



## Our Long-awaited Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

A cold and cloudy late-autumn day could not dampen the spirits of those gathering at 110 Boston Road in Groton last November 30th. It was a day that was more than ten years in the making, and it was worth the wait! It took hundreds of donors and volunteers – including past and present Board of Trustees, and Board of Directors – along with an entire community and a move to, and back from, a temporary location to get Groton Community School to this moment in time. The newly renovated and expanded school building's opening finally would be “officially” recognized, after a long delay due to pandemic-related restrictions.

With a few people representing the much larger group who made the **Forward Motion Project** possible on hand, the brief



GCS representatives included Trustee, Board, Steering Committee and Staff Members



John Amaral, Linda Kosinski & Melissa Fetterhoff (NVCoC) with Official MA Senate Citation

presentation kicked off with comments from the President of the Board of Trustees, John Amaral, and GCS Director, Linda Kosinski. Both John and Linda expressed deep gratitude on behalf of the staff, the families, and most importantly all the children that will benefit from this transformational project now and for decades to come.

Linda ended by saying, “There are so many hands that helped us to get to where we are today and we are forever grateful. We have made new friends for life!”

After the ceremonial ribbon was cut, participants were treated to a special musical

presentation and some American Sign Language by the young children of GCS. The joyous event concluded with light refreshments and tours of the beautiful new Groton Community School building.

Groton Community School still has big dreams and goals to achieve. The shell where our future Community Room will be housed is constructed. Planning for the future buildout of this space will come down the line. For now, we enjoyed celebrating and being in our “new” GCS home. The return of our annual in person Open House in March was yet another celebration to welcome back the community!





## From our Director

One of the most rewarding aspects as Director of Groton Community School is watching young children as they learn and grow together throughout the school year. I particularly cherish the many moments where I am able to watch these young children flex their “kindness muscles” and share their compassion and humanity. That is what our school-wide theme – Tunza - is all about this year. In Swahili, Tunza means “to treat with care or affection” and it is even a fun word to say! The children and Teachers alike have wholeheartedly embraced the spirit of Tunza in the classrooms, on the playground, in the community and environment, and within themselves. Tunza is all around us here at Groton Community School and continues to grow each and every day!



A delightful bonus to this year’s theme is the ability to share and teach about the origins of the word Tunza. That we live in a truly global society and can learn from all corners of the globe helps our young children to understand and embrace their role in the broader world. Learning about culture and geography, likenesses and differences, open mindedness and how to reach out beyond one’s self have been important and valuable lessons.



Events such as a school wide breakfast food collection for the local food pantry proved a valuable lesson when children realized that they were fortunate enough to get so many treats on Halloween, while others may not have the basics of just breakfast. A bakesale in a classroom resulted in enough sales to purchase a pump for clean water through a Heifer International project. Culturally we have been experiencing African stories, art, and music through song and dance. Assistant Director, Lisa Stafford shared her love and talent of djembe drumming by spending time in each classroom. And it was especially rewarding to engage in an all school Kente cloth inspired art project with GCS Teacher Monique Meehan, where each child was able to paint a fabric strip for a “Woven as One” art installation that is proudly displayed in our school.

Imagine how wonderful it would be if our school-wide theme were to ripple out beyond our GCS walls, to our families and neighbors, community, and beyond. There is no telling the extent of the reach that teaching young children to treat others with care and affection will have on our world. May all of us be shining examples of Tunza this year and beyond!

*Linda*

Linda Kosinski, Director





# Leave a Legacy

Our **Leave a Legacy Brick Campaign** will create a meandering walkway of remembrance and celebration along the front of our building! This special fundraiser commemorates Phase One of our GCS **Forward Motion Project**. We hope you will “walk down Memory Lane” with us, and purchase your brick(s) today! It will be so wonderful to remember many members of our GCS community - past and current GCS children, families, staff, board members, and

more - through this creative endeavor. We invite you to select your own meaningful message, listing child or family names, sharing inspirational words, or paying tribute to loved ones.

Brick orders are due on June 30th. To purchase one of these cherished items, feel free to stop by the school in person or visit [www.grotoncommunityschool.org/brick-campaign](http://www.grotoncommunityschool.org/brick-campaign)



## Why I Give *Steve Lane*

Steve Lane was introduced to Groton Community School in 1985 when he and his family first moved to town. When they enrolled their young son Michael, the school building was brand new, and Linda Kosinski had just begun her GCS career!

The high quality of teaching immediately impressed Steve, who shared, “The teachers really get to know their students and quickly pick up on cues to aid in each child’s development. GCS has unparalleled programs and expertise in developing young children, and the communication with parents is superb!”

The GCS impact stays with the children as they grow and mature, influencing them throughout their lives. “I am thankful to Groton Community School for providing such a strong foundation for Michael on which to grow. He went on to enjoy a strong academic career and is now a lawyer in Boston, with a wife and 8-year-old daughter.

Steve served as a Trustee from 2017-2020. “Being a Trustee at GCS gave me the

opportunity to give back both my time and money. I enjoyed helping to update the school’s 5-year strategic plan and raise funds for the recent renovation. It has all been very rewarding!”

In addition to making a gift to the Annual Fund each year, Steve also made a pledge to the **Forward Motion Campaign** to expand and renovate the school. “I see GCS as a very special institution in Groton. It is among a select few nationally accredited early childhood schools in the area, it has been operating for over 75 years and the staff does an amazing job preparing the children. Also, I have made a conscious decision to donate locally as much as possible to be able to watch the results first-hand. GCS is in the top tier of local organizations which deserve widespread support.”

A longtime member of the Groton community, Steve has coached Groton Youth Hockey for twelve years and still plays hockey weekly all winter long. He is also involved with Prescott Community Center,



recently moved to a new home on Knops Pond and has joined the Board of Directors of the Groton Lakes Association.

In closing, Steve enthusiastically shared, “I am always happy to relate to my friends and family my strong feelings for GCS! Send your children or grandchildren to GCS. You will be very pleased with the results!”



110 Boston Road, Route 119  
Groton, MA 01450

## Look Who's Soaring Now! *Tom Keras*

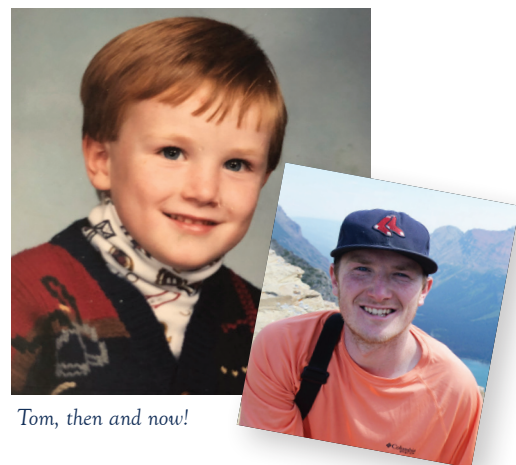
Tom Keras is an Open Space Ranger in Colorado, preserving land and wild spaces. In this role he manages about 1,000 acres of land, with a focus on community outreach, programming and education. His road to his fascinating career began in the mid 90's when he was a young child enrolled at Groton Community School.

The son of beloved current GCS teacher Noreen Keras, Tom has special memories of GCS. "I remember the Big Room, playing on the playground with friends, and enjoying the large climbing structures. I also got to see GCS through the lens of my mom. I enjoyed watching the transition to the new building and have enormous respect for the dedication of mom and her fellow teachers, and their tremendous impact at the school."

Tom's professional journey began in banking as a commercial lender, but he quickly realized

this wasn't the right fit for him. "I felt like my core values, such as kindness and caring, community awareness, and good citizenship, carried through my life from my time at GCS. These important values were missing from this job, and I wanted to get to a place where I was helping people."

An opportunity to take part in an AmeriCorps program in Montana arose, allowing Tom a "foot in the door" and cementing his confidence in his new career choice. "It is not a surprise that I am managing land and looking at ecosystem health. It began with the outdoor and nature emphasis at GCS where my foundation for learning was forged. I work in the most complex system, our natural resources and natural order. One decision affects a dozen other things. GCS built my desire to want to learn. Every day my job is new, and I can't wait to learn. I credit GCS with sparking that."



*Tom, then and now!*

While he enjoys backpacking, fly fishing, and camping, the most important things to Tom are time spent with family and friends, especially as he and his wife have just welcomed their first child. His advice to today's GCS children is simple, "Continue to be curious and continue to play. Curiosity drives me in my job, and a curious approach helps you prepare better. Play is such a great learning experience. It teaches you about yourself and how the world works."

*Helping Children Soar*