



Look Who's Soaring Now! Ashley Barron

Ashley Barron attended Groton Community School from 2003 to 2006, participating in preschool, kindergarten, and Summer Camp. Her family has a strong connection with GCS. Her dad, Randy, is a Trustee, her mom, Kathleen, has worked on many projects for the school, and Ashley has volunteered on numerous occasions.

Ashley fondly recalls her time at GCS. "I remember going to River Court in kindergarten to sing for the residents. I loved camp, and I cried on the last day when I aged out."

Her career path was influenced by her time at GCS. "Every job I've had since high school has been working with kids, and I've always loved the younger ones," Ashley says. "GCS played a big part in my career choice because my parents are still so involved, and it's always been prevalent in my life."

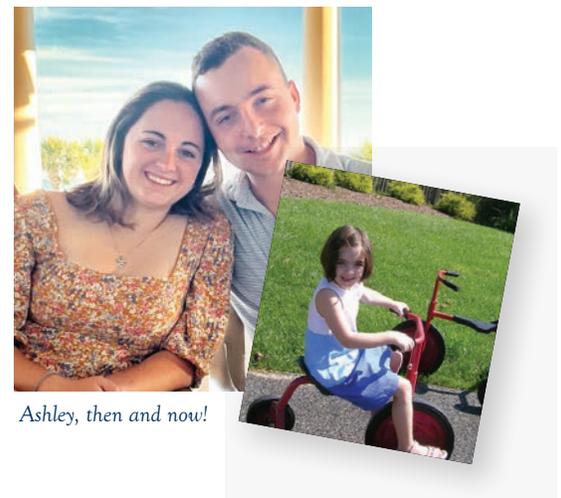
After graduating from Elon University with

a degree in elementary education, Ashley quickly found her calling in early childhood education. She recently became the director of New Philadelphia Moravian Preschool in Winston-Salem, NC. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Ashley is dedicated to reviving the preschool and creating a supportive community for young children.

"My goal is to help this school grow back to its former glory," she explains. "I think a lot about GCS and how community is something you can build. It's so important, especially for a young child, to be part of and to build that community as an educator."

In her personal life, Ashley remains passionate about gymnastics, having started a club team at Elon and now coaches at a local gym.

Additionally, Ashley is busy planning her wedding to her fiancé, Jacob, and setting up their new home.



Ashley, then and now!

Ashley shares heartfelt advice for today's GCS children: "Focus on having fun because you'll remember all the good memories later." Her journey from a shy preschooler at GCS to a successful preschool director shows the lasting impact of a strong early childhood education and the importance of community involvement.



Soaring

Summer 2024

Celebrating the Week of the Young Child

April was an incredible month at Groton Community School! Each year, we join the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to celebrate the “Week of the Young Child” (WOYC) in April. This week is dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of early childhood education and honoring those who work with young children.

This year, the celebration was filled with joy and creativity. The children decorated their own “GCS” baseball caps, showcasing their school spirit and fostering a sense of community.

The WOYC festivities kicked off with a spectacular event, courtesy of Mother Nature. We had the unique opportunity to view a solar eclipse in small groups. A big thank you to the parent volunteers who made this safe and enjoyable!



Throughout the week, the children enjoyed the annual Peace Picnics at the Peace Pole. We shared songs and “Peace Mix” (community trail mix) for snack time. It was a wonderful way to promote unity and harmony among the children.

The staff were also treated to two amazing luncheons, organized by the GCS Room Parents. These luncheons were a delightful way to show appreciation for the hard work and dedication of GCS educators.

The grand finale of our WOYC celebration was a visit from Leigh Baltzer of “Through Me to You Puppetry.” Leigh performed

Puppet Story Time, captivating the children with a variety of delightful puppet characters. Each puppet had its own personality and voice, and the stories were perfectly aligned with this year’s school-wide theme, “Together We’re Stronger!” This theme emphasizes the importance of teamwork and cooperation.

Thank you to all our donors, volunteers, and staff for making this week so special. Your support and generosity continue to make events like these possible, enriching the lives of our young learners and creating lasting memories.

A Heartfelt Thank You from GCS Director, Linda Kosinski

This is such an exciting time to be writing to you! The days are warmer, and we are finally seeing some sunshine. The children love being outdoors and noticing all the seasonal changes in our beautifully landscaped play area.



In this issue of Soaring, you will discover many exciting events that have occurred this spring. We celebrated the Week of the Young Child, held our annual Spring Spruce Up, and had a fun week where our kindergarten children practiced their “hot lunch skills” before heading off to first grade in the fall. Plus, we’re proud to announce that GCS has once again earned NAEYC accreditation <https://www.naeyc.org/>. All these wonderful happenings are possible because of you, our generous and loyal GCS family!

This year’s school-wide theme, “Together We’re Stronger,” could not be truer. Once again, our GCS family and friends stepped up in support of the Annual Fund. Thanks to your tremendous generosity, over \$67,000 has been donated so far to help outfit the new Community Room.

It’s an exciting time as we finalize details and select a contractor with the hope of having the space completed sometime during the next school year. Your heartfelt gifts will go a long way to provide the essential equipment needed to bring this dream to life.

The Community Room isn’t just a space; it’s where the magic will happen! It will be a catalyst for holistic development and a canvas for boundless possibilities. This room will be the hub for large motor and creative arts activities, classroom celebrations, and school-wide gatherings and community events. It will provide our children with an environment where they can explore, create, and thrive.

Think of it as giving the children a playground for their brains and bodies. From climbing and running to participating in creative games and arts activities, your support fuels their gross motor skills, creativity, and social development.

There is still time for you to contribute to this important project! Making a gift is easy—just go to www.grotoncommunityschool.org/giving/annual-fund/.

You can help fill the Community Room with excitement and endless opportunities for GCS children to learn and grow. Together, we are making a significant impact on their early childhood experience.

Thank you for making everything at GCS possible. Your generosity and support mean the world to us and to the children we serve.

Warm regards,

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

Linda Kosinski
Director, Groton Community School

Rotary Boosts GCS Scholarship Fund with Generous Donation



We’re thrilled to announce that the Groton-Pepperell Rotary Club has generously donated \$1,000 to Groton Community School (GCS) in support of the Donna Pettersen Scholarship Program! Donna is an important member of the GCS family. In addition to being the mother of a GCS alum, Donna is a past teacher and the former Assistant Director.

This incredible scholarship program helps make early childhood education accessible to families who might otherwise miss out on this essential first school experience. According

to GCS Director Linda Kosinski, “With this scholarship, we hope to support as many families as the budget allows with partial scholarships to our half-day program. In return, we encourage families to contribute to our school community through volunteering.”

The scholarship fund thrives thanks to our school’s fundraising efforts and the wonderful support from our community. Want to make a difference? You can contribute to the scholarship fund or apply by contacting GCS at info@grotoncommunityschool.org.

Save the Date for the 20th Anniversary GCS Home Tour!

The 20th Anniversary Groton Community School Home Tour is coming up, and you won't want to miss it.



Mark your calendars for **Saturday, November 23, 2024.**

This special event showcases unique homes, from historic residences to newer houses with spectacular decor and distinctive details. It's a fantastic chance to explore beautiful interiors and get some holiday shopping done.

During the tour, you'll find vendors and local artisans displaying their amazing handiwork in each home. Plus, more artisans and vendors will be on site at Groton Community School in the morning for both attendees and the public. You'll also want to be sure to visit the renowned GCS Bake Shop for some delectable treats.

Stay tuned and get excited for a day of fun, shopping, and beautiful homes. Keep an eye out for more details about the homes, artisans, vendors, and ticket information coming soon. **We hope to see you at this special 20th anniversary Home Tour event!**

GCS Earns NAEYC Accreditation

We are delighted to share some exciting news: GCS has once again achieved National Accreditation from the **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**!

This accreditation, awarded every 5 years, includes curriculum development, teaching methodologies, child assessment and observation, the physical environment, health and safety protocols, relationships with children, families, and the community, as well as leadership and professional development support for staff.

NAEYC accreditation is a prestigious recognition that validates the GCS commitment to providing high-quality early childhood education. Groton Community School first earned this accreditation in 1993, and we take immense pride in this ongoing acknowledgment of our continuous efforts to excel. Congratulations to all GCS staff for their dedication and hard work in achieving this milestone!

Why I Give *Steve Janes*

Steve Janes, Managing Partner at Fuse Energy, is a dedicated supporter of Groton Community School and its mission of nurturing young minds. His commitment to GCS is deeply personal, rooted in the experience of his son, Michael. "My son, who is now a 21-year-old Junior at UMass-Amherst, attended Groton Community School," Steve shared, highlighting the profound impact GCS has had on his family.

Steve emphasizes the school's unique role in the community, stating, "GCS is a small gem in our community. Surrounded by exceptional public and private schools, it offers a local learning experience like no other." He attributes much of its success to the dedicated staff who go above and beyond to ensure every child feels valued and supported.

When discussing his support for the annual fund, Steve stresses the important role it plays in sustaining GCS's ability to provide

quality education. "We owe a debt of gratitude to GCS for teaching and nurturing our son during those incredibly important, formative years," he reflects. "Contributing to the annual fund ensures that GCS can continue to offer exceptional learning experiences to future generations."

In addition to his involvement with GCS, Steve actively engages in community service, serving on the Board of Trustees and participating in local organizations like the Groton-Pepperell Rotary Club and Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce Advisory Board. He also enjoys spending time in a variety of ways with his now college-aged son. "Fifteen years later...Michael now shares my love of golf, guitar, and travel, which has been a joy for both of us!"

As GCS looks towards the future, Steve encourages others to join him in investing in exceptional early childhood education. "Your contribution to the GCS Annual Fund can



Steve Janes and his son, Michael.

make a tangible difference in shaping the next generation of learners."

You can join Steve in his commitment to empowering young learners and ensuring that GCS continues to thrive as a beacon of educational excellence in the community. Your support makes a lasting difference!