

GFS PTA NEWS

Learning Together | Working Together | Playing Together

Back to School Night

GFS Back to School Night is Thursday, September 1, from 5:30 - 8:30 PM.

Attendance is mandatory for all parents; for that reason, childcare will be provided for those unable to make their own arrangements. MANDATORY is an authoritative word, but an accurate reflection of the importance of the evening to getting the year off to a good start. Back to School Night is packed with important information: First, we'll get an overview of the year. PTA Tribe Assignments will be announced and each group will meet briefly. You'll be able to pay your PTA dues, making you a voting member (everyone is always welcome at PTA meetings). Break-out meetings for each classroom will let us all know expectations and norms and provide a forum for questions.

Watch Parent Square for more information, including childcare sign-up.

See you there!



We Are the PTA

We're trying something new this year, in an attempt to make communication between families, the PTA officers, tribes/tribe leaders, and the teachers even better: a monthly newsletter designed to highlight current and upcoming events, provide resources for families, and generally make the operations of the PTA as transparent and engaging as possible. After all, we are all the GFS PTA!

Goleta Family School is a cooperative learning environment. Parents have played a vital role in carrying out the curricular goals of the program since the very beginning. In the regular school programs, parent volunteers are welcome. At GFS, parent volunteers, both in the classroom and on committees (tribes) administered through the PTA, are essential. In that sense, we really are all the PTA, learning together, working together, playing together.

It's going to be a great year.

Leslie Hogan - 2016-17 PTA President

P.S. If you haven't already, get your summer packet turned in!

Tribes

You hear a lot about Tribes at Goleta Family School. The PTA has "tribes" instead of committees; the school shares parent provided "Tribes' Treats" each day at snack time; there are student tribes within classrooms and still other student tribes made up of children from each of the three classrooms.

What's this all about?

For many years, GFS has utilized the **Tribes Learning Community** curriculum to help foster a sense of community within the individual classrooms and the entire student body. The Tribes curriculum is designed to foster a positive school and classroom environment, with the goal of improving behavior and learning, and give students the tools to work collaboratively.

Four agreements are honored: attentive listening, appreciation/ no put downs, mutual respect, and the right to pass. If you hear a teacher say she's "waiting for attentive listening," that's what that's about.

Students also learn a set of collaborative skills for their group work. The focus there is on how to help each other work on tasks, set goals and solve problems, monitor and assess progress, and celebrate achievements.

For more information, explore <http://www.tribes.com>

Volunteer Opportunities

While the GFS PTA Tribes and classroom hours form the bulk of the volunteer workload for GFS families, there are several other vitally important opportunities to serve. Much appreciation to all who have already committed for the year, making this section mostly informational.

First, we have the **School Site Council Representative**. The School Site Council is a group of parents and teachers charged with making decisions about the allocation of resources campus wide. Last year, the group also worked with Bridget Braney in crafting a homework policy that would affect the entire campus. Having a GFS parent and teacher on the committee ensured that the particular needs of our educational philosophy were acknowledged and met. This year, **Teri Briggs** is the teacher representative and **Tanya Genova** is the parent representative.

Another position is the **District Advisory Council Representative**. The Goleta District Advisory Council (DAC) is a group consisting of parent representatives from each of the district's nine schools. The DAC meets monthly each year at a different school site to hear District updates, provide input, and share information from the school sites. DAC meetings are open to parents and all members of the public. DAC Representatives generally serve for three years. **Beth Kanne-Casselmann** is the current DAC representative for Goleta Family School; she is beginning her second year in that role.

Rebekah Bardakos takes over this year as Treasurer of the GFS PTA, after a year of shadowing outgoing treasurer Brian Thompson. *Like all PTA officers, she may serve no more than two years in that capacity.* Rebekah will be working this year to identify her successor, so that person may also have a year of training. If you're interested, please let her know and if she asks you, please give it serious consideration.

Adrienne Demboski and **Sophie Spier** are in their second years as Vice President and Recording Secretary, respectively. This means that in the spring, when PTA elections come around, they will not be running for those positions. We will need to have new people on board, because our bylaws do not permit them to continue in those positions. Start thinking now about whether you'd like to step up, and be sure to talk with Adrienne or Sophie if you have questions about the responsibilities of those positions.

From time to time, other opportunities will arise, short or long(er) term. When that happens, we'll get the word out on Parent Square or in person, at one of the monthly PTA meetings.

Treasurer's Corner

Rebekah Bardakos - rjpeake@hotmail.com

Greetings GFS families! It's a pleasure to serve as your PTA Treasurer this year. As we kick off a new year, we wanted to touch on a few things financial: 1. The budget process and 2. Spending guidelines.

I. Budget Process. The mechanics of creating our budget starts with the PTA officers reviewing the prior year's revenue and expenditure trends, identifying multiyear expenses (if any), and planning for larger capital expenditures (computers, for example). We get valuable input from the teachers on what works, what doesn't, and what they envision as priorities and areas of focus for the year. In consultation with State PTA financial guidelines, reserves are reviewed, bearing in mind that "a PTA fundraises to exist, it does not exist to fundraise." We do maintain a reasonable reserve to help buffer the unexpected and smooth out the effect of large capital expenditures.

Each September, the first PTA meeting of the year includes a review of the budget to actual report from the prior year, as well as a review and approval of the current year's proposed budget. It's important to remember that a budget shouldn't constrain an organization and its endeavors—as the California PTA Toolkit aptly describes it, "The budget is a guide outlining expected income and expenditures." It's often said that a "budget tells a story," and this is certainly true of GFS: our budget "story" is one of honoring our philosophy by supporting dynamic opportunities for multi-age education via project base learning. Our teachers implement thoughtfully crafted curriculum, our parent organization supports our endeavors through contributions and fundraising, and our children enjoy opportunities to learn and grow through collaboration, all of which are reflected in our budget. Our budget includes our incredible field trips, supports outdoor education and stewardship, keeps our technology up to date and ready to meet our ever growing needs, and supports professional development for our amazing educators who brilliantly shepherd us all through this beautifully crafted, unique opportunity to learn and grow together, students and parents alike.

II. Spending guidelines. Here are a few helpful guidelines to keep in mind when making purchases on behalf of the school:

- Clearly communicate and collaborate with your teacher or Tribe leader regarding expectations: about how much should the cost of the item(s) be? Does the the item(s) you are requested to purchase need to be procured urgently, or in a few days: this may make the difference between a hefty delivery charge, or being able to take advantage of free shipping. Is this an item that needs to be purchased, or can it be borrowed/loaned?
- Spend money as if it were your own, using discretion and prudence.
- Generic brands can be great!
- Think creatively and remember to reduce-reuse-recycle: Great crafting supplies can be found at Art from Scrap, the clearance rack, or even the Dollar Store.
- Seek reimbursement in a timely fashion: Payment authorization forms will be made readily available, should include any justification for the expenditure (if you have an e-mail exchange with your teacher or Tribe leader about it, this will help us code it to the proper budget line item) and reimbursements will be reviewed and processed on a weekly basis. Be sure to save and submit your receipt(s).
- If in doubt, ask! Your Treasurer is always here to help and answer questions.

Upcoming Events, August and September

Wednesday, August 24

Parent Meet and Greet

8:20 - 8:45 AM, in the GFS area.

Kindergarten Pickup - 1:35 PM

Everyone else - 2:55 PM

Thursday Kindergarten - 1:35 PM

Thursday everyone else- 2:00 PM

EVERY Wednesday

Walk, Bike, Bus & Roll Day

Thursday, August 25

Meet and Greet with Felicia Roggero, Principal for GFS and Foothill

8:20 - 8:45 AM, in the GFS area.

Thursday, September 1

Back to School Night, 5:30 - 8:30 PM

Mandatory; childcare provided.

Monday, September 5

Labor Day Holiday. No School.

Tuesday, September 6

Parent Volunteers Start

Schedule to be determined with your classroom teacher(s).

Monday, September 12

PTA General Meeting, 6:30 - 8:30 PM

Location TBD

At this first meeting, among other things, we will review and approve the 2016-17 budget. Anyone may attend and join in the discussion, but only paid members may vote on the budget. We'll have membership information at Back to School night.

Saturday, September 17

Garden Work Day, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Let's all join together in getting the GFS garden in shape for the fall. It is a valuable outdoor classroom space, not only for gardening but for many other kinds of learning. There will be activities for all ages and abilities. Watch Parent Square Communications for more detailed information.

Friday, September 23

All School Restoration Day, during school hours

For the past several years, GFS students have been working to restore native plants and habitats to the park and creek located at the corner of Ribera and University. This is the first of several all-school restoration site days scheduled for 2016-17. Students and teachers will walk to the site, then weed, water, plant--whatever needs to be done. Not only will they continue important restoration work, but will develop relationships and trust that cut across the classrooms. Watch Parent Square communications for more detailed information, including any parent participation needs.