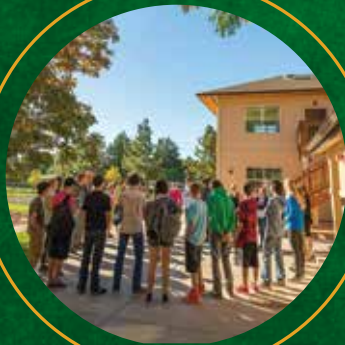


Why Tara?

TARA

PERFORMING ARTS
HIGH SCHOOL





"Tara's rich and hands-on education not only gave me confidence but also opened a path to connect to myself. Through engaging conversations, I was able to ask questions that led to millions of sparkling untouched ideas. There will always be a place in my heart in which Tara continues to live and the questions I was able to ask there continue to grow."

Alumna, Class of 2020



Rigorous Academics. Compelling Theater. World Travel.

Tara offers a truly rigorous education with immersive academics, world travel and compelling theater. At the heart of our vision is the belief that deep and collaborative work in the performing arts inspires an all-encompassing love of learning.

Further kindled by the passion and expertise of our faculty and direct experience of culture and history through travel, this enthusiasm leads to academic excellence. The spirit of ensemble – commitment to each other, the school, the community and the world – is embodied in our substance agreement and honor code and permeates every aspect of our program.

Profound thinkers and compassionate human beings, our graduates lead extraordinary lives in fields ranging from quantitative economics to education and from environmental law to theater.



"Through drama at Tara, I was challenged to explore the truth of complex characters who were not me, to experience the vulnerability of letting everyone see emotion deep inside of me, and to empathize with a person who fictitiously lived long ago in a different culture. I learned that with hard work things that once seemed impossible become possible. I learned about some of those universal truths that never change, about what makes us all human. And after I learned these things, I had to act on them. I had to show an audience the truth of the character and journal about it; I had to make these ideas concrete and tangible. This has given me opportunities to excel in all areas of my life."

Alumnus, Class of 2012



Tara's founders: Greg Fisher, Laurel Fisher & Betsy Barricklow

THE PERFORMING ARTS

Why Tara?

At the heart of Tara's vision is the conviction that the performing arts are the ideal vehicle for adolescent intellectual and personal development. Our curriculum, which weaves together engaging academics with drama, music and movement, awakens in each student a unique capacity for inquiry through discipline and artistic expression. Performance at Tara builds confidence and community spirit, preparing students for success in all of life's endeavors. All-school productions include the Christmas Candlelight Festival and a major musical. In addition, each class works in depth on a play, enriching the production with historical, literary and cultural exploration and research.



PERFORMANCE A

"Everything from class plays and tech crew to the festivals and the all-school musical has prepared me to be able to effectively work with others – as both a leader and a follower – and to collaborate to solve problems. The collective focus that Tara students have to create something meaningful and beautiful is truly special, and I aim to carry it with me through the rest of my life."

Alumna, Class of 2023

"We studied history and politics, we learned much about a culture we had hardly known existed, and we learned a great deal about ourselves. And the entire student body learned with us. It was far more than a play; it altered the lives of all who took part."

Alumnus, Class of 2009



T TARA



"Theatre has the capacity to bring out attributes we don't know we have. It gives us courage to go beyond our reach. By exploring different characters, we learn to understand human nature, which helps us to make a conscious choice of the role we play in life."

Alumna, Class of 2004



"Why do a play? ... Few other arts fill people with such inspiration, conviction and indeed courage that they are willing to tell the stories they feel need to be told. Happily, Tara students become part of what is carried on across time and space from ancient Greece to the modern Congo and war-torn Ukraine. I am so grateful that I was able to participate in this tradition and that many more generations will be able to do the same."

Alumnus, Class of 2022



"Every Tara course combines facts with experiences, and this keeps these subjects alive in me to this day. I was asked to be a thoughtful student – and a conscious and curious individual and citizen. This comprehensive approach continues to influence my daily life in the way that I prioritize, communicate, teach, problem-solve and connect with the world around me. I am eternally grateful to Tara and all the teachers and administrators who have devoted their lives to the betterment of the world, one student at a time."

Alumna, Class of 2001



ACADEMICS

Why Tara?

Tara inspires the next generation through academics that transcend the traditional classroom setting. We expand what it means to be a student of life through our challenging and in-depth approach to classical education as a vehicle for deepening our humanity. Our faculty is made up of people who love what they teach and are able to bring passion and thought-provoking questions to all subjects, their expertise enriching the learning experience. All of our teachers are committed to academic excellence and engendering true interest in the pursuit of knowledge.





ACADEMICS AT

"One of the most important things about Tara's classes is that they push you completely out of your comfort zone. While the subject material is challenging and built to stretch a person academically, we are not only taught with the goal of passing tests or being groomed for a career, but each class is taught with one's whole life in mind, supporting each student to reach their full potential. It is not only an education in the academic sense, but that we are also learning to become citizens of the world and the truest versions of ourselves."

Alumna, Class of 2025



TARA



"Teaching at Tara allows us to immerse students in our topic, not just remain adjacent to it ... creating a personal relationship that will live on within them."

Kim Williams
Earth Sciences Teacher

"At Tara I learned how to be the student I wanted to be. I learned how to ask the questions I wanted answered, and through a continued dialogue with my teachers and individual reflections, I developed an understanding of how I learn and process new information. ... Perhaps the biggest thing I took away from my Tara education was to not be afraid to go after the opportunities I wanted."

Alumna, Class of 2010



"Travel at Tara has been exciting, eye-opening, and profoundly humbling. From the striking awe of the San Juan River, to the rich culture and history of the Native Americans, to the impactful and ever-surprising theater, art and music we were exposed to in New York and Europe – these experiences have shaped who I have grown to be today, and I am forever grateful."

Alumna, Class of 2019



CLASSROOMS WITHOUT WALLS

Why Tara?

While our extensive travel program augments aspects of the academic curriculum, its greater effect is to connect our students to culture outside their familiar boundaries and to provide expansive experiences for mind and soul.

Following culturally rich and varied itineraries, our classrooms-without-walls program takes many aspects of the Tara curriculum and translates them into life, connecting the students with the ancient (and the not-so-ancient) past and, in so doing, working to prepare them for their future. We are not tourists; we are a group of teachers and students on an academic, cultural and spiritual journey. The result is learning and subtle yet powerful transformation.



TARA'S CLASSROOMS WITHOUT WALLS



"The immersion in culture that Tara students experience teaches how interconnected we all are and sets us on paths to becoming global citizens, benefiting not just ourselves but our communities and the world at large."

Alumna, Class of 2017



"On the geology trip, the lectures are delivered while we are in the actual environment, and the pictures are made by nature itself. As I write this, I am looking at a massive sandstone monoclone that is 100 miles in length, so big that it can be seen from outer space. What an amazing way to learn!"

Tenth Grade Student

"I was so inspired by the people the trip leaders introduced us to. Friedl, whose walking tour of Old Vienna could have gone on all day (and maybe all night too); Robin Hanbury-Tenison, a world class explorer who has written over 30 books but had time to talk to us; Mary, our host in Wells. It expanded my knowledge of myself and the world through vibrant, friendly and knowledgeable human beings."

Alumnus, Class of 2025



"We had just seen many of these famous art pieces on slides at school; seeing them in person, everything seemed so much more vibrant and real. Everything came to life in front of me."

Ninth Grade Student



"Tara's emphasis on choral music supported a love of singing I'd had since childhood. Mine was a class that often spontaneously broke into song, and I took a lot of joy in teaching my classmates music I learned, even outside of Tara. It was special to be around people who shared my love for and understanding of music as a gift best when given and shared ...

Some teachers might balk at the idea of giving a teen choir Mozart's Coronation Mass, but the lessons contained in this brilliant piece and others like it served my musical understanding and fed my soul. If we are not shown the best of what human beings are capable of then we may never dream of what we ourselves can aspire to."

Alumna, Class of 2006



FESTIVALS

Why Tara?

An integral part of life at Tara, festivals help us celebrate the rhythms of nature, bring the community together and cultivate the inner life of the soul. These festivals also provide the basis for our school calendar, beginning with Michaelmas in September and ending with St. John's Tide (or Midsummer) in June, as these natural rhythms strengthen the work we do with the students.

"The festivals are meant to link the soul with all that lives and weaves in the great universe."

Rudolf Steiner



FESTIVALS AT

"Recently I heard a wise man say, 'Courage is when the heart begins to think.' Compassion is when there is no egotistical aim ... It is when you have the courage to live and think from your heart, to expand your views, and to recognize the truth within."

Michaelmas Speech
Eleventh Grade Student



TARA



"Handbells are the Tara way of getting high. I was so happy, every time I played – pure ecstasy. I felt so much joy that it was painful even thinking about coming out of the Candlelight experience."

Alumna, Class of 2022

"Decades of the Candlelight Festival leave me full of shining memories. ... When I close my eyes, I can see all the faces around me illuminated and full of grace. I sense that Candlelight lives within each of us. By this light remember."

Alumna, Class of 2001



"I've worked very closely with teenagers for over 30 years, and the most impressive group I ever sat with was a senior class at Tara Performing Arts High School. The level of highly intelligent and impassioned discussion fueled by a true and even refined curiosity, supported by each student's sense of personal agency and grounded sense of self, astonishes me to this day. The openness and interest that they had individually, as well as how they supportively played off of each other collectively, was and is completely unique to me, even with many thousands of hours spent with kids that age. They're clearly doing some things at that school that others are not."

Michael Vladek
Owner, Conscious Parenting In The Digital Age



CULTURE & COMMUNITY

Why Tara?

Tara intentionally fosters an atmosphere which demands that the students be authentic, open and vulnerable in everything that we do, whether it be a moment on the stage, an a-ha discovery in the science lab, a potent experience on a trip, a challenging conversation in class meeting or the exhilaration of singing a Mozart Mass. This environment of wonder and respect builds true community, an ever-expanding circle of students, staff, alumni, families and supporters, and inspires our graduates to seek and create similar connections in their lives beyond Tara.



TARA'S CULTURE AND COMMUNITY



"I feel like our class is held together by our love of singing. I don't know where I will ever find another group of people who will burst out into a piece of music in four-part harmony in a cathedral, in a 14th-century kitchen or on the beach at sunset. I will be looking for this in my life in the future."

Alumnus, Class of 2025



"Tara's substance agreement creates a fantastic atmosphere for learning, building friendships and finding myself. It takes away the worry of figuring out how to say no to pressure and helps me fully trust the people I spend so much time with."

Alumna, Class of 2021

"Tara gives students something that's hard to find today: a place where we can experience life firsthand and to the fullest, instead of on a screen. Without the distraction of cell phones, we are more focused. We listen to others, feel listened to and can really take in the world around us."

Alumna, Class of 2020

"Tara is not just another school; it is a community and a family. As a student, you learn to discover and appreciate your hidden talents, your most joyous laugh and your outstanding creative thoughts. Tara makes you strive to become a better person, giving you the gift of curiosity for the world and wonder at what it can create."

Alumna, Class of 2019





CULTURE & COMMUNITY

Substance Agreement

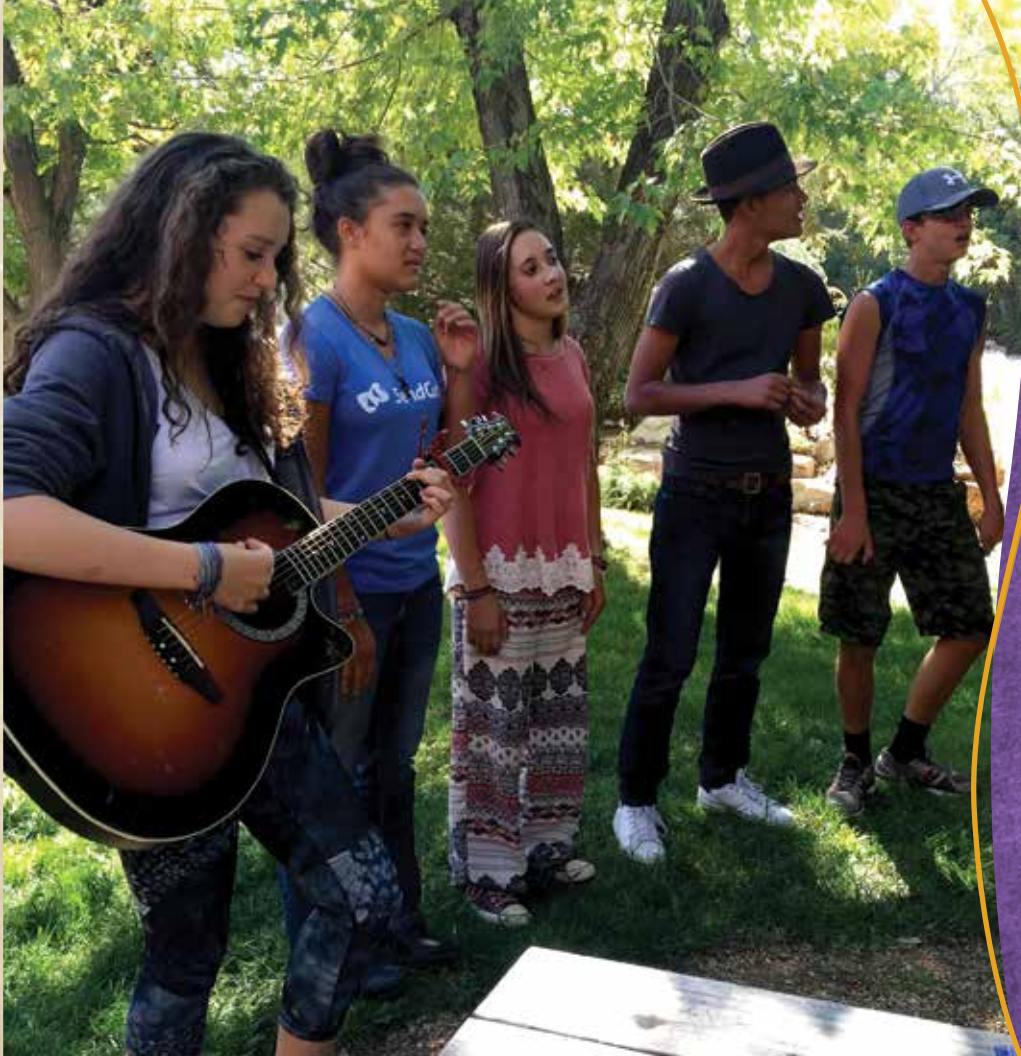
The Substance Agreement is the cornerstone of Tara's foundation. Any activity engaged in for the purpose of creating an altered state of consciousness is a breach of the agreement to be one hundred percent substance-free that every student signs upon entering Tara. In a community as small as ours, honoring one's word is of the highest importance.

Honor Code

Tara's Honor Code sets forth the highest ideals for our community. Each year's senior class reviews and revises the document so that it remains a living representation of the students' ownership of this essential part of our school.

Approach to Media

At Tara, we value human connection; we strive for honesty and respect in all our interactions; we strongly believe in the importance of reflection in the integration of experience. Accordingly, we have created some guidelines for media usage: all electronic equipment is turned in at the start of each school day, and media "fasts" during all trips, plays and festivals notably increase the students' excitement and involvement in these social and academic experiences. We also ask families to facilitate media-free homework time and sleep time, thereby improving energy and concentration at school and elsewhere.



"Do you know a teen who would rather be at school than at home on social media? ... I do!"

Tara Parent

"This is the first time in 2 years that our daughter has been excited, happy and feeling accepted at school. She is coming home smiling. We are so incredibly grateful for Tara and the community you have all built there."

Tara Parent

"I'm unspeakably grateful to be part of a community that I know will love and nurture me for life. I haven't missed a single class play, musical or Candlelight. Because of Tara, I live a life in which I no longer wish to remain anonymous!"

Alumnus, Class of 2011

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why are the Performing Arts in your name?

We view the performing arts as a transformative and compelling path to self-confidence, compassion and courage. Deep engagement in these arts cultivates curiosity, empathy and motivation, creating interest in the gifts the world has to offer and deep understanding of oneself and others.

Is Tara too small to offer important high school experiences and milestones?

Tara offers big challenges and incredible variety that fill the spirits of our students with excitement and the love of life and connection. The real and deep experiences they have here stay with them for a lifetime, and they soon forget that they once wanted a big school with a prom or a homecoming. A student once tried public school for the first month of tenth grade; by the time Tara opened for the new school year, she was back – and grateful to be back. She said that she found the curriculum too fact oriented, and at Tara she had fifty-one friends, while at public school she found two!

How does Tara approach bullying?

Even at full enrollment, Tara is intentionally small, so bullying cannot occur without being seen and addressed. Our student-written honor code is an ongoing subject for discussion in weekly class meetings, and compassionate interaction permeates everything that we do. We are teaching students to be honest and caring human beings.

How is the substance agreement enforced?

The substance agreement is an essential part of Tara's fabric, and adherence to it is a critical part of being enrolled at the school. That being said, all human beings make mistakes, and we are always prepared to have a dialogue that includes restitution and another opportunities. The substance agreement is also held peer to peer, and the senior class reviews how they want to hold it, support it and represent it as role models in the overall social life of the school.

Can Tara students get into a good university?

Each fall a course leads seniors through the application process, and over 95% of our alumni go on to fine schools;

the list of college acceptances is quite impressive. Equally impressive are the initiatives that Tara graduates embark on that may not include college yet offer their particular gifts to a world that hungers for them. Our focus is on helping our students find the next step in life that is right for them.

Is my child ready to go away on such intensive trips?

Parents are often hesitant to let their children go, and that fear can be reflected in the student. But once the initial step into this new manifestation of independence is taken, the students love Tara's travel and cultural exchanges, and they come home with new-found inner strength and maturity.

I see a lot of Christianity in your festivals; is Tara a Christian school?

The festivals of the year are connected to the seasons and therefore the earth as well as the cosmic stories that speak to the human soul of any faith or background of the archetypal universal being of love. Everyone is welcomed into our community of mutual respect and will find good will and common ground as we celebrate these festivals with music and artistic offerings.

What is the value of human creativity when we have AI?

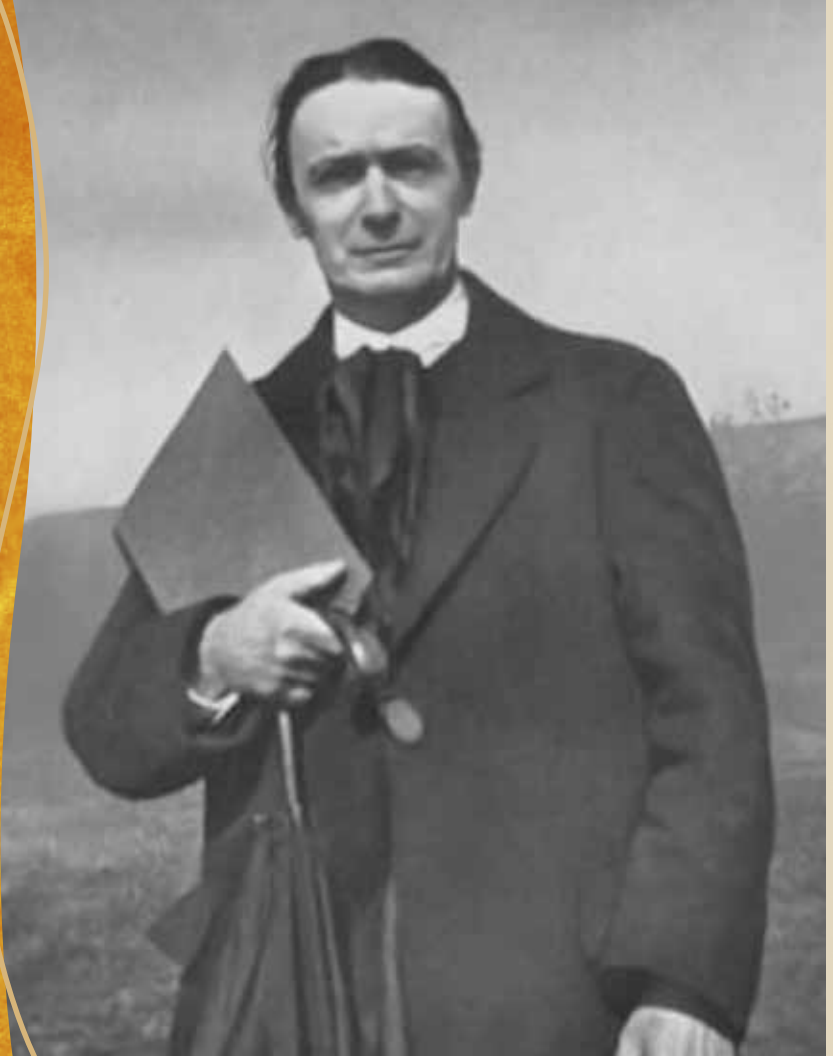
With this belief comes the loss of understanding of what it truly means to be human, which is one important focus of a Tara education. Teachers make a connection to their students by preparing lessons out of their intellect and heart connections, and students live into the material by engaging their hearts and minds fully. Thus, our teachers, students and administrators are asked to leave AI out of their daily work.

How do you cultivate emotional intelligence and leadership skills?

At Tara, we build on the concept of ensemble, working together towards a common goal. Students develop the ability to self-reflect, give and receive feedback from teachers and peers, and witness progress, improvement, growth and future potential. Tara students learn initiative and develop independence as navigators and leaders, and they discover how to care for both self and others. We hone communication skills and self-expression, with courage and vulnerability, in the classroom and beyond. Leadership skills progression is built into Tara's four-year curriculum, and students become conscious of how their role as leaders impacts the entire school and community.

"Tara's Waldorf curriculum places genuine intellectual engagement over standardized achievement – cultivating an enthusiasm for learning that has served me well in college and beyond. Rather than just teaching us about literature, languages or history, the teachers encouraged us to see what we could learn from these subjects – how Dostoevsky, for example, could shed light on our own urgent, emerging questions as young adults. My education at Tara encouraged me to think critically, feel deeply and act with integrity. As I navigate academics, relationships and global citizenship in an increasingly unpredictable world, I couldn't be more grateful to have Tara as my foundation."

Alumna, Class of 2021



WALDORF EDUCATION

Tara, a Waldorf school honoring the past, working in the present, for the sake of the future.

In the last days of his life, Rudolf Steiner told a good friend that if he had the time he would have reworked his indications for the high school with a focus on the social arts. The founders of Tara spent three years doing just that. They created a unique curriculum that allows time for the performing arts, meaningful festivals, travel with strong experiences in nature as well as the rich culture of significant cities. To these three focus points, they added rigorous and meaningful academics and the substance agreement. These became the five pillars of Tara.

With this came a decision that lies in the essence of “the being of Tara” that whatever compromises would be made to create time for these five Tara pillars, there would be no compromises made with the guidance Rudolf Steiner gave for Waldorf education. While our school is considered groundbreaking, everything that is taught carries with it deep respect for what Rudolf Steiner gave to humanity through his educational principles.



TARA'S CAMPUS

Tara's schoolhouse is situated on two acres in North Boulder. Our extended campus includes the historic Nomad Playhouse, within easy walking distance, where all of Tara's plays and musicals are rehearsed and performed. Thanks to the generosity of many individual donors as well as the State Historical Fund, in 2015 Tara assumed ownership and management of this beloved theater, the essential physical component of the profound work that we do in drama. This ensures the sustainability of our performing arts program and allows us to support other fine community theatre and events.



"What is remarkable about Tara is the wonderful mood and attitude at the school and the ethic of responsibility and caring for the work, the art and the community that the teachers foster in the students. The roof and walls of our schoolhouse should burst with all the enthusiasm that is held within."

Catherine Barricklow
Tara Faculty, Nomad Production Manager



"Concluding his senior year at Tara, my son was Perchik in Fiddler on the Roof, a role that gave play to his humor and idealism. I had never seen him so happy, so alive, so radiant. Throughout the performance, I was overcome with gratitude for what Tara had brought out in him – renewed tenderness, generosity of spirit, wonder, appreciation. His joyous confidence astonished me even though I had been watching it unfold for four years.

How did this transformation happen? Why does it happen to so many students who find their way to Tara? I believe it's because the school connects students with their innate purity and dignity – their "basic goodness." They sing, dance and act; they are immersed in a remarkably stimulating curriculum; they embark on enriching journeys of mind and spirit. They discover the joy that comes from making friends with themselves and from genuinely connecting with others in a multitude of ways – through journaling and personal reflection, through character development for the stage, through immersion in artistic creation. I believe that what gives all of this such transformative power are the contemplative spirit and the vision of human goodness that infuse the Tara experience. I am profoundly grateful that such a place exists in our world."

Alumni Parent



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