



FAMILY NEWSLETTER



Garden City Community School

September 18, 2009

NEWSLETTERS

We want to communicate with families as clearly as possible. Teachers will send class newsletters to you on a regular basis, but feel free to contact them with your questions. As School Director, I will be writing a monthly All-School Family Newsletter such as this. Starting in October, this newsletter will be posted on the GCCS website versus being printed on paper and sent with children. We have found this is costing too much, wasting trees and many newsletters are not making their way home to parents! If you need a paper copy due to no computer access, please ask and we will send one with your child or a few copies will be available in the school office

FALL EVENTS

- All-School Community Circle - every Wednesday morning at 9AM. Be sure to find out the day your students' class is in charge of this event! You're always welcome to join us!
- School Board Meeting- Monday, Sept 21 at 7PM, GCCS- You are always welcome to attend and participate in the Board meetings.
- Community Council Meeting- Wednesday, Sept. 24 at 7PM We encourage ALL families to attend this group as this is your way of participating in the way our school is continuously developed and improved. Parents, staff, community members and board meet to discuss ideas and learn what is going on with the school. Your Parent Representatives to the GCCS Board are Michael Tetrault (mtetrault@cableone.net) and Sara Covington (sara_covington@hotmail.com). Contact them if you have questions or concerns - and plan to meet them at this first Council meeting of the year! They want your input regarding what this group will look like this year!
- School Pictures- Wed. Sept 30 Purchase packets will be sent home prior to this date.
- NO SCHOOL for Staff Professional Development, Thurs. October 1 & Friday, Oct. 2.
- Garden City Dragon Parade - Sat, Oct. 3 - starts at noon. (See more details on our website and from students' teachers)
- Student-Led Conference: "GOAL NIGHT" - Wed, October 7 (time to be announced)



ART at GCCS

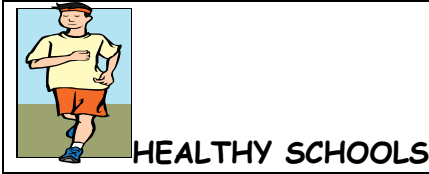
Despite budget cuts and grants that ended, we have managed to creatively increase our students' exposure to the arts this year! Your Special Programs Fees are helping with this.

- Arts Integration: Staff has gone through intensive training in the various arts and learned some incredible new ways to include the arts as part of ALL the students' learning in their various subjects. This has been including visual arts, music, movement/dance and drama. The students don't even realize that they're learning a TON of math, science, reading, writing, social studies in the middle of all the fun! Ask them details about this and watch their teachers' newsletters for more details!
- Art Studio:

We have added a special hour for each class each week to explore and learn the various arts from various professional artists. As a professional artist myself (BFA in architecture, graphic design business owner, art education specialist certification, and art teacher for over 20 years), I

will teach this Art Studio throughout the year in addition to guest artists. I am starting the students with basic elements of art and drawing and will include more advanced visual art and theater as the year progresses.

The next Art Studio will be with photographers who plan to help them eventually start a Yearbook group. College art ed students plan to join us for part of the year. *Please let me know if you - or friends of yours - are interested in volunteering for this Art Studio experience for our students! I am scheduling the year now!*



Watch our website for more information as the year proceeds. Through the hard work of our counselor, Cyndi Groth-Landis, we have received a federal grant to use towards training to develop healthy school programs. This is taking an exciting direction at GCCS which we hope you will encourage! So far the following are some improvements we have started:

- 1) **"Good Morning Starts"** is a short exercises time where staff and students take turn leading five minutes of "movement" before leaving the playground for class. We're all having fun with this and brain research shows this is very important to improved learning for all ages!
- 2) **PE** - The Boys & Girls Club has partnered with our energetic kindergarten teacher, Elizabeth Sackman, to create our new physical education sessions! We have contracted with them to bus our students each week for a one hour visit to their facility (fields, gym, playground) with a well-trained staff member helping Elizabeth teach students skills to learn fun sports and activities. These two adults truly understand our students and school philosophy and have such fun, upbeat attitudes that everyone's enjoying PE now! If you have time to help with your child's class and are willing to actually "participate" with the activities, please let your child's teacher know. They would love to have some volunteers!
- 3) **Recess/Lunch** - We have increased the recess and lunch time this year as many parents requested more time for their children to play and more time for them to eat. We feel these were healthy suggestions and see what a difference it has made for the children. Thanks for your suggestion!
- 4) **Friday Sack Lunches** - as part of our nutrition for Healthy Schools, we are asking for you to teach your children how to pack a nutritional lunch. We encourage you to have them learn to pack their own. Contact Counselor Cyndi if you need ideas for cheap- yet healthy- lunch ideas!
- 5) **Snack & Stretch Time** - Every day, each class takes time for a healthy snack and movement/exercise. Please be sure to send your children *healthy* snacks for this break by avoiding items with sugar or caffeine.
- 6) **Brain + Movement** - Following current brain research, we are doing as many things as possible to increase brain activity to improve learning for all ages. Teachers are being trained in specific exercises to share with students which stimulate particular areas of the brain to increase learning. Research "Brain Gym" and "Super Brain Yoga" or the National Brain & Learning Institute if you'd like to learn more about our findings.
- 7) **Health Suggestions** - see the website for our suggestions if your child gets sick.
- 8) **Staff Health** - and last, but not least, our entire staff is determined to be good role models for the students. They are eating healthier, exercising more and learning other health-related ideas. The theme this year for staff is "Balance!"

ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS We are very excited about our increased plans for environmental learning opportunities this year! There are incredible plans partnered with the Boise Water Shed Project right now. Your child's teacher will be sharing these with students and families soon. The Water Shed is located just a few miles from us and is using our school to develop curriculum for the Hyatt Wetlands located behind GCCS! The older students are planning to attend an environmental camp in McCall while each class will have an environmental theme for at least one tri-mester this year. All staff and classes are also responsible for cleaning their own room and assigned areas of the school this year and I'm noticing better care of the school and supplies now that it's our responsibility to clean!

VOLUNTEER FORMS Please complete the bright orange "All-School" Volunteer forms and return them to the school! Every family is asked to volunteer in the class or with school projects at least five hours a month. We're compiling your responses and project coordinators will contact you as the help is needed!

STUDENT HANDBOOK FORMS All families and students need to review the handbooks and sign the various sections on the back page. Please return these to the classroom teacher right away so they may be filed.



OFFICE GREETERS

Thanks so much to our volunteer Office Greeters: Barb Hamon, Patricia Angel, Jeanna Vickery, Katie Coe, Melissa Rupe, Gypsy Thomas, Stacey Crouch-Keefer, Emilie Ariybi, Michele Sutton, Dustie Heideman, Melanie Folwell, Gina Munkers, Shauna Buttars and Marissa Weekes. They are a great addition to our school and have been doing a super job making school visitors and phone callers feel welcome!

SCHOOL MESSAGES Since a volunteer is the first person answering the phone now, please remember to keep you messages "short & sweet" as you don't know who will hear them. We want to keep your info handled professionally and confidentially and it is quite uncomfortable for our volunteers to hear some of the information some families have left on the phone! If you call with transportation messages late in the afternoon, it is very hard for us to get them to your child before class is over, so please try to call early. Staff is being very good about returning your calls right away, so this system is proving to work very well. Thanks for your consideration to our volunteer greeters!

SCHOOL HOURS Remember that the playground is open at 8:30AM and school is over at 3:15PM. There is no staff available to keep children safe if they are dropped off early or stay past school hours, so please be aware of this safety issue and respect for your child's teacher's time. Thanks to everyone for using our drop off/pick up procedures. These have been developed to create as safe a process as possible so your cooperation is appreciated.



NEW ROBOTIX PROJECT

Thanks to Brenda Miller for writing a "Robotix" grant, the 7/8 grade class has the opportunity to compete in an invention contest through the use of advanced Lego Robotix techniques. This is sponsored by the Idaho Discovery Network and Idaho Department of Education to encourage the use of technology and math. I recommend families encourage their students in Brenda's class to apply to be on this team as it will be an extremely fun, creative and challenging after-school activity for the next few months.

Feel free to call me with any questions or concerns you might have!

Sincerely,
Cindy Hoovel, Director (cindy.hoovel@gardencityschool.org)