hurt my physical ability. Even if I wanted to exercise I couldn't because my heart wouldn't let me, it sucked really bad. When I turned 12 on my annual trip to the doctors, I was finally big enough to have the surgery done. The procedure was like 6 hours long. Then after the surgery they said I was fixed., but I had to be monitored for 2 days in the hospital just to see if I was normal again. The surgery was perfect. I had one most

doctors appointment and I've never been back since. I was in the news; I was the first person in the United States to have that certain procedure. The doctors had a new procedure that only have been used in Europe. So, that was a pretty cool thing to be remembered by. The doctor said in a little way I would go down in history in the medical books. So that was the most important thing that ever happened to me. It cured my heart problem and I was finally able to play sports without any threat of something happening to me.*



Gas Prices

By Gus Ascencio

Gas prices are getting higher every day, the price right now is \$2.09. In the past year gas price has increased to 3 dollars or more. To fill up a car today is about 30 dollars for your regular car. For an SUV your going to have to fill your tank with about 40-50 dollars. In 1999 the gas prices national average was about \$1.13 per gallon. Today it is almost double sometimes triple that. Many Americans have to fill up their tanks two times or more a week. In average that is about anywhere from 60-120 dollars depending on what kind of car you drive.*



The Hardest Decision

A journal entry by Joe Scott

The hardest decision that I ever had to make was to give up my license. The two alternatives I had to face were giving it up right there or go for another court date. The choice I made was to give it up right there, I made the wrong choice. I should have chosen another court date then I might have my license right now.*



How to be Successful at Tech Academy

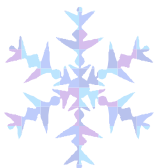
By Joe Scott

1. Don't lie.
2. Come on time.
3. Do your work.
4. Stay on task.
5. Try *



Christmas Excitement

What will I do over the Christmas holidays? Well first of all I am not going back down to Louisiana to see my family this time. My brother Travis, his wife, and their two kids will be here the day after Christmas and will be staying until the 31st. I will only be able to see them for a couple of days because I am going on a church trip at Liberty College. I will be spending New Years at the college also. That will be all my holiday excitement this Christmas.*



My Favorite Place

By Gus Ascencio

My favorite place in the world is... I don't really have a favorite place in the world. I really have never liked a place so much that I go there all the time. I used to go to this one place which I call the blocks and other people call it the corner of Holden and Denver Dr; but I don't even go there anymore. I have not been to that many places in the world but I would like to visit a lot of places. In about 10, 20, maybe even 30 years you can ask me that question and I might tell you what my favorite place in

the world is. I have always wanted to go to Amsterdam, which is in the Netherlands, because there is a lot to do there. I know a kid who went during college and he said he had the best time of his life, he also said the coffee shops are the best. He said that the best time to go there is in late November, that is when they have the best events going on in my book. But yeah, I don't really know where my favorite place is but maybe one day I will.*

“He said he had the best time of his life.”

How bad do you want it?

A journal entry by Rob Foster

Who is my hero? Well I'm about to tell you which he is so heroic in my eyes. My hero is Michael Jordan because of his drive and ambition. Even he didn't make the varsity basketball team his freshman year, but he did not let that get to him. In fact, because of his hard work and not having the attitude of "I'm a failure" Michael went to a couple of basketball camps during the summer. By the time he was a junior in high school he finally made the varsity team. Before his senior year in high school he attended another camp to continue improving his skills. During that summer he met the UNC head coach, Dean Smith, and he earned a spot on the Tar Heel's team. He then became a valuable player for them and eventually was drafted into the NBA. I think those qualities are important because if you fail at something don't just give up. Keep working hard and it will all pay off in the long run like it did for Michael. If you are dedicated to whatever you love the most then you wouldn't let it get you down. Just tell yourself to keep practicing at what you are going for and it doesn't just apply for any sports.*

My Hero

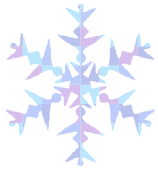
A journal entry by Steven Castillo

My hero is my father, I feel this way because I look up to the man. When I sit with my father and he tells me some of his life stories I really look up to that. My father was raised in South Central, Los Angeles a really rough neighborhood. He told me things he could have done but he kept away from all the negativity. My father knows the people who started MS in Los Angeles. Those were his friends but then when they started to do illegal stuff he went his own way and just worried about himself. It's really hard to just leave friends like that but he did because he wanted to be someone and be successful in his life. I look up to that because I couldn't imagine hanging with people like that and keep away from all that. It's really hard especially living in a rough neighborhood like that. But my father can do anything he wants have all the fun he wants and he doesn't have to worry about cops on his back. That is why my father is my hero.*

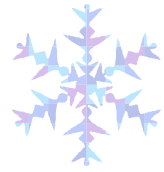
Varsity Basketball

By Jonathan Suthard

Playing for Manassas Park varsity basketball team while attending the Tech Academy is easy because I only go to school for 4 hours, then I can't go to practice and be tired. It's cool being the only kid that plays sports at the Tech Academy. My teammates hate the fact that I only go to school for 4 hours, when they have to go for 7. Being on the team has brought my grades up and my attendance because in order to stay on the team I have to go by the coaches rules. His rules are to get no more than one F or I'm off the team. I have to fill out grade sheets, its kind of hard but I have to do it. *



STUDENT LITERARY CORNER



WIND

By
Destini Taylor

Wind blowing
Ice
Night time comes soomer.
Talk of Christmas.
Eating, lots of eating.
Ripping open presents.



NATURE

By
Joe Scott

Nature is awesome
But nature has its problems
Like rain, sleet, Ice, Snow.



SNOWFLAKE

By
Manuel Vasquez

What does a snowflake mean to me? It means a really cold day, staying home and keeping warm with girls and hot chocolate. A day with no work or school, I am able to sleep, eat, and stare out the window while watching all the white powder falling down, covering the road and melting. That is what a snowflake means to me.

SNOW

By
Emilio Pollock

My friends love the snow,
Sledding is fun in the snow,
My dogs like to go.

SNOWBALL

By
Justin Christensen

Snow,
No school..
One snowball left.
Winter.
Bears hibernate.
Angles.
Learn to sled.
Licking hot chocolate.





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Upcoming Dates to Remember In January

- January 2—First day back to school after winter break
- January 15—Lee Jackson King Day—NO SCHOOL
- January 16—All regular school work must be turned in to receive a grade.
- January 16-26—Exams
- January 26—Last day of this semester.

There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.

Colin Powell



Have a safe and wonderful holiday. We look forward to an exciting new year!

Friday Counseling Classes

Ms. Kim will begin the Tech Academy small group counseling classes in January. Counseling subjects will include drug abuse, gang participation, attitude, and anger management. Parents will be notified if their student will be required to attend. The classes will run from 7:30–11:00. Students who do not attend the required classes will be subject to disciplinary action. Following is a schedule of dates for the upcoming classes.

- January 5—
- January 12—
- January 19—
- January 26—

