

Dear Parents and Prospective Students,

It is my great honor to welcome you to the Center for Students with Learning Differences at Scholé Academy.

I love Scholé Academy's focus on *restful* learning, because it points us to the foundation of classical education in the *liberal* arts, the arts that free us to live as fully human beings. As Stratford Caldecott says, "Too often we have not been educating our humanity. We have been educating ourselves for *doing* rather than *being*." While the liberal arts can serve instrumental purposes in helping students to reach academic and, eventually, professional goals, their *primary* purpose is to free students for the true learning that comes from restful seeking that allows for contemplation—not from harried striving focused on the acquisition of instrumental ends. Such contemplation stands at the center of the truly human *being* for which we were created: communion with God through seeing and delighting in what is true, good, and beautiful in communion with other persons.

This contemplative foundation is essential for the right direction of all lesser instrumental ends. Once we see that classical education properly orients us toward this kind of being, rather than toward challenging modes of doing, we begin to see that such an education should not be limited to the most academically gifted students. For *all* students deserve to be led toward what is true, good, and beautiful. *All* students should be offered an education that presents them with the tools of the liberal arts. These tools free them to engage with the truly human things, which, in Christian understanding, are always deeply connected with the divine, as we are made in God's image and for communion with him.

Making this type of education—education in the truly human things that set us free to love and to serve rightly—accessible to all students is important work to which we are called by the principles at the heart of Christian classical education. In light of this truth, Scholé Academy's opening of the Center for Students with Learning Differences is a beautiful step toward offering the riches of classical education to students who might otherwise struggle with the skills of the liberal arts. This Center will help students with learning differences, such as dyslexia or dyscalculia, to thrive in Scholé Academy courses by providing them with specialized tutoring offered by qualified educators trained to assist students with these types of learning challenges. It has been a joyful part of my work in Eastern University's Master of Arts in Classical Teaching Program to collaborate with Scholé Academy Director Joelle Hodge as she develops this tutoring center. I am excited to see it launch and flourish! So, welcome!

Sincerely,

Amy Gilbert Richards

*Dr. Amy Gilbert Richards, PhD, teaches in the Master of Arts of Classical Teaching Program at Eastern University. Building on her previous philosophical work, she teaches a course in this program called Difference and Human Dignity in the Great Tradition, which develops an understanding of what it is to be human through the lens of disability and difference, and offers practical techniques for welcoming students with disabilities and learning differences in classical classrooms. Also of note: Dr. Richards and Classical Academic Press have recently begun a collaboration project on a book related to her work in this course—more coming soon! She lives in Havertown, Pennsylvania, with her husband and their 3 small girls.*