



Soaring

March 2015

SAVE THIS DATE!

Join us on Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 8:15 AM for refreshments and conversation with some of our staff and Board of Trustees members. Learn about the exciting projects you helped bring to GCS through the new I.C.E Grant program. RSVP by April 30 by email to reg2@grotoncommunityschool.org or by phone at (978) 448-6179. Hope to see you there!



YOU Make the Difference...

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New Projects Inspire Innovation, Creation, and Exploration

Thanks to you, GCS children soar to new heights

With support from our community investors, this school year GCS launched our new Innovation, Creation, and Exploration (I.C.E.) Grant program to provide funds to teachers for special programs and activities. The first round of grants, which aligned with the school's 2014-2015 STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) theme, are already making new things possible for our children: Early Childhood Master Professional Steve Lechner is bringing small-group STEM workshops to the school, introducing children to the wonders of STEM learning, allowing them to question, investigate, and examine age-appropriate topics through hands-on explorations.

Also, in honor of our STEM theme, GCS will hold a spring time Science Fair led by the Kindergarten class. GCS classes are in the process of planning their Science Fair contributions, and the Kindergarten is writing an I.C.E. Grant for the materials required by each. It will be exciting to participate in scientific discoveries together in a school-wide event! Other I.C.E. Grants in the works include audio/visual equipment and a STEM children's video library, iPad technology to benefit children and families in classrooms, and playground

enhancements to promote exploration and experimentation.

Finally, it has long been a goal of GCS to construct a small greenhouse to promote children's interest, knowledge, and active exposure to learning about nature, life cycles, and ecology. We are so excited to be moving forward with this project due in part to our donor-funded I.C.E. Grants. Serving as an additional "outdoor classroom," the greenhouse will provide richer and more extensive learning opportunities for years to come.

These grants are supported by gifts to the Annual Fund from generous donors like you. In fact, as a result of the challenge issued by a group of anonymous donors, all donations to this year's annual fund received by December 31, 2014 were matched! "We are continually grateful for the generosity of our Annual Fund donors," says Linda Kosinski, Director. "Their support makes these I.C.E. Grants possible, and allows GCS to continually offer cutting edge programming to our children." We look forward to reporting the full results of these programs at the end of the school year.

Why I Give One Donor's Perspective

*A chat with Jenny Cathrow,
Former GCS Board Member
and Past GCS Parent*



GCS: What is your personal connection to GCS?

JC: Both my children attended GCS. My son began in My Grown Up and Me, and stayed through Pre-K and Kindergarten. My daughter attended the Toddler Program and would have stayed for preschool, however, we moved out of state. Both also participated in Camp K.

GCS: What do you think sets GCS apart?

JC: GCS provided a stimulating and nurturing environment for our children, helping each of them grow and learn in the ways that were best suited to their individual personalities. From the beginning, we experienced a true open door policy with the administration. We found the staff accessible and easy to communicate with about our children's academic and social progress. We also appreciated the emphasis on developing respect and caring for others.

GCS: Why do you choose to support the GCS Annual Fund?

JC: We continue to support the GCS Annual Fund as an appreciation of the wonderful experience our children had as students and the dedication

and excellence of the administration and teachers. In my opinion, GCS provides an exceptional early childhood education. Contributions to the Annual Fund ensure that the school continues to evolve and advance. GCS is also an important part of the Groton community. Its continued recognition as a topnotch preschool benefits the town of Groton overall in terms of attracting and retaining new residents.

GCS: What can you tell us about you?

JC: My (pre-kids!) professional background is in marketing and PR. I was thrilled to use these skills to support GCS as a member of the Board of Directors.

GCS: Is there anything else you would like to share?

JC: We were relatively new to the area when my son began at GCS and the relationships I established with other parents and the school really cemented our connection to the community.

Want to join Jenny in becoming a sustaining supporter of GCS? Consider donating to our Annual Fund! Call (978) 448-6179 to learn more.

GCS Children are Healthy and Active in 2015

A Word from Our Director

While spring may only be a few weeks away, as I write this we are in the midst of a record setting winter in MA. Here at GCS we are working to help our children enjoy an active and healthy life despite all this snow. We have been moving and grooving in Creative Movement with Patty Barr, gathering for a visit from the dentist, playing movement games in the Big Room, and riding our scooters down the hallways when the weather keeps us inside. As we share snacks and lunches in our classrooms, we talk about healthy eating choices. We are fortunate to have kitchens in each classroom enabling us to engage in cooking nutritious foods together. I am so impressed by the children's enthusiasm for learning about healthy choices!

At the same time, I am honored and humbled by all that our friends are doing to ensure that GCS continues to be a healthy organization. It is because of you that GCS continues to be a top-notch school. On behalf of the entire GCS community, thank you!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda".

Linda Kosinski
Director

Did You Know?

You can double your donation to GCS! Many employers will match any charitable contribution made by their employees. Some will even match donations made by retired employees. To find out if your company has a matching gift program, visit our website and click "Get Involved," or contact your company's HR department.

...thank you for all that you do for our children!

Donors Honor the Past and Nurture the Future

Inaugural Gifts Establish the Adelaide Luca Giving Society

The Adelaide (Torrey) Luca Giving Society was recently established in honor of one of the first teachers and Director of Groton Community Kindergarten, which would later become Groton Community School. "Miss Adelaide" was an elegant, intelligent, and eloquent woman, with a keen memory of the children she taught throughout the years, and a warm and welcoming heart.

The Society honors Adelaide's legacy in our community and her life-long dedication to early childhood education and GCS. Membership in the Society recognizes philanthropic leadership giving to the GCS Annual Fund and is awarded annually to donors who make \$1,000 in cumulative gifts during a fiscal year (Sept. 1 – Aug. 31). A reception is being planned for Society members in fall 2015.

For more information or to become an inaugural member of the Adelaide Luca Giving Society, visit our website and click "Get Involved."



A Peek inside Our Classrooms

GCS Students Experience Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM)

By Jennie Fitzkee

If you have had the pleasure of spending time with preschoolers as we do at GCS, then you already know exactly how integrating STEM into our classrooms works. Let's face it, preschoolers LOVE to ask "why?" In fact, preschoolers have insatiable appetites for anything that has real moving parts. They want to figure out how stuff works!

With this year's STEM theme, we take their excitement for "why?" and teach them how to answer this favorite question. Although our children may be little in age and stature, we actually teach them BIG words in STEM, such as "estimating," "predicting," and "hypothesis." For example, the children estimated the circumference of an apple, then wrapped the apple in string, and finally measured the string using a ruler. Measuring the circumference of the apple involved using

science and math to determine the accuracy of their predictions. What they really learned from this process was an approach to problem solving and critical thinking.

Sometimes the inspiration for our STEM explorations comes from our children's observations in our classroom. When we noticed that a string on the autoharp moved, it led us to explore and demonstrate vibration with a multitude of instruments. Children in the Pink Room noticed their own shadows on the playground, which led to photographing, measuring, and drawing self-portrait shadows. Through impromptu investigations such as these and a rich variety of planned explorations, GCS classrooms can actively teach STEM by engaging children in learning through real experiences that excite them. And as our teachers have learned, "why?" really is the best question of all!



Camp Kaleidoscope 2015

GCS Goes On Safari this Summer

While we romp in the snow, we are also dreaming of sun and fun at Camp Kaleidoscope! This year's theme will be "On Safari" with explorations into African animals and cultures. Each summer, we have over 100 campers in four Half Day Sessions or for the whole summer in our Full Day Program. Summer Camp Director Terri Martin, Assistant Rebekka Ericson, and all our Camp K Counselors will offer creative African adventures including music, arts and crafts, construction opportunities, nature study, and dramatic arts. Our campers from ages 3 to 8 will be divided into four groups, from our youngest to the "big kids," a.k.a. "Mighty, Mighty Cheetahs" this year.

Another highlight is "Nature with Shelley." Every Thursday, Shelley Grove leads each age group in outdoor nature-related explorations, art projects, and children's literature with a natural focus. The children also enjoy gardening outside in our



planters — this year in our new greenhouse — and harvesting the vegetables for snack. At GCS we are firm believers in daily activities on our outdoor playscape to take advantage of nature, sunshine, exercise, and outdoor fun with friends, and Camp K is no exception!

Our campers will get suited up each day for wonderful water play in wading pools and on our gigantic water slide. In addition, you may have seen some of our Full-Day campers swimming and splashing at the

Groton Country Club on weekly "Big Pool Swim" days. If you see us, give a "wave"! The end of the school year is always bittersweet, as we celebrate our year together and say "good-bye" to children we have watched grow so much in their year(s) with us. Thank goodness we have Camp Kaleidoscope, with current GCS children, new friends from the community, and alumni who return for summer time fun at their old school!

Calling all GCS Alumni! *New Alumni Network Created*

GCS has a rich history, from its roots in the 1930s and official opening in 1945 to the modern Groton Community School that we know today. In its 70+ year history, so many children have started their journey towards a bright future at GCS. All of their stories are the real history of GCS, and we want to know more. Therefore, for the first time, the staff and volunteer leadership of the school are establishing an alumni network to help reconnect our children to the school and to each other.

"We want to reunite with former students, celebrate their accomplishments, see the successes they've had and reconnect them to GCS," said Dan Barton, President of the Board of Trustees. "The creation of the Groton Community School Alumni Network is new, and we are just starting the process of forming a committee to identify and reach out to former students. Once many of our alumni are located, GCS plans to have a fun gathering of alumni and their families," Barton said.

In future issues of Soaring we will feature GCS alumni with an update on where they are and what they are doing now. Are you — or do you know — an alumnus or alumna who would like to join the GCS Alumni Network or who would like to be featured in our newsletter? It's easy to reconnect! Call us at (978)448-6179, email us at alumni@grotoncommunityschool.org, visit www.grotoncommunityschool.org and be sure to follow us on Facebook by searching "Groton Community School, Inc."