



Currents

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Genesee Community Charter School

June 2008

Volume 7 No. 6

Goodbye, Alexander

Dear Alexander,

Currents is coming out a little late this month because it has been a Herculean effort to write this column. It is, you see, the last *Currents* I will produce as a GCCS parent. Next week, you and your classmates will say good-bye to your elementary years and when you walk out the door, both our roles will change. You will become a middle-schooler, and I will become just School Leader.

You gave up a lot in order to make this school happen. We wrote the charter when you were just out of diapers, and that process meant that you sacrificed a great deal of mommy-and-me time. I remember the day we were out on a bike ride and you said, "You know what I'm going to give you for Mother's Day, Mom? I'm going to let you work the *whole* day." I sincerely hope that what you gave up came back to you hundred-fold over the last seven years. I hope that, someday, you will feel a little grateful for the tremendous gift that GCCS has been for you.

Because there is so much for all of us to be grateful for. The incredible teachers who taught you to read, to write, and more importantly, to think, to create, and to care. The talented arts teachers, who have breathed beauty and expression into your souls. The unbelievable opportunities for you to learn in all kinds of historic and natural sites. The beautiful environment and rich resources provided by our museum partners. The museum's men-in-black (including Linda!), who keep our school clean and in good repair. Mrs. Milke, who never hesitates to stop what she's doing to take a temperature or provide an ice pack, or who will always give your question her full attention as though you're the most important thing she has to attend to all day.

Mrs. O'Malley, who will gleefully stick on a mustache or don a costume to make history really come alive for you, and who never rests in her quest for just the right book,



- continued on p. 3

Introducing our New Staff



We have a few staffing changes to announce for 2008-2009.

Melissa Fredericks will be moving to kindergarten, where she will be joined by a new co-teacher, Jenny Elahi. Mrs. Elahi has taught preschool at Strong Museum, Summerville Nursery School, the RMSC Preschool, the Rochester Preschool-Parent Program, and Irondequoit Cooperative Nursery School. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Arts from San Diego State University and a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Nazareth College. Mrs. Fredericks has taught in the K-1 loop for five years. Christy Khiosida will be the teaching assistant in kindergarten.

Kate Daniels will move to first grade with Keri Gonzalez and Sarah David. Mrs. Daniels taught first grade in 07-08, and taught sixth grade for three years prior to that.

Becki Mason will be going out on maternity leave in August and will return in November. Her substitute will be Miranda Bradshaw. Ms. Bradshaw has taught second grade for most of her career, and has recently retired from the Rochester City School District. Ms. Bradshaw also happens to be Kate Haley's mother. They are looking forward to co-teaching together for a few months this fall. Marcus Robinson will continue to be the teaching assistant in that class.

Please join our staff in welcoming Mrs. Elahi and Ms. Bradshaw to GCCS.

Family Association Directory

Board of Trustees Representatives

John Bernunzio (256-0722), Diana Carter (473-1187), Wendy Quarles (647-1667)

Officers

Co-Chairs: Jamine Wilson (256-1566), Bill Gargan (461-0855)

Secretary: Jane Cherin (473-3481)

Treasurer: Andre Spenard (820-6639)

Family Association Committee Chairs

Family Social Activities

John Quitter (787-0332)

Fund-Raising

Anne Punzi (242-8902)

Legislative Issues

Nevada Schickling (329-5751), Mark Watts (242-8902)

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 – Lead Parents

Kindergarten

Kate Kressman-Kehoe (442-6942)

First Grade

Wendy Walsh (244-4996)

Second Grade

Denise Anderson (244-8202)

Third Grade

Betsy Serapilio-Frank (654-5958)

Fourth Grade

Eileen Wrona (288-3273)

Fifth Grade

Yvonne Villareale (473-9318)

Sixth Grade

Jeanne Eckl (377-8957)



NO BUS TRANSPORTATION AUGUST 27-28-29

The City School District will not provide bussing for our first three days of school in 08-09. If you cannot arrange transportation for your child, please call the school at 697-1960 by August 8. Limited bus runs will be scheduled for students unable to find alternate transportation.



Upcoming Dates To Remember



- June 9: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
- June 11-12: Sixth Grade Passage
Presentations
- June 12: Parent-Teacher Conferences
11:30 a.m. Dismissal
- June 15: Family Association Picnic
1:00 p.m. Camp Arrowhead
- June 17: Sixth Grade Passage Dinner
6:00 p.m. Eisenhart Auditorium
Tickets Required
- June 18: Last Day of School for Students
Passage Ceremony
10:00 a.m. Eisenhart Auditorium
Tickets Required
- June 19-20: Professional Development Days
- Aug. 21: Family Open House
6:30-8:00 p.m.
- Aug. 27: First Day of School Grades 1-6
1:00 p.m. Dismissal
Kindergarten Screening by
Appointment
- Aug. 28-29: Grades 1-6 1:00 p.m. Dismissal
Kindergarten Screening by
Appointment

INDIANS/EXPLORERS/ SETTLERS EXHIBITION DATES



- Wed., June 4: 6th Grade – 7:00-8:00 p.m.
- Tues., June 10: 4th Grade – 5:45-6:45 p.m.
5th Grade – 7:00-8:30 p.m.
- Wed., June 11: 1st Grade – 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- Thurs., June 12: 3rd Grade – 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- Mon., June 16: K – 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Goodbye, Alexander (continued from p. 1)

expert, or field study location. Mr. Colby and the Board (most of whom you don't even know), who carry the interests and needs of GCCS students foremost in their hearts and minds. Mr. Levy, who has inspired all of us to strive for greatness.

It is very painful, after seven years, to make this shift from parent to staff member. But it's not only about losing you as a student. It's about losing your whole beautiful, smart, lively class – our first class to go all the way from kindergarten through sixth grade. I will miss seeing your bright blue eyes light up when I come in the room, just as I will miss seeing the brown, gray, green, and hazel eyes of your classmates. I will miss the enthusiasm with which you all learn new things and the determination with which you tackle new challenges. I will miss seeing you take the stage during exhibition night with a poise and polish that defies your years. I will miss the joy with which your class makes the most of every opportunity, and the seriousness with which it accepts the responsibilities that accompany them.

Your class is firmly woven into the tapestry of our school's culture. You have set the bar high for quality, and you have shown us what is possible when children and adults set their minds to achieving ambitious goals. You have demonstrated what our seven-year investment can yield – a loving, reflective, intelligent, curious, and skillful group of young people ready to take on the world. It has been our privilege to watch you grow over the years.

During a recent parent meeting, a wise parent referenced the old saying *Give them roots and wings*. She said, "Roots are easy. Wings are hard." That's the truth. But we have managed to give you both. The roots of a caring community that nurtures you as individuals. The wings that come from being challenged to take responsibility, learn leadership, and make a difference. Next week, Dad and I, and all of your friends' grown-ups will watch with gratitude, melancholy, and pride as you and your bird-loving, bee-expert class step out of GCCS and prepare to soar.



Students Try Out a Settler's Life



First through third grade students experienced the joys and tribulations of settler life during recent camping excursions to Webster Park. From hauling their belongings through the woods, to building their own shelters, to cooking over an open fire, students learned how basic needs were met a couple hundred years ago without today's modern conveniences. Students also built a bridge, a mill, and a split-rail fence by chopping wood and trading for hardware at the "general store" (Mrs. O'Malley in a great settler dress and bonnet!).

Reading about history is one thing, but living it is another. Our young students now have a much clearer understanding of the challenges of settling Rochester, and a greater appreciation for the hardships endured by those who sought new opportunities in Rochester's earliest days.

Passage Ceremony Marks End of Year

This year's Passage Ceremony will be held Wednesday, June 18 at 10:00 a.m. This annual event provides students, staff, and parents an opportunity to celebrate a wonderful year and look forward – just a little – to the year ahead.

Due to space limitations, we must restrict the audience to two guests per family. Tickets are required and have already been sent home via U.S. mail. Please note that GCCS alumni must have a ticket to attend, and must



sit with a parent during the ceremony. Dismissal will take place immediately following the ceremony.



Family Association Picnic



Sunday, June 15 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Camp Arrowhead

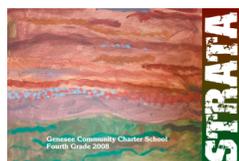
Swimming, Crafts, Games, Face Painting, and More!

Please bring a dish to pass

Hot dogs, hamburgers, veggie burgers
and drinks provided



Mark Your Calendars!
Family Open House
Thursday, August 21 6:00-7:30 p.m.



GCCS Yearbooks Available to Order

Enjoy a beautiful reminder of the 07-08 school year for years to come. The inaugural issues of GCCS *Strata* are available to order. The yearbooks feature each child's Passage Ceremony portrait and artwork as well as a couple dozen photos from field studies and classroom activities.

Yearbooks are \$10 for each grade level from kindergarten through fifth grade and \$15 for sixth grade. Proceeds from the yearbooks will help fund sixth grade's gift of art to the school. The class is working with Ms. Valle to create a bird sculpture that will hang in the entryway near the elevator.

Order forms are available in the office or online at www.GCCSchool.org.

Many thanks to Diana Carter for spearheading this effort and to Ken Tryon for contributing countless hours of graphic design expertise.

Before you go back-to-school shopping...

We would greatly appreciate it if each student could donate the following items to his/her classroom community next year:

- ✓ 2 boxes of Puffs or Kleenex 
- ✓ 2 bottles of Softsoap (pump kind)
- ✓ 1 box sandwich-sized Hefty one-zip bags
- ✓ 1 box gallon-sized Hefty one-zip bags
- ✓ 3 large packages graham crackers, animal crackers, goldfish crackers, or pretzels
(teachers will request additional snacks throughout the year as the need arises)
- ✓ 1 dozen No. 2 pencils 
- ✓ 1 box Dixie cups
- ✓ 3 glue sticks

In addition, please select a wheel-free, modest size backpack for your child. Wheels pose many safety hazards, and large backpacks are difficult to fit in cubbies. Thank you!