



Currents

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Genesee Community Charter School

October 2007

Volume 7 No. 2

Addressing Relational Aggression

One of our staff's focus areas this year is learning how to more effectively address and prevent bullying behaviors. If this immediately puts you in mind of physical intimidation, lunch money theft, and being shoved in lockers, you're not alone. Many adults consider bullying to be primarily a tough kid and mostly male domain. Our experience has been different. We don't have problems with physical aggression and threats. We've experienced bullying of a sneakier, more subtle variety.

This type of bullying is called "relational aggression," is more often the domain of girls, and happens in every type of school with every type of student population. According to the literature, these behaviors peak at about ages 11-12, and consist of rumor-spreading, teasing, exclusion, and manipulation. Children talk about one another's clothes, hair, families, and other things behind one another's backs. They make jokes or call names at one another's expense. They send secret messages about who is "in" and who is "out" on any given day. They roll their eyes or have silent eye contact conversations across the circle in response to what a peer is doing or saying. They write notes. They talk about social events in a public enough way for the non-invited to hear. They make plans for their "group" to dress the same, which sends a clear message about who is *not* in the group. They use friendship as a threat and a weapon, so that it feels good neither to be a friend nor an enemy.

It happens on the bus, on the playground, on the phone, via e-mail, and right under the teacher's noses, but is very difficult for adults to actually see or hear. Consequently, it is hard to catch children in the act and impose swift consequences, which is why it is not as easy to deal with as physical contact offenses.

The staff has begun its work by reading three books on the subject and working with a consultant, Katy Allen (www.impacttraininginc.com), in order to more clearly understand what relational aggression

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GCCS Board of Trustees

Election of New Parent Representative
at the Family Association Meeting
Tuesday, October 16

If interested, please attend the meeting
prepared to make a brief statement.
Elections will be held immediately following
candidate presentations.

This Year's Saturday Work Days

Fulfill Family Volunteer Hours and Help
Keep Your Child's Classroom Shipshape!



Saturday, November 3

Saturday, January 26

Saturday, April 5

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Child Care Provided

Please bring extra rags and buckets if you have them.

Thank you!

Wanted



**About five moms, grandmothers, or aunts to
join the Rochester Museum & Science
Center's Women's Council!**

This group of active, dedicated women serves the museum through outreach, advocacy, and fundraising efforts like the Holiday Bazaar, Artistry in Threads show, and Rummage Sale. The group also holds monthly (optional) luncheons with guest speakers and performers.

Your membership and participation will help support the RMSC and build stronger relationships between GCCS and our museum community.

Please call 271-4320 or pick up a flier in the GCCS office if you'd like to join or have questions. Representatives of the Women's Council will attend an upcoming Community Circle to provide additional information.

Family Association Directory

Board of Trustees Representatives

John Bernunzio (256-0722), Wendy Quarles (647-1667), New Board Member Elected at October Meeting

Officers

Co-Chairs: Jamine Wilson (256-1566), Bill Gargan (461-0855)

Secretary: Jane Cherin (473-3481)

Treasurer: Julie Schnepf (256-0722)

Family Association Committee Chairs

Family Social Activities

John Quitter (787-0332)

Babysitting & Transportation

Mary Carol Taylor (458-9809)

Fund-Raising

Anne Punzi (242-8902)

Legislative Issues

Nevada Schickling (329-5751), Mark Watts (242-8902)

Outreach

Lorraine Schild (244-1161), Betsy Serapilio-Frank (654-5958)

Program

Diana Carter (473-1187), Hugh Brantley (328-3288)

Classroom Parent Volunteer Coordinators

Karen Braden (473-5303), Nikki Hogan (621-8731), Yvonne Villareale (473-9318)



Classroom Parent Volunteer

Coordinators

Kindergarten

Amy Wulforst (654-5681)

First Grade

Pam Black-Colton (244-5097)

Second Grade

Colleen Charvella (244-8339), Darla Spofford (22408437)

Third Grade

Gina Dodd (426-3356), Jeanne Eckl (377-8957), Kate Kressman-Kehoe (442-6942), Lynn McCart (271-2628), Amy Wulforst (654-5681)

Fourth Grade

Eileen Wrona (288-3273)

Fifth Grade

Yvonne Villareale (473-9318)

Sixth Grade

Diana Carter (473-1187), Jeanne Eckl (377-8957), Kathryn Goldfeder (381-5083)

More Names Coming Soon!



New School Website

Launching October 10

www.GCCSchool.org

Upcoming Dates To Remember



- Oct. 4: Curriculum Night
5:30 – 8:45 p.m.
- Oct. 5: Professional Development Day
No School for Students
- Oct. 8: Columbus Day
School is Closed
- Oct. 11: School Pictures Make-up Day
- Oct. 15: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
- Oct. 16: Family Association Meeting
6:30-8 p.m. Eisenhart Ballroom
- Nov. 12: Professional Development Day
No School for Students
Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
- Nov. 19-20: Professional Development Days
No School for Students
- Nov. 21-23: Thanksgiving Recess
School is Closed
- Dec. 10: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
- Dec. 13: Parent-Teacher Conferences
11:30 a.m. Dismissal
- Dec. 18: Family Assoc. Pot Luck Social
6-8 p.m. Eisenhart Auditorium
- Dec. 24-
Jan 2. Winter Recess
School is Closed
- Jan. 3-4 Professional Development Days
No School for Students

PREHISTORY EXHIBITION DATES

Tues., Nov. 13: 5th, 6th Grades

Wed., Nov. 14: 4th Grade

Tues., Nov. 27: 2nd, 3rd Grades

Wed., Nov. 28: K, 1st Grade

Responding To Parent Feedback (continued from August *Currents*)

A few more responses to comments we received on our Parent Satisfaction Survey last May:

“I signed up for a Family Association Committee and was never contacted...”

Yes, we are aware that this has happened in a number of cases. All committee chairs receive the blue sheets parents fill out as part of the enrollment process, as well as any other sign-up sheets we have. They are directed to call every parent who has expressed interest in order to inform them of meeting times, tasks, future plans, etc.

Unfortunately, this doesn't always happen, and parents are left feeling unwanted. This year's committee chairs and outreach folks will strive to be more thorough in this effort, but please, if you don't receive a call, let the Family Association Co-chairs know. Also, if you see additional requests for volunteers come home, please submit your name again, just in case we've had a glitch that prevented you from being contacted the first time around. Your participation is very important to the school.

“We need wider involvement from parents, and not all the same faces at all events...”

This is somewhat related to the previous comment. Some parents may become turned off about attending things because their efforts to volunteer have gone unnoticed. Other families may have more limited time due to work schedules and personal situations. Still others notice the strong friendships that exist among many of our families, and feel that the parents are clique-y.

The staff is delighted that we get near 100% attendance Exhibition Nights and parent conferences, which are tremendously important to student learning. We hope that every parent who has a little time can make the effort to attend Family Association meetings, social events, and programs – and that, more importantly, they feel welcome when they come. There are many families here who have developed social bonds outside school through neighborhood events, children's play dates, sports teams, etc., but they are committed to a strong parent culture at GCCS and would want all parents to feel accepted and appreciated.

Next time you're at a family event, please introduce yourself to some parents you've never met before. Our Family Association is only as strong as those who show up, and everyone is needed!

Chaperone Orientation Session Scheduled

Last chance this year! If you were unable to attend the August 30 Chaperone Orientation session, please plan to attend this one. This training is required for chaperones for overnight and extended day fieldwork, and preferred for day excursions.

What: Chaperone Orientation
When: Thursday, October 25, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Where: GCCS 4th Grade Classroom

Babysitting will be available

Winter Weather Is Coming!



And the need for boots and warm outerwear will soon be upon us! Please be sure your child is equipped with boots, hats, mittens, and snowpants every day. We request that a hat and a spare pair of boots, mittens and snowpants be left at school for the winter season. Children need to be prepared for outdoor recess and field studies every day.

Please send into school labeled with your child's name:

- ✓ Boots
- ✓ Hats
- ✓ Mittens
- ✓ Snowpants



4th and 5th Graders Strike Gold

Fourth and fifth graders discovered the mother lode in Gold, PA, when they walked through an overgrown field and found the headwaters of the Genesee River. As part of their study of local geology, the students visited the source, then followed the river northward through Letchworth State Park to its mouth in Charlotte. Traveling along the river's 165-mile length took three days, and the students observed, sketched, photographed, took notes, and gathered data at many stops along the way. Their field notebooks will be indispensable as students continue their quest to learn about the science of our river. Students will spend the rest of the expedition finding out how the Genesee River acquired its current shape, and the forces – both human and natural – that have played a role in its formation.



6th Graders Present at National Conference

The International Underground Railroad Conference was held in Rochester in late September, and our sixth graders took an active role. They hosted one of the conference's workshops to inform participants about the class's Fall '06 expedition "We The People???" Students described the content of their expedition, the resources they used, and their final product – a website about significant local people and places in the fight against oppression.

The event gave sixth graders a wonderful opportunity to showcase their high-quality work in a professional venue. They had an audience of 60 conference participants, and they received glowing feedback about the depth of their knowledge, their enthusiasm for learning, and their presentation skills. Well done, sixth graders!

Don't Forget Curriculum Night!



Thursday, October 4

5:30 – 7:00: 1st, 2nd, 3rd Grades

7:15 – 8:45: Kindergarten, 4th, 6th Grades

(5th Grade met Monday, Oct. 1)

What Service can you OFFER?

PLAN ahead FOR the

GCCS SERVICE AUCTION

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18

At the FAMILY POT LUCK SOCIAL

Relational Aggression (continued from p. 1)

looks like and what effects it has on girls who are bullies, bullied, or bystanders. We have also learned to view adult responses as a process for learning, restoration, and reconciliation rather than as a set of punitive consequences.

The staff's next steps are to break into work groups to develop:

- ways to recognize and document instances of relational aggression
- ways for students to report instances without fear of retribution
- common expectations and language for addressing students about these issues
- a range of intervention strategies and appropriate consequences, and
- strategies to educate and involve parents as partners in addressing the issues.

We will be scheduling a parent presentation with our consultant later this fall, and invite you to read these suggested titles in preparation:

The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander by Barbara Coloroso, 2003.

Odd Girl Out by Rachel Simmons, 2002.

Queen Bees and Wannabees by Rosalind Wiseman, 2003.

