



May 15, 2017

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# Link Letter

## Principally Speaking

### Help Needed May 20 & 21

We are a stop on the Heritage Hill Tour of Homes this coming weekend. If you would like to help, please contact me: robinsonj@grcdc.org.

### Parking on May 22 & 23

On May 22 and 23, our family lot will be closed in order for us to facilitate our next step with the greenspace, the rain garden installation. Our neighbor, Mary Free Bed, has graciously agreed to open their lot on Cass Ave. on May 22 & 23. Thanks for your kindness and consideration as we share our neighbor's lot, and work with each other with our space modifications those days. This is an exciting next step in the greenspace project. Thanks for your help in making it happen.

### Thank You

Thank you to our friends at the Junior League, and the Family Team members, who helped us remove our retired garden boxes last Tuesday. Thank you also to the Family Team members and staff who helped build Discovery A's vision Saturday.

From Discovery A:

"Our project focus has lead us to create need-fulfilling gardens for four animals in our ecosystem here at the GRCDC; bats, butterflies, worms and birds. The students worked in learning groups to research the needs and connections between these animals and were given an amazing opportunity to interview the head children's gardener at the Frederik Meijer Gardens.

We will be building and installing four garden beds, one for each animal group on the front lawn. Each learning group is working to build prototype, need-fulfilling gardens that incorporate more elements than the basic needs. The child-designed gardens will be installed in the beds once the M-step testing is complete and we have access to the front lawn again."



## Mind Meets Music App

Mind Meets Music has released an exciting new FREE app available to our students! The Mind Meets Music App (M<sup>3</sup> App) is designed to improve literacy skills and extend the reach of the Mind Meets Music program from classroom to home. The M<sup>3</sup> App is available for iPads, iPhones and all Android (Google) devices. Dello the Dino takes your child through four levels of play, each one a different game with varying degrees of difficulty. Helping your child play these games can increase their success in building upon their reading skills. You can find the M<sup>3</sup> App on Apple's App Store and the Google Play App Store. For more information about on the M<sup>3</sup> App please go to the Mind Meets Music website <http://mindmeetsmusic.com/about-the-app/>.

That's all for this week. As always, thanks for reading, Be Kind, Keep Discovering, and have a great week!

*Coach*

John Robinson, Principal/Executive Director/Superintendent  
[robinsonj@grcdc.org](mailto:robinsonj@grcdc.org)

Please arrange for your child to arrive at school between 7:45—8:00 am. Please sign your child in at the office if arrival is after 8:05 am.

Dismissal is 3:15 pm M, T, Th, F and 1:10 pm on Wednesdays

## Family Team Corner

The 2nd Annual Craft & Rummage Sale is this Saturday, May 20th from 10-4pm. We still have spots available for crafters & vendors. If you were thinking of having a yard sale this year, we're a great space to get some cash for your gently used items! Email the Family Team at [grcdcfamilyteam@gmail.com](mailto:grcdcfamilyteam@gmail.com) to sign up. Come and shop too! We'll have booth's with jewelry, clothing, handmade lotions & bath bombs, baked goods and much more!

It's Yearbook Shout Out Time! We're accepting shout outs until May 19th in the Office & Saturday the 20th at the Family Team table at the Craft & Rummage Sale. Only \$10 a shout out for your student! We're also taking ads for the Yearbook until May 19th. Do you have a business or company that you would like to promote? Email us at [grcdcfamilyteam@gmail.com](mailto:grcdcfamilyteam@gmail.com) to place your ad. All proceeds raised from Shout Outs and Ad Sales go towards free yearbooks for each student at the GRCDC!

The last First Friday Food of the school year for our teachers and staff will be Friday, June 2nd. Our theme is Take Out! Please click on the link to sign up and thank you for all of your donations and love you've shown our teachers this year! <http://signup.com/go/YkeQvhl>

Co Steward Update - "Stella" aka , Sarah M. Cooper, mom of Laura in Discovery B & Alex in Discovery F, will be joining Janelle Gaudet as Co Steward of the Family Team! Sarah will be going by the nickname "Stella" so she is not confused with the GRCDC Pedagogista & Instructional Leader, Sarah Cooper.

Thank you for your wonderful support of our most recent fundraisers!

## Calendar

The calendar also available at [grcdc.org](http://grcdc.org)

ONGOING EVENTS:	
Thru 5/26	M-Step Testing – K & 3rd grades are testing 5/15-5/19
COMING UP THIS WEEK:	
5/15	Girls on the Run M/F Team until 5:00 PM
5/16	Bake Sale for Girls on the Run, 3:10-4:45 PM * New time * Girls on the Run T/Th Team until 5:00 PM
5/17	Early Release Day, Dismissal at 1:10 PM Booth Reservations for Craft and Rummage sale DUE
5/18	Girls on the Run T/Th Team until 5:00 PM Minecraft Club, 5:30—7:00 PM
5/19	Afternoon Meeting, 3:00 PM Girls on the Run M/F Team until 5:00 PM Yearbook Shout Out and Sponsorships DUE
5/20	GRCDC Craft and Rummage Sale, 10:00 AM—4:00 PM Girls on the Run 5K @ 8:30 AM, Calder Plaza
5/20 & 21	Heritage Hill Tour of Homes, Volunteers Wanted!
EVENTS HAPPENING IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS:	
5/22 & 23	Rain Garden Installation — no parking in family lot for 2 days. Mary Free Bed lot will be open to GRCDC Families
5/22	Girl Scouts—Brownies @ GRCDC 6:00 PM Daisy's @ Ah-Nab-Awen Park, 6:00 PM
5/23	Rain Garden Installation, Help Needed: <a href="http://signup.com/go/wlEOjuK">http://signup.com/go/wlEOjuK</a> IMMERSE Family Night @ Public Museum, 6:00—8:00 PM
5/29	Memorial Day Break— NO SCHOOL
6/7	End of Year Celebration, 5:00—7:00 PM
6/9	Fifth Grade Camp Out (overnight at Camp Rockford)
6/12	Fifth Grade Graduation, 2:00 PM
6/14	Last Day of School, Early Release Day, Dismissal at 1:10 PM
6/21	Last day for teachers to mail report cards

**Grand Rapids Nutrition Center** The full menu is available on our website: <http://grcdc.org/be-connected/link-letters/>

Breakfast (\$1.50):	Lunch (\$2.75):	Milk only: \$0.50
T—Mini maple waffles	Ultimate beef nachos	
W—Cheesy omelet	Turkey & chese on ciabatta bread	
Th—Sausage gravy breakfast	Chicken drumstick	
F—Pancake wrap	Italian dunkers	
M 5/22—Turkey sausage bites	Chicken nuggets	

<b>Breakfast time:</b>	7:30AM—7:50 AM
<b>Discovery A &amp; B</b>	Lunch 11:55 AM—12:15 PM Recess 12:15—12:40 PM
<b>Discovery C &amp; D</b>	Lunch 10:55 AM—11:15 AM Recess 11:15—11:40 AM
<b>Discovery E &amp; F</b>	Lunch 11:25 AM—11:45 AM Recess 11:45 AM—12:10 PM

## The Philosophy by Sarah Cooper

As a Reggio Emilia inspired school in America, we are provoked by Italian practice and must translate it to fit our context. Documentation, one of the Reggio Emilia principles, challenges adults to document student thinking by collecting artifacts in written, verbal and visual formats in order to facilitate meaningful project work. Take a glimpse at the board outside Discovery B as it holds evidence of student thinking. In the picture below, Taylor shares initial theories about the rainforest and why she’s interested in it. From this work teachers observe that children have prior knowledge about what lives in the rainforest ecosystem.

To help all of our students reach their fullest potential, documentation can also be used to assess understandings of learning objectives. Many assume that assessments are separate or outside the scope of the Reggio Emilia approach, this is not the case at all. Practice in Reggio Emilia and best practice in the United States highlights the importance of frequent assessment - not just tests like the MSTEP or those that come at the end of a unit. Masterful teachers continually observe, check for understanding and use their findings to assess their own practice and adjust instruction. It is this type of reflective teaching practice and assessment that informs how student needs are matched with appropriate instruction. Brenda Fyfe, a Reggio educator from St. Louis, describes a growing trend in the relationship between assessment and documentation: “[Many are] interpreting documentation as part of their daily work, rather than only at the end of a unit, project or extended period of time.”



Next year our teachers will engage in professional learning committees on a biweekly basis. It is a structured, collaborative practice which offers grade level teams opportunities to reflect on student work (writing and science, in our case) and continually refine instruction and assessment strategies to reach learning goals for all children. I am confident that it will push our Reggio Emilia inspired documentation practices and increase student achievement. Through the Reggio Emilia principles, we aim to meet the needs of all children and engage them in meaningful learning opportunities. I look forward to sharing the outcomes of this new practice next year.

Contact me with any questions!  
Sarah Cooper, Pedagogista [coopesar@grcdc.org](mailto:coopesar@grcdc.org)

## Save the Date

On Wednesday, June 7 is our End of the Year Celebration! It runs from 5-7 pm here at school. Classrooms will be open, year long project documentation will be on display and a DJ will be providing music. The End of the Year Celebration is a wonderful opportunity for current and new families to visit the school and see the culmination of the yearlong studies. See you there!

## Central Office Updates

- **Rain Garden Installation—VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!** We are installing the rain garden all day on May 23 with the help of the Plaster Creek Stewards. They will guide us through installation during school hours and Discovery D students will be cycling through to help too. But we are in need of volunteers to help plant as well as spread mulch and soil. Sign up for one hour sifits to join the work: <http://signup.com/go/wIEOjuK>
- **Discovery Care Summer Camp** is a great child care option for the summer. For more details, follow this link: <http://bit.ly/2p9OGqj>
- **This week, the M-Step testing continues for 3rd grade and Kindergarten students this week.** Looking for ways to support your test taker? Check out the Link Letter article by Sarah Cooper from March 20th (page 2) <http://bit.ly/2odIKZI> and this resource from the Michigan Department of Education: <http://bit.ly/2oXQF05>
- We have **applied for a waiver** with the Michigan Department of Education to **start school on August 28th** next school year. For more information see a past Link Letter article about this (page 2): <http://bit.ly/2p9OGqj>

## Community Corner

Thanks to the Museums for All Initiative, families who qualify for EBT cards can enjoy the Grand Rapids Children’s Museum for only \$1.75. Entry is for up to 4 people per card. The Museums for All Initiative’s goal is to ensure that every child and family has access to a high-quality children’s museum experience. For hours and more info about the GR Children’s Museum, visit their website: <http://www.grcm.org/>

**IMMERSE Family Night** is for students (& their families) who participated in the IMMERSE program this school year. Students in Discoveries C, D E and F all participated in IMMERSE this year. Work from GRCDC students will be on display and families will enjoy free admission to the museum on Tuesday, May 23rd from 6:00—8:00 PM.

**The 2nd Annual Family Team Craft & Rummage Sale** is on Saturday, May 20th from 10:00 AM—4:00 PM. Several students and GRCDC families will be participating as vendors. There will be all types of vendors selling things like homemade soaps, clothing, jewelry and more! Please come out and support our school community!

Please arrange for your child to arrive at school between 7:45 - 8:00 am. Please sign your child in at the office if arrival is after 8:05 am. Dismissal is 3:15 pm M, T, Th, F and 1:10 pm on Wednesdays