The Bridge

Back-To-School 2012  Gig Harbor Academy Magazine  Narrowing the Gap Between Your Home and Gig Harbor Academy

Inside This Issue:
• Summer Camp Fun!
• The Class of 2012
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, drama, and much more.

In the photos above, GHA and Lakewood Playhouse paired up to present a fabulous production of “Peter Pan” at Gig Harbor High School after two weeks of rehearsals during Drama Camp. See the article on page 10 for more information about the fun on campus this summer!
GHA — The Definition of an Effective School

By Darcie Bigelow, Head of School

We know that Gig Harbor Academy is an incredibly successful school, but what makes one school stand out from all the others? There have been copious studies conducted over the past 20 years that have answered this very question. Without a doubt, the skill, talent, and training of the teacher in the classroom proves to be one of the primary factors influencing student success. A great teacher in the classroom will ensure a superb learning opportunity for your child.

While a talented and dedicated teaching staff is critical, an effective school must also establish and maintain a supportive learning environment where the children not only feel safe to explore and make mistakes, but where each child is intellectually challenged every day. An effective learning environment is personalized with lower class numbers, enabling the teacher to work with individuals in a rich and supportive manner. When these pieces are all in place, children feel connected and fully engaged in learning.

Another characteristic that successful schools share is a high level of family and community involvement. Children who are part of a community, and where education is valued and parents and teachers support the efforts of one another, experience greater success and a positive, long-lasting attitude about school.

A successful school also stays current with up-to-date curriculum materials, modern technology, instructional approaches based on the best of the research, and a strong professional growth plan for teachers. In addition, effective schools expand their learning stages outside of the physical classroom, including the surrounding environment, community, and the world.

Successful schools must establish and maintain high standards for all students. Whether a child experiences learning challenges or has exceptional ability or interest in any area, successful schools don’t plan for just the middle, but rather, build a curriculum that challenges and supports each child, encouraging growth each day.

So how does Gig Harbor Academy measure up to this definition of a successful school? The above description is Gig Harbor Academy. On our campus, you will find extraordinary teachers, small class sizes, individual attention, challenging curriculum, expansive activities, opportunities to learn in our outdoor classrooms, connection to the world in our travels and over the internet, modern technology, a strong and involved parent and volunteer corps, and children who enjoy school and learning. Gig Harbor Academy is the definition of an effective school.
A Welcome from the Board of Directors

By Elizabeth Gray, Chair—GHA Board of Directors

Whether you are part of a new or returning family to Gig Harbor Academy, the Board of Directors wishes you a warm welcome to the 2012-2013 school year! We have much to celebrate from news and projects over the summer. A quick summary follows:

- A warm welcome to our new Head of School, Darcie Bigelow, who started at Gig Harbor Academy on July 1st
- A new Child Care Director, Heather Graves, who started at GHA in late July and led a busy summer child care session after Rose Brown's retirement
- Summer camp programs enrolled over 100 kids with revenue 30% higher than expected
- An opening enrollment count that exceeds last academic year’s enrollment
- Several facilities changes and upgrades, as follows:
  - Using a part of your generous auction "fund-an-item" technology donations to update networking connections on campus
  - New carpeting and flooring in the specialist room
  - A classroom switch for the Pre-K and Preschool classes to meet state Department of Early Learning requirements

As I speak with families on campus, I often encounter some questions regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Board, both in terms of what falls into the Board's purview and what falls outside of it. In general, the Board is primarily responsible for long-term strategic planning and the Head of School is responsible for day-to-day operational leadership of the school. The relationship between the Board and Head of School, however, is a true partnership, and we function as a team to address many challenges and opportunities. Below is a summary of responsibilities:

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<th>Board Responsibility</th>
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<td>Defining mission &amp; programs</td>
<td>Curriculum integration &amp; evaluation</td>
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<td>Financial stability planning</td>
<td>Financial aid policy and decisions</td>
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<td>Hiring &amp; evaluation of Head</td>
<td>Hiring &amp; evaluation of faculty/staff</td>
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<td>Budget approval/tuition setting</td>
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<td>Risk management policies</td>
<td>Student disciplinary issues</td>
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<td>Major fundraising</td>
<td>Academic year calendar</td>
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The Board is presently composed of six current parents, but we would like to expand our membership this year to include community members, such as leaders of other nonprofit organizations and educators from other independent schools. In addition, we are specifically seeking Board members with legal expertise, financial management expertise, and facilities/engineering/construction expertise. The Board meets on the second Tuesday of each month. If you would like more information about the Board’s work, minutes of the meetings are available for review in the school office. We welcome and encourage parent involvement on Board committees (Facilities, Development, Technology, etc.) and communication with Board members. The Board, the Head of School, the faculty/staff, and the parent community share a common goal of ensuring Gig Harbor Academy is a strong, stable, and joyous community of learners for many generations to come.

Gig Harbor Academy Board of Directors

Elizabeth Gray—Chair
Maureen Brekke—Vice Chair
Zack Rosenbloom—Treasurer
John Golden—Development Committee Chair
Tina Myers
Chela Mitchell
Get To Know Ilene Wider
By Ilene Wider, Second Grade Teacher

I am so excited to return to the classroom as the second grade teacher at Gig Harbor Academy. Over the past four years, I have gotten to know the students and families of GHA as a fourth grade teacher as well as the second half of the Spanish Department.

I was born and raised on Long Island, New York. While completing my degree in Marine Science/Biology at The State University of New York, I met my husband Ron. After graduation, Ron joined the Army which led us to San Antonio, Texas. While in Texas, I earned my teaching certificate through the University of Texas, San Antonio. After five years of teaching science, I took some time off of teaching to begin our family. We have two amazing kids, Jake, 12 years old, and Gabby, 10 years old.

In 2003, Ron’s job relocated us to Washington. Although very different from growing up in New York, we absolutely love Gig Harbor. In our spare time, our family enjoys kayaking, hiking, and exploring the Puget Sound on our boat. We also love to travel and visit our family in Colombia, Panama, and Spain. Practicing our Spanish and exploring other cultures has been a priority for us and I intend to bring that enthusiasm into my classroom.

Gig Harbor Academy is a unique learning community. There is truly a partnership of learning between faculty, administration, and parents with each of us advocating for the “success” of each child. I am proud to be a part of the GHA community and I look forward to the new adventures which lie ahead!

Get To Know Nancy Mangola
By Nancy Mangola, Prekindergarten Assistant

My name is Nancy Manglona and I’m excited to be joining the Gig Harbor Academy faculty this fall as the Prekindergarten Assistant. I enjoyed working in the Our School of Gig Harbor Child Care Center as a lead teacher for the past 21 years. Annually, I have met the training requirements of the WAC (Washington Administration Code) in Early Childhood Education.

I have lived in Gig Harbor with my husband and our family for the past 24 years. We have three awesome sons, one fabulous daughter-in-law, and one beautiful, bright, precocious, and energetic 2 1/2 year old granddaughter. Some of my favorite things that I enjoy doing are spending time with my family, cooking, reading, and traveling.

It’s going to be an exciting year and I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to work with your prekindergarten children.
Get To Know Heather Graves

By Heather Graves, Early Childhood Director

Greetings! My name is Heather Graves and I am thrilled to be the new Early Childhood Director for Gig Harbor Academy and Our School Child Care. Raised in an in-home childcare on Vashon Island, I have been working with children since age 11. I am also from a large blended family with seven siblings, providing plenty of inspiration for me to become a teacher!

I studied elementary and early childhood education at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma and received my Washington State Teaching Certificate with endorsements in both areas. After moving off Vashon and getting married, I settled into my teaching career. I started as a substitute teacher in Tacoma, where I now reside with my husband and daughter, and then accepted a position at Providence Christian School in Gig Harbor. Over the years, I have developed a true heart for the Gig Harbor area, having served its families for three and a half years at Providence and four years as a Lead Teacher and Program Supervisor at Cottesmore Christian Child Care. I have been thoroughly blessed by this community and am ecstatic to be able to spend this newest chapter in my life in a place that I have grown to love so much!

Gig Harbor Academy is excited to offer full-day childcare (6:30 AM - 6:00 PM) for children ages 3-12. Located on the Gig Harbor Academy campus, the childcare takes advantage of the beautiful ten acres that it sits on. Our new Early Childhood Director, Heather Graves, has enriching activities that will stimulate your child's growth in all areas - cognitive, physical, social and emotional. Low child to teacher ratios mean that your child will receive plenty of one-on-one attention in a safe and nurturing environment. If you are looking for a more structured academic environment for your child you can take advantage of the Gig Harbor Academy programs just a quick walk down the lane. For Artondale students, we offer before and after school childcare where children are picked up and dropped off by the Peninsula School District bus transportation.
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 the school. SFN meets in the library the first Wednesday of each month, at 9:00 AM.

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:

- Hot Lunch Pick-Up & Delivery
- Secretary (to take notes during meetings)
- Parade
- Class Rep for: Prekindergarten

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.

After-School Programs Start Soon!

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Day/Time</th>
<th>Other Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robotics (Grades 1-3)</td>
<td>Thursdays 3:30 - 4:45 PM.</td>
<td>September 6–December 6.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys Robotics (Grades 4-5)</td>
<td>Thursdays 3:30 - 4:45 PM.</td>
<td>(same as above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls Robotics (Grades 4-5)</td>
<td>Mondays 3:30 - 4:45 PM.</td>
<td>September 10-December 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Country (Grades Prek-5)</td>
<td>Wednesdays and Fridays 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM.</td>
<td>August 31–October 5. Competition meets on September 8, 23, 30, and October 7 at Bellarmine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chess 4 Life (Grades K-5—GHA &amp; non-GHA students)</td>
<td>Fridays 3:45 - 4:45 PM.</td>
<td>September 14–December 14. (optional October 19–December 14 enrollment for students in Cross Country)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GHA/LPH Theatre Presents: A Christmas Carol! (Ages 7-15—GHA &amp; non-GHA students)</td>
<td>Mondays and Wednesdays 3:45 - 5:45 PM</td>
<td>October 15–December 5 (Performance on Friday evening, December 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric Guitar (5th Grade)</td>
<td>3:45 - 4:45 PM (September 10, 18, and 25. October 2, 16, and 30. November 27.)</td>
<td>Guitar and amp will be provided.</td>
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GHA’s Fifth Graders Move On to Middle School

On Thursday, June 7th, GHA’s fifth graders—the class of 2012—held their graduation ceremonies. Parents, grandparents, and other family members as well as some faculty and staff were in attendance. Former Head of School, Bruce Shoup, made some opening remarks. Then fifth grade teacher Jeff Funk spoke to the students and their families, handing 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.

Congratulations to the class of 2012! 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.)
Alumni Reflections from GHA’s Class of 2012

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?

Katie Babson (St. Nicholas School)

1) My favorite GHA memories were going to Williamsburg and seeing Jefferson’s house at Monticello.
2) My advice is do not be afraid to ask questions. No questions are dumb.
3) I am really looking forward to meeting new friends and seeing new places.

Ashleigh Bernard (Lighthouse Christian School)

1) My favorite GHA memory is going to Washington, D.C. and seeing the Smithsonian and the White House. We also went to Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Yorktown. The best part was that the whole class went on the trip.
2) My advice is to make sure that you listen to the teachers and do what they say. Always pay attention.
3) I am going to Lighthouse Christian and I am looking forward to meeting new friends and fun stuff like art, music, recess, and math.

Sophie Boyd (St. Nicholas School)

1) One of my favorite memories of GHA was traveling to Williamsburg, VA. It was so fun to go on a plane so far with my friends. Another thing I love about GHA is that all the teachers are so nice. I was nervous to go in to kindergarten and Mrs. Felton and Mrs. Walther were so welcoming. Mr. Funk was a perfect teacher to prep us for middle school. Each teacher brings something great to the school.
2) My advice for a new student is talk to everyone. Try to make friends and you will succeed.
3) I am looking forward to making new friends and meeting new teachers.

Thomas Dean (Kopachuck Middle School)

1) My favorite memories are in third grade at the Museum of Flight when my team’s rocket shot up into the sky and in fourth grade when we went to Camp Orkila.
2) My advice for a new student is talk to everyone. Try to make friends and you will succeed.
3) I am looking forward to middle school in order to meet new friends and work at new challenges.

Brandon Hitchcock (Charles Wright Academy)

1) I was given the opportunity to explore the world of robots through the First Lego League, Bellarmine’s big robot, and Multicare’s surgical DaVinci robot used in the operating room. Our unforgettable fifth grade trip to Washington, D.C. with its many mishaps was the most memorable field trip.
2) Pace yourself, remember your homework, and go to the many school events such as pumpkin carve, school picnics, roller skating, and bowling. You can become a well rounded person both academically and socially.
3) I am looking forward to the laboratory science classes, playing a musical instrument, and exploring my individuality as I grow in middle school.

Robin Javid (Kopachuck Middle School)

1) My favorite GHA memory is going to Virginia and Washington, D.C. I enjoyed going to the Smithsonian museums and Great Hopes Plantation.
2) My advice to new students would be to make lots of new friends. Be nice and care for your friends.
3) I am looking forward to exploring the school and making new friends.

Nicholas Lavinder (Goodman Middle School)

1) My favorite memory about GHA was robotics every Thursday with my friends. It’s not very often that you get to work with robots.
2) Keep your desk organized. Instead of looking for your math sheet for five minutes, you will be prepared. Also, never abuse the trust of your teacher. If you do, you will feel bad and it will be hard for them to trust you.
3) What I am looking forward to in middle school is the art program. When I saw the art room on my visit, I could not wait to get started.

Isabella Nohara (Kopachuck Middle School)

1) My favorite GHA memory was the pumpkin carve when I was in fourth grade. My friends and I kept stabbing my pumpkin so it looked like it had freckles. Another good memory I have is when we had snow in fourth grade. We got to play computer games until our parents picked us up.
2) My advice is to get used to playing in the mud and rain! Also, be nice to everyone and you will succeed.
3) I am looking forward to making new friends, having lockers, and changing classes.

Isabel Puratich (St. Nicholas School)

1) My favorite GHA memory is going on our trip to Washington, D.C. We also went to Williamsburg.
2) New students should try to make new friends and learn about GHA.
3) I am looking forward to St. Nicholas because I can walk to school and other kids from GHA will be there.
GHA Summer Camps Offer Something for Everyone

By Lynn Swanson, Student Enrichment Coordinator

Summer Session 2012 at Gig Harbor Academy was HOT! 105 students gathered on campus this summer to take part in one or more of GHA’s 16 camps. Students came from as close as next door, and as far away as Texas to EXPLORE, LEARN, CREATE and PLAY! From three year-old preschoolers to next year’s seventh graders, fun was had by all!

Our talented and energetic staff brought campus to life for three weeks in July with a wide range of classes and activities. Camps included Art, Theatre, Woodshop, Robotics, Cheerleading, Soccer, Outdoor Adventures, Top Chef, Chess, Circus Camp, and a week of Discovery and Adventure for our youngest campers!

Here is a quick look at some of the highlights from Summer Session 2012:

**Art:**
Miss Lisa led campers of all ages in a variety of artistic endeavors from preschool Arts & Crafts to Pop Art and Painting. As always, Miss Lisa’s projects were innovative and challenging, and the level of skill shown by our students was truly impressive!

**Theatre:**
GHA partnered with the Lakewood Playhouse Theatre this summer and the results were truly magical. Two weeks of intensive drama instruction resulted in an inspiring performance of Peter Pan! Family, friends, and community members alike were delighted with the results of this partnership that will continue during the academic year! (For more photos of the production, see page 2.)

**Woodshop:**
“Safety first” was the mantra in Mr. Funk’s woodshop, where our upper grade students built their very own lighthouses! Students honed their math skills while they developed their craftsmanship, and their masterpieces turned out beautifully.

**Circus Camp:**
Mrs. Grochowski led our Circus campers in a week of clowning, balancing, imagination, and fun! Students made their own clown car and piled inside, practiced juggling and walking on stilts, and even took turns being “strong men!”

**A Week of Discovery and Adventure:**
Teacher Diana took our youngest campers on some wet, wild, and MESSY adventures! An alphabet hunt in the wetlands, throwing paper towels full of paint at life-sized canvases, and riding our bikes and tricycles through the bike wash were just a few of the highlights from this fast-paced week of activity!

Planning for Summer Session 2013 is already underway! Please email Student Enrichment Coordinator Lynn Swanson at enrichment@gigharboracademy.org with questions, comments, or camp ideas!
Upcoming Events:
SFN Meeting      September 5 (9:00 AM)
Back-To-School Picnic     September 7 (5:30-7:30 PM)
School Pictures   September 18-19
No School (Professional Development)   October 12
Scholastic Book Fair  October 22-26
Pumpkin Carve Night  October 26 (6:00 - 8:00 PM)

Reminder:
Fridays are Spirit Wear Days
Order Yours Today!
(See Cristina in the office)

In early June, GHA once again participated in the Maritime Gig Parade. GHA used the large treasure chest and the theme of “Gig Harbor Academy—Jewel of the Harbor.” Students wore pirate hats, special parade shirts, and handed out candy in GHA-logo bags. In addition, GHA also had a booth at the festival where kids could decorate pirate flags. 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!