



Soaring

June 2017

A Very Special Guest!

YOU Make the Difference...

- A Very Special Guest
Page 1
- Forward Motion Launches
Page 2
- A Word from Our Director
Page 2
- Scholarship Recipients
Page 3
- Did You Know?
Page 3
- A Peek Inside Our Classrooms
Page 3
- Look Who's Soaring Now!
page 4



We were extremely honored to receive a very special and personal visit this spring from the MA Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) Commissioner, Tom Weber. EEC is the state licensing and regulations agency that oversees all Early Childhood Programs here in Massachusetts to ensure health, safety, and quality of curriculum content. Our own Aqua Room Teacher, Jennie Fitzkee, met the Commissioner last April, when she received an Early Childhood Education award from the Boston affiliate of NAEYC. She invited him to our school, and were delighted that he actually came!

It was such an exciting morning as the children warmly welcomed our guest with a beautifully inspired "Welcome" banner. Commissioner Weber was enthusiastically greeted by children as he made his way up and down the hallway to personally meet and speak with each classroom. How often do we have a "man wearing a suit" hanging around in classrooms? We were so inspired by the attentiveness, kind nature, and personal thoughtfulness that he shared with each child as he shook hands with them. The entire school then gathered together in the "Big Room" to share some special music that we had prepared for him, and we were impressed that he even sang along! To show our appreciation, we held a staff luncheon in his honor, and also gifted him with a bucket of beautiful pansies (to represent our "bucket filling" philosophy) and a Groton Community School sweatshirt for him to wear in style.

Like all children's centers, Groton Community School is required to adhere to stringent regulations at all times and participate in a relicensing study every two years. We are fortunate to have a strong working relationship with our school's state licenser and communicate with her regularly for questions and concerns that arise throughout the year. It is exciting to now have a familiar relationship with the Commissioner, too, and we are so grateful to him for taking time from his very busy calendar to visit GCS!



Groton Community School Launches Forward Motion Campaign

Groton Community School's first ever capital campaign, *Forward Motion*, is underway and promises to be transformational on many levels. With over seventy years of history in the community, GCS is positioning itself for future generations of young children. *Forward Motion* will lead us there!

Led by a team of committed volunteers, the heart of the campaign is a building project which will expand and modernize our 33-year-old building. Originally serving approximately 50 children and 12 teachers, the school population has grown to 150 students and over 20 staff members. The new facility will comfortably meet the needs of our expanded GCS family. Although increasing enrollment is not a goal, there will be room for some modest growth.

Additional enhancements will include a Library and Technology Center, as well as conference spaces for parents and teachers. A welcoming Community Room will provide ample space for large motor activities, school assemblies, and

community activities. To support the ongoing operation of the facility, a Building Maintenance Fund is being created and funded as part of the capital campaign.

The creation of an Exceptional Teachers Fund will allow for recruitment and retention of high quality educators, and offer enhanced professional development opportunities. This fund recognizes that the teaching staff are key to making GCS an excellent early childhood education experience, and this investment is critical to the ongoing success of the school.

Another important aspect of the *Forward Motion* Campaign is the creation of a Financial Aid Fund, to support the families of Groton Community School and our community, making our school even more accessible. With the creation of these three funds (Building, Teachers, Financial Aid), GCS can ensure the long-term financial health of the school while continuing to provide the very best in early childhood education.



GCS has a compelling history and is poised to begin a remarkable new chapter. To achieve all that is needed, our fundraising goal is \$3,850,000. The Trustees and *Forward Motion* Steering Committee have already been meeting with donors to secure several lead gifts, and have over \$2.2 million committed to date. For *Forward Motion* to succeed, we will need the backing of all who know and love GCS. So, we will be reaching out to everyone in the GCS family as the campaign progresses, giving everyone an opportunity to share in its success!

To follow our progress with *Forward Motion*, please visit our campaign website: www.gcsforwardmotion.org.

Be sure to register as an "Insider" to get timely messages from our *Forward Motion* Campaign Co-Chair, Debbie MacDonald.

A Word from Our Director

Despite the rainy weather that surrounded us during the month of May, we were able to gather together as a school community and share in a very special Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony. We are so grateful to Army Sergeant First Class John Moses, who joined us in full military attire, to help convey the significance and meaning of this very special day. The children learned about respect and rules of the American Flag, shared in some patriotic poetry and music, and were excited to welcome Clint and Emma Huff, members of a past GCS family whose son/brother is currently serving in Afghanistan. Each classroom was able to share an American Flag in memory and honor of those who serve our country and their families. The important message we

wanted to impart to all the children is that Memorial Day goes far beyond that of a day off from school or a barbeque in the back yard. This ceremony was also the perfect opportunity to remind children of personal remembrances, as well as a time to reflect and instill values. Our school-wide gatherings for peace, school spirit, and remembrance throughout the year are important priorities to teach and embrace the sense of community that we are so fortunate to enjoy at Groton Community School. Thank you to the many who were able to join us for this lesson of honor and



commemoration. The only way to have made this ceremony any more perfect would have been if the sun was shining, so we could have paid tribute outside at our special GCS Memory Garden.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Linda".

Linda Kosinski, Director

Groton Community School Scholarship Recipients

We are delighted to honor two special GCS alumni who are graduating seniors through our Groton Community School Scholarships for 2017. Each year, our Scholarship Committee has been faced with the difficult task of selecting a recipient from a talented pool of alumni applicants, who exemplify the qualities of kindness and an enthusiasm for school, for our Scholarship in Memory of



Martha and Ian

Taylor Benjamin Young. Beginning in 2017, we now have a Scholarship in Memory of Christopher Barton, who possessed a passion for STEM pursuits, and made a difference in the lives of others through his cancer research. Congratulations to Ian Peterson on receiving our 1st annual GCS Scholarship in Memory of Christopher Barton. Ian will be attending Colby College in the fall and plans to pursue a career in the field of environmental science. We also would like to congratulate Martha Perego for receiving our 6th annual Scholarship in Memory of Taylor Benjamin Young. The Committee was especially impressed with Martha's essay, "Kindness is the Best Medicine", and her interests to combine medicine and education to benefit children. She will be attending Trinity College. We are very proud of our alumni, how they represent our school in the community, and how they display our core values of caring, community spirit, and a craving for knowledge and learning.

DID YOU KNOW?

Matching Gift Programs

Did you know that one in ten companies has a matching gift program? Many companies will match all, or part, of your gift to a qualifying charitable organization. Every company has its own rules regarding matching gifts, so you need to check with your – or your spouse's – human resource department. You will usually need to complete a simple form and provide evidence of your qualifying charitable gift, which GCS can help you do. Some companies will even match gifts for retired employees!

We have a list of many companies in MA with matching gift programs on our website <http://www.grotoncommunityschool.org/matching-gifts>. This is a great place to check to see if YOUR company will match your generous donation to Groton Community School. Matching gifts are a great way to increase your support of GCS, and help our school continue to soar!

A Peek Inside Our Classrooms

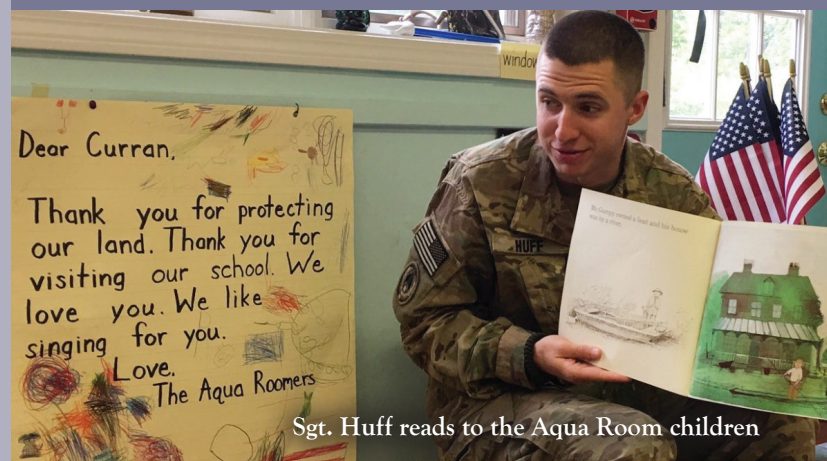
by Jennie Fitzkee, Head Teacher

The Aqua Room recently welcomed home their pen pal, Army Sergeant Curran Huff, stationed in Afghanistan. What could be better for young children, and a soldier far away from home, than becoming pen pals? We did just that. It has been a year-long gesture of thanks and giving from the children.

It began in the fall with a slide show all about Curran. His parents and sister Lily were eager to tell us all about him as a child, what he liked to do, and where he went to school. Children dressed up in his Army gear, and watched a video with Curran's personal "Hello!". Children immediately felt a connection, and couldn't wait to write to him! Letters, drawings, and stories followed as the months went by. His Dad visited to read Curran's favorite childhood book, *Mr. Gumpy's Outing*. Oh, what a wonderful book! It became a classroom favorite. We then hosted a bake sale to raise money to buy items for a care package. With \$200 in hand, the class walked to CVS with a list of all the things children decided Curran might need. Three boxes were mailed to Afghanistan. Curran was thrilled; he told us so in his letter to the children.

Then the big day came to meet our pen pal on leave. Curran arrived, warmly greeting the children. He was presented with a copy of his favorite book, signed by all of them. The tables were turned as he became the reader of the story, followed by hugging and eager chatting. After a colorful red, white, and blue snack, children sang their favorite new song for Curran, "Red, White, and Blue" by Debbie Clement. He was given the honor of planting American flags in our Memory Garden, for those who served, and children watched in silence and respect. When it was time for Curran to say "goodbye", the arms of children wrapped him in genuine hugs of gratitude.

While Curran did not attend GCS, his younger siblings did; his family has been long time supporters of GCS. We were fortunate to reconnect in such a meaningful way with a past family, and connect children to concepts in literacy, geography, culture, and caring.



Sgt. Huff reads to the Aqua Room children



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Groton, MA 01450

Look Who's Soaring Now! *Devin Beaulieu*

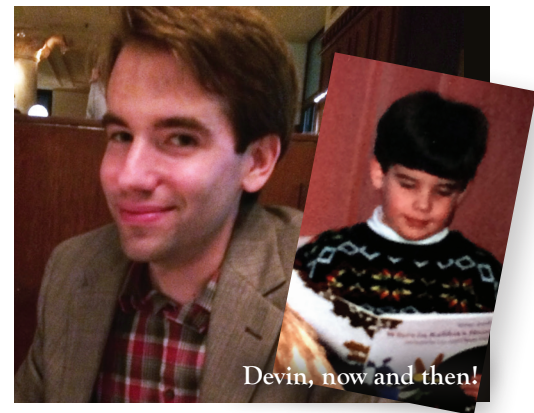
From 1993 to 1995, Devin Beaulieu attended Pre-K and Kindergarten at Groton Community School. Playing on the classroom computer was a favorite activity, as was playing cribbage with one of his teachers, Tara. Normally on the shy side, Devin flexed his developing reading skills by playing the role of Narrator in a class play, which he remembers was a really proud moment. Interestingly, he was also a member of the last Kindergarten class that Linda Kosinski taught before she moved from a teaching to administrative role as GCS Director. We are grateful to Devin's Mother, Candace, for her leadership at GCS, as well, serving on our Board of Directors as Parent Representative.

Now as an adult, Devin works on air and missile defense systems and related technologies at the groundbreaking MIT Lincoln Laboratory. This work led to an expanding interest in electrical

engineering; he has just completed his Masters and will return to school for his PhD, both on scholarship from Lincoln Laboratory. Such scholarships are extraordinarily competitive, and an impressive accomplishment.

When Devin returns to Boston University this fall, he will be working on adaptive optics technology. A typical application of this would be eliminating the distorting effects of the atmosphere for large telescopes by creating variations in the telescope's mirror. Devin credits GCS with sparking his curiosity and instilling a love of lifelong learning in him at a young age!

As for having fun, Devin has played piano for many years. He also enjoys video games, movies and books, and has been running in 5K events. He is a very versatile and effective researcher at the cutting edge in



Devin, now and then!

physical sciences, who is also well-read, well-rounded and happy in his personal life. We are so happy to hear about Devin's personal and professional successes, and future endeavors!

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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 for our "Look Who's Soaring Now" article. Be sure to also visit our "GCS Alumni Network" Facebook page!*

*Helping Children Soar*