



Currents

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Genesee Community Charter School

October 2005

Volume 5 No. 2

What To Expect In Third Grade (and beyond)

We can set our calendars by particular social issues cropping up in each grade level. These issues seem more pronounced among the girls in each class, as these budding pre-adolescents tackle dilemmas and predicaments related to friendship and perceived social strata.

Third grade seems to be the year in which both boys and girls experiment with teasing to a larger extent. Their more highly developed language skills, their greater exposure to popular culture, and their increasing awareness of each other's likes and dislikes means that the teasing is more pointed and specific. Boys tend to disregard or brush off teasing more easily; girls are more likely to escalate an incident into a difficult situation that soon involves both home and school. Girls engage in some name-calling, but more of their social entanglements involve speculations about who "likes" who. The boy-girl tumult begins.

Fourth grade girls spend more energy jockeying for social position in their classrooms. They use language to bring down others, to form and maintain cliques, and to build up their own self-image at the expense of their classmates. Bruised feelings can color girls' outlook on school; a 30-second incident can ruin an entire day. Girls come home distraught about the constant barrage of insults and slights that they experience, when in fact these incidents are relatively infrequent.

Fifth grade girls tend to engage in behaviors that exclude peers. They have preferred friends and are reluctant to include others in their social activities.

They sometimes become dramatic about affronts, and are quick to come to the



(continued on p. 4)

Odds Bodkin

*A Family Story-Telling Event
and
Family Association Fund-Raiser*

Thursday, November 10

7:00 p.m.

Eisenhart Auditorium

GCCS Prepares to Host National Colleagues

For the third year, GCCS has been asked to serve as a demonstration site for Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound. Our demonstration site seminar will be held October 26-29. We are expecting over 100 guests, including teachers, parents, teaching assistants, district superintendents, college professors, and education students.

Visitors will observe in classes on Thursday and our staff will hold workshops and discussion sessions on Friday. Wednesday and Saturday are additional days for visitors who wish to spend more time observing or working with our teachers.

The site seminar will focus on our strengths – nurturing quality student and teacher work, building classroom and school culture, and integrating the arts into expeditions. It is our pleasure to share our practices and learn new ideas from our colleagues around the country.

Family Association Directory

Board of Trustees Representatives

Jemeul Johnson (719-8610), New Representatives Elected at October Family Association Meeting)

Officers

Co-Chairs: Tracy Smith (544-0577), Anne Spaulding (256-1444) (New Chairs Selected at October FA Meeting)

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)

(New Chairs Needed!)

Legislative Issues

Anne Lichtenstein (244-7373)

Classroom Parent Volunteer Coordinators

Kindergarten

Jennifer San Filippo (442-5420), Other Volunteers Needed!

First Grade

Portia Chiarella (44-7048), Liz Conheady (44207048), John

David Morgan (461-4471), David & Mary Carol Taylor

(458-9809), Yvonne Villareale (473-9318)

Second Grade

Denise Anderson (244-8202), Marcy Berger (271-3549),

Blanche Fox (288-9313), Sekile Nzinga-Johnson (328-

9614), Karen Schneider (288-9313), Margaret Velocci (647-

0337), Nancy Weinstein (865-7714), Eileen Wrona (288-

3273)

Third Grade

Gina Dodd (426-3356), Annette Ramos (244-1378), Marisa

Stike (473-9318), Yvonne Villareale (473-9318)

Fourth Grade

Skip Bruzda (473-9736), Jeanne Eckl (377-8957), Kathryn

Goldfeder (381-5083), Kathy Grove (328-2621)

Fifth Grade

Adam Frank (820-1248), Teresa Gerchman (458-1845),

Faye Henri (244-1831), Erin Kohler (254-3815), Sue

Lederer (473-3929), Anne Lichtenstein (244-7373), Anne

Spaulding (256-1444)

Sixth Grade

Alicia Ainsworth (262-5482), Cheryl Marshall (671-2961)



Upcoming Dates To Remember



- Oct. 11: Curriculum Night
 Oct. 17: Board of Trustees Meeting
 5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
 Oct. 18: Family Association Meeting
 6:30 p.m. Eisenhart Ballroom
 Oct. 26-29: ELOB Site Seminar
 Oct. 28: No School for Students
 Nov. 10: Odds Bodkin Storytelling
 Performance 7:00 p.m.
 Nov. 11: Professional Development Day
 No School for Students
 Nov. 15: 2nd Grade Exhibition
 Students Required to Attend
 Nov. 16: Kindergarten, 3rd Grade
 Exhibitions
 Students Required to Attend
 Nov. 21-22: Professional Development Days
 No School for Students
 Nov. 23-25: School is Closed
 Nov. 29: 4th, 5th Grade Exhibitions
 Students Required to Attend
 Nov. 30: 1st Grade Exhibition
 Students Required to Attend
 Dec. 1: 6th Grade Exhibition
 Students Required to Attend
 Dec. 8: Parent-Teacher Conferences
 11:30 a.m. Dismissal
 Dec. 20: Family Association Social
 6:00 p.m. Eisenhart Auditorium

Village to City Exhibitions

2nd Grade: *Monday, Nov. 15*

K & 3rd Grades: *Tuesday, Nov. 16*

4th & 5th Grades: *Tuesday, Nov. 29*

1st Grade: *Wednesday, Nov. 30*

6th Grade: *Thursday, Dec. 1*

Specific Times and Locations To Be Announced



*All students are
required to attend.*

Smoothing Out Community Circle

We welcome you to join us for Community Circle every Wednesday from 12:20 – 12:50. Community Circle is a special time each week when our whole school gathers to sing, dance, perform, and learn together. Each Wednesday is a little different; sometimes we learn new songs, other times we have guest performers, some weeks we celebrate Wacky Wednesday, other weeks we share the talents of individuals or small groups. Community Circle is usually held in the Eisenhart Auditorium; signs will be posted if the event has been moved.

This year we are dealing with some growing pains we experienced as the school expanded to its full size. We have found that Community Circle is most productive when the atmosphere is as focused and interruption-free as possible. Students have a much easier time attending to the presentation and participating in the activities, and teachers experience far fewer discipline issues, when distractions are limited.

For these reasons, we are implementing some new policies to try to deal with our new and improved size. We sincerely apologize if these policies seem less family-friendly, and we respectfully ask your cooperation in helping us to

reduce the number of disruptions during this half hour. Please note the following:

- ❖ Students may sit with their families most Wednesdays. We ask family members to make every effort to be on time, or a little early. After the opening song, children will remain with their classes and will not be excused to join their families. If you are late, please find a seat among the audience and enjoy Community Circle with the rest of us.
- ❖ Only students whose family members are present may leave their classes.
- ❖ Please limit adult conversation to whispers while children are entering, and refrain from conversation once Community Circle has begun and during the closing song.
- ❖ Please leave stairways, aisles, and the doorways clear. If you have an active or fussy youngster, please choose a seat near the door and feel free to move out into the lobby if you need to.
- ❖ Please limit restroom use to real emergencies.
- ❖ When the bleacher seats are pulled out, please bear in mind that noise strongly carries to the front of the auditorium.
- ❖ Children will be dismissed with their classes and may be met by parents on the Eisenhart patio.
- ❖ Please exit by the patio doors in the Eisenhart Auditorium, and help us maintain a clear pathway for the classes to pass by on the patio.

Thank you so much for bearing with our need to put some restrictions in place during what we intend to be a joyful, community-building time. We are striving for a more positive experience for everyone, and hope that these policies will help.

Winter Weather Is Coming!



And the need for boots and warm outerwear will soon be upon us! Please be sure your child is equipped with boots, hats, mittens, and snowpants every day. We request that a hat and a spare pair of boots, mittens and snowpants be left at school for the winter season. Children need to be prepared for outdoor recess and field studies every day.

Please send into school labeled with your child's name:

- ✓ **Boots**
- ✓ **Hats**
- ✓ **Mittens**
- ✓ **Snowpants**



Planning Ahead

John McCutcheon Concert
Friday, March 31, 7:00 p.m.
Eisenhart Auditorium

A Family Association Fund-Raiser

Save the date for a wonderful evening filled with music, songs, and stories performed by masterful folk singer John McCutcheon.



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Lisa Wing 10/1/05 2:27 PM

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What to Expect in Third Grade (continued from p. 1)

defense of their friends. Interest in boys becomes more apparent, which adds a level of complexity to girls' social status and relationships.

Our approach to the social curriculum continues to evolve as we learn more about how children develop socially and intellectually. Morning meeting, crew work, recess, lunch, and other procedures and rituals are designed to build social awareness, nurture social skills, and engender respect among children. Class meetings are regularly held to address conflicts that arise. Rituals and traditions build classroom and school community.

However, some problems persist and require greater intervention. Student to student conflict resolution sessions may be held, parent-teacher meetings might be necessary, consequences for bullying behavior may be delivered. Recently, the School Leader and teachers held meetings with the third grade and fourth grade girls to raise their awareness about typical social problems that

confront them at these ages. We impressed upon the girls that while their behavior may be "normal," it isn't o.k. We told them that it is our job to teach them appropriate ways to interact and treat one another in a friendly way. We encouraged them to respond "We don't talk about that here" or "This conversation makes me uncomfortable" if approached by a classmate attempting to gossip about a peer.

Heightened awareness, continued support with strategies, and ongoing team-building efforts will help our increasingly social youngsters learn appropriate and respectful ways to communicate. When behaviors become extreme or chronic, we will work with children and parents to take corrective measures. As always, disciplinary actions are confidential and will only be shared with the child's parents.

For more information about typical developmental stages, we recommend the book *Yardsticks* by Chip Wood, which is available on the Responsive Classroom website, www.responsiveclassroom.org.



Family Association Meeting

Election of Two Parent Members to the GCCS Board of Trustees
and
Selection of Family Association Officers and Committee Chairs

Tuesday, October 18
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Eisenhart Ballroom

Parents interested in running for the Board positions should call Tracy Smith at 544-0577 and be prepared to speak at the October 18 meeting.

The election will be held immediately following candidates' statements.

Babysitting Provided by the Family Association (\$2.00 suggested donation)

