



June 2018

## Groton Community School Launches Public Phase of their *Forward Motion* Capital Campaign



Groton Community School has launched the ***Forward Motion Campaign***, the largest fundraising endeavor in its history. With a \$3.85 million goal, the campaign will allow GCS to modernize and expand its facilities. Highlights include a dedicated Children's Library, Technology and Resource center, enlarged classrooms and meeting spaces.

According to John Amaral, GCS Board of Trustees President, "This is an exciting time in the history of GCS. High-quality early education programs have a tremendous impact on a community, including tax-payer advantages and a stronger economy, which speaks volumes about the importance of

this project. The investment in GCS gives young children a strong foundation and readies them for lifelong success. There is also a ripple effect – as we are providing this exceptional first school experience to families, our friends, neighbors, and local businesses are benefitting as well."

During the quiet phase of the campaign several donors made very generous leadership gifts, demonstrating their belief in the powerful impact that GCS has on our community. Gifts and pledges totaling more than \$2.2 million have already been collected as we eagerly anticipate breaking ground on the first phase of the project.

"Many families in Groton and the surrounding towns have been a part of GCS over the past 72 years. Now is the time for all of us who have children or grandchildren that attended the school, and those who attended themselves, to step up and give. If everyone who was ever part of the GCS family were to donate, we would easily achieve the campaign goal," said Peter Myette, a past GCS parent and grandparent, past Board member and current Trustee.

You can learn more about the ***Forward Motion Campaign*** and make a gift or pledge by visiting [www.gcsforwardmotion.org](http://www.gcsforwardmotion.org).



A rendering of the school once completed.



# Why I Give ...One Donor's Perspective: A Conversation with Chuck McKinney

Early in the *Forward Motion Campaign*, former GCS parent and Board member Chuck McKinney became involved with the Steering Committee. Not long after, he and his family joined together to make a leadership level gift. We asked Chuck to share the story of how the McKinney Family gift to the *Forward Motion Campaign* came to be. Chuck writes:

We moved to Groton in 1992 and Groton Community School was one of our first experiences in town. All of our kids attended GCS and we developed personal and family friendships that have lasted throughout the past 25+ years.

I served on several fundraising committees, then on the board of directors, becoming chair. Recently I decided to join the *Forward Motion Campaign* to help spread the word and build momentum for this exciting and important project.

GCS is a very engaging and involved community of kids, parents, teachers, and staff. I have many fond memories, from opening circle songs at the beginning of each school day to “peering over the fence” as the pick-up line formed at the end of each day. I can still remember watching my kids and others first learning to kick a soccer ball around...and then watching that same group of kids win the state soccer championship in high school!

GCS teaches so many important life lessons that have served all of my children well, including the notion of “paying it forward”...way before it was an official thing! I knew it was important to have everyone invested in this campaign to help the future generations of GCS kids and families...and they all wanted to do what they could!

We have known that the school needed to be expanded and updated for a long time, so to see the beautiful architectural renderings of what the new facility will look like was really exciting! We know it's going to happen!

The idea of creating a “family gift” started in a subtle way, as I learned more and more about the *Forward Motion* project and shared this knowledge with my family, all of whom were curious what I was doing with GCS so long after they had graduated. The idea grew organically as we each realized that every family member was in a position to support this effort!

With grown family members living in various locations around Massachusetts and New York, we started a family email thread to talk about how we could support *Forward Motion*, who could chip in, and how we could maximize our gift with corporate matching programs.

Our first assignment was for everyone to inquire about their company's matching



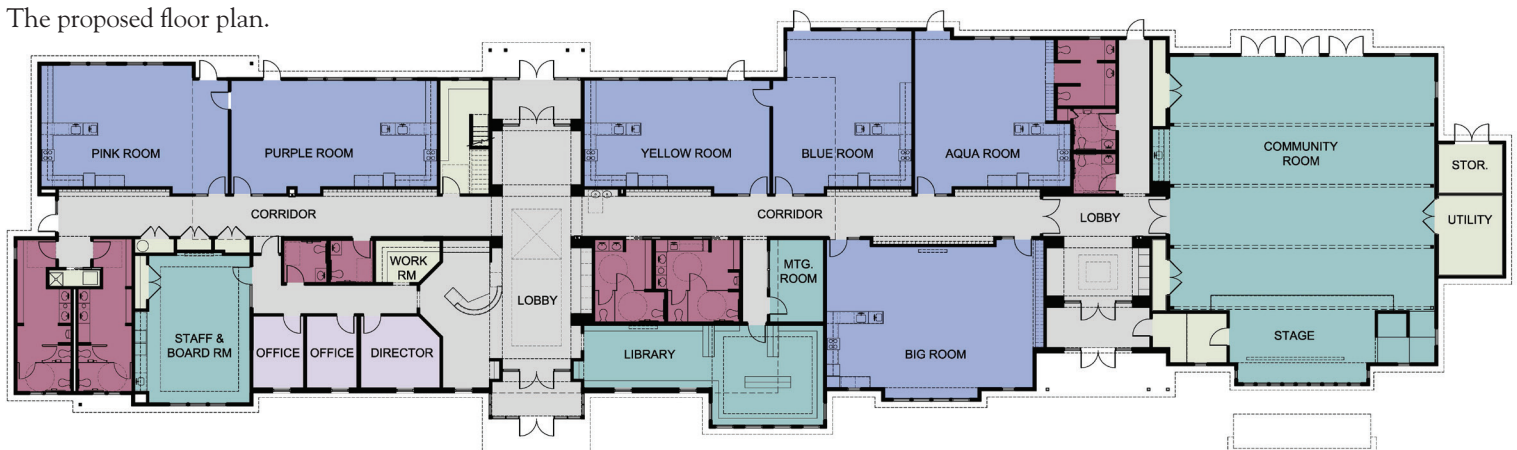
gift program. Almost every company we talked to had a matching program! After that it was easy, as everyone realized that their gift could be doubled! So, I would definitely encourage people to look into their employers' matching gift programs, and consider making a multi-year gift! Spreading the payment out over 5 years can make it so much easier to commit the funds needed to get us to our goal. Our kids attended GCS for 7+ years, so it only makes sense that we would give to *Forward Motion* over multiple years well.

While the decision to support any project should be a personal one, I think that there is absolutely no question that getting kids started in the right direction is absolutely essential in terms of their future direction. There is a well-known quote attributed to Lao Tzu that states “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.” Well, that first step happens at GCS, and it points kids in some great directions for that journey!

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Want to join Chuck in supporting the *Forward Motion Campaign*? Check out our website at [www.gcsforwardmotion.org](http://www.gcsforwardmotion.org) or call us at 978-448-6179.

The proposed floor plan.



# Inside Owen's Classroom

By Mairead Orpen, GCS Parent

We are deeply grateful for the role GCS has played in supporting not just our son - but our entire family - in a significant school transition.

Our son Owen attended preschool three afternoons in 2016-2017, and this year he attended three mornings all with teachers Debbie and Tracy. Our daughter Kelly attended My Grown-up and Me this spring.

Our older son Jack was going into Kindergarten when we moved to Groton. At that time, I was teaching full-time and the children were in daycare. Owen was one, and I was pregnant with Kelly. Our life priorities changed unexpectedly when Owen was then diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes (T1D\*).

Over time, our comfort level increased in managing Owen's T1D, and we felt that the next healthy step would be for him to learn how to go to school. We initially felt we should send Owen to public preschool because there would be a nurse onsite. However, neighbors who attended GCS and the outstanding word-of-mouth reputation made us want to explore the school.

We had a wonderful tour with Lisa and I remember two things distinctly. As an educator, I was blown away by the curriculum, with multiple learning stations and scaffolding of children's needs. And when I explained that Owen had a medical condition, I was touched by how the school exclaimed, "Of course we can take care of him!"

The staff learned how to check his blood sugar, use his insulin pump, interpret his Continuous Glucose Monitor, and communicate with me (sometimes several times a day).

The school was especially warm and embracing to Owen as he learned to be away from home. As he entered preschool for the first time, Owen was often apprehensive and teary as he worked through the fears he had when apart from the security of his parents who had been the only ones to manage his T1D. For our family, preschool was about much more than academics and social growth. It was about learning independence and trust.

Owen's bucket was also constantly filled by his classmates as his teachers encouraged a peer role in being a supportive community member to Owen as he managed his Diabetes. When his Glucose Monitor beeped saying he needed food or insulin, kids intuitively began to check in with him about how his body was feeling. Often, when he would eat a snack, Debbie would embrace the opportunity to lead his classmates in counting out the grams of carbs to enter into his pump.



One of the first times we were welcomed as a "Mystery Reader", we read a book about Goofy going to a birthday party with a friend who has T1D, which also helped educate Owen's classmates. This is part of what sets GCS apart – the culture of nurturing, including and supporting others. Owen's peers learned empathy and community membership at a crucial time in his and their growth. As a result, he learned confidence and acceptance despite the significant differences in his every day experience.

Owen loves the learning stations, and all of the opportunities to solve puzzles, use a hammer and nails, and answer problems. He gets excited about the art stations, especially painting and writing in shaving cream. We really didn't anticipate the extent to which his mind explores things, and never would have exposed him to all of these various problem-solving activities on our own. It's really cool to see this side of Owen, and it wouldn't have been nurtured without GCS.

Owen is absolutely academically, socially, and now emotionally prepared for Kindergarten.

For us, gratitude is the biggest thing. Greg and I have been beyond grateful for GCS's willingness to support our child medically even without a full-time nurse on staff. Because of GCS, we learned the importance of allowing our community, our village, our school, to help us support our child's needs. Like Owen, we also learned independence alongside gratitude.

We are thrilled to have our youngest attend GCS next year.

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*\*According to JDRF, "Type 1 diabetes (T1D) is an autoimmune disease in which insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas are mistakenly destroyed by the body's immune system. T1D seems to have a genetic component and can be diagnosed early in life but also in adulthood. Its causes are not fully known, and there is currently no cure. People with T1D are dependent on injected or pumped insulin to survive." You can learn more at [jdrf.org](http://jdrf.org)*



## We gratefully acknowledge the following donors for their support of the Forward Motion Campaign to date.

### \$1,000,000+

Anonymous

Susan Randazzo and  
Stuart Schulman

Alfred and Kristen von Campe

### \$100,000+

Anonymous (2)

John and Lisa Conner

Deborah and Scott MacDonald

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*With appreciation for the  
experiences of Miles & Ryan Burke*

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*In celebration of all GCS children*

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The Stallman Family,  
*In celebration of our boys &  
for generations to come*

The Tyler Family

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### Up to \$100

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*In memory of Barbara Halloran*

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Donna Petterssen,

*In memory of my mother, Libby*

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*In celebration of Molly Jane &  
Maeve Elizabeth Zukauskas*

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### Goal: \$3.85 Million



Amount Pledged to Date:  
**\$2,286,150**

# Look Who's Soaring Now! *Dan Schulman*

Dan Schulman attended Groton Community School for three years in the early 1980s, and during his Pre-K year in '85-'86 he was in Linda's (GCS Director's) first ever GCS class. Now Dan lives in California with his wife, Carrie, and their children Owen (age 5) and Lena (age 3). While he has difficulty remembering details of his time in preschool, as the parent of two young preschoolers he finds it easy to make the connection between his own GCS experience and his current success.

"When I think about what my own kids are experiencing in preschool, I know that my time at GCS helped prepare me for my work and life. There is so much value in unstructured play, in learning how to interact with other children, and how to listen and to treat others with kindness and empathy. As a young child, it is critically important to explore and use your imagination to figure things out and discover your interests. As a consultant, I use so many of these skills learned at a tender age. My work requires the ability to relate to many different types of people and personalities, to listen and understand them, and try my best to help them."

Dan left Groton to attend Northwestern University, and since graduating college has worked for a family-run firm, Beghou

Consulting. Dan's area of expertise is data analysis for Biotech companies, where he uses his degree in Applied Mathematics. He noted how his interest in math, statistics, and engineering began at a very young age and was cultivated throughout his early school years.

Recently, Dan made a generous donation to the **Forward Motion Campaign**. "There really are a number of reasons why it was important to me to donate to the campaign. With my own children in preschool I really understand the value of quality early childhood education and know how important it is to have a modern facility. I also have a strong affinity for my hometown and want to provide young children there opportunities that are as good, or better, than I had. Of course, when I found out my parents were donating to the campaign, I wanted to join them. This was an opportunity for me to give back for all that I have been able to accomplish because of the early education I received at GCS."

When Dan isn't going to the park or riding bikes with the kids, or working, he plays trombone in a local band and likes to hike. His advice for today's GCS children is to "explore, create, use your imagination, have empathy, and try to treat others as you would want to be treated."



Dan, then and now.

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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 and Instagram pages!!



Forward Motion Campaign Steering Committee

In a celebration of both the history and future of GCS, 150 guests were welcomed at a Kickoff Celebration Event held at the Barn at Gibbet Hill. This exciting and inspiring evening was made possible due to the generosity of the Webber Family and GCS Trustees, and was attended by Campaign Donors, Trustees, and former and current Board and Staff members.



Linda and young supporters





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## A Word from Our Director

As we head into summer, we are excited to have just finished another wonderful year, and eagerly begin our summer program, Camp Kaleidoscope. This is also a time of transition for many of our GCS alumni as they graduate from High School and prepare to head off to college in the fall. We are thrilled to offer two Groton Community School Scholarships in memory of Taylor Benjamin Young and Christopher Barton to assist former GCS students with the cost of their College education, all made possible by the generous gifts of donors like you. The scholarships also highlight the community nature of our school, emphasizing that the children and families who attend GCS are forever a member of our "GCS Family"!

We awarded four scholarships this spring, and welcomed Taylor's mom, Gale Young, and his sister Olivia for a special ceremony to present the awards. This year's Taylor Young Memorial Scholarship recipients are Kyle Adams and Katelyn McKiel, who embody Taylor's commitment to bring kindness and caring to others. We are confident that their generous and genuine spirits will make the world a better place.

Ellie Eisenklam and Rachel Trickett received the Christopher Barton Memorial Scholarships. Just like Chris did, Ellie and Rachel have a passionate interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) studies, and a desire to use their passion in this area to make a difference in the lives of others. We believe that both Ellie and Rachel's strong work ethic will enable them to realize their goals in college and beyond.

Ours sincerest thanks to all of you who support GCS through both the in-school fundraisers and direct donations. Your investments make our efforts possible and allow us to prepare young children each year to go on and achieve their potential, just like our scholarship winners. Congratulations to Ellie, Katelyn, Kyle and Rachel! Your GCS Family is so proud of you.

Linda Kosinski  
Director



From above: Rachel Trickett;  
Ellie Eisenklam &  
Katelyn McKiel.

*Helping Children Soar*