



Soaring

Summer 2022

Community Supports GCS at Bid It Forward Wine Sampling and Auction

On a recent Saturday evening, community members gathered at the beautiful Groton Inn for our 2022 **Bid It Forward** event. After two years of postponing, GCS was able to host the in-person component to complement the online auction. Friends of GCS came together to enjoy a selection of fine wines and delicious food, and to help raise funds to support the **Forward Motion** Project.

In addition to the online auction, Director Linda Kosinski had a message of both *gratitude* and vision for the future of GCS that she shared with the attendees:

“I am thrilled to finally be celebrating with you in person! We have been in our beautiful new building for over a year now, and we are so grateful to the many people who helped make that happen. As we look to the future of GCS, the funds raised through this event will help the school to finish the first phase of the upgrade and expansion of the building at 110 Boston Road. There is still much work to be done, including the addition of acoustic tiles, landscaping, furniture, and fixtures. Most importantly, we hope to attain increased investment in the *Extraordinary Teachers Fund* so that we continually attract and retain the best educators. We also look forward to planning for the completion of the Community Room.” Linda also thanked two special guests, Chuck Vander Linden



and Peter Myette, for their decades of work and contributions to GCS over the years.

Many Groton businesses, wonderful friends, Board & trustee members, and staff at GCS generously donated items to the online auction. Some of the most sought-after items included a two-night stay at the Black Point Inn in Maine, a virtual wine tasting, and a Cub Cadet ride-on lawn tractor. Special acknowledgements go to our pianist, Steve Zocchi, event sponsor, Worker’s Credit Union, and premier donors including The Groton Inn, Migis Hotel Group, and Great Road Farm and Garden.



Linda concluded, “Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who made this event possible, including all of those in attendance, the volunteers who managed the event, the local businesses who sponsored the evening or donated auction items, and the greater Groton community for its generous and continued support of our school.”



From our Director

What an exciting spring this has been! Although the year was ever-changing and challenging in terms of navigating continuing protocols and regulations related to COVID-19 management, we ended the year with several memorable events that brought our school community together.

The annual Spring Spruce-Up Day was held in early May when over twenty volunteers gathered together to lay fresh mulch on our playground, prepare garden beds for planting, spread grass seed, and work on the reconstruction of our greenhouse.

GCS recognized Memorial Day with a heartfelt Remembrance Ceremony. The children gathered together outside to sing “Red, White, and Blue” together, placed American flags in our gardens as a tribute to fallen soldiers and welcomed a special guest and current GCS father, US Air Force Master Sergeant Michael Kennedy, who shared some special words and the meaning of Memorial Day.

The first GCS Family Picnic to be held in two years was so much fun and a great success! It was fabulous to have so many families gather together to celebrate our wonderful school year. This Board-run picnic included music and fun from children’s entertainer, Mr. Vic, and popsicles were shared for dessert.

It certainly has been an eventful year for GCS children, staff, and families! One thing that has been particularly wonderful is that we finally have been able to welcome families inside classrooms and on the playground with their children’s classes. We continue to follow the guidance of state experts to keep our GCS community safe, and look forward to the time, soon, when we will be able to fully open GCS to our community.

I hope that you and your family are enjoying the longer, warmer days of summer and that you continue to stay safe and healthy in the months to come. Thank you for always being such a wonderful friend and for your continued support of Groton Community School!

Linda Kosinski, Director



Alumnus Selects GCS for Eagle Scout Project

The playscape has a new addition, thanks to GCS alumnus Sam Landry! This spring, for his Eagle Scout Project, Sam constructed a much-needed shed to store outdoor materials and playground equipment. In addition to raising the funds needed to implement the project, Sam picked out the materials and organized a group of family and friends to assist with the building process. Linda Kosinski shared, “The new shed is such a welcome and useful addition to the playground. We are so proud of all that Sam has accomplished since he attended Groton Community School! It was wonderful to have one of our alumni reach out to learn about the school’s needs, and we are tremendously grateful for the gift of Sam’s time and talent in giving back.”



Why I Give *Randall Barron*

Randall Barron first became involved with GCS when his now college-age children attended the school. Randy was recruited to fill the role of Treasurer when the Board of Trustees was created, and he has served on the Board since its inception.

“My wife Kathleen and I were impressed with how the GCS teachers and staff handled the day-to-day activities and how they cared for each student. We got more involved with the school over the years. Our daughter, Ashley, graduated from Elon University this year. She will be an early childhood/elementary education teacher, and I credit GCS for influencing her career choice. In addition to remembering her GCS experience fondly, Ashley spent significant time volunteering at GCS over the years as she got older. She knows that GCS is an outstanding program. Her experiences with the school helped develop her interest in becoming an educator.”

What delights Randy most is how professionally Groton Community School operates. “As a parent, you don’t see the behind-the-scenes administration, the financial balancing, the planning and thought that goes into each day to create the best school for the students and the staff. As a member of the Finance Committee, I see the details of maintaining a strong and healthy school. These include regular review of budgets,

professional investment oversight, and annual financial audits by an outside firm. These all work toward a responsible, well thought out plan, not only for this current school year but for many, many years to come.”

Randy believes that the best thing to happen since he became involved with GCS is the newly renovated and expanded building. “It took a community effort to build. But it’s not just the building itself that is remarkable. It’s the commitment to raise the level of all other areas of the school. This includes increasing teacher salaries and benefits to attract and keep quality teachers and staff.”

As loyal friends of GCS, Randy and Kathleen donate to the Annual Fund every year. They also supported the *Forward Motion Campaign* to ensure that GCS could remodel and expand the school.

“We are glad to be able to give back to the school that gave so much to our family in the form of an exceptional start to Ashley and Drew’s education. We know that for most non-profits like GCS, tuition and fees do not cover the actual costs to run the programs. Without philanthropy, schools like GCS would not exist. We want to see GCS continue to offer educational opportunities for generations to come, so other families can have the same exceptional start to their children’s education that we enjoyed.”



“Our work is not done, however. We need to continue to generate resources to support some of the other buckets of funding priorities.”

Randy would like to increase awareness of the amount of thought and planning that goes into every day and every decision at the school. “Linda and Lisa work tirelessly, spending a tremendous amount of hours during and after school and even on the weekends, to guide, protect and promote GCS. Their knowledge about early childhood education and running a top-notch, accredited school is impressive. How can one not support such dedicated professionals!

The exceptional quality of the teachers and staff and their dedication set GCS apart. Without hesitation, every member of the GCS staff is committed to the school, its core values, and the children. It is the reason there is such longevity in the team. For staff to be at GCS for 15, 20, 30 years, and more, it’s genuinely a commitment and love of the school and its mission.”

Longtime GCS Friend Wendy Frank Remembered

We are deeply saddened by the recent passing of our dear friend Wendy Frank. Wendy had a longtime presence here at GCS and gave so much of herself to the school throughout the years, as a parent, a substitute teacher, a volunteer, and a musician. She had a passion for music and a love to be with children, desiring to volunteer with us in her final months. Wendy’s family and friends generously donated almost \$4,000 to Groton Community School in her memory. We are humbled and grateful for this loving tribute, recognizing all that Wendy gave to our community. We look forward to sharing how these funds are used to enhance the school, and honor Wendy’s legacy with her family’s guidance.





110 Boston Road, Route 119
Groton, MA 01450

Look Who's Soaring Now! *Jessica Chu*

Jessica Chu attended GCS from 1999 to 2002. In addition to her time in the Aqua Room, Purple Room, then Kindergarten, she also participated in Camp Kaleidoscope. Jessica has fond memories of GCS. "I am 50% Chinese, and one of my favorite memories was when my dad came into my class to celebrate Chinese New Year, and we folded wontons. We do this as a family every year, and it was fun to share the tradition with my classmates. Another fun memory from that year was singing patriotic songs to welcome our teacher Jolene's husband home from deployment."

Currently working as an in-patient physical therapist at Littleton Adventist Hospital in Colorado, Jessica wanted to be a teacher when she was younger. Growing up, she was also very athletic and played several sports. As she started exploring courses in high school, she became interested in PT. "Physical Therapy combines teaching people with that physical

theme that I love," Jessica shared. "I can help people who are sick get stronger. We work together to enable them to return to their normal life. I love seeing the reaction from my patients when they do something they didn't think they could do."

GCS's values of kindness and caring for others, community awareness, and good citizenship have carried through both Jessica's personal and professional life. "As a physical therapist, I am serving my community and helping people every day."

Jessica developed several friendships from her time at GCS. She is still very close with Jolene and enjoys visiting with Jennie and Terri. Her most exciting friendship began in Kindergarten. "I am getting married to one of my Kindergarten classmates! Greg Mahan and I reconnected in high school, and now we are getting married this August in Williamstown."



Jessica & Greg, now and then!

In her free time, Jessica coaches a competitive gymnastics program. "I am very patient and understanding with the students because of how I got my start at GCS." She and Greg also enjoy watching Marvel movies together and exploring restaurants.

The entire GCS family wishes Jessica and Greg congratulations on their upcoming wedding and a lifetime of happiness together!

Helping Children Soar