



What's Up @ G&P

October 2011

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 list serves:

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/ELA 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

September 20, 2011

Dear Families,

I am thrilled to announce that we are about to launch our second year of the Family Cultural Exchange Project (FCEP)! This project, started last year by parents and enthusiastically supported by teachers and participating families, is a wonderful institution in our school.

The FCEP matches international families at our school with domestic families for a two-way cultural exchange. Over the course of the school year, the families agree to get together at least 2 times outside of school. Most families initially meet each other at our International Potluck, which is a wonderful celebration of the rich cultural diversity at Graham and Parks. At last year's potluck, two men ran into each other and realized they had known each other 20 years earlier in their native Ethiopia and only reconnected here through their children all being at our school. Their laughter rang out through the cafeteria!

Don't miss this opportunity to meet another family, learn about the similarities and differences between your culture and theirs (especially how schools are the same and different), and to strengthen the overall sense of interconnectedness at our school.

Look for a flyer going home within a week. Or send your interest right away to Joyce Majewski (parent of a fourth grader) at 617-868-2032 or jmajewski@hbs.edu. Be sure to include any languages you speak and the grades of your children.

Warmly,

Sarah

G&P Calendar and Highlights

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

October

- **URGENT CALL for OUTSTANDING Required Forms** – we need your emergency cards and other info to keep students safe! **Please bring forms to HOME ROOM TEACHERS tomorrow!**
- Monday, Sept. 26: 6:00 – 8:00 PM - CSAG (City-wide School Advisory Group) meeting, Martin Luther King Jr. school
- Saturday, Oct. 1: 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM **CitySprouts Festival**, Fletcher Maynard Academy, 225 Windsor St.
- Saturday, Oct. 1: 10 AM - **CRLS Cambridge Rindge & Latin High School Ribbon Cutting Ceremony**
For more information visit www.cambridgema.gov
- Tuesday, Oct. 4: 6:00 – 8:00 PM - **Steering Committee Sponsored COMMUNITY MEETING** (parents and staff), G&P Cafeteria. G&P Planning Meeting for Sept. 2012, purpose is to select representatives to Vassal Lane Upper School Transition Committee and to organize G&P Committees. Please RSVP for pizza and childcare via this link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JXVFRY5>
- Wednesday, Oct. 5: **Steering Committee Parent Candidates declare intent**
- **Monday, Oct. 10: NO SCHOOL - Columbus Day**
- Wednesday, October 12, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM - **Regular Steering Committee Meeting**, First floor conference room. Childcare by advance appointment. Please contact Judy by 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 3 at jamendola@cpsd.us or 617-349-6577 x115.
- Saturday, Oct. 15: **G&P Yard Sale** – details to come via flyers
- **Wednesday, Oct. 19: EARLY RELEASE DAY, Dismissal at 12:25 PM**
- Wednesday, Oct. 19:
 - **Parent Candidate Statements due by noon**
 - **Vassal Lane Upper School Transition Committee Kick-off Meeting**, time & place to be determined.
- Friday, Oct. 21: 8:30 AM - **Friends of Graham & Parks Fundraising Meeting**, G&P lobby. New members welcome!
- Thursday, Oct. 27: **Parent Candidate Statements posted**
- Friday, Oct. 28:
 - **GreenStreets Walk-Ride Day**
 - 3:00 – 5:30 PM – **G&P October Fest: Fundraiser** to support the Graduating Class of 2012. Games, face painting, costume parade and food. All families are welcome.

Field Trips and Room Activities

As of September 20. Any changes or additions will come directly from the classroom teachers.

- Thursday, Oct. 6 – Junior High to Arnold Arboretum

Looking Ahead

- **Monday, Nov. 7: NO SCHOOL – Eid Al Adha**
- Tuesday, Nov. 8: **Election Day**, Gym is polling place
- Wednesday, Nov. 9: **School picture make-up day**
- **Friday, Nov. 11: NO SCHOOL – Veterans Day**
- Wednesday, Nov. 16: 6:30 – 7:30 PM, Courtyard/Cafeteria: **World Foods/FCEP International Dinner Event**
- **Thursday, Nov. 17 – EARLY RELEASE DAY – Dismissal at 12:25**
- **Wednesday, Nov. 23: EARLY RELEASE DAY for Thanksgiving Break, Dismissal at 12:25 PM**
- **Thursday, Nov. 24, Friday Nov. 25: No School – Thanksgiving Day**
- Friday, Nov. 25: **GreenStreets Walk-Ride Day**

- *Monday, Dec. 26 through Monday, Jan. 2: No School – Winter Break*

G&P Happenings

Community Sign In Procedure

Our school doors are open during drop-off and dismissal times each day. At other times of the day, the school doors are locked and those entering the building need to come in through the front door and use a buzzer system.

After people enter the building, it is important for everyone – parents, visitors, guest teachers, babysitters – to sign in at the office. We have been inconsistent in our practice of this routine recently and we are asking everyone to help us reinstate it. We need to know who is in the building; signing in helps us do this.

Thank you for your help with the routines that help our school run smoothly and safely.

Backpack Express Newsletters

In order to reduce paper consumption, paper copies of this newsletter will only be sent home with the youngest child of each family. Classroom notices will still be sent home with each child in the class.

Steering Committee Community Update, October 2011

Welcome back to a new school year! We hope the transition from summer vacation to school has been smooth for you all. Here are a few updates about what's been going on with respect to planning for September 2012.

On June 27th, the G& P Steering Committee met with the School Councils of the Haggerty and Tobin schools. Parents, teachers and other community members of our Triad also participated in this meeting. After introductions, we broke out into small groups to discuss our visions for the Vassal Lane Upper School. It was a great way to start the formal planning process. Notes from this meeting are posted on the new Vassal Lane Upper School yahoo group. See the link pasted below to join.

Please read the letter from the Vassal Lane Upper School Triad principals, sent home separately via hard copy and email, which outlines the next steps in the upper school planning process. In short, there will be a Vassal Lane Upper School Transition Committee, which will focus on preparations for September 2012 at the new Upper School. We are also creating G & P-focused committees to help our school prepare for the changes we will experience at Linnaean Street. Please consider serving on one of these committees.

The Cambridge City-wide School Advisory Group (CSAG) has been active as well. The Governance Committee met over the summer to draft the organization's by-laws and further articulate the group's mission. Mary-Ann Matyas and Yogesh Gajjar are G& P's representatives; however, all meetings are open to the public.

A note of thanks to all families who responded to the Steering Committee parents' request to reach out to School Committee members in support of each Upper School's ability to consider teaching English Language Arts and Social Studies using a humanities model. To date, there has been no decision on the issue, but we continue to monitor this and other Innovation Agenda-related items.

To read more about the Innovation Agenda and the Implementation Plan, please refer to the Cambridge Public School's website, <http://www2.cpsd.us/>

To reach the Graham and Parks Steering Committee, please use this e-mail address:
gpsteering@googlegroups.com.

To subscribe to the new Vassal Lane Upper School group: e-mail VassalLane-subscribe@yahooglegroups.com

Regular Steering Committee Meeting Dates for 2011

All regular Steering Committee meetings run from 6 pm to 8 pm in the first floor conference room. Meetings are open to all. Childcare by advance reservation the day prior. Contact Judy at jamendola@cpsd.us or 617-349-6577 x115 by 10:00 AM the day prior to the meeting.

Wednesday, October 12th: Steering Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 3rd: Steering Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 8th: Steering Committee Meeting

Thursday, January 12th, 2012: Steering Committee Meeting (new SC is sworn in)

News From Friends of Graham & Parks Fundraising

Meeting on Friday, 10/21, 8:30 am, meet in lobby. New members always welcome!

Wrapping paper sale kicking off at end of September. Look for materials in backpacks.

Yard Sale - save the date - Saturday, 10/15.

Announcing Endless Fruit & Vegetables for students who purchase a school lunch!

CPSD FOOD SERVICES is happy to encourage students to eat more fruits and vegetables by offering students as many servings as they would like when they purchase a school lunch. Please tell your students and encourage them to enjoy an extra apple or helping of veggies!

Introducing Graham & Park's new Garden Coordinator, Sarah Rund

We are very pleased to announce that Sarah Rund has joined CitySprouts as our new garden coordinator for the Graham & Parks School. Sarah's hours at G&P will be Mondays 8:00 AM to 12:00 noon and Tuesday afternoons 12:45 to 5:15 PM.

Sarah received her Masters of Science in Ecological Teaching and Learning from Lesley University in February 2011. Sarah has taught children in a variety of environmental settings including most recently as a youth crew leader at the Charles River Youth Conservation Corps. We're delighted to have Sarah join our staff. After September 1st, she can be reached at srund@citysprouts.org.

Sign up for CitySprouts Festival 10/1/11

Every fall, CitySprouts holds an annual event to show what the CitySprouts program is all about and to celebrate the school garden harvest in Cambridge Public Schools. The focus is on good food by kids and for kids, and our audience includes families, teachers, principals and neighbors. This year, CitySprouts Festival will be held Saturday October 1st from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM and will be hosted by Fletcher Maynard Academy.

The Festival will feature delicious food, rockin' music by Connect Three and tours of the FMA garden. CitySprouts Summer Interns from all of the schools will be doing cook-offs ala Iron Chef with yummy tastings for the crowd. The Mayor will present certificates to the interns at 1:30 PM.

We are very excited about this year's Festival! We are looking for parents to sign up for a short shift with their school table at the Festival, hosted this year by Fletcher Maynard Academy.

G&P will be teamed up with parents from Haggerty and Tobin. Our activity will be pumpkin decorating. CitySprouts will provide all of the supplies that you need for your activity. All you need to do is show up for your shift and have fun!

To sign up for a two hour shift, please visit signup genius at www.SignUpGenius.com/go/citysprouts1

Linnaean Community School

- Zumba – Thursdays, 5:45 - 6:45 PM, G&P Gymnasium. Families and individuals join us for a fun and gentle workout--ZUMBA! October 6 - December 15. \$10/person per class, \$15/family per class. Instructor: Cambridge resident Jess Perkins
- Adult Knitting Class, 5 Mondays beginning Oct. 3. 6:00 PM, G&P Cafeteria. Learn the basics of knitting or further develop your skills. Instructor: Talia Lefton Fee: \$50
- Preteen/Teen Babysitting Certificate, Oct. 3, 17, 24. 6:00 – 8:00 PM, G&P Cafeteria. Earn Babysitting Certification. Instructor: Michele Dupras Fee: \$70
- Fall Enrichment Program. Linnaean Community School Fall Enrichment Program still enrolling for some classes. Offerings include Study Hall, Soccer, Life in Ancient Pompeii, Juko Club, Chemistry, Fencing, French, Dungeons & Dragons, Latin American Cooking, Kung Fu, Math, Creative Movement, Sculpey, Drumming, Chess, Jamnastics, Knitting & Gamemaker Whizards-Robotics.

For more information on Linnaean Community School activities contact Mary Ellen Breen at 617-349-6267 or mbreen@cambridgema.gov.

Tips for Reading and Math at Home

Being able to do mathematics in your head is important. Have kids try adding (or multiplying) the numbers on the license plate on the car in front of you. Share ideas about how you reached your answer.

Practice make perfect. That's true whether you are shooting baskets, playing the piano, making cookies, or reading books. Just reading independently (or reading with your child) 15 minutes each day will help develop your child's reading muscle. Try setting aside a regular time for reading every day of the week.

Of Interest Outside G&P

Meet Award-Winning Author and Illustrator Kadir Nelson!

Friday, October 14, 3:30 PM, Cambridge Public Library, Main Library Lecture Hall (Level L2), 449 Broadway - Kadir Nelson's paintings invite us right into the stories of famous and not-so-famous people. Two of his books, *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led her People to Freedom*, and *Henry's Freedom Box*, received Caldecott Honor awards. *We Are The Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball* won a Coretta Scott King Author Award. Join us to discover how the author creates these wonderful books! Attendance is free, but signup is required. This program is for 9 year-olds and older. Please call 617-349-4409 to register or for more information. Books will be available for purchase and autographing.

Oops Ma! Songs and Stories of Family Life with Judith Black

Wednesday, October 19, 6:30 PM, O'Neill Branch Library, 70 Rindge Avenue - Enjoy a hilarious set of stories reflecting the trials and tribulations of a family's daily rituals. We all know those early morning wake-ups, mealtime challenges and endless debates about how many books to read at bedtime! Join the fun! Judith Black has been a teller of tales for over 30 years, has recorded 13 DVD's for adults and children, and was chosen as the "Gold Medal Family Entertainer of the Year" by the Boston Parents Paper. Attendance is free. For ages 6 to 96! For more information, call 617-349-4409

Chinese Immigrant Children: Their Developmental Challenges, with Dr. Jin Li

Sunday, October 23, 2:00 – 3:30 PM, Cambridge Public Library, Main Library Whale Room (3rd floor), 449 Broadway - Chinese immigrant children face hidden challenges even though they may seem to do well in school. Learn more! Dr. Jin Li is Associate Professor of Education and Human Development at Brown University. Her research with Chinese, Taiwanese, Chinese American and European American children examines the ways that our cultures shape what our children believe about learning and what they accomplish. Attendance is free, but registration is required. This program is for adults. Please call 617-349-4409 to register or for more information.

Basic Rights in Special Education Workshop

Thursday, October 27, 6:30 PM, Cambridge Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Avenue - across from City Hall - FCSN Presenter and Special Education Advocate Ginny Brennan returns to present this annual training for families. This workshop provides families with an introduction to their rights and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Massachusetts Special Education Law and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It is designed to help parents learn how to be effective partners with their child's school to decide the child's eligibility for special education, and to plan, make decisions and monitor their child's progress in school.