

Giff Hill School Newsletter

October 7th, 2011



Good Day, Parents:

The month of October will be busy with all sorts of curricular and extra-curricular activities. Next week, after we return from the Columbus Day Holiday, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, Grades 2-9 will take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills while on Wednesday Grades 10-11 will take the Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Tests. Students should plan to get a good night's sleep and eat a healthy breakfast to ensure that they are at the top of their game when they take the tests. Students should arrive promptly at 8:15. Testing will start immediately. There will be no homework for the days that tests are administered. Apart from the morning testing, we will have a normal school day schedule Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Friday there will be no classes for students to allow teachers an in-service day of professional development.

The Fall Parent Teacher Conferences will occur next week. If your child is in the Lower School, please contact your child's teacher directly for an appointment. At the Upper Campus, please contact Jill Hale in the Office to request an appointment.

Giff Hill School is honored to have received two prestigious invitations:

- Senior Patrick Smith and high school science and math teacher Jim Willen will attend the World Food Prize Global Youth Institute in Des Moines Iowa, October 11-14. This is a conference to which only 200 students and teachers are invited from around the world. The topic of their discussions will be Food Security. By participating in the Global Youth Institute, students are eligible to apply for the Borlaug-Ruan International Internship, an all-expense paid, eight-week hands-on experience, working with world-renowned scientists and policy makers at leading research centers in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.
- I have been invited to attend the Island Institute's Annual Teacher Conference and Sustainable Living Summit next week in Rockland, Maine. The Island Institute is a non-profit organization that has served the islands and communities of the Gulf of Maine since 1986. Although this is a group primarily made up of down islanders of Maine, our previous conversations as educators and island leaders have revealed such similar challenges that we all agree that we have much to learn from each other.

The Summit will feature nationally known experts in informative sessions on economic development, leadership, and civic engagement while the Teachers Conference will feature such diverse topics as Curriculum Across Classrooms and Integrated Learning; Elementary Literature Circles via the Tandberg System; School Gardening Projects; Bringing Oceanography to Island Classrooms; and Early Mathematical Thinking. Both events bring together year-round island and coastal residents with regional and national experts to discuss strategies for educational practice, sustainability and economic vitality in remote communities along the Maine coast. The programs will provide useful perspective as well as be a catalyst for us to engage in similar discussions at Giff Hill School.

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Congratulations to the Flag Football Team and coaches, Mr. Rich and Mr. D., for their 20-12 victory over All Saints and to the Cheerleaders and their coach Ms. Jessica, and all of you parents and teachers, for your enthusiastic support. It was a great day for Giff Hill School. Our next home game will be Tuesday, October 11 at 3:30 pm.

Starting Tuesday, Cross Country will begin having their meets at UVI starting at 3:45. Volleyball will start its game schedule playing Wednesday v. Montessori @ Kean and Friday v. All Saints @ BCB.

CALENDAR

Monday, October 10 - School Closed

Tuesday, October 11 at 3:45 - **HOME** Flag Football Game on Trayser Field

Tuesday, October 11 at 3:30 - Cross Country Meet at UVI

Tues-Thurs, October 11-13 - IOWA Testing

Tues.-Fri., October 11-14 - Parent/Teachers Conferences

Wednesday, October 12 - PSATs will be held in school for Sophomores and Juniors

Friday, October 14 - School Closed for Students, Teacher In-Service Day

Wednesday, October 19th at 8:10 - Vassar College to visit GHS

UPPER CAMPUS NEWS

Interested in reducing, reusing and recycling? So is GHS! Ms. Sarah will be recruiting for the GHS Eco Council to lead the way. Any interested students should see Ms. Sarah to sign up.

Students in grades 6-9 have been "introduced" to their pen-pals at our sister EARTH school in Uganda through digital photos. Their first set of letters and photos are on the way to the Namasagali School. Students are eager to hear back from their pen-pals and learn more about the similarities and differences in our two school communities.

The middle school is looking for help organizing boats for a trip to Norman Island as a culminating activity for their summer reading assignment, Treasure Island. If you own a boat and would be interested in helping us, please contact Liz Kinsella at lizkinsella@giffthillschool or by phone at 776-1730.

Individual netbook computers purchased with school funds have arrived for students in grades 6-8, and will be in students' hands by next week. We are excited about the positive impact these machines will have on the learning and organization of our middle school students. Unlike those computers purchased with federal government Title V funds, which must remain the property of the school, these netbooks will be available to the middle school students for purchase at the end of the school year.

Sophomores and Juniors will be taking the PSAT test on Wed, Oct 12th, during school hours. The PSAT is the Preliminary SAT and is good practice for the SAT test that they will take for the first time as Juniors. Students were given a Student Guide to the PSAT, which included tips for the test and a full-length practice test. The PSAT is the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship. Please feel free to call or email Ms. Meghan with any questions.

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CALLING ON PARENTS: If you work for a non-profit or government agency and have volunteer opportunities available for our students, please email the details to Ms. Meghan at meghanduffy@giffhillschool.org so that she can add them to the Community Service Opportunities bulletin board.

Juniors and their families, SAVE THE DATE: We will be hosting a Junior Parent/Student Night on Wednesday, January 18th at 6pm. This informative evening will introduce juniors and their families to the college process, timeline, testing schedule, and other important facets of the application process. This program will be conducted by Ms. Meghan, our College Counselor. All juniors and their families are encouraged to attend!

LOWER CAMPUS NEWS

Congratulations and thank you to all our new PTO officers. Looking forward to hearing all the new ideas you may have for this school year.

Ms. Alisa has completed her individual testing of students at the lower campus and will begin small group instruction the week of October 17th.

Gentle reminder: Parents of students in K-5th grade are encouraged to use our new drop-off system rather than parking and walking their children to their classrooms. This alleviates the congestion in the parking lot and prevents children from having to walk around and between cars. If you have an appointment with a teacher or need to visit the front office, parking spots are certainly available. Otherwise, please drop-off at the arrows and a staff member will welcome your children and ensure their safe arrival.

Please see Ms. Mia if you would like to become involved in the Friends of the Library project. It is great to see our library being used by all the students.

Laptops for the fourth and fifth graders are being configured this weekend and should be available for use next week. There is no charge for usage of these as they were purchased through Title V and belong to the government.

Passwords for our new online subscription to Discovery Education came this week. It will be a wonderful resource in all classes across the curriculum. Ask your children about it!

Please let us know if you would like to assist in organizing the Halloween Party on Monday, October 31. Thank you!

Hope you enjoy a lovely extended weekend.

Warmest regards,

Ms. Judy