The passing of Nelson Mandela gives pause for reflection on his life providing a window into what could be if we strive on a daily basis to make our community a better place. The passionate commitment that Mandela had for equity and the humble, peaceful manner in which he achieved his desired goal for South Africa was indeed a remarkable achievement for the world to embrace and emulate. On a smaller, community-level our community of learners, family, friends, and stakeholders seek to make our world a better place by our commitment and service to others. Throughout the academic year we work to help others in our community, although during the holiday season, we consider and count our many blessings. Each year, TALH students collect gifts for a family in need of assistance. Some Other Place, a local charitable organization, provided us with the name of a family and our students (and wonderful parents) purchased items for the family. I truly believe that the act of giving is an expression of our inner most humanity and that the gratification one receives from that act is bountiful to the spirit and resounds the essence of our being. I am very proud of our students and note that their generosity is appreciated and indeed makes our community a “better place.”

Service is a huge component of improving our community. I am pleased to announce that our students have provided nearly 900 hours of community service for the fall 2013 semester. I am inspired by their commitment to our many service organizations and even more delighted by the heartfelt messages received from many within the community in which they serve. It is always gratifying to know that we are providing quality service within our community and making a difference through our efforts. Moreover, our students are continuing to develop a compassionate heart and mind.
I want to extend a special thanks to all parents who donated their time, energy, and resources to our holiday gathering. The food provided was exquisite in taste, rich in heritage, and more than enough to inspire additional gatherings of food coinsures throughout the following days. In addition, I give much gratitude to all students who assisted in decorating and clean-up of the TALH lounge. You probably don’t realize how important of a service you provided. I also commend our TALH staff. Mr. Stevenson contacted parents and facilitated our menu items. Ms. Corwin provided food and assisted with set-up and clean-up, Mrs. Colichia also made contact with parents and assisted with the decoration. In addition, Mr. Hodge organized the snowman and gift giving activity. Overall, the event was very successful and we cannot thank our parents enough for their assistance.

We had many students involved in various activities throughout the campus this semester. I wanted to remark on two students because not only have they embraced TALH, but also have become well integrated within Lamar University. These two ladies are juniors Carrington Barfield and Baylie Fox. Carrington is a member of the Lamar University Marching Band Twirlers and has performed throughout the semester at various events including football games and campus spirit activities. Baylie is a member of the Lamar Dance Company and performed in the fall dance concert, “Co.Motion.” TALH students may be early college students, but regardless of age, their natural abilities and talents reflect their ability to perform at a high level. I encourage our students to participate in the university experience as much as their schedules allow and to truly integrate their academic endeavors with their interest.

We want to extend birthday wishes to Ryan Huff (11th) and Jake Starkey (18th). We hope you have wonderful birthdays.

The fall semester of 2013 has come to a close. I hope that your student, rather a junior experiencing their first semester at TALH, or a senior now 75% complete with the program, has continued to grow intellectually, as leaders, and service-oriented students. I trust that they have made new connections with faculty mentors, university activities, and experiences increasing their skill sets and opening new opportunities for learning.

With my warmest regards,

Lamar University will be closed for the semester break holiday. All TALH students must depart by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 12, 2013 and may return after 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 12, 2014. Students are not allowed back in the dorms during the closed holiday period.
GRADE REPORTS AND TRANSCRIPTS

Lamar University does not mail grade reports. Parents and students may check grades on the WEB at www.lamar.edu. Click on “My Lamar,” click on “Self Service Banner,” enter student ID and 6 digit PIN Number, click on “Student Records,” click on “Grades” or “Unofficial Transcript.” Remember PIN is date of birth until changed by student.

TALH transcripts for those students who made a request by the Thursday, December 12th deadline will be mailed on Friday, December 13th. TALH transcripts requested after the deadline will be mailed during the week of January 13, 2014.

Mrs. Colichia will be out of the office from December 16th until January 13th and therefore unavailable to send out transcripts during that time.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION
MONTHLY REMINDERS

- We welcome your calls. If you ever have a concern about your student or just want to keep in touch with us, please call.
- Weekend travel forms are due to Mrs. Colichia by 4:00 p.m. each Wednesday. Mrs. Colichia will confirm that students have permission to travel by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday. Weekend travel information is distributed to TALH administrators, TALH community assistants and TALH security every Friday morning, so we ask that travel plans be finalized by Wednesday afternoon. Your help is appreciated!

- CLOSED WEEKENDS: Reminder: All students are required to vacate the dorm for closed weekends and required holidays by 4:00 p.m., Friday. Students may return after 2:00 p.m. on Sundays (or Mondays if Monday is a holiday).

- TEA VERIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT: The Texas Education Agency (TEA) states, “School enrollment and attendance as a condition of licensing a student to operate a motor vehicle applies to persons under 18 years of age unless a high school diploma or its equivalent has been obtained.” In order to obtain or renew student driver’s licenses, students must obtain a Verification of Enrollment form from Mrs. Colichia.

- SAT and ACT fee waivers are available. Students must meet qualifications. Please contact Ms. Corwin for more information.

- Students and parents are reminded that when applying to other colleges, both TALH and LAMAR UNIVERSITY transcripts are required. TALH transcripts may be requested by sending an email to Mrs. Colichia at: texas.academy@lamar.edu. Lamar University transcripts may be requested from the Lamar Records Office located in the Wimberly Building Room 112.

- Students are reminded that a two-week turnaround is required for letters of recommendation from TALH administrators. Students needing letters of recommendation must fill out a request form (available next to Mrs. Colichia’s office) and turn it in to the administrator from whom you are requesting a recommendation, along with all pertinent information and/or attachments. Updated resumes must accompany each request. Please be courteous and ask the administrator in person PRIOR to filling out the request form.