

Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Great River School. Don't forget to add [dkeefe@greatriverschool.org](mailto:dkeefe@greatriverschool.org) to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

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Engaging intellect, shaping character, building community.

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#### Future Events

2/1 New Student Lottery

2/4 GRS Honors Ben Moudry 9am-10am

2/7 Community Voices 6:30

2/16-2/17 No School

3/8 Community Voices

3/12-3/16 Spring Break

3/28 6:30 Board

#### MESSAGE FROM OUR HEAD OF SCHOOL, Christina Beck

Thanks to all who participated in a morning of visioning for our upcoming three year strategic plan. A collection of 25 students, faculty, board members and parent/guardians gathered with our facilitators from Heartland to work on three areas of strategic planning. Namely- facility, Montessori education and diversity. After deep listening, we were asked to generate questions, discover themes and ultimately make recommendations for the board to consider. Those include:

Operate in a facility that supports high quality Montessori education:  
Have a committee to oversee ongoing upkeep and renovations  
Dedicate time and resources to beauty and order  
Answer long term viability of site

Continue to develop and solidify a model of Montessori education:  
Define the size and configuration of GRS with a commitment to Montessori pedagogy  
Nurture alliances with local and national schools  
Continue to develop Montessori-trained faculty  
Support and increase opportunities for parent education  
Opportunities for students to demonstrate academic achievement  
Use observation to chart our course on micro and macro level

Increase and sustain our capacity to retain and support diversity among students, faculty, families and Board of Directors:  
Provide training in real differentiation  
Created focused and intentional time for faculty to differentiate curriculum  
Hire hands-on consultant 2x/year  
Keep a Promise Fellow; expand partnerships with tutors  
Support and tools to support skills/learning  
Plan for neighborhood outreach

The final product will be shared at the April 2012 Annual Meeting on 4/25/12.

#### COMPREHENSIVE TEST SCORE STATISTICS FOR GRS

The following information was summarized for our expansion affidavit. Over the past six years of testing, Great River School's overall scores have increased dramatically in both reading and math.

- Since the first year of testing in 2005-6, GRS's overall math scores on the state tests have increased from 49% proficient to 63% proficient. In comparison, during that same time period, state levels of overall proficiency decreased by 2% from 58% to 56%.
- In reading, GRS has a 90% proficiency rate overall, up 22 percentage points since its inception. Statewide scores are at 75% proficient; up only 3 percent since 2005-6.

A modest decrease in proficiency can be observed in some subjects from one year to the next, particularly in 7th and 8th grade. This can be attributed to the statistical variation in academic ability and test readiness that is beyond the control of the school as these students are new to us.

- In 2010-11, we note that while 11th grade math scores rose by 11% over the previous year, 7th and 8th grade math scores fell by 10%. State scores also fell by 11% in 7th grade and 5% in

## Meeting

4/4 Early Dismissal

4/5 -4/6 NO SCHOOL  
CONFERENCES

4/13 6:30 Coffee House

4/25 6pm Board  
Meeting

5/9 6:30 Board Meeting

5/12 \*\*\*\*\***GREAT  
EXTRAVAGANZA 4-  
7PM**\*\*\*\*\*5/17 Vocal Music  
Concert 7:30 pm

5/19 PROM 7-11pm

5/23 Instrumental  
Music Concert 7pm5/25 last day Semester  
2

5/28 - NO SCHOOL

5/29-6/2 A1 BIKE TRIP

5/29 SPRING  
INTENSIVES BEGIN6/6 LAST DAY OF  
SCHOOL NOON  
DISMISSAL

6/6 GRADUATION

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8th grade.

- In reading, 7th and 8th grade scores fell, but remain 20 percentage points above state averages and 89 and 91 percent respectively.
- While GRS science proficiency in 8th grade fell 10% between 2010 and 2011, it remains 14% above the state average. In 11th grade, proficiency levels were measured at 68%. Again, exceeding state averages; in this case by 14%.

The PLAN scores indicate positive growth in 10th graders since last year and scores in all subjects exceeding the national average. The EXPLORE was administered to 9th graders this year, but not to last year's ninth grade. The results again highlight scores exceeding the national average in all subjects.

**MARCH LUNCH MENUS**

March lunch menus are now available on the Great River Website. You can access them by going to <http://www.greatriverschool.org/> and clicking on the listing for lunch menus on the right hand side of the screen, or you can also click directly on this [link](#).

**Please be sure to have your orders in no later than Monday February 20th.** Thank you.

**STREP REMINDER**

Since our last notice on January 25th, we have had several more cases of strep throat reported in the GRS community. Symptoms may include headache, rash and/or sore throat.

Please continue to remind your students to:

- [wash hands frequently](#)
- [refrain from sharing food, drinks, utensils or make-up](#)

**Before returning to school, students should have completed at least 24 hours on antibiotics in the case of strep.**

Please report it to GRS if your child does test positive for strep. Thanks for your help in trying to avoid the spread of these illnesses.

**DONATION PICK UP NEEDED**

A 4' X 10' oval table has been generously donated to GRS. The table needs to be picked up in Golden Valley. If there is a parent or friend of GRS who has a truck that will accommodate the size, and is willing to pick it up, please contact Lydia McAnerney at 651-305-2780 ext 102, or by e-mail at [lmcanerney@greatriverschool.org](mailto:lmcanerney@greatriverschool.org)

**ST.MARY'S ADMISSIONS RECEPTION**

A chance to meet St. Mary's professors, current students and alumni to talk about the St. Mary's experience on **Sunday, Jan. 29th between 1-4 pm** (you may arrive and leave as you wish - it is open house style). The event will be at the Hilton Hotel in Bloomington, MN (3900 American Blvd. West, Bloomington, MN).

**STARS BASKETBALL UPDATE**

**Tuesday, January 31st**, the Stars travel to Edison High School in Minneapolis (700 22nd Ave. NE). JV starts at 5:30 and Varsity follows at 7 p.m.

**Friday, February 3rd**, the Stars travel to Eden Prairie to play the International School of Minnesota (6385 Beach Road). Game times are 5:30 and 7 p.m.  
Go Stars!

**RSVP REQUESTED: GRS HONORS BEN MOUDRY**

Join us on Saturday, February 4 to both honor Ben Moudry, and raise money to support the intensive Adolescent Montessori training this summer. We hope you will come to help us recognize the work Ben Moudry has done on behalf of GRS and for a brief presentation about the summer training.

Many hours of professional development over the past few years have been dedicated to Montessori pedagogy. Since the founding of Great River School eight years ago, six of its teachers have attended the Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies through the North American Montessori Teachers Association (NAMTA) in Cleveland, OH. This is the most comprehensive training available for Montessori teachers of adolescents. In the summer of 2012, all GRS teachers will have the opportunity to participate in an intensive adolescent training program developed in conjunction with NAMTA. This opportunity has never been available locally and represents a once in a lifetime opportunity for faculty from our school and other local initiatives to train together on a farm (Lake Country School's Land School) and locally to become more intimately familiar with the transformative and inspirational pedagogy of Montessori for adolescents.

On February 4, we will honor Ben Moudry, one of the founders of GRS and the current Montessori Director and A1 social studies guide, as an initiatory force in the creation of Great River School and in holding a vision for this training to happen.

David Kahn, our featured speaker, has been Executive Director of the North American Montessori Teachers' Association for more than thirty years. He has seventeen years of Montessori teaching experience, twelve of them as teaching principal at Ruffing Montessori School (Cleveland Heights, OH). Mr. Kahn was Founding Director of the Hershey Montessori

School adolescent program on the farm. He now serves as Founding Director of Montessori High School at University Circle (Cleveland, OH).

### A message from the MN Association of Charter Schools

On Tuesday, February 7, 2012, at 7:00 p.m., five of Minnesota's political parties (Constitution, Democratic- Farmer-Labor (DFL), Green, Independence and Republican) will hold precinct caucuses to begin the process of selecting legislative candidates and shaping public policy issues for this year's elections. It is an especially important year as all (67) state senators and (134) state legislators, as well as members of the U.S. House and one U.S. Senate seat are up for election.

Every person eligible to vote in the general election on November 6th and who resides in the precinct in which he or she is eligible to vote can attend and vote in precinct caucuses.

Precinct caucuses are grassroots democracy at the most elemental level - it is you and your neighbors discussing candidates and policies that will shape the future of our state and nation.

For more information about precinct caucuses and the location of your precinct caucus of the political party of your choice: <http://caucusfinder.sos.state.mn.us>

Remember - we cannot and will not have a "Government of the people, by the people and for the people," as President Lincoln eloquently described our nation over 150 years ago, if people (that means individual people) do not get involved in the process of choosing the government.

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### LECTURE AT BRAIN BALANCE

The Brain Balance learning center is sponsoring two lectures by Dr. Robert Melillo, a well know expert on childhood ADHD, Learning Disorders & High functioning Autism. He's the author of bestselling book "Disconnected Kids" and a fantastic and informative speaker.

Tues., 2/7 at 7pm: Woodbury Central Park

Wed., 2/8 at 7pm: Minnetonka Arts Center on 7

Please the Woodbury Center at 651.731.6163 with questions.

### POETRY OUT LOUD REGIONAL COMPETITION 2012

Please join students Gabe Dale-Gau, Megan Hobbs and Isaura Lira Greene at the **POETRY OUT LOUD Regional Competition**

WHEN: Thursday, FEBRUARY 9, 2012 at the

WHERE: Neighborhood House Theatre at Wellstone Center  
179 Robie Street East, St. Paul, MN 55107

There will be students performing from the following schools:

Community of Peace, St Paul

Eastview High School, Apple Valley

Eastview High School, Apple Valley  
 Great River School, St. Paul  
 Highland Park Senior High, St. Paul  
 STEP Academy, Inver Grove Heights  
 Twin Cities Academy High School, St. Paul  
 Woodbury High School, Woodbury

Parking: attached ramp, free; NOTE: Vehicles parked in El Burrito Mercado lot across the street will be towed!

### **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY - SPRING INTENSIVE - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

A GRS student is currently working with the Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity organization in creating a Spring Intensive oriented around the 'A Brush With Kindness' program it offers. In this Spring Intensive, students will work with some of the Habitat for Humanity staff in restoring a home in St. Paul for four days by repairing, painting, and possibly doing some minor landscaping at the site of the house.

We are in need of 2-3 volunteers each day to help supervise the students and help out a bit. **The tentative dates set for working onsite are Tuesday 5/29, Thursday 5/30, Friday 6/1, and Saturday 6/2.** These dates are not set in stone, but are the most probable days we will be working on the house. Please contact Enrique Garita at [enrique@greatriverschool.org](mailto:enrique@greatriverschool.org) if you are interested in volunteering.

### **Great Extravaganza Donations**

The Great Spring Extravaganza is our signature fund raising event held in the spring of each year. This event raises money for our ongoing programs and activities. We feature a silent auction, entertainment, food and other activities. This year, we will provide a pasta dinner at an affordable cost but will not charge admission to the event. We will also feature a special show in our new building which will take place following the close of the silent auction to give us time to do the administrative work. Watch for more information about this special show!

The Great Extravaganza planning committee has been working since the fall to create a new plan for this year's event. We would be honored if you would support our 2012 event by getting involved. There are four ways you can contribute to the success of the event:

- Make a donation. Last year, many families donated items or hosted Great Gatherings that were included in the auction. Making a donation to the silent auction makes the event fun and provides ways to people to get to know each other (especially Great Gatherings).
- Become a Star Sponsor to help defray expenses of the event. All contributors will be acknowledged in the Great Extravaganza Catalog that will be distributed to all GRS families, as well as friends and guests. Leading up to the event, donors' businesses will be displayed on the GRS website and acknowledged for their support of the school. Call us for more information about being a sponsor.
- Volunteer. We need nearly 50 volunteers to help prepare and serve food, sell tickets, work with the auction and help set up and clean up. Watch for the online volunteer sign up link in a newsletter coming your way soon.
- Come to the event and bring friends. While we need donations to make the auction happen, we also need folks to attend, bid on items and have fun. Mark your calendar now for 5/12/12, 4-7 PM.

Watch for a letter coming to you in your student's grades soon and respond as you can. Thanks in advance for your support.

### **MINNESOTA DENTAL ASSOCIATION SPONSORS 10TH YEAR OF GIVE KIDS A SMILE**

Statewide program brings **free dental care to children Feb. 3-4**

The Minnesota Dental Association is celebrating the 10th year of Give Kids a Smile on February 3rd and 4th and dentists across the state will open their clinic doors and provide free, professional dental care to an estimated 6,000 children. United Way 2-1-1 - a 24-hour information and referral service - will continue to serve as an invaluable link between the

Dental Service - will continue to serve as an invaluable link between the dentists and families in need. Interested parties are encouraged to call 2-1-1 to schedule an appointment.

Tooth decay affects 50 percent of U.S. first graders, but there are many barriers to care. Give Kids a Smile, a unique grassroots program, provides children facing barriers with the dental treatment they deserve. In 10 years, Minnesota dentists have provided free care to nearly 45,000 children and donated services valued at more than \$13.5 million.

In 2012, nearly 3,000 dental professionals and interpreters - including a record-breaking 555 dentists - will volunteer at 200 locations statewide. 3M ESPE Dental Products and HealthPartners are sponsoring TV and radio ads. The Minnesota Dental Foundation accepts grant applications from participating community clinics and educational programs to help defray the cost of supplies.

To schedule an appointment call United Way 2-1-1 by simply dialing 2-1-1 from a landline or 651-291-0211 from a cell phone. Outstate residents can call toll free, 1-800-543-7709. Patients should be 18 years or younger and accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Information on specific services will be outlined when an appointment is scheduled.

For more information visit [mndental.org](http://mndental.org) or [Facebook](#) to see clinic lists, get facts, and view photos.

### AFTER SCHOOL TUTORING

Tutors will continue to be available through second semester Monday and Tuesday afternoons 3-5pm, in the A2 commons.

**Upper-level math tutor** on Mondays, **A1/A2 math tutor** on Mondays and Tuesdays, **Spanish tutor** on Mondays and Tuesdays, **English/Writing** on Mondays and Tuesdays. (Unfortunately, we no longer have a physics tutor available. We will keep you updated on any changes)

Please contact Faith Kwon with any questions. You can email her at [fkwon@greatriverschool.org](mailto:fkwon@greatriverschool.org), or by phone at 651-305-2780 ext. 100.

### YEARBOOK INFORMATION

The 2010-2011 Yearbook is here and has been distributed to most current GRS students. There are a few extras, so anyone interested can bring in \$25 to purchase one. Act quickly as they will go fast.

The 2011-2012 yearbook is well underway. The cost is \$25 for the book which will be completed and delivered before the end of school. To order a yearbook, students should complete an order form, (found in the wooden rack next to the front office) and return it along with \$25 in cash or a check to the front desk. Orders will be taken until mid-April.

### POWER OF YOU PROGRAM

The Power Of YOU program helps pay for tuition and fees for two years at Saint Paul College or Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) through state and federal funds.

The Power Of YOU deadline is Tuesday, May 1, 2012.

(detailed application information is available through Lynn Snyder, College & Career Counselor at Great River School)

In order to be eligible for the Power Of YOU program, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Graduate in the spring from a St. Paul or Minneapolis public high school,
- meet the criteria to apply for federal financial aid,
- meet the admission requirements of the college you wish to attend (MCTC or St. Paul College), and
- Meet a family adjusted gross income cap of \$75,000 or less.

Applicants are also required to complete the following application steps by our May 1, 2012 deadline:

- Complete and turn in the Power Of YOU application,
- Take the Accuplacer Test and
- Complete and submit the FAFSA.

Students are also welcome to take the Accuplacer Test at MCTC or Saint Paul College. They will need to bring with them a photo ID. Students can only take the Accuplacer Test two times within one calendar year.  
For more information, please contact:  
Kathleen Gordon, Director - Power Of YOU  
T \* 651.846.1600

Deb Keefe  
Great River School

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