



Soaring

June 2019

First Phase of *Forward Motion* Set to Begin

“Embracing Change,” the 2018-19 schoolwide theme was certainly timely for children and staff, as Groton Community School will undergo some exciting upcoming changes. With the support from generous donors like you, **Phase One** of the *Forward Motion Project* begins later this summer!

The former Country Day School, just down the street, will serve as a temporary home for GCS while our current school site is under construction. Renovations to ensure that this interim space best meets the children’s needs have already begun. We would like to express our gratitude to Lawrence Academy for their community spirit in helping us with this essential piece of the puzzle for our project.

Phase One at the current site includes enlarging classrooms, creating a dedicated Children’s Library and Technology Center, and building a welcoming reception area and conference spaces. The newly renovated, state of the art space will be ready to welcome GCS children for the 2020-21 school year. The next phase of the project will be the addition of a large multipurpose Community Room. This will provide much-needed space for large-motor development, school-wide events, and community activities. The *Forward*



BHP Movers (an Alumni Family) with GCS Admin in preparation for our temporary relocation.

Motion Campaign committee continues fundraising efforts to **fully** realize Phase One and help to make Phase Two a reality. To learn more and support the *Forward Motion Project* with a donation, visit www.gcsforwardmotion.org.

Spending a year with the “Embracing Change” theme certainly helped to prepare the GCS family for all the changes ahead. We are excited to start the next school year with a flexible, positive, and optimistic approach. We are so grateful

to you and all of the donors like you who have made the *Forward Motion Project* possible. Thank you for investing in GCS and the young children of our community!





Community Foundation Awards \$10,000 Technology Grant

Groton Community School is very grateful for the award of a \$10,000 grant to support technology enhancement from the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts. This funding gave GCS the exciting opportunity to work with consulting services to help identify school-wide IT needs, and provide for the purchase of iPads for each teaching team and classroom.

The new iPads give children access to a wide variety of educational apps and assist our teachers in their work. The goal is to present digital learning in a balanced and thoughtful way. Selected apps have significant educational value, and include an interactive aspect for individuals or groups. The iPads are also helping teachers in their observation and assessment of children and their communications with families.

Literacy, math, science, foreign languages, and social and emotional learning are supported through the use of the new iPads. Some favorite apps encourage the concepts of “growth mindset” and “mindfulness” and the physical and cognitive benefits of yoga. The app selection meets the needs and interests for a variety of learners of different ages and developmental levels.

Themes and topics are explored in an entirely new way, and the children really enjoy the world of possibilities that the iPads bring into the classroom. For example, when learning about construction, recycling, animal habitats, and other cultures, children can participate in real life learning. An entire class can share in experiences like visiting the rainforest, soaring through space, or dancing to flamenco music when the iPads are projected on a big screen. Teachers can enable children to see live footage of events, such as the landing on Mars or watching eagles hatch through a webcam. Curiosity, critical thinking, and individualized learning are being fostered, as teachers encourage children to ask questions and then help them seek answers through online research.

Thank you to the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts (www.cfncm.org) for making all of these exciting learning opportunities possible!

From our Director

We welcomed summer and wrapped up our school year by presenting two annual, memorial scholarships to GCS alumni, all made possible by the generous gifts of donors like you.

The Christopher Barton Scholarship is awarded to graduating seniors who share Christopher’s passion for STEM pursuits. Students who exemplify “bucket filling”, showing a commitment to kindness and caring for others like Taylor, are given the Taylor Benjamin Young Scholarship.

The Board of Directors, Staff, and Taylor’s mother Gale were on hand to present awards to this year’s recipients. Wesley Cline and Bryson Roberts both received the scholarship in honor of Taylor. Bryson will attend the University of South Carolina to study Computer Science. Wesley will major in History at Gettysburg College. We are confident that they will continue to make the world a better place with their kindness and sincerity. Derek Breton received the Scholarship in honor of Christopher, and will study Bio-Chemistry at UMass Amherst. Derek hopes to follow in Christopher’s footsteps to help others through research, and we know his work will benefit many.

Please read more about our Scholarship Program, Taylor and Christopher, by visiting www.grotoncommunityschool.org/gcs-scholarships. Sincerest thanks to all who support GCS through school fundraisers and direct donations. Your investments help us prepare young children to achieve their potential, just like our scholarship winners. Congratulations to Derek, Wesley, and Bryson! Your GCS family is proud of you and looks forward to watching you soar in the years to come.

Linda Kosinski, Director



Scholarship Winners Wesley, Derek, and Bryson

A Peek Inside Our Classrooms

By Jennie Fitzkee, Head Teacher

Reading aloud is the gift of language. In the classroom, reading aloud is the single most important thing a teacher can do for their children. It opens every door to learning – both to the mind and to the heart. Reading aloud means stopping so children can ask questions, or laugh and cry. It is profoundly intimate and absorbing.

You would just need to listen to the children at Groton Community School to know this is true. Ryan bursts with “I know that book!” whenever I read a story that he is familiar with, such as Mother Bruce. Alex can barely hold in his laughter when I read Gaston. Mia could hardly hold back her tears when Charlotte’s babies left in Charlotte’s Web.

Jim Trelease was spot on when he said, “Reading is the heart of education. The knowledge of almost every subject in school flows from reading. One must be able to read the word problem in math

to understand it. If you cannot read the science or social studies chapter, how do you answer the questions at the end of the chapter?”

When we chapter read, the children don’t have an image from a picture book. They have to make the pictures in their head. That requires language development. The more they hear, the more they learn. Even the youngest children benefit enormously. For example, they may not ‘get’ the humor of the goose repeating everything three times in Charlotte’s Web, but they are still getting a massive dose of language. And, that language is sparking their imagination. No pictures; just words pouring into eager, young minds and creating their own images.

Reading aloud is the gift of language, and language is the most critical element in a child’s development and success in school. Wow! The number of words a child knows can be directly attributed to his or her



success in school; not just in English, but in math and science as well. Reading aloud is a big part of a classroom curriculum, and children love it.

This certainly applies to home as well. The more that families read aloud at home, the more they increase a child’s development. The biggest bonus is the bonding together. Nothing beats snuggling up and reading a book!

GCS Earns NAEYC Accreditation

This school year, GCS underwent the intensive reaccreditation self-study process, required every five years, to examine all the work we do with young children, families, and staff. We are extremely proud to have received the honor of national accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) once more. This award recognizes Groton Community School’s unwavering commitment to delivering high quality in early childhood education in our community.

Accredited programs must meet NAEYC’s 10 standards for excellence in early childhood education. These programs have demonstrated that they provide a warm, safe and healthy environment for children, have well-educated and trained teachers, have supportive relationships with children, families and the community, and foster children’s growth and development with a rich curriculum that is appropriately challenging and developmentally sound. Learn more about NAEYC and the Accreditation Process on the NAEYC website: www.naeyc.org/our-work.



Your investments help GCS teachers to excel.



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Look Who's Soaring Now! *Elibet "Ellie" Moore*

Elibet "Ellie" Moore attended GCS from 1994-96. Her parents, Rob and Laura, told us Ellie always said she wanted to "grow up to be her teachers Diane and Denise."

In fact, Ellie did become a teacher. Ellie studied at Bowdoin College where she earned a degree in sociology with a minor in education studies. She is currently enrolled in a summer graduate program at Middlebury College, earning a Master's degree in English.

Having educators for parents certainly influenced Ellie's career choice. "I loved growing up on the Lawrence Academy campus and being part of that community." Ellie now teaches English at Proctor Academy, a boarding school in NH, where she also serves as a dorm parent and coaches JV Lacrosse and Basketball.

Ellie's love for learning started at GCS; she remembers her teachers and playing outside with her friends Nina and Lisa, fondly. Now she looks forward to being a bridesmaid at Lisa's wedding this fall. Ellie especially loved bringing home the GCS puppet for the weekend and writing in its journal about the adventures she had with it. Perhaps this early journaling instilled the appreciation for writing that Ellie shares with her own students today!

"I really couldn't imagine not teaching. I want to continue to learn and figure out better ways to connect with my students and teach them how to write better," Ellie shared. "The day-to-day victories with students, when I can tell they have made a connection with the reading or improved their writing, motivate me."



Ellie, now and then!

In her free time, Ellie enjoys reading, running, hiking, playing with her dog, Frankie, and spending time with her family. Her advice to today's GCS children is to "be kind to one another and enjoy and embrace the learning, the fun, and the friends."