

Giff Hill School Newsletter

November 18th, 2011



Good Day Parents,

What a lovely time of the year this is! With Thanksgiving coming, we are all looking forward to spending time with family and friends, giving thanks for our many blessings and reflecting on the richness of our life on St. John.

As part of the GHS observance of Thanksgiving, last Thursday our students performed community service from one end of the island to the other in our 2nd **Annual Giff Hill Gives Back Day**. Our students were delighted to be able to share their talents and put their muscles to work to help out our St. John neighbors by cleaning, painting, gardening, reading to seniors, cooking meals for the hungry and raising money for the ACC. Bravo to the GHS Administration and especially the Development Office who helped to organize the event and to our students who joyously exceeded their own expectations!

If you haven't already seen the pictures, take a look at the links below. Enjoy!

<http://www.on-stjohn.com/2011/11/15/ghs-kids-doll-up-a-planter/#comments>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Animal-Care-Center-of-St-John/191713299499>

<http://stjohnsource.com/content/news/local-news/2011/11/10/giff-hill-school-students-care>
www.on-stjohn.com

As part of our Thanksgiving Break we will have a shortened week. Monday will be a regular school day, but on **Tuesday there will be an early dismissal at 11 am with regular bus service**. There will be no afterschool activities/care that day.

We have launched a new tradition at GHS to foster even more school spirit. Students in grades PS through 12th have been assigned to one of two teams: Green or White with siblings assigned to the same team. Throughout the year students will participate in challenges to earn points for their team. The competition will culminate in a "field day with a twist" in late May.

The first team challenge is student participation in the Annual Fund campaign, Seeds for Success. Teams that achieve 100% participation earn three points toward their overall score. The first team to achieve 100% participation will be awarded an additional two point bonus. **In the three days of the campaign 54% of students have already donated at the upper campus alone.**

Barracuda Cross Country continues to dominate the scene with first place girls elementary team win, a first place JV boys win for Evan Jones, and a second place Varsity trophy for Coral Breuning. Congratulations on an incredible season and many thanks to Coach Arthur Jones for his leadership.

Congratulations and thanks are also in order to Coaches Rich Walsh, Topher Dunlop, Jessica Farmer, Arthur Jones & Emily Menzen, Meghan Duffy, and Luke Neely. Thank you to Athletic Director, Barbie Barry, on a great fall season in which 57 of our 160 students participated on a sports team.

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UPPER CAMPUS NEWS – from Ms. Jill, Ms. Liz, Ms. Meghan

Gifts Around the Globe, the GHS high school travel abroad program, will be raffling a CUSTOM JEEP! Look for it displayed at the Marketplace, 2nd level soon. Be sure to support your favorite GHS student in the program by purchasing a \$10 raffle ticket for a chance to win this awesome vehicle! Tickets will also be available at i Scream & Coffee Shop in Wharfside Village, The Tap Room in Mongoose Junction, both Connections locations, and St. John Hardware.

Seventh graders submitted Friends of the V I National Park “S.K.I.P” grant applications for educational field projects today! Proposals included funding requests to help students become SCUBA certified, to start an after-school swimming program for GHS, to create an audio-tour for popular hiking trails, and a series of snorkel trips to collect data on the health of the reefs and populations of endangered/invasive species.

Already out on the water, Ms. Jen’s Marine Biology class has been working to identify near-shore marine flora and fauna in order to construct their field guides to Virgin Island marine life. They have 3 more excursions planned.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICE NEWS

The 3rd Annual “Seeds for Success” matching campaign has launched! Generous donors have once again agreed to match gifts to the Annual Fund at the following levels:

Parents, Students, Faculty, Alumni:	9 to 1
Grandparents:	3 to 1
Board Members:	1 to 1
Community Members:	2 to 1 (provided the gift is new or increased)

The Annual Fund is the most important fundraising effort of the year, and it supports faculty salaries, tuition assistance, educational and athletic programs...just about everything. Your child’s tuition *does not cover* the cost to educate your child, even if you pay in full. You will be hearing from the Development Office a lot about the Annual Fund over the coming weeks, and you will also be contacted by Parent Ambassadors to discuss your gift or pledge. It is vital that we have 100% participation from our school community; this shows our donors that we care about GHS as much as they do (they don’t even have children or grandchildren in our school!) and shows grant-makers and foundations that we have the support of our community. When Parents, Faculty and Students each achieve 100% participation, the school will also receive a \$10,000 bonus from our donors for each category! Please give or pledge what you can by 12/22/11! Pledges must be paid in full by 6/30/12. **The only gift too small is the one not given at all.**

LOWER CAMPUS NEWS from Ms. BETH

Next Tuesday morning at 8:30 am will be the LC Student of the Month Assembly.

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As previously discussed, Judy and I will be meeting with parents of each grade at the Lower Campus to answer your questions about programs and procedures, as well as to hear any ideas you would like to discuss. The meetings will take place in the library. The schedule is as follows:

Pre-K – Monday, December 5th – 8:30-9:30
K/1st – Tuesday, December 6th – 8:30-9:30
2nd/3rd – Wednesday, December 7th – 8:30-9:30
4th – Thursday, December 8th – 8:30-9:30
5th – Friday, December 9th – 8:30-9:30

Mr. B's ABC Basketball program will be changing from Tuesday after school to Wednesdays starting November 30, continuing December 7, and ending on December 14.

I would like to again thank Ms. Mia for her commitment to the library and I am pleased to announce the books she ordered, based on teacher requests, have arrived. The hot lunches prepared by Mr. Joe twice a month will continue to support this project.

Congratulations to the 2nd/3rd graders for collecting the most Boxtops this month. They will be having an ice cream party after lunch today.

You have probably already noticed the heightened fence on the playground, which will prevent playground balls from going over and landing down the hill. We were able to finally bring out new equipment this week much to the delight of the students.

The teachers at GHS are always happy to meet with parents over any concerns they may have, that being said, first thing in the morning when teachers are setting up for the day is not always the best time. Please set up mutually agreed upon times to speak to your child's teacher. Thank you for your cooperation.

UPCOMING CALENDAR

Monday, November 21, 2:15	UC Student of the 1 st Quarter
Tuesday, November 22, 8:30	LC Student of the Month Assembly
Tuesday, November 22, 11:00	School Dismissed for Thanksgiving Break
Monday, November 28, 8:15	School Reopens
Wednesday, November 30	Job Shadowing at the Westin
Wednesday, November 30, 5:30	1 st Auction Meeting
Thursday, December 1, 3:30	PTO Meeting
Friday, December 2	Marine Biology Field Trip

Enjoy your holiday and warmest regards,
Ms. Judy