



What's Up @ G&P

June 2012

Main Office

617-349-6577

School Cancellation Line:

617-349-6513

Tardy or Late Line:

617 349-6577 x125

Contacting G&P Staff

For time sensitive messages, call the main office at 617-349-6577.

While staff cannot take phone calls during the day, you can leave a voice message by calling 617-349-6577 and using the classroom number as the extension.

Staff members have email addresses as follows:
First initial and last name as one word, followed by @cpsd.us
For example, Jane Smith would be jsmith@cpsd.us

Staff members also have mailboxes in the front office where you may leave a note.

Communicate with the G&P Community

Email lists:

Blackboard Connect for official school announcements, sent to email addresses on emergency cards.

gp21 is a parent-run Yahoo group with discussions of school matters as well as sharing of information and resources. Visit groups.yahoo.com/group/gp21

If you would like this document translated please contact the Bilingual/World Languages Department at 617-349-6468. Announcements are authored and proofread by each individual contributor. If you have a question or comment, please contact the contributor directly using the contact information listed in the announcement. The parent volunteer editor(s) may be contacted at graham_parks_newsletter@gmail.com.

A Note from Principal Sarah Fiarman

Dear Families,

The end of the school year is particularly poignant this year. We say good-bye not only to our 8th graders as they move on to the high school, but also to our 5th-7th graders this year as they move on to the Vassal Lane Upper School. They are an incredible group of kids who have supported each other to grow academically and socially and who continually rise to the high expectations they are given. These students will help build a vibrant, good-humored, and urgently curious upper school community. We will miss them – and we celebrate them at this important transition.

Of course it's not just the students whom we'll miss. The parents – and in several cases the grandparents – of our upper grade students have helped shape the character of our school through important and lasting volunteer work and through reinforcing core values of the school with their children. Many of these parents have been the backbone of committees and other volunteer work at Graham and Parks over the years. They have provided a model for parent engagement at our school, and will be a tremendous asset to the Vassal Lane Upper School.

Finally, we're saying good-bye to our 6th-8th grade teachers who have brought students and parents together for all of the above. I am inspired by the high quality of their teaching and their continually evolving practice – they model the reflection and revision process in their own work even as they teach it to their students. I respect their commitment to community within their classrooms and to supporting each child's individual growth as well. Together with students, families, and their new colleagues, these teachers will build a dynamic learning community at Vassal Lane. Their commitment to high standards will continue to be a prized value at Graham and Parks. We'll miss them.

We'll say good-bye in many stages during this last month of school. Individual classroom communities will say good-bye during curriculum celebrations and end of year trips. The entire 5th-7th grade community will join for an end-of-year potluck celebration on June 13th. We plan a faculty breakfast for colleagues to say good-bye to each other. In addition, we have created a good-bye banner as a place to collect messages for the 6th-8th grade community as they transition to a new school. I hope

you'll stop by the lobby to add a note to the banner (or email it to Judy Amendola, who can print and add your message).

As the upper grades students, teachers, and families move on to build a new upper school together, they – as with all of our former students, families, and colleagues -- will continue to be part of the Graham and Parks family. I know the JK-5 families and staff join me in saying we will miss them all!

Warmly,



G&P Calendar and Highlights

Items that are underlined have more information in the [G&P Happenings](#) section.

June

- Tuesday June 5 through Friday June 8: G&P Book Fair
- Thursday, June 7: 6:00 – 8 PM Book Fair Family Night
- Thursday, June 7, 5:30 – 7:30 PM: Steering Committee Meeting
- ***Monday, June 11 – Early Release for Grades K – 7 Dismissal at 12 NOON.***
- Monday, June 11, 3 PM – 8th Grade Graduation
- Wednesday, June 13: Evening: Grades 5-7 [End of the Year Fun Family Picnic](#)
- Friday, June 15, 8:00 AM – 8:25 AM: [Green Streets Walk/Ride Day](#)
- ***Monday, June 18: Last Day of School***

Field Trips and Room Activities

As of May 27. Any changes or additions will come directly from the classroom teachers.

- Friday, June 1, 10:30 AM – 1:00 PM: Room 103 – Tufts Eliot Pearson School field trip
- Tuesday, June 5: Grade 5 Girls Sports Day (June 6 rain date)
- Thursday, June 7: Grade 6 Museum of Science Overnight
- Friday, June 8: JK/K – Public Garden field trip
- Monday, June 11, 8:15 – 9:15 AM: Room 106 End of the year Author's Breakfast
- Monday, June 11, 9:30 – 11:30 AM: Room 222 Schoenhof's Books field trip
- Tuesday, June 12, 8:15 – 9:00 AM: Room 102 Author's Breakfast
- Wednesday, June 13, 8:15-9:00 AM: Room 111 Author's Breakfast
- Wednesday, June 13, 8:30AM – 2:00 PM: Grade 5 Hopkington Park field trip
- Thursday, June 14: Grades 1&2 Wingersheek Beach field trip
- Thursday, June 14, 8:15-9:30 AM: Grade 3 Proudly Presents: "[Our Habitat: Cambridge](#)" Curriculum [Breakfast](#) and Celebration
- Thursday, June 14: 9:30 AM: Grade 3 Community Packing Day
- Friday, June 15, 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM: Grade 7, Canobie Lake
- Monday, June 18: Grade 3 Cambridge Common field trip

G&P Happenings

7/8 Teachers Sarah Shaw and Chris Rettig win 2012 Facing History Margot Stern Strom Teaching Award

The award was given by Facing History and Ourselves, an international organization based in Brookline. Their mission is to promote curriculum and teacher training that combats racism, anti-Semitism and prejudice. For those not familiar with the program, to quote Sarah and Chris, “Facing History and Ourselves . . . is an approach and an outlook into teaching that challenges and inspires students to constantly reflect on the choices made by people and history and to carry that reflection into the way they live their lives today. . . . By teaching and learning through the lens of Facing History and Ourselves, all of us are challenged to better people.” Congratulations Sarah and Chris!!! Our thanks to you both for what you’ve given our students.

Grade 5,6,7 End of the Year Fun Family Picnic – Wednesday, June 13th

Wednesday, June 13, evening, Grade 5,6,7 th grade students and their families are invited to celebrate their time at G&P at a family picnic in the G&P Cafeteria & Courtyard. All the details will come via flyer. If you're interested in volunteering at this event, please contact Family Liaison Judy Amendola at jamendola@cpsd.us or 617-349-6577 x115.

Our thanks to all those who have donated to the Camp Fund across the year

Thanks to your generosity, summer camp for a number of Graham & Parks students has been sponsored in part by the G&P Camp Fund. These children will now have the opportunity to enjoy a productive summer experience both academically and socially.

Many Thanks!

Many thanks to parents Sun-Joo Shin and Henry Smith from Emily Moore's classroom for their wonderful help in organizing our Leveled Book Room. Sun-Joo and Henry have put in many, many hours to organize and document the books we use for our guided reading groups. This has made it easy for teachers to match the right books with the right students. If anyone is interested in helping with the Book Room next year, let Kathy Greeley know.

Staffing Updates

Sarah Fiarman expects to be able to announce all new hires soon, probably within the upcoming week.

GreenStreets Walk/Ride Day

Friday, June 15, 8:00 – 8:25AM, Front lobby: Give the family car and the planet a break by walking or riding the last Friday of the month. Show your Walk/Ride Day hand stamp in one of the dozens of local stores displaying the Green Streets logo to get discounts. Visit www.gogreenstreets.org for a listing of participating stores, and to click “Raffle & Check-in” for more tangible rewards.

Room 106 End of the year Author's Breakfast

Monday, June 11, 8:15-9:15 AM, Room 106: Bring a dish to share! Come see our Insect Research, Poems and published books!

Grade 3 Proudly Presents: "Our Habitat: Cambridge" Curriculum Breakfast and Celebration

Thursday, June 14, 8:15-9:45 AM, G & P Library: Join us as we celebrate students' work on the learning expedition: "Our Habitat: Cambridge." We will be sharing "Cambridge Lives," our oral history project, as well as research about animals that are native to Cambridge and student books featuring maps and articles about Cambridge.

Last Chance to Buy G&P T-shirts and Aprons This Year!

There's still time to get your G&P T-Shirt before school is out! We're running low on Kid sizes, so don't delay. Plenty of adult shirts left. Aprons, too. T-Shirts and Aprons make great gifts for teachers and staff, siblings, cousins, grandparents, and you and your kid! Kid sizes (top row) are \$12; Adult sizes (bottom row) are \$15; and Aprons (hanging on the side) are \$12. Checks can be made out to Friends of Graham and Parks and put in the lock-box attached to the stand. Cash is welcome, also.

If you don't see the size or color you want, contact Judy Weiss at judyw21@comcast.net or 617-256-4163.

New Furniture Fund Established for Teachers' Lounge

The G&P Teachers' Lounge Upgrade is almost complete! The room has been cleaned and painted, and there is art work up on the walls. The final piece is to replace the ratty old folding chairs that are being held together with tape with brand-new comfortable and attractive chairs, and to upgrade some of the other furniture in the room. A G&P Teachers' Lounge New Furniture Fund has been established with the goal of raising \$1,000 before the end of the school year to refurnish the lounge! What better way to let our wonderful teachers and staff know how much we value them and appreciate their work with our children, than by giving them nice, new chairs to sit on!?

Contribute whatever you can. No amount is too small (or too big)! It's easy. Look for the Teachers' Lounge New Furniture Fund Donation Box in the Lobby. Tax-deductible checks may be made payable to Friends of Graham and Parks and either placed in the box or mailed to Friends of G&P, G&P School, 44 Linnaean St., Cambridge, MA 02138. Please write 'Furniture Fund' on your check.

In addition to the 16 folding chairs, we are looking for 2 end tables, a comfy chair, a long folding table, and a small floor cabinet for the bathroom. IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THESE ITEMS AND WOULD LIKE TO DONATE THEM, let Judy Weiss know (judyw21@comcast.net or 617-256-4163). Please contact Judy Weiss for additional information.

DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS IS JUNE 11TH.

LAST CALL to Pick Up LOST & FOUND ITEMS

It's time to come in and collect any items you may be missing! The Lost & Found items remaining after June 18th will be brought to a charity organization. The Lost & Found is located in the Avon Street lobby.

Planning for September 2012: Innovation Agenda Updates

Innovation Agenda Update, June 2012, submitted by the G&P Steering Committee

Many thanks to all who attended our community meeting last month, *What's Up JK – 5 for School Year 2012-2013*. It was a lively and productive gathering!

Approximately 40 parents and guardians gathered in the library to hear updates from Sarah Fiarman about the changes we'll experience this fall. Primarily:

- The addition of three new Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) classrooms that will join our existing three SEI classrooms.
- The addition of two language-based learning disabilities classrooms.

It was very gratifying to hear the universal interest expressed by parents about how to welcome our new community members and make them feel included in the school fabric. We shared ideas about how to do that, and we also discussed important G & P values and traditions that we'd like to continue and strengthen as we move into this new era.

There are several parent-led committees that need new volunteers, and we encourage you to consider giving your talents and interests to one of these:

- Parent Council
- Friends of G & P
- Welcoming Committee/Family Cultural Exchange Program (FECP)
- Garden and Compost Committee
- Translation Pool
- G & P Arts Magazine, The Mural/Desen sou Mi

Thanks to those who have already expressed a willingness to join in these committees!

More detailed notes of the meeting will be forthcoming before the end of the school year.

One other important note: There is a vital need for parents to help teachers pack up and move their classrooms the week of June 11th, June 18th and later to help unpack in the mid-summer. Any and all help will be greatly appreciated! Contact Mary-Ann at ma.matyas@comcast.net or call 617-945-5462.

Library News

THE BOOK FAIR IS COMING SOON!

Tuesday through Friday, June 5 through June 8, 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM Tue., Wed. & Thu., 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM Thursday, Fri. Family night is Thursday, 6:00 – 8:00 PM. Our annual book fair is June 5 - 8, including a Family Night with Refreshments on June 7th. This is a great way to build students' excitement about reading as well as being a major fundraiser for our school library. Details on the library blog: <http://grahamandparkslibrary.edublogs.org>. You can help! Volunteer, buy books, contribute baked goods for Family Night, or donate to the "Random Acts of Kindness Fund" to help low-income students get books. See you at the book fair!

LIBRARY BOOKS DUE SOON!

It's time to return your child's library books! 7th and 8th graders' books are due June 1st. JK-6th graders' books are due June 8th. Please contact Ann in the library if your child's book is lost. Thank you!!!

Stop the Summer Slide!

Summer is an exciting time for kids and families. It is a time to get outside, spend time with families and friends, and have a change of routine. Even during this break from school, however, kids can still be learning! In fact, students who continue to use their minds well during the summer return to school with a real advantage—they've beaten the Summer Slide! On the other hand, students who do not read or practice math skills can lose two to three months in their achievement. These students often come back to school and have a hard time keeping up with their schoolwork.

We are launching a campaign to STOP THE SUMMER SLIDE! What can you do to help? It is simple. Set up a daily schedule so your child reads 20-30 minutes and does 15 minutes of math.

For reading, we recommend that each child set a goal to read at least 6 books. It's important that your child chooses a "just right" book (not too easy, but not too hard) and it be one s/he enjoys. Summer reading should be fun! In addition, students should keep a record of their reading. Teachers will be sending a summer reading "contract" Teachers will be doing a variety of activities with their classes based on students' summer reading.

Math is important, too. Just 15 minutes a day of math practice can help to maintain and strengthen the gains students made over the school year! At the end of the year, families will get a Summer Math Learning Packet that includes directions for some fun games and a math calendar that will help you plan fun activities throughout the summer.

As a parent, your help is essential to our Stop the Summer Slide Campaign! Remember, the key to success in reading and math is enjoyment and practice. Have a safe, healthy, and happy summer break, everyone.

Look in your child's progress reports for more tips: *Help Your Child Become a Reading Star, and Math is Everywhere*

Our Reading and Math Coaches, Claire Dahill and Kathy Greeley will provide families with Learning Packet that includes directions for some fun games and a math calendar that will help you plan fun activities throughout the summer.