



Currents

The Bimonthly Newsletter of the Genesee Community Charter School

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Top Ten Ways to be Selected as an Overnight Chaperone

The overnight chaperone selection process is fraught with emotion for our students, families, and staff. We sincerely understand that parents care deeply about their children's well-being and that they want to share new and exciting experiences with them. The staff works diligently to balance individual student needs with class needs and to weigh the many factors – gender balance, chaperone experience and skills, student special needs, to name a few – that must be considered when selecting chaperones. With the huge response to each request for chaperones, some parents are necessarily left disappointed.

There are some things parents can do to increase their chances. Bearing in mind that chaperoning an overnight is an intense instructional role, teachers are much more comfortable selecting parents they've seen in action. Here are some suggestions:

1. *Attend chaperone training.* This is mandatory for all chaperones. Beginning in 2011-2012, chaperones must re-certify every three years.
2. *Chaperone day fieldwork.* According to our new policy, chaperoning day fieldwork is mandatory in order to be considered for overnights. The more teachers see parents interact with students and lead instructional fieldwork, the more confident they are that the demands of overnights can be met by those individuals.
3. *Submit paperwork by the deadline.* We have had some disappointed parents who submitted their chaperone application after the deadline, or whose application got lost in a child's backpack. Hand-delivering applications or sending them through the mail is safest. You're also welcome to call and make sure we've received the paperwork.
4. *Spend time in the classroom.* Even an occasional volunteering session can help teachers form relationships with parents.
5. *Accept disappointing news gracefully.* Unfortunately, not every parent can attend every overnight. But those parents who are diplomatic when expressing their disappointment at being left behind are far more likely to be selected the next time. An angry or hostile response raises the question of whether the individual can handle the stress of being responsible for others' children 24/7.
6. *Remember that the trip is about the students' experience, not the adults'.* Expressing disappointment about where the field study will take place ("I've already been to Philadelphia, I was hoping to go to Boston") misses the point that it is the *students* for whom the fieldwork is designed, not the adults.
7. *Take on the wild as well as the mild.* Outdoor overnights pose different demands, but parents willing to slog through the mud and rough it in a cabin on one overnight are more likely to be selected to hike city streets and sleep in a hotel the next time.
8. *Tout your qualifications.* We might not know that you're a closet history buff or that you used to work at Ellis Island. Be sure to include pertinent information in your chaperone application.
9. *Understand that your child will likely be just fine without you.* We know that some students absolutely cannot make an overnight without a parent present, but there are cases in which the separation is harder on the parent. We cannot choose chaperones based on threats to keep children back if a parent doesn't go. If you feel your child cannot attend without a parent, be sure to schedule a conference with the teachers at the earliest opportunity.
10. *Do a bang-up job as an overnight chaperone.* We try to select a combination of veteran and new chaperones for every overnight, and those who are repeat chaperones were top-notch the first time around.

There is no guarantee that each parent who wants to chaperone will be able to. We try to spread the

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Family Association Directory

Board of Trustees Representatives

LaShunda Echols-Smith (436-6219,
lashunda.smith@successfulpathways.com)

Dan Bell (544-0577, dbell@rochester.rr.com)

Kimberly Schafer (271-7329, Kimberly.Schafer@cbre.com)

Officers

Co-Chairs: Nikki Hogan (621-8731, nhogan13@hotmail.com)
Elvis Reyes (338-9012, elvis.reyes@twcable.com)

Secretary: Rebecca Degro-Carbonel (266-8408,
becky273@hotmail.com)

Treasurer: Andre Spenard (820-6639,
hammerheadconsulting@earthlink.net)

Family Association Committee Chairs

Family Social Activities

Lynn Mazzeo & Vincent Graves
(298-5125, betecd@yahoo.com)

Fund-Raising

Allison McGrath (482-0052, amcgrath@museumofplay.org)

Legislative Issues

Annie Briggs (738-9664, annietobiasz@hotmail.com)

Outreach

Volunteer Needed!

Program

Diana Carter (473-1187, blueloon@rochester.rr.com)

Classroom Parent Volunteer Coordinators

Mary Staropoli (461-0034, marystaropoli@yahoo.com)

Classroom Parent Volunteer Coordinators

Kindergarten

Emily Lambert (278-4510, davemi75@gmail.com)

First Grade

Cynthia Popinko (244-3979, cjdanceballet@gmail.com)

Second Grade

Sarah Goff (563-6609, goffs5@rochester.rr.com)

Third Grade

Becca Haak (703-2959, rhaak@rochester.rr.com)

Fourth Grade

Nancy Bernier (323-2578, nbern239@aol.com)

Fifth Grade

Denise Anderson (244-8202, tommya31323@frontiernet.net)

Sixth Grade

Liz Conheady (764-2282, econheady@msn.com)

Upcoming Dates To Remember



- Feb. 9: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
- Feb. 12: Family Ice Skating Party
1:30-3:30 p.m.
Manhattan Square Park
- Feb. 17: Family Association Meeting
6:30-8:00 p.m.
- Feb. 21: President's Day
School is Closed
- Feb. 22-23: Professional Development Days
No School for Students
- Feb. 24-25: YES! School is Open for
Students!
- Mar. 6: Family Talent Show
2:00 p.m. Eisenhart Auditorium
- Mar. 11: GCCS Family Birthday Party
6:30 p.m. RMSC
- Mar. 17-18: Professional Development Days
No School for Students
- Mar. 24: Parent Teacher Conferences
11:30 a.m. Dismissal
- Apr. 1: Professional Development Day
No School for Students
- Apr. 3: Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser
8:30-10:30 a.m.
Webster Applebee's
- Apr. 9: Saturday Parent Work Day
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Family Dance Party
6:30 p.m. Eisenhart Auditorium

Reminder!



School starts at
8:00 a.m. Please do not bring
children into the building
before 8:00 a.m. Thank you.

Seniors' Luncheon A Memorable Reunion



They're all grown up! Our first class of sixth graders, now seniors in high school, came back for a special Community Circle and luncheon in early January. Twenty-two out of 25 class members attended, a real testament to the lasting power GCCS has on its students and the fond memories our graduates hold (two of the three who didn't attend now live out of state, and the third has moved and couldn't be located). Every one of the seniors has college plans, with anticipated majors such as international political science, marine biology, business, and automotive engineering.

The highlight of the event was when Mr. Michailidis dug up some hilarious old video of the students in fifth grade acting out a poem (complete with dance moves, rapping, and song). The seniors truly enjoyed reconnecting with one another and taking a walk down memory lane. This event will be a new tradition for our students who complete sixth grade at GCCS.

GCCS Board Reaches Decision About RCSD Compact

At its January meeting, the GCCS Board of Trustees considered the request that GCCS join the RCSD-Charter Collaboration, an initiative funded by the Gates Foundation. The Board voted not to sign the compact for several reasons. The initiative would require an investment of time for GCCS leadership and staff that would put a strain on already limited time resources. It was unclear how participation in the compact would benefit GCCS staff and students. The scope of activities to be undertaken as part of the compact and the timeline for implementation were vague, and included some efforts that the Board believed should not be part of GCCS's responsibility.

GCCS has maintained a very collaborative and positive relationship with RCSD and with other charter schools over the years, and our school has been extremely supportive of professional development for area educators. GCCS received the first New York State Dissemination Grant to share practices with City Schools, and RCSD staff members are invited to our annual Site Seminar. We have supported both public and charter schools in their adoption and implementation of Expeditionary Learning. Five local colleges regularly place student teachers at GCCS, and both Nazareth and St. John Fisher hold site-based courses at GCCS that include extensive observation hours in GCCS classrooms. GCCS recently completed a four-year collaboration with Springfield Public Schools to facilitate their learning about the integration of the arts, and GCCS staff members teach master classes each year at the EL National Conference.

GCCS looks forward to continuing its positive relationship with the Rochester City School District and to finding ways to collaborate that meet the needs of our school as well as those of our City School District colleagues.

**CITY GROWS
EXHIBITION
DATES**

Thursday, Feb 10 – 6th Grade

Thursday, March 10 – 1st Grade, 3rd Grade

Monday, March 14 –
2nd Grade, 5th Grade

Wednesday, March 16 –
Kindergarten, 4 Grade

Overnight Chaperones (cont'd from p. 1)

opportunities around, but confidential information and/or teacher concerns may result in our declining to take a parent along. We have recently decided to add a parent member of the Board to the chaperone selection team so that parents' perspectives are heard during the process.

In all cases, our strong desire to provide students with a safe and educational experience is at the heart of all chaperone decisions. If you have questions or suggestions, please feel free to e-mail Lisa Wing at Lwing@GCCSchool.org or call the school.

To-Do List

Family Skating Party
Sat. Feb. 12, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
Manhattan Square Park
Bring skates if you have them

Family Talent Show
Sun. Mar. 6, 2:00 p.m.
Eisenhart Auditorium

Family Association
Pancake Fundraiser
Sun. Apr. 3, 8:30-10:30
Webster Applebee's

Family Association Meeting
Thurs. Feb. 17, 6:30 p.m.

GCCS 10th Birthday Party
Celebration for Families
Fri. Mar. 11, 6:30 p.m.
at the museum

Saturday Parent Work Day
Sat. Apr. 9, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Family Dance Party
Sat. Apr. 9, 6:30 p.m.

Intent to Return Due March 16

The deadline for **INTENT TO RETURN** forms is **Wednesday, March 16 by 3:00 p.m.** All current students who plan to attend GCCS next year must return a form to school in order to hold their spaces. Forms will be sent home in the mail in mid-February. If you don't receive a form, please call Maureen at 271-4552 ext. 460.

We have many anxious families of children at all grade levels on our waiting list. Unreserved spaces will be offered to new families. Please note that in order to be fair to all our families and applicants, *we strictly observe deadlines.*

Don't lose your child's space! Be sure to send your **INTENT TO RETURN** form back to school before the deadline.



Parent Information Sessions Scheduled for New Applicants

Know any families interested in sending their children to GCCS? Please encourage them to attend one of our Parent Information Sessions so that they may learn the details of our school's program and philosophy, and determine if GCCS is a good fit for their child. These sessions will be held in the Eisenhart Auditorium on:

Wednesday, March 30, 7-9 p.m.
Saturday, April 2, 9-11 a.m. or 1-3 p.m.

Applications for enrollment will be available at these sessions. The enrollment lottery will be conducted Monday, April 4 at 9:00 a.m. in the Computer Lab.