



Soaring

February 2017

YOU Make the Difference...

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A Great Investment Tip: Investing in Children's Futures!

Every great journey begins with a plan, a starting point and road map that leads to a destination successfully. For our children, one of the most important journeys is their education. That is why high quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs, like the ones offered at Groton Community School, play a critical role in launching children toward future successes.

You, our loyal supporters, know that your gift to GCS helps to ensure exceptional early learning experiences. GCS offers a multi-faceted curriculum to foster growth in all developmental areas, and that develops future leaders. What you might not know is that according to a recent University of Chicago study, investing in quality ECE returns 13% to the community annually for each dollar invested – in fact, investing in preschool beats the stock market! (“How Investing In Preschool Beats The Stock Market, Hands Down,” nprED, 12/12/16) This research shows that quality preschool programs have been proven to positively affect the health, IQ, and future earnings for students, as well as lowering obesity rates and reducing crime in the community.

These long-term gains and huge dividends are impressive, but what excites us even more is that studies have shown that the

very things that make GCS special, are the things that create these huge successes. nprED writes, “Experts cite several key elements in ‘high-quality’ preschool: small class sizes, student-directed learning and lots of open-ended play.”

Without these, studies show the positive effects of preschool may be short-lived. But with them – with these very elements that we offer every student, every day – the effects carry forward through elementary and secondary school and beyond. (“A Lesson For Preschools: When It’s Done Right, The Benefits Last,” nprED, 11/17/16)

We are thrilled to see that studies are now proving what investors like you have always known – preschool is the foundation for success in learning and life. At GCS, we are grateful for the investment you have chosen to make in our children, and we are proud to offer programs that will pay these lasting dividends for our children and for our world.



Why I Give

What's YOUR reason for giving? We asked some of our supporters why they give to the GCS Annual Fund. Here is what they have to say.



"Groton Community School is the embodiment of all that is important to young children. I financially support what I know to be the best- because teaching is my calling and GCS is my home."

Jennie Fitzkee, GCS Teacher



"Contributing to the Annual Fund is a way of investing in the well-being of GCS children and supporting the tremendous commitment of the teachers and administrators. It is great to see these dollars working in our local community."

John Amaral, President of the Board of Trustees



"Groton Community School has been a safe and nurturing "home away from home" for our children over the past five years. We give to the Annual Fund because we believe in GCS and the education, support and love that the school gives to so many children and their families."

**Sarah Belcher,
Board of Directors and Current GCS Parent**



"GCS helped mold me into a hard-working, award winning, scholarly individual while still loving to have fun and learn. The happy memories I made at GCS will last a lifetime, and it would be a shame for any child not to get to experience those magical moments."

Wesley Cline, GCS Alumnus



"As our twin daughters have progressed through the classrooms of Groton Community School, from My Grown-Up and Me through preschool and now kindergarten, we have known that every teacher, every lesson, and every decision is instilled with the deepest commitment to the needs of our children. We give to the Annual Fund because a wonderful education is the most important investment we can make for our family and our future."

**Stacie Moeser,
Past Board of Directors and Current Parent**

DID YOU KNOW? Annual Fund vs. Capital Campaign

An annual fund is money for the school's current year operating expenses. Annual gifts make up the difference between what tuition covers and the actual cost of running the school. Your gift to our Annual Fund, every year, helps GCS provide the exceptional first school experiences for which it is known.

A capital campaign, however, funds brick and mortar building projects — new facilities and major renovations — and sometimes endowment or special funds, in addition. In our case, the *Forward Motion* Campaign will allow GCS to complete a major renovation and expansion project, as well as create funds to ensure the long term financial security of the school. Because capital project gifts are often larger, you have the option of paying your pledge over two to three years.

The bottom line is that there are two opportunities to support Groton Community School. With a gift to the GCS Annual Fund you will support the daily operations of our school. Meanwhile, a gift to the *Forward Motion* Campaign will help build the future of GCS. Both are important vehicles for the financial support of GCS.

Forward Motion Update

As we move forward into 2017, our *Forward Motion* Capital Campaign is gaining momentum. Our campaign committees are working hard on ways to share our building renovation and expansion plans with current and past GCS families, as well as with many friends of the school, who are interested in fostering the future of GCS. As you may know, these plans include improving our learning and teaching spaces so that our dedicated teachers can continue to offer children a preeminent early childhood education experience.

We are excited to actively grow our circle of support through a variety of informational gatherings and peer-to-peer discussions, which are taking place now and will continue over the next couple of months. We welcome your interest and participation in the campaign and



encourage you to join us in spreading the word about *Forward Motion*.

To stay up to date on all that is happening with *Forward Motion*, please visit our website www.gcsforwardmotion.org. Here you can become a *Forward Motion* "Insider" and receive timely emails with all the latest news from our campaign Co-chair, Debbie MacDonald. It is an exhilarating time as we gain momentum, and look forward to a bright future for GCS children, families, and staff!

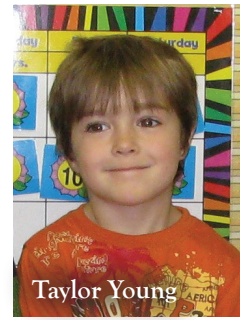
A Word from Our Director

Groton Community School is proud to sponsor two annual scholarships, which are awarded to graduating high school seniors who attended our school as a young child. We are very happy to honor our school alumni, and also to acknowledge two special young men who are near and dear to us. Each had a profound impact at very different stages of their lives.

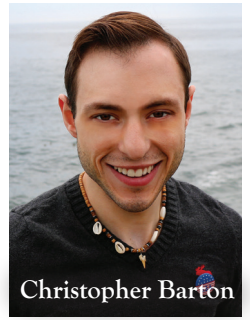
The Groton Community School Scholarship in Memory of Taylor Benjamin Young is now in its sixth year. Taylor was a beloved and treasured GCS student who lost his life at the tender age of four. He was a sweet, sincere, and happy little boy who brightened each and every day. It was remarkable how someone as young as Taylor understood and embodied principles that we hold so dear: our school's dedication to "peace"

and "bucket filling" (thoughtful words and deeds). The award recipient will exemplify these qualities demonstrated by Taylor during his young life.

This year we have extended our alumni Scholarship Program to celebrate the life of another special individual to our school. This second scholarship is in memory of Christopher Barton, the son of Daniel and Alisa Barton. In his work as a Groton Community School Board of Trustees President, Dan's vision and inspiration has been instrumental in paving the way for the future of our school. Alisa has shaped the future of many children in our community as a talented Teacher in the Groton Dunstable Regional School District. Their son, Christopher, was a personable and brilliant young man, whose important work in cancer research has guided future research and improved the lives of many. The award recipient will exemplify Christopher's qualities of scientific inquiry



Taylor Young



Christopher Barton

and achievement in math, with interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) related pursuits, and desire to make a difference in the lives of others.

Through the award of these annual scholarships, we hope to share these inspiring qualities of Christopher and Taylor with the community, and celebrate our GCS alumni, as well as advocate for the importance of Early Childhood Education and continued learning throughout life! Please see our school website for more information: www.grotoncommunityschool.org/gcs-scholarships.

A Peek Inside Our Classrooms

By Shelley Grove,
Head Teacher in the Blue Room

At the start of the school year, we began studying our own backyards, the Eastern Woodlands. It was fun to learn about trees, feel the bark and moss, run around to the crunch and pop under our feet, and lay down looking up to see the sky through the branches. Our senses are given a gift when we visit "our maple tree" right outside our door, enabling us to watch seasonal changes and feel connected to nature.

We then enlarged our study to include our own country, America the Beautiful, and discovered that the land in other states is quite different than ours. The mountains and trees are taller out west, the deserts are hot and sandy in the southwest, and in the middle of the country (the plains), they grow a lot of corn and wheat. Whatever the topography, the Native American people honored the earth and its gifts. We

read many Native American legends about animals that taught us morals.

Another exciting activity was to learn about the history and importance of our flag, the "Star Spangled Banner", and how it represents freedom. We counted the stars and stripes, and learned that if you make five rows of ten objects, you can count to fifty by tens. It was exciting to discover there are fifty stars (one for every state in America) and that the thirteen red & white stripes are in a pattern!

We expanded even further to learn that our country is on planet earth, which is inside a galaxy, which is inside of the universe. To quote Albert Einstein: "A human being is part of the whole, called by us the 'Universe'..." Using a set of Russian



nesting dolls while we read *Inside All*, we were able to present the concept of how something as small as the love inside each of our hearts is connected to something much bigger, the whole universe. The children created their own galaxies with a crayon resist technique and practiced their cutting skills by adding a star and a heart. Their mixed media masterpieces reminded us of the quote by Francis of Assisi: "He, who works with his hands, is a workman. He, who works with his hands and his head, is a craftsman. He, who works with his hands, his head and his heart, is an artist."

Groton Community School

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Look Who's Soaring Now! *Emily Zukauskas*

In 1987, when she was 4 years old, Emily Zukauskas began her education at Groton Community School. Her first class was with Laurie Hall in the Pink Room, where she enjoyed playing "hair and makeup" with a life-size Barbie Doll Head. Later, she moved to Jennie Fitzkee's class in the Aqua Blue Room. Memories include a field trip to Nashoba Hospital, making Green Eggs and Ham, and playing on the railroad-tie climber on the playground.

It didn't end there. For almost 25 years Emily continued to be involved with GCS, because her mom, Jolene, started teaching at the school. So, throughout her childhood, Emily would come over to GCS with her mom after school and on weekends to help out.

Emily also attended the Groton-Dunstable School District K-12. She then went on to Bates College in Maine and studied abroad in both Germany and Scotland, as well as attending the University of Wisconsin Law School in Madison, Wisconsin. After graduation, Emily joined the Army JAG Corps, serving at West Point (NY), Fort Riley (KS), and Fort Belvoir (VA). Currently, she is an Army Prosecutor under the Criminal Law Division of the pentagon, and teaches trial strategies to Prosecutors at Army bases around the world. In 2016, she traveled to 19 Army bases, including bases in Germany, South Korea, Hawaii, and Alaska.

Emily is married to a wonderful guy named Brian. She seeks out new adventures, and last winter she tried her hand at the sport of curling. In her free time, she loves to



read and to bake pies. Emily also really enjoys traveling and is always eager to learn about other countries and people.

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*Do you know a GCS alum who is soaring? Visit [grotoncommunityschool.org/gcs-alumni-network](http://grotoncommunityschool.org/gcs-alumni-network), or contact [alumni@grotoncommunityschool.org](mailto:alumni@grotoncommunityschool.org) to share a personal story or nominate someone you know to be featured in our "Look Who's Soaring Now" article.*