Dear GMCS Families and Friends,

So much has happened since our last newsletter. Our Winter Concerts were fantastic, and they demonstrated the voice, acting, and instrumental talents of our students. The 2/3-6 grades even did an encore performance for the Mayor of Gettysburg! Mayor Streeter and his wife were very impressed by the performance and enjoyed coming to our school.

We have had some staff changes as well. Mrs. Bechtel is now our 2/3 classroom teacher and Miss Russo will join our 1/2 grade band at the end of January. We are so happy to welcome them both.

We are continuing to work on the components of the USDA Rural Development Program Loan application. We hope by the next newsletter, to have final approval for a 35-year, low interest rate loan. In the meantime, we are ready to start the design phase of our new school addition! I would like to have some parents on this committee as well as some staff and board members. We also will be getting feedback from our students. If you are interested in joining this committee, please contact me fayepleso@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org. There will be a limited number of spots. I anticipate the design committee to begin meeting in early February 2019 and we will continue to meet periodically until we begin the building phase in March 2020.

2019 is going to be a fantastic year!

Sincerely,
Faye Pleso, MEd, PhD

From the Board

Board of Trustees:
Chair - Jill Clinton  Vice Chair - Becky Uppercue  Secretary - Rose Thornberry  Treasurer - Diana Williams

Board Member - Tish Weikel  Board Member - Lieucretia Swain  Board Member - Melissa Ring

This quarter the board welcomes Rose Thornberry as our new secretary.

The Finance committee continues to work with Dr. Pleso and other parties to secure funding for our upcoming building project as well as working on the ‘wish list’ for the next fiscal year budget.

The Personnel Committee will be presenting the results of the 2018 Parent Survey at the January Board meeting.

The Executive Committee will be meeting next month to review the Special Education and Students with Disability school policies.

We’d like to thank board member Melissa Ring for offering to spearhead upcoming Teacher Appreciation Week activities.

The Board would love to encourage all parents and guardians interested in volunteering to complete their clearances - it’s easier than you think, particularly for longtime PA residents - and Board members would love to help walk you through the process!
Kindergarten

Mrs. Edmond & Mrs. Lawrence - Our kindergarteners have experienced some exciting activities during quarter two. We visited the Mobile Agricultural Lab twice, to learn about both insects and the role farms play in providing food to the community. We also enjoyed doing winter themed activities. We are excited to have Mrs. Edmond back from maternity leave!

We've had a great start to the New Year! Our Kindergarteners are showing responsibility and habits of lifelong learning as they challenge themselves with new works in the classroom. In Eureka Math, we have wrapped up a unit of study focusing on geometry with flat and solid shapes and a unit on measurement. Next in Eureka, we will be continuing our studies on the attributes of numbers; using the terms “more than” “less than” and “are there enough”. In Language, we have learned many new sight words and are applying our knowledge of words and phonics to reading and writing stories. This quarter, science and art converge as we explore color mixing.

We are looking forward to celebrating our students’ 100th day of school coming up soon!

Both classes are looking for donations, which include: glue sticks, tissues, napkins and small paper plates. Thank you again for your support!

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1st & 2nd

Mr. Stare - We have been hard at work in 1st and 2nd grade. We just finished our 2nd unit in our Language Arts curriculum and have moved on to unit 3. We learned about Jobs Around Town, Buildings, Our Community, Helping, and How to Use Maps in 1st Grade. In 2nd Grade we have learned about Animals in Nature, Animals in Stories, Animal Habitats, Baby Animals, and Animals in Poems.

We have been having fun Adding and Subtracting in Math Lessons. We are learning that there are many different ways to solve a problem and still come to the right answer. We have learned about number bonds, the Arrow Way, and Make 10 Equations. We have also been solving word problems with the help of Mine Craft C.U.B.E.S. We have been Circling the numbers, Underlining the question, Boxing the buzz word, Evaluating what strategy to use, and then Solving the problem. Mr. Stare has even started to let the students play a video game in class. As a class we discussed how to build our confidence up by asking questions, volunteering to teach during lessons, and by paying attention when lessons are going on.

In the month of December our class elf Pepper came back to room 10 with his friend Mint. He brought Salt the reindeer back as well as Cinnamon the St. Bernard. The students really enjoyed finding Pepper and Mint daily and seeing what kind of mischief they were getting into. During one Fun Write Friday the students came up with a way to trap the elves. The students also wrote narratives about their lives if they were an elf.

Bib has still been going on weekend voyages with the students as well. His journal is filling up with beautiful artwork and journal entries. Bib has been to Walmart, he played in the snow, he went to Chipotle, captured an elf and was captured by an elf. I wonder what new voyages Bib will go on in 2019?

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2nd & 3rd

Mrs. Bechtel - Students in the 2/3 classroom have spent the first part of January reviewing expectations as well as getting to know Mrs. Bechtel. We are currently in the process of wrapping up mid-year Acadience (previously Dibels) assessments.

In quarter 3, 2nd and 3rd graders will be continuing to work through Unit 3 in Wonders. In Math, we will continue working through Eureka and our WIN groups with computation.

Be on the look-out for our Star Students and Back-pack Buddies.

The students are very excited to have these additional activities in our classroom.

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3rd & 4th

Mrs. Jan & Mrs. Stough - Math- In Quarter 2, 3rd Grade students have completed Eureka Module 2 which focused on Place Value and Problem Solving with Units of Measure. Within this module, concepts such as time measurement, problem solving, measuring weight and liquid volume in metric units, rounding to the nearest ten and hundred, two- and three- digit measurement addition using the standard algorithm, and two- and three-digit measurement subtraction using the standard algorithm have all been explored. We are now heading into Eureka Module 3, which will focus on multiplication and division with units of 0, 1, 6-9, and multiples of 10. A new parent tip packet will be sent home for this module so that you can guide your student as we learn new concepts.

In Quarter 2, 4th Grade students have completed Eureka Module 2 which focused on unit conversions and problem solving with metric measurement. This was a short module and we progressed quickly into Eureka Module 3, which focuses on Multi-Digit Multiplication and Division. The concepts that will be explored in this module are: multiplicative comparison word problems, multiplications by 10, 100, and 1,000, multiplication of up to four digits by single-digit numbers, multiplication word problems, division of tens and ones with successive remainders, reasoning with divisibility, division of thousands, hundred, tens, and ones, and multiplication of two-digit by two-digit numbers. Please be sure to use the parent tip packet and any of the online Eureka videos to help you as you work with your student on these concepts.

Both classes began W.I.N. this quarter, which stands for “What I Need” and is geared towards helping all students build upon previously learned concepts towards the mastery of required 3rd and 4th grade skills. The 3rd and 4th Grade students have really worked hard to reach their goal of 90% of the class reaching mastery each week on these skills and I could not be prouder of their accomplishments in this program as well in the Eureka studies! Way to go mathematicians! Keep up the good work! ~Mrs. Jan

“ِIt would be very beneficial for all families to be practicing basic multiplication facts at home along with going over any work that students may be struggling with from Eureka and WIN.

ELA -3rd Grade: This quarter, students learned about the importance of government and voting, how to help animals survive, good ways to solve problems, unique animal traits, and leadership. Students also focused on identifying point of view, problem and solutions, and cause and effect relationship in different texts.

In the upcoming quarter, we’re looking forward to reading about Earth and its neighbors.

4th Grade: In quarter two, students learned about how all living things are connected, different traits that help animals survive, how animals inspire writers, how to welcome new friends, and ways to help the community. Students also focused on identifying point of view, and the main idea in different text.

In the upcoming quarter, we’re looking forward to reading about important people from the past and ways science advances can be helpful or harmful.

Both Classes: Students continued to work on comparing themes/settings/
plots and determining types of genres. Through our leveled reading groups, students are practicing asking and answering questions to demonstrate understanding of a text on their reading level. The students are also continuing to build their vocabulary as the school year progresses.

This quarter students completed their first project of the year by conducting a research report while creating a diorama to represent the animal’s habitat that they researched. We were very impressed by the students’ creativity and effort that they put into this project. We were also very proud of how well the students did presenting their information to the class.

Mrs. Gulden & Mrs. Sauter - Students in Upper Elementary have had a very eventful few weeks! The students worked extremely hard on their Market Day projects during the month of December. At the beginning of January, the students were able to present their projects to their peers and families. We learned so much about the continent of Asia, saw some great costumes that represented specific areas, and we were able to share in some very scrumptious dishes. Everyone did such an amazing job on this project! On Thursday, January 10th, the fifth and sixth graders were able to attend the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg, PA. Students were able to see and pet many animals that are raised on local farms, learn about different crops native to PA, see the infamous butter sculpture, and of course slurp down a milkshake! This was a very enjoyable experience for all who attended. The Harry Potter Book Club continues to meet weekly and the students have been enjoying the discussions with their peers. We are getting ready to begin the fourth book in the series. We are thrilled to be able to offer this opportunity for our students.

Upcoming projects: Keep an eye out! Students will be completing a book report as their next big project. Guidelines on the book report were given out January 22nd and the project will be due March 1st. Please encourage your child to read their book and work on the project at home as it will be due in just a few short weeks.

ART

We have made some exciting art projects this quarter!

Kindergarten learned about the word “abstract” in December and made abstract monsters with oil pastels. We are currently learning about color-mixing and making rainbow birdies. First, second, and third graders painted winter trees in December with a snowy background. We are currently learning about Chinese New Year and are making hand fans.

Third and fourth graders spent December weaving cups similar to the weavings of Pomo Indians in Northern California. We are also learning about Chinese New Year and are making paper lanterns. Fifth and sixth grade learned about Vincent Van Gogh in December and made Starry Night landscapes with oil pastels. We are currently learning about one-point perspective and will be building upon that in our next drawing project.

Decorateer Art Groups have been meeting with me to make decorations for the school. We are currently painting on canvases, which will be hung up around the school when they are finished! Independent Art Groups are honing in on their art-skills. Some students are drawing while others are using modeling clay to build their creations!

Is math homework a struggle every night? Here are some great tips from “No Guilt Mom,” an online blog. Tell me if this sounds familiar. Your child brings home a page of a page of double-digit subtraction problems. You know… the kind where you have to “borrow” from the tens place to do the operation in the ones place. You got this, you think… But no, your kid politely informs you. You aren’t supposed to borrow. Instead, your child needs to use a method where he “counts up” from the number. What in the world? This isn’t subtraction… at least not the way you learned it. How are you expected to help your kid when the method doesn’t even make sense? You’re frustrated and a little angry. There should be a way to help your child succeed in the math without you needing to relearn everything yourself. Call this your math homework help for parents.

So why did math change? Math worked perfectly well, right? I mean, you and I turned out OK. As kids, success in elementary school math meant memorizing procedures and doing those procedures perfectly each and every time. If we came up with the wrong answer, it meant that we missed a critical step and we needed to comb through the problem to find our error. While some of us excelled at that (I’m looking at you fellow perfectionists), others were completely lost. In fact, some of the procedures didn’t even make sense. We couldn’t explain WHY we were doing what we were doing. Remember the rhyme for dividing fractions? “Yours is not to reason why, just invert and multiply.” I rest my case. When presented with a problem where the correct procedure to solve wasn’t immediately evident, many of us could think of no alternatives to try. Since math didn’t make sense, problem solving didn’t make sense. If you ever labeled yourself “bad at math” and shut down, this is why. To remedy this, educators have changed how math is taught so that one problem can be solved my multiple strategies. Ultimately, every problem should make sense to the student solving it. Teachers teach these strategies one at a time so that kids can see their options.

So, what can you do at home when you have no clue how your kid is expected to do the problem? Your kids are sitting at the table, head in their hands and you aren’t quite sure how to help.

Here’s what to do.

1. Use websites like Learnzillion, Khan Academy, and Youtube. Did you know every Eureka lesson can be found explained on YouTube? It’s an invaluable resource!
2. Leave the problem unsolved and write a note for the teacher. It is helpful for teachers to know when homework takes hours and students are not understanding.

For more information on how to help your child succeed with math, please contact Mrs Hedrich at ahedrich@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org.
Our unit for January and February is on the instrument families! We are exploring the strings, woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments with exciting classical pieces to go with them. We are also studying music theory and how to write our own music. Our goal will be to create original compositions that we can play on the xylophones and other instruments. These skills will encourage the students to be stellar performers as we prepare for our concerts later in the spring. Both concerts for K-2 and 3-6 will be in May! See you soon!

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Our First “Parent Information Night” was held on December 4th. Thank you to those parents and guardians who were able to attend. The presenters were Mrs. Becky Kane, Speech and Language Pathologist from LIU #12 and Miss Housholder and Mrs. Hedrich, RTI Teachers from GMCS. Please stay tuned for information regarding our upcoming “Parent Information Nights”. Flyers will be sent home with your students in the next few weeks.

Our processes for identifying students who may be eligible for special education services include, but are not limited to, Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTII), Speech and Language screenings, Occupational Therapy screenings, teacher referrals, and parent requests. Gettysburg Montessori Charter School currently provides Learning Support services, Speech and Language services, Occupational Therapy services, Physical Therapy services and Deaf and Hard of Hearing services. Brochures reviewing the student identification process, the parents request for an evaluation process and additional topics are available to all parents and located on the green shelf in the lobby of our school. For further information, feel free to contact our Special Education Coordinator/Teacher, Rebeka Black, at becky@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH**

Mr. Woodward - Looking ahead to term 3 in P.E. we will be starting with a unit in karate where we will have special guest Vince Fannon presenting a lesson from Dubbs Karate.

The month of February will be Jump Rope for Heart month. We will be having a kick off assembly on January 28th, please check your children’s take home folders for information regarding our upcoming “Parent Information Night”. Following the assembly.

Following Karate and Jump Rope units we will be starting a unit on basketball to correlate with March Madness. Please check your calendars and make sure your children are wearing proper clothing and shoes on gym days.

May 29th, will be GMCS field day so please mark your calendars. If you would like to attend and volunteer please let me know via email. This is such a big day for the students as it marks the pinnacle of the school year.

Let’s make 2019 our best year yet!

**Facts about Missed School Days**

- Research shows that missing 10% of school days negatively affects a student’s academic performance. That’s just two days a month and known as chronic absence.
- Absenteeism’s ill effects start early. One in 10 kindergarten and 1st graders is chronically absent.
- Poor attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade or be held back.
- By 6th grade, chronic absence is a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.
- 1 in 7 students miss a month of schooling each year.

**HEALTH NEWS**

Nurse Adrian - I have noticed and become concerned about how many students are absent daily. Most families are unaware of how missing just 2 days/month can put their kids at greater risk of poor academic performance. As adults, we’ve all experienced not feeling good, wanting to stay home, yet we go to work. I understand that it’s difficult to have your child tell you they don’t feel good yet, still ‘make’ them go to school. We can help our kids by distinguishing between the ‘want’ and the ‘need’ to stay home. Most often headaches, stomach aches, or coughing do not meet a ‘need’ to stay home. It is common to feel bad for several days after having a stomach bug or cold, but your child is safe to return to school. In the case of bronchitis…coughing can last for days or weeks, but they may come back.

Let me help. Weekly, I have students of all ages telling me, “But, mommy [daddy] said I could come home.” I have your back. Please do encourage them to see me if they don’t feel well. Trust me to determine if your child can stay at school.

We are fortunate. Over-all our students are very healthy. The few who have chronic diseases such as asthma maintain good health and rarely have complications. We only have a couple with health problems associated with high absenteeism. Our teacher’s adapt and plan ways to limit their health related academic challenges. With your help, by sharing health concerns or obstacles to school attendance, we can support and guide our kids. Outcomes can change! When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating!