



Currents

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Genesee Community Charter School

October 2006

Volume 6 No. 2

GCCS Receives Grant from U.S. Department of Education



Last spring, GCCS was delighted to be asked to work as part of a consortium with the Expeditionary Learning organization and two EL schools from Springfield, Massachusetts to write a grant proposal. The grant was part of the "Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination Program." We designed a proposal that would build on the strengths of GCCS's visual arts, music, and dance programs and our integration of these disciplines into academic areas.

In early August, we learned that we had been awarded the grant. The Department of Education received 146 applications, funded 34 proposals, and ours ranked #24. The project has the potential to be funded for four years.

Springfield's schools are relatively new to EL, and their funding and staffing for arts are extremely limited. EL and GCCS will model ways in which the arts can be used to help students deepen their understanding of content and concepts, and as vehicles for students to express their learning. Springfield teachers will learn how to incorporate the arts into their expedition planning. They'll also develop ways to teach social studies and science using the arts.

GCCS will work with EL and Springfield to develop a digital archive of exemplary student work in the arts, which will help us disseminate effective practices to schools throughout the EL network. We'll also assist with the planning and facilitation of a 5-day Arts and Humanities Institute for EL teachers.

Grant funds will support Lisa O'Malley's salary as Project Director, stipends and travel for GCCS teachers who work with Springfield teachers, and materials to archive student artwork. We'll keep you posted on our work as it progresses.



Please Mark Your Calendars!

Saturday Work Days

A Great Way

to Fulfill Family Volunteer Hours and Help Keep Your Child's Classroom Ship-shape!

Saturday, October 21

Saturday, January 20

Saturday, April 28

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



(Please bring extra rags and buckets if you have them. Thank you!)

GCCS Prepares to Host National Colleagues Once Again

For the fourth year, GCCS has been asked to serve as a demonstration site for Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound. Our demonstration site seminar will be held October 23-25. We are expecting over 100 guests, including teachers, parents, teaching assistants, district superintendents, college professors, and education students. We learned that two schools have decided to cancel classes so that their entire faculties can visit GCCS.

Visitors will observe in classes on Monday and our staff will hold workshops and discussion sessions on Tuesday. Wednesday is an additional day 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, incorporating literacy into expeditions and fieldwork, and integrating the arts into expeditions.

Family Association Directory

Board of Trustees Representatives

John Bernunzio (256-0722), Betsy Serapilio-Frank (654-5958), New Board Member Elected at October Meeting

Officers

Co-Chairs: Jim Carter (473-1187), Greg Cutt (339-9940), Lorraine Schild (244-1161)

Secretary: Alice Carli (527-9632)

Treasurer: Julie Schnepf (256-0722)

Family Association Committee Chairs

Family Social Activities

John Quitter (787-0332)

Babysitting & Transportation

Mary Carol Taylor (458-9809)

Fund-Raising

Allison McGrath (482-0052)

Legislative Issues

Anne Lichtenstein (244-7373), Nevada Schickling (329-5751)

Outreach

Lorraine Schild (244-1161), Betsy Serapilio-Frank (654-5958)

Program

Diana Carter (473-1187), Hugh Brantley (328-3288)

Classroom Parent Volunteer Coordinators

Karen Braden (473-5303), Nikki Hogan (621-8731), Yvonne Villareale (473-9318)



Classroom Parent Volunteer Coordinators

Kindergarten

Alison Adams (217-1308), Natasha Beaman-Brown (467-3607), Pam Black-Colton (244-5097), Heather Downey-Gernon (865-6207), Colleen Fogarty (461-1156), Nicole Meyer (482-2566), Jamine Wilson (256-1566)

First Grade

Denise Anderson (244-8202), Colleen Charvella (244-8339), Vincent Graves (295-8512), Melody Nowlin (458-8557), Anne Punzi (242-8902), Darla Spafford-Davis (244-8437)

Second Grade

Allison Bosworth (385-5220), Jane Cherin (473-3481), Jeanne Eckl (377-8957), Rebecca Fuss (482-8963), Amy Wulforst (654-5681)

Third Grade

Noelle Ignatowski (781-0331), Sekile Johnson (395-8456), Jennifer Sanfilippo (442-5420), Margaret Velocci (647-0337), Eileen Wrona (288-3273)

Fourth Grade

Bridget McLaughlin (385-3105), Annette Ramos (244-1378), Lucretia Rashad (232-3476), Yvonne Villareale (473-9318)

Fifth Grade

Upcoming Dates To Remember



- Oct. 5: Curriculum Night
5:30 – 8:45 p.m.
- Oct. 6: Professional Development Day
No School for Students
- Oct. 9: Columbus Day
School is Closed
- Oct. 12: School Pictures Make-up Day
Chaperone Orientation
4th Grade Classroom
- Oct. 14: Chaperone Orientation
4th Grade Classroom 9-11 a.m.
- Oct. 16: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
- Oct. 17: Family Association Meeting
6:30-8 p.m. Eisenhart Ballroom
- Oct. 24: ELOB Site Seminar
No School for Students
- Nov. 10: Professional Development Day
No School for Students
- Nov. 13: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
- Nov. 20-21: Professional Development Days
No School for Students
- Nov. 22-24: Thanksgiving Recess
School is Closed
- Dec. 11: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
- Dec. 14: Parent-Teacher Conferences
11:30 a.m. Dismissal
- Dec. 19: Family Assoc. Pot Luck Social
6-8 p.m. Eisenhart Auditorium

Village to City Exhibition Dates



Wed., Nov. 15: K, 1st 2nd Grades

Tues., Nov. 28: 3rd, 5th Grades

Wed., Nov. 29: 4th, 6th Grades

Dismissal Due Diligence

As the school year progresses, we'd like to provide a few reminders about dismissal procedures and pick-up policies.

Playground use: The playground is used by the RMSC preschool from 2:50 – 3:30 every day, and is closed to GCCS students after school. On Wednesdays, however, the playground is open for GCCS students immediately following Community Circle. Please enjoy the playground with your children after Community Circle, but free up the space for the preschool by 2:50. *All children using the playground on Wednesdays must have parents or caregivers present and providing active supervision.*

Patio and School Entrance Pick-ups: If you are picking up your children, please wait for their class to pass by on either the patio or by the school entrance. Children will wait in line with their class until their teacher dismisses them.

After children are released to parents, parents are expected to actively supervise them. *Please do not allow children to play in trees, walk on the stone wall, climb on the benches, or run through the museum's landscaping.*



Changes in Pick-up Arrangements: Teachers are extremely diligent about following parents' directions and releasing children to the appropriate caregiver. Please be sure teachers know who is approved to pick up your child. If you need to make a change in arrangements, please call or send a note in to school. *Without notification from parents, we must adhere to the child's typical daily dismissal arrangements.*

These policies and procedures help us ensure children's safety. They will also help us in our efforts to be good museum citizens. Thank you for your assistance.

Chaperone Orientation Sessions Scheduled

Help our students get the most out of their fieldwork experiences! Chaperones play a significant role in supporting student learning, interpreting exhibits, assisting with note-taking, and keeping students safe on field studies. If you hope to chaperone field studies this year and were unable to attend the September 27 Chaperone Orientation session, please plan to attend on one of our October dates. This training is required for chaperones for overnight and extended day fieldwork, and preferred for day excursions.

What: Chaperone Orientation

When: Thursday, October 12, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
or Saturday, October 14, 9-11 a.m.

Babysitting will be available

Where: GCCS 4th Grade Classroom

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



GCCS Sets Foot on an International Stage



Lisa Wing and Lisa

O'Malley will be presenting at an education conference titled "Forum on Innovation and Learning" in Zaragoza, Spain on November 10. GCCS was invited to present after a group of Spanish educators visited the school last spring. The trip is being sponsored by the Colegio Juan de Lanuza.

We will present two 90-minute sessions that highlight Expeditionary Learning, our local history-based curriculum, our integration of the arts, and strategies we use to nurture a culture of quality. Other American presenters will include representatives from the "Accelerated Schools" model, educators from a school in Tampa, Florida, and researchers from the "Understanding by Design" approach to planning.

We have recently hosted other international educators from the United Arab Emirates and from Japan. Our visitors regularly comment on the focus and engagement of our students, the sense of community they observe, and the quality student work they see. We greatly benefit from helping other educators learn from our challenges and successes.

6th Graders Buoy the World Canals Conference

For the first time ever, the World Canals Conference was graced with the presence of student participants – our very own 6th Grade canal enthusiasts. The Conference is held in a different world city each year, and we were fortunate that this year it was in Bethlehem, PA. Students participated alongside the conference delegates in seminar sessions in the mornings and field excursions to area sites in the afternoon. They investigated three themes of information: heritage preservation of canals all over the world, restoration efforts that have helped revitalize canals, and the economic impact of canals on their communities.

Students saw different types of locks, rode a mule-powered canal boat, and manipulated all the hands-on exhibits at the National Canal Museum. They took reams of notes and made a great many contacts that will be helpful as they pursue further research into the merits of the Grasso-Zimmer plan to revitalize Rochester's old Erie Canal downtown.

Come to a Very Informative



Curriculum Night Thursday, October 5

Special Guest Speaker



Expeditionary Learning School Designer



5:30 – 7:00 – Presentations in K, 1st, 4th, 6th Grade Classrooms

Presentation by Steven Levy in the Eisenhart Ballroom

7:15 – 8:45 – Presentations in 2nd, 3rd, 5th Grade Classrooms
Repeat Presentation by Steven Levy in the Eisenhart Ballroom