



Currents

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Genesee Community Charter School

December 2004

Volume 4 No. 3

Learning on Location

The 4th and 5th Grade classes are barely containing themselves this last week of the year. Their excitement has little to do with the upcoming holiday and vacation – most of the buzz is about the four-day excursion the classes will take when they return from break. These students will travel to New York City to experience the joys, challenges, and traditions of immigrants of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They'll visit the Empire State Building and tenement museum, explore cultural neighborhoods, and spend a day at Ellis Island.

Field studies to sites outside Rochester are planned when distant resources are central to our students' understanding of the content of an expedition. Our overnight field studies are carefully structured to address the learning goals of the expedition. Teachers generally visit the sites ahead of time to meet with local experts and guides. They lay out the agenda minute-by-minute so that each experience is purposeful and productive. We plan overnight field studies so that site visits are interspersed with readings, journal writing, reflective conversations, and team-building activities. We also try to schedule sufficient "down time" for students and chaperones to unwind and recharge.

The value of overnight field studies is irreplaceable. Student learning during fieldwork forms the foundation for the next three months of study. In line with our Outward Bound approach, during overnight fieldwork students are challenged to work to the limits of their stamina and academic ability while supporting one another. This experience tends to bond students and teachers together in a way that is deeper than what is possible through daily classroom work.

Overnight field studies are a significant commitment for the school, staff, and our parent chaperones – but one that is well worth it! Student learning on fieldwork translates into much more meaningful student work in the classroom. Look for samples of student reflections in the next issue of *Currents*.



Time to Send in That Winter Outerwear! Please Send in hats, mittens, snowpants and boots to leave at school for Outdoor Recess!



Participate in a Family Focus Group for RMSC!

The Rochester Museum & Science Center has received a grant to digitize its Albert R. Stone photo collection as part of a program called "Seeing Rochester." Each photo is like a treasure that reveals life in Rochester from 1903-1936 (these dates happen to correspond to the time period we're currently studying!). The goal of this grant program is to make the Albert R. Stone Photograph collection available for public use online. RMSC would like assistance in the assessment of this collection on the Rochester Images Website: its utility, availability, and ease of use.

The first focus group session will be Saturday, February 26 at 10:00 a.m. If your family is interested, please contact Kathryn Murano at the Rochester Museum & Science Center at 271-4552, extension 329.



Family Association Directory

Board of Trustees Representatives

Sara Bruzda (473-9736) Jemeul Johnson (719-8610), Teresa Snell (527-0070)

Officers

Co-Chairs: Tracy Smith (544-0577), Anne Spaulding (256-1444)

Secretary: Alice Carli (527-9632)

Treasurer: Julie Schnepf (256-0722)

Family Association Committee Chairs

Family Social Activities

John Quitter (787-0332)

Babysitting & Transportation

Volunteers Needed!

Fund-Raising

Mary Lavin & Tom Slothower (442-1277),

Jim & Diana Carter (473-1187)

Legislative Issues

Anne Lichtenstein (244-7373)



Classroom Parent Volunteer Coordinators

Kindergarten

Pamela Black-Colton (244-5097), Diana Carter (473-1187), John Morgan (461-4471), Susan Proe (224-0536), Marisa Stike (473-9318), Yvonne Villareale (473-9318)

First Grade

Laura Brewer (241-3034), Blanche Fox (288-9313), Jennifer Sanfilippo, Nancy Weinstein (865-7714), Eileen Wrona (288-3273)

Second Grade

Gina Dodd (426-3356), Annette Ramos (244-1378), Marisa Stike (473-9318), Yvonne Villareale (473-9318)

Third Grade

Joanne DeMarle (328-5982), Jeanne Eckl (377-8957), Betsy Serapilio-Frank & John Frank (654-5958), Bill Howard (436-2573)

Fourth Grade

Faye Henri (244-1831), Sue Lederer (473-3929), Anne Lichtenstein (244-7373), Susan Proe (224-0536), Anne Spaulding (256-1444)

Fifth Grade

Alicia Ainsworth (262-5482), Cheryl Marshall (671-2961), Debbie Ortenzi (533-2428), Jim Shook (461-1438), Teddi Urriola (671-2961)

Sixth Grade

Paul Jonasse (461-1137), Mary Lavin (442-1277), Karen Schneider (288-4726), Mary Terziani (328-3744)

Upcoming Dates To Remember



- Dec. 20-31 : Winter Recess
School is Closed
- Jan. 3: School Reopens
- Jan. 10: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
- Jan. 15: Saturday Parent Work Day
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Prospective Parent Info Session
1:00-3:00 p.m. 4th Grade Room
- Jan. 21: Sibling Applications Due
- Jan. 17: Martin Luther King Day
School is Closed
- Jan. 26-29: ELOB Site Seminar
- Jan. 28: ELOB Site Seminar
No School for Students
- Feb. 7: Prospective Parent Info Session
7:00-9:00 p.m. Eisenhart Aud.
- Feb. 8: Enrollment Lottery
9:00 a.m. Computer Lab
- Date TBA: TENTATIVE Silent Movie
Fundraiser – Details TBA
- Feb. 14: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
- Feb. 21: Presidents Day
School is Closed
- Feb. 22-23: Professional Development Day
No School for Students
- Feb. 24-25: YES! Students Do Have
School!

City Grows Expedition Dates

Tuesday, March 15

Kindergarten, First, Second Grades

Wednesday, March 16

Third, Fourth Grades

Monday, March 21

Fifth, Sixth Grades



Specific Times and Locations To Be Announced
All students required to attend

Help Wanted for Site Seminar Cleaning Brigade Jan. 15

Our guests from around the country will be arriving January 26 to see our Expeditionary Learning School in action. We want to put our best foot forward, so Anne Lichtenstein, Chair of the Parent Volunteer Coordinators, has scheduled a Saturday Parent Work Day for January 15, 2005 from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Please come out and help shine up our lovely school. We'll need cleaning, painting, light carpentry, sorting, organizing, and maybe a little laundry done. A crew of 10 parents per classroom would be great.

Pizza will be served and babysitting will be provided. A flier will be sent home via backpack mail in January.



Help Wanted

Parent Volunteers to
Clean, Paint, and Tidy Up School
No Experience Necessary

Please Come on
Saturday, January 24, 2004

9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

Babysitting Provided

Watch Backpack Mail for Sign-Up Info

Sibling Applications Due January 21

January's going to be a busy month at GCCS! Sibling applications will be sent to our current families through the mail in early January, and will be due on January 21, 2004. If you have a child entering kindergarten or another grade level, please submit the sibling application in order to ensure him or her a space. Late applications will be entered in our regular lottery, which will be held February 8.

Parents of Sixth Grade students will receive a separate letter to inquire about siblings who are not yet old enough to enter kindergarten. We will offer sibling preference to those children for whom we receive a response in January.



You're Invited to the Site Seminar Reception

Once again, parents will host a reception for our Site Seminar visitors on Thursday, January 27 from 5:30-7 p.m. We're eager to have our colleagues from around the country hear about our school from the parents' perspective as they mingle at the reception. Would you like to attend this adults-only event? Please watch backpack mail in January for an invitation. Due to space limitations, the first five responses from each grade level will be accepted. If you have questions, please contact Jean Hurst at school or Teresa Snell at 527-0070.

This is the second year we will host an Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound Demonstration Site Seminar. Each year, three or four exemplary ELOB schools are asked to host colleagues from around the country who would like to see best practices in action. We already have over 70 registrants for January's event!

City Grows

During this time period, Rochester blossoms from a flour-producing mill town to a bustling city with a wide range of businesses and industries. Chief among them were the nursery industry, carriages, gears, shoe and clothing industries, color lithographic businesses, and the beginnings of Kodak and Bausch & Lomb. Rochester's economic landscape was shaped by new forms of transportation, westward expansion, and an influx of immigrants from Europe and migrants from the American south. New people contributed new ideas, skills, and a growing workforce. Each of our winter expeditions examines issues of work and leisure with special attention to the opportunities and the social problems that confronted a growing city.

Kindergarten – Playing Along

What do I learn from play? Did my great-grandparents play with toys? Did they play with the same toys that I play with? What toys and games have changed the way people play? How and why have toys and games changed in the last hundred years? The kindergarten class will answer these questions throughout their "Playing Along" expedition. Students will visit the Strong Museum weekly for the first half of their expedition. Fieldwork at Strong Museum will guide students through an examination of toys and play over time from the late 1800's to modern times. Each child will research and become an expert on one toy in the Toy Hall of Fame. One final project will be a "living" play timeline during which students will act out the use of their toy and answer questions about the importance of their toy in the history of play. The other final project will be a children's guide to the Toy Hall of Fame to be given to children visiting the Strong Museum.



1st Grade – Every Picture Tells a Story



In this expedition, students will come to understand how the invention of the camera changed the way we learn about the world. Students will discover what changed as Rochester progressed from a village to a city. Through photographs, students will learn that many cities, including Rochester, have developed things that help people get from place to place, communicate, and be safe and healthy. As students journey through Rochester history via photographs, they will grapple with the questions "What can you learn from a picture?" and "How does a village become a city?"

2nd Grade – Rochester in Transition: From Flour To Flower



In the latter half of the 19th century, westward expansion into the great plains occurred in conjunction with the rise of the railroad as a more efficient means of transportation. Rochester found itself forced to redefine its economy in as the center of flour production shifted to the midwest. Flowers replaced flour as Rochester's primary industry.

In their previous expedition, 2nd Graders became experts on wheat (complete with weevils), milling, and simple machines. Now they will confront the notion that the local flour industry declined and new businesses provided continued economic growth for Rochester.

Students will learn about seeds and plants as well as canal and rail transportation. They will create Hyperstudio projects to represent what they learn about the science and economics of the nursery industry.

3rd Grade – Reynolds Arcade: Marketplace of Ideas

While the strategic location of Rochester at the crossroads of the Genesee River and the Erie Canal provided unprecedented growth, technology, and geography conspired to take away its “Flour City” title. Fortunately, the same geography that allowed wheat to flourish also helped flowers, orchards, and vegetable crops. The distribution of goods by canal and railroad and the introduction of color printing provided Rochester a second chance, and the “Flower City” blossomed. As money was made and opportunity brought newcomers to Rochester, new businesses took root and a thriving community of entrepreneurs helped to build the future of industry in Rochester.

Many of these entrepreneurs located in Reynolds Arcade, a marketplace of some 100 shops that provided Rochester with a central market of goods and services. Within the walls of the arcade, hopes and dreams, success and failure were played out daily as small business owners and community visionaries worked to make a living and make Rochester a better place.

During this expedition, students will examine why Reynolds Arcade was the heart of innovation in Rochester. By examining one business – the Reynolds & Bateman Seed Store – students will research how the Flower City came to be and how a business works. Each student will then become the manager of a unique store or organization that called the Arcade home, and share the information in a brochure that details the history of the store, the product, and where we would find its 21st century equivalent.



4th Grade – Inventing a Future in Rochester

How does immigration influence society? Why do people work? How have people’s ideas changed our city? These are some of the questions guiding 4th Grade’s second expedition of the year, as they explore immigration, the Industrial Revolution, and important businesses and inventions native to Rochester. The class will begin with an examination of U.S. immigration during the early 1900’s, including a four-day field study to New York City. As they visit Ellis Island and the Lower East Side of Manhattan, simulations, reenactments, and walking tours will provide the students with rich experiences and genuine understandings of immigrant life and tenement living. As many immigrants and children worked in factories and sweatshops during this period, the class will use this connection to learn about child labor and the beginnings of worker’s rights (the labor movement) in America. For the second half of the expedition, the students will learn about the many important inventions and businesses that began in Rochester. Individual research projects will explore the evolution of these endeavors, the people behind them, and any lasting legacies they had on our city, country, and world.



City Grows Expedition Dates

Tuesday, March 15

Kindergarten, First, Second Grades

Wednesday, March 16

Third, Fourth Grades

Monday, March 21

Fifth, Sixth Grades

Specific Times and Locations To Be Announced

All students required to attend



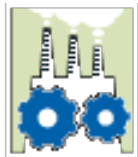
5th Grade – Retracing Footsteps

Emigration, immigration, forced migration, tenements, strikes, unions... was America really a better place to be? In this expedition, the 5th Grade class will look into the reasons people chose to leave their homelands and move to the United States in the century between 1860-1960. During those years, Rochester steadily grew in population in part because of the influx of immigrants who came to work in the garment and shoe industries here. The development of photography and the popularity of family scrapbooks during this time have preserved a wealth of documents detailing immigrant life. Students will study those amazing documents, and will have a compelling reason to immerse themselves in this topic. Through a partnership with the Italian American Community Center in Rochester, the students will pair up to write the biographies of an elder immigrant. This face-to-face relationship will enable the students to see history through the eyes of someone who has lived it. In return, we will serve the elder community by preserving their stories through biographies.



6th Grade – The Story of Stuff

Students will study the culture and people in their river systems as they explore basic concepts related to living in a global economy. They will look at products: where they come from, who produces them, and under what conditions, who consumes certain products, and what factors consumers consider in making purchases. Students will consider questions of equity, quality of life, working conditions, and interdependence as they learn about basic economic forces. They will identify a product produced in their river system, and will research fundamental issues related to the production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of that product. Students will explore the culture, geography, and policy-making structures unique to their river system as they develop an understanding of what it means to live in a global economy. Students will experience firsthand the process of creating a product; they will write and illustrate a unique children's book about a product made in their river system. Throughout this journey, students will take an introspective look at themselves as consumers as they explore the myriad factors that shape decisions they make as consumers.



ARTSpedition

Our arts teachers will collaborate on a special “ARTSpedition” for the first half of this expedition. Art, Music, and Physical Expedition will center on American city growth in the 1800's. A collaborative operation amongst the arts team will give new meaning to “The City by the Genesee” as we attempt to build a city within the walls of our school. Our processes will include strict observation and listening of exemplary models in music, PE, and art. Students will learn how local and national architecture represents patterns of immigration and city growth. In PE Students will be playing street games and studying movement related to city life and building structures. The blues will wander through every classroom and be the music that binds the school in a culminating performance that will leave the audience inspired to take in the culture that our wonderful city of Rochester has to offer!

