

The Bridge



Back-To-School 2011 Gig Harbor Academy Magazine Narrowing the Gap Between Your Home and Gig Harbor Academy

Inside This Issue:

- ***Summer Camp Fun!***
- ***The Class of 2011***



The Bridge

Special Edition

Back-To-School 2011

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Off and Running	3
After-School Programs	3
Head of School Search Update	4
Get to Know Lyndsey Casey	5
Get to Know Melanie Bruey	5
GHA's Fifth Graders Move On to Middle School	6
Alumni Reflections from GHA's Class of 2011	7
School Family Network (SFN) News	8
Our School Childcare News	8
GHA Summer Camps Offer Something for Everyone	9
New Enrichment Programs	10
Weekly Colors Brings GHA Students Together	11
Parade	12

Mission Statement: GHA strives to instill academic excellence by challenging each student intellectually, creatively, and physically in a respectful and caring environment.

The Bridge is the Gig Harbor Academy school magazine and is published biannually with a special back-to-school issue at the start of the school year.

For questions or comments regarding *The Bridge*, please see Christina Dudley (parent) or Niki Vanderford (in the office).



About the Cover and Photos Above:

This summer, GHA played host to a variety of summer camps available to both GHA and non-GHA students. Students could participate in sports, art, cooking, robotics, and much more. On the cover, Bruin Bear and Ansley Hardy have a "picnic" on the field during Summer Fun where students ages 3-5 could explore themes such as fish, pajama day, picnic day, and more. See the article on page 9 for more information about the fun on campus this summer!

Off and Running

By Bruce Shoup, Interim Head of School

There is an early college start program in the Washington schools known as "Running Start." September 1st was the first day of school at GHA, and I think most of our kids have qualified for "running start" simply by the manner in which they enthusiastically charged the building doors and ripped into the classrooms to discover and reconnect with their teachers! If we could bottle and sell the excitement demonstrated by our returning Eagles and their parents, then we wouldn't need an endowment!

As faculty and staff, we are thrilled to have your children back on campus. The faculty has spent many hours planning and preparing, with some teachers being regularly present on campus over the summer.

Speaking of summer, our summer camp program managed to provide a record summer revenue stream for the school. (See page 9 for more information about this year's summer camp program.)

One of the many surges of enthusiasm this week has been the high level of

energy and delight shared among the teachers when they returned with their iPad2's and compared their summer assignments of discovery. Summer campus work included new conduits and rewiring for faster wireless.

We pride ourselves in being responsive and communicative with our parents and within our community in so many ways. Much of this correspondence is now managed on-line with state of the art tools and notifications. Our school size permits us to work faster and smarter in preparing for school events and to keep you informed. That, in turn, makes for a better parent and child relationship. And that will lead to deeper and wider learning opportunities for your children.

We are off and running into an exciting new school year, with smiles all around and the sun still warming us with the spirit of summer!



Bruce Shoup, Interim Head of School

After-school Programs Start Soon!

To register, find the links in the school newsletter or see the office.

Activity	Day/Time	Other Information
Robotics (Grades 1-3)	Thursdays 3:30 - 4:45 PM.	September 8—competition in mid-December.
Robotics (Grades 4-5)	Thursdays 3:30 - 4:45 PM.	(same as above)
Cross-Country (Grades K-5)	Wednesdays and Fridays 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM.	September 2–October 7. Competition meets on September 10, 25, October 2, and 9 at Bellarmine.
Chess Club (Grades K-5)	Fridays 3:45 - 4:45 PM.	September 16–December 16.

Head of School Search Update

By the GHA Board of Directors

Gig Harbor Academy's Board of Directors formed a search committee for the next Head of School at GHA at its final meeting of the school year in June. The mission of the search committee is to define the desired criteria for present and future GHA school leadership and to select the candidate for Head of School who is the best fit for GHA's leadership needs in terms of qualifications, personal attributes, and vision for the school community's growth and development. Bruce Shoup, the current Head of School, was hired as Interim Head in spring 2010 for a contract running July 2010 through June 2012. He continues to provide a wealth of experience from many years of independent school leadership and has agreed to assist the search committee as an ex-officio (non-voting) advisor.

Many schools hire an educational consulting firm to provide oversight, management, and administrative assistance with the search process, but the cost for these services can run between \$25,000 to \$50,000 exclusive of travel fees and other expenses. In an effort to keep expenses to a minimum, the search committee has elected to forgo the use of any consultants. Bruce Shoup's years of service and numerous connections within PNAIS (Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools) schools and informal contacts with search consultant representatives make this approach a viable one for GHA.

Elizabeth Gray, a current Board member and parent, has been designated by the Board to lead the search committee. Other search committee members include Jeff Funk (fifth grade teacher), Jim Kelly (parent), Cristina McDougall (immediate past SFN president and parent), Tina Myers (Board of Directors president and parent), and Sheila Walther (second grade teacher).

The timeline for a new Head of School search process typically stretches over 10-18 months at independent schools. The initial phase of the search is a self-study process about "who we are" as an institution which encompasses the school's mission statement and core values, the educational program and curriculum, the school's culture and unique "feel," the challenges facing the school, and a description of the school community. Much of this work was completed in the spring of 2011 in the context of GHA's self-study

for PNAIS accreditation through the weekly surveys sent electronically to parents and through faculty working group meetings. The search committee pooled their experience and the self-study input to prepare an "Opportunity Statement" for release in national educational publications and web sites in mid-August. This document is a multi-page report that describes the school and specifies the personal qualities and professional competencies sought in the next Head of School. It will be posted on the school web site and the search committee encourages parents and faculty to read it.

Interested candidates have already started to submit their application materials to the committee for consideration. While the names and current schools of applicants must remain confidential until the final stages of the search process, we can report interest from candidates within Washington and as far away as the East Coast. The committee looks forward to a robust response over the next several weeks of candidate screening. The next phase of the process will be to narrow the pool of candidates to 6-10 semifinalists by mid-October and to proceed with initial interviews in early November.

While the search committee represents a variety of stakeholders within the school (faculty, Board members, parents at large from multiple grade levels), we welcome input from anyone in the school community, as we truly believe that a multitude of perspectives adds depth, honesty, and integrity to the search. Committee members may be approached in person, by phone, or by email with questions, concerns, or comments. In particular, if you know of a potential candidate for the Head of School position, please notify the committee and encourage that person to submit application materials. A candidate might be a head of school at another independent school, a lower school division head at a larger school, or a public school principal or administrator. Email can be directed to searchinput@gigharboracademy.org. If you wish to make anonymous comments, an old-fashioned comment box will be placed in the school office where you can leave a note. Please look for updates on the search process periodically in the electronic newsletter and future issues of *The Bridge*.

Get To Know Lyndsey Casey

By Lyndsey Casey, Kindergarten Assistant



Lyndsey Casey joins the GHA faculty this fall as the new Kindergarten Assistant.

My name is Lyndsey Casey and I have joined the GHA faculty this fall as the new Kindergarten Assistant. I went to the University of Washington Tacoma, and have obtained my Bachelors in Psychology and a K-8th grade Teaching Certificate. I was a running start student and received my Associates Degree while I graduated from High School. My student teaching was at Lowell Elementary School with first graders. While I was at Lowell, I implemented an instructional unit on plants and attended workshops on how students learn. I was a preschool teacher before Gig Harbor Academy at New Adventures. I just celebrated my one year wedding anniversary in Snoqualmie, WA. My husband is a youth pastor at Lifegate Auburn Foursquare church. There I teach Sunday school with Elementary students and am a leader for the middle and high school youth group. I enjoy scrapbooking/cardmaking, reading, going to the beach, and love to go to antique shops. Tacoma is my current residence, but I used to live in Gig Harbor as a young girl. I am very excited about being a part of Gig Harbor Academy.

Get To Know Melanie Bruey

By Melanie Bruey, Preschool Assistant



Melanie Bruey joins the GHA faculty this fall as the new Preschool Assistant.

My name is Melanie Bruey and I am pleased to be joining the GHA faculty as the new Preschool Assistant this fall. I was born and raised on the North Shore of Oahu, Hawaii and moved to Gig Harbor when I was 10. Since then, I have lived in the area and graduated from Peninsula High School. Currently, I am finishing my degree in Early Childhood Education at Pierce College and will be done this Spring.

For the last 8 years, I have been a private nanny for several wonderful families in North End Tacoma and Gig Harbor. I also worked at New Adventures Children's Center which is run by Tacoma General/Mary Bridge in the 3 year-old classroom as a Teacher Assistant and Lead for 4 years.

I built my own home 7 years ago and live over the Purdy bridge. My family and friends are a big part of my life and I enjoy spending quality time with them.

Working with children is my passion and I am so excited to be a part of the Gig Harbor Academy community.

GHA's Fifth Graders Move On to Middle School

On Monday, June 6th, GHA's fifth graders—the class of 2011—held their graduation ceremonies. Parents, grandparents, and other family members as well as some faculty and staff were in attendance. Fifth grade teacher, Jeff Funk, spoke to the students and their families and handed out items of special meaning that had been “shipped” from one of our nation's founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson. (Items included duct tape, a math book, trade beads, gold coins, and a pad of paper.) After listening to Mr. Funk's words of wisdom, students received their diplomas and then watched a special DVD created by kindergarten teacher, Sheila Walther.

Fifth grader Maddie Golden, who was visiting Liberia for three months, was able to participate in the ceremony via Skype which made for a very global graduation ceremony.

Congratulations to the class of 2011! We wish you all the best for your middle school years and beyond. We will miss you here at GHA! (See the facing page to read about the fifth graders memories of GHA and advice to other students.)



The graduates of the class of 2011 listen to Mr. Funk's words of wisdom during their fifth grade graduation ceremony which included a cake made by Mrs. Funk.



Alumni Reflections from GHA's Class of 2011

In June, we asked the fifth graders to answer the following questions so that we could feature their responses in this issue of *The Bridge*:

- 1) What is your favorite GHA memory?
- 2) What advice would you pass on to a new GHA student?
- 3) What are you looking forward to in middle school?



Phillip Dainty (St. Charles Borromeo School)

1) At GHA, I liked everything there was to do. There's always new things to try out.

2) My advice is that you should always try your best even though you think you are not doing well. If you try your best, you will become better at things.

3) I'm looking forward to middle school to learn

harder math, try new things, and meet new friends. It is important to do well before middle school, so you can be ready for middle school.



Drew Gilbert (Harbor Ridge Middle School)

1) My favorite memories at GHA are helping with the archeological dig and working on the log cabins.

2) My advice to new students is listen more so that you can learn more.

3) I am looking forward to middle school so that I can try things like Drama Club.



Maddie Golden (Harbor Ridge Middle School)

1) My favorite GHA memories are going to Camp Orkila in fourth grade and to OPI in fifth grade.

2) My advice is to not be shy—be outgoing and make as many friends as you can.

3) I am looking forward to making new friends in middle school.



Hayden Radcliffe (Life Christian School)

1) My best memory from GHA is meeting some new friends. I also met Phillip again after knowing him as a little kid in Washington D.C.

2) My advice to new students is that if you have fun and work hard, you'll always get it right.

3) I am looking forward to middle school because I will meet new friends and learn new things.

School Family Network (SFN) News

By Nichole Wolfe, SFN President

The School Family Network (SFN) is an informal, yet enthusiastic group of parents who meet once a month to organize numerous school-wide events. With the intent of supporting and enhancing our school through communication and commitment, SFN hosts Family Fun events such as Bowling Night, the annual Pumpkin Carve, weekly hot lunches for the students, teacher appreciation activities, as well as the bi-monthly snack sales. In addition, SFN reaches outside of our school with varying community service projects throughout the year.

In an attempt to improve communication flow, we have Room Representatives from each of the classrooms. These dedicated volunteers keep parents informed of the ongoing events on campus and also provide a source of connection to the school community.

Similar to PTA, our SFN welcomes all families to join them, when their schedule allows, for some community, conversation, and inclusion. SFN meetings are not meant to be a place to solicit volunteers or committee members, but often just a place to gather ideas and submit interests.

These meetings are a great opportunity to meet new parents, while keeping informed on the up-comings of

Our School Childcare News

By Rose Brown, Child Care Director

What a great summer we have had!

Childcare students were able to explore a variety of topics over the summer months. Our themes included Spirit of America, Jungle Week, Camping Adventure Week, Under the Sea, and Exploring the Arts Week. We also had Louis Fox entertain us with his magic tricks.

We are looking forward to a great school year. (Please see our hours of operation at right.)

Thank you to a great staff this summer!

—Nancy, Laura, Kim, Elise, and Rose

Please Join Us:

SFN's First Meeting of the School Year

Wednesday, September 7th

9:05 AM in the Library

the school. SFN meets in the library the first Wednesday of each month, at 9:05 a.m.

Working together with our teachers, staff, and board members, SFN enthusiastically strives to make Gig Harbor Academy the warm and welcoming environment we are all proud to be a part of.

Volunteers are still needed

- *Snack Sale Coordinator*
- *Family Fun Events Coordinator*
- *Parade Coordinator*

If you have any questions or would like more information about these positions, please come to our first meeting or contact Nichole Wolfe or Niki at admissions@gigharboracademy.org.

Childcare Hours

Before school child care: 6:30 AM to 9:00 AM

Enrichment/Mid-day Program: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

After school child care: 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Care provided throughout the day: 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM

Contact Rose Brown, Childcare Director for current rates and registration fees at (253) 265-8773.

GHA Summer Camps Offer something for Everyone

More than seventy kids from the Gig Harbor area and beyond discovered summer time fun at Gig Harbor Academy's 2011 summer camps. We even had a child from Indiana join us this year while vacationing in the Puget Sound region! Camps ran the gamut from soccer to space to robotics, wood shop, and cooking. GHA offered something for everyone this summer and we're sure to repeat the success of summer camp next year. The fun five-week program continued student's learning into the summer months, and introduced the GHA campus to new and prospective students. Here are some highlights from some of the camps offered:

Soccer: Summer camp kicked off with soccer for 5 to 11 year-olds with Coach Jenny and Coach Heather.



Soccer camp kids learned how to head a ball and practiced their foot work while burning a ton of energy at the beginning of the summer. Soccer camp kids worked hard and had a lot of fun on the field.



Our Place in Space: Fourteen budding astronomers explored the universe during Mrs. G's "Our Place in Space" camp. Students worked on creating their own solar system mobile and had an out-of-this-world experience learning about space.

Art and Cooking with Ms. Lisa: GHA's own resident artist-teacher Ms. Lisa offered a number of creative camps this year. Young budding Warhol's created oversized paper mache art objects, creative

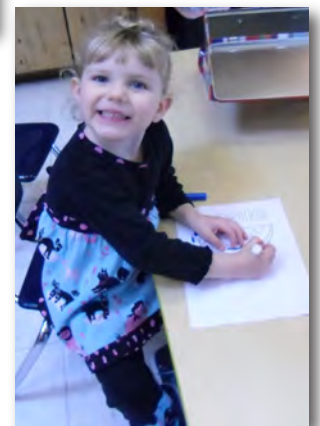
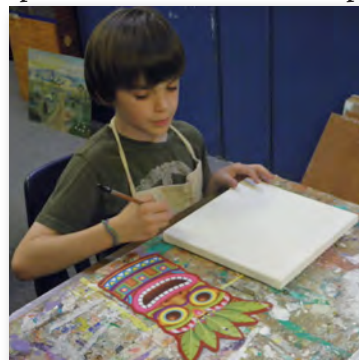


chefs learned a number of cooking techniques in the kitchen during the Top Chef camps, and students learned the mastery of fine art, art appreciation, and theory in her painting camps.

Big Wide World and Amazing Race: Students in Big Wide World and Amazing Race discovered new cultures, foods, and languages as they traveled the world in the comfort of the classrooms at GHA.

Moroccan, Indian, and Polynesian cultures were among the many that summer camp kids got to discover firsthand.

Thanks again to Cristina McDougall for helping to organize this year's summer camps! We're looking forward to next summer when we hope to offer many of these camps and more to non-GHA and GHA students alike. If you have suggestions for camps, please let the office know so that we can start planning now for a spectacular 2012 summer program!



Preschool Enrichment Program

Tuesdays September 13 - December 13, 2011

Gig Harbor Academy's Preschool Enrichment Program is open to children ages 3-4. The program includes lunch, music with our music specialist, and one hour instruction time with Teacher Diana. Instruction and curriculum will include science, math, and literacy. These core subjects will be explored through a myriad of mediums such as cooking, art, wetland exploration, and group collaboration. Every week, children will focus on different learning discoveries. This addition to your child's week will be a fun-filled journey with benefits that will reach beyond the traditional preschool classroom.

Spots are limited! Sign-up today.
Daily Schedule: 11:30 AM - 2:00 PM

Lunch Bunch
11:30 AM-12:30 PM

Music with Mrs. Swanson
12:30 PM-1:00 PM

Instructional Hour with Teacher Diana
1:00 PM-2:00 PM

Cost is \$495

Contact Niki Vanderford at 253-265-2150 to sign up today.



Friday Kindergarten Enrichment Program

Tell Your Friends and Neighbors!

Our School Childcare has openings on Fridays in our kindergarten enrichment program as well as throughout the week from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM for ages 3-11.

Our staff works with both school and family to create a comfortable but structured place to promote your child's growth through social interaction, intellectual development, and physical and emotional expression. Tutoring in areas needed is also available on Fridays by our staff.

If you would like more information, please call (253) 265-8773 and speak to Rose Brown, Childcare Director.

Weekly Colors Brings GHA Students Together

One of the newer traditions at GHA is the weekly Colors ceremony. Colors takes place on Monday mornings and Friday afternoons (weather permitting) and allows the entire school community to come together. During Colors, students and faculty honor the flag (fifth graders are responsible for raising and lowering the flag on a daily basis), listen to a welcome from the Head of School as well as teacher and school announcements. In addition, classes share their current projects through skits, songs, dances, poetry, or inspirational readings. Even the youngest children quickly become comfortable speaking and making presentations to an audience of their peers, teachers, and parents. This time allows children to share in their community, learn the value of what it means to be a supportive audience, to listen politely to a presentation or performance, and to show appreciation for the performer's hard work and preparation. This time of coming together and sharing not only reinforces the idea that students belong to a community in which they should take pride, but also it offers opportunities for students to practice their public speaking and performing skills.

Parents and other family member are always welcome and encouraged to attend Colors.



GHA's focus on values plants seeds of enthusiasm for building positive relationships, the value of our presence in our community and our responsibilities in our families and school. These values are reinforced through class discussions, stories, role-playing, and projects that help children to identify those values that help create a successful community. This year, the faculty has created the "House of GHA Spirit" (see photo above). Each pillar of the house represents a different character trait. Each month, a different character trait/pillar is discussed in the classroom and at Colors.



GHA's first Colors ceremony of the 2011-2012 school year took place on Friday, September 2nd where students presented poetry readings, discussed alternate endings to a story read during class, learned about the new House of GHA Spirit, and watched fifth graders lower the flag.



Upcoming Events:

SFN Meeting

Back-To-School Picnic

School Pictures

No School (Professional Development)

No School (Conferences)

Scholastic Book Fair

Pumpkin Carve Night

September 7 (9:05 AM)

September 9 (5:30-7:30 PM)

September 20-21

October 14

October 24-25

October 21-28

October 28 (6:00 - 8:00 PM)



On the first Saturday in June, GHA once again participated in the Maritime Gig Parade. Since the parade theme remained the same, GHA once again used the large treasure chest and the theme of "Gig Harbor Academy—Jewel of the Harbor." Students wore bandanas, special parade shirts, and handed out candy in GHA-logo bags. In addition, GHA also served as a sponsor of this year's parade and had a booth at the festival where kids could decorate pirate hats. GHA was proud to be honored with the award of Best Children's entry! Thanks to all who participated in the parade and to those who cheered us on from the sidelines. It was a great day to show our school spirit!



Reminder:

*Fridays are Spirit Wear Days
Order Yours Today!*

(See Niki in the office)