

Dear FGCS Families:

We hope this finds you all well and enjoying the beautiful Pacific Northwest summer. We're writing to share a long list of news and updates. If you have questions or comments, please check individual items to find the right person to contact. Please don't reply directly to this email.

For those of you who have been on our email list previously, you will notice that you are receiving messages from Karen and Vanessa directly rather than from FGCS News. We are in the process of updating our database and transferring management of the system to school staff. To try to avoid being filtered out by spam detectors, we are sending this message in two batches labeled FGCS News (Returning Students) and FGCS News (New Students). The content of the messages is identical. Some separate messages may be sent out only to new students or high school students, for example, when the news pertains only to those groups. In addition, messages also are going to students on our waiting lists so their families will be up to date if they are ultimately able to enroll; please call the school office at 503-359-4600 if you have questions about your enrollment status.

We apologize in advance to those who may receive duplicate messages. Please bear with us as we work out the kinks in our new system. A million thanks to Sherie Pitt, who has volunteered countless hours over the past several years managing the database and helping us stay in contact with our community. To report problems or concerns about email communications, please contact Karen at [k.torry@fgcschool.org](mailto:k.torry@fgcschool.org) or 503-359-4600.

### **Back to School Picnic**

Mark your calendars! Our 2<sup>nd</sup> back-to-school picnic, this year called the Community School Local Harvest Gathering, will take place from 4 to 6 p.m. Sunday, August 24<sup>th</sup> at Lincoln Park Pavilions 1 and 2 near the skate park. We'll send details closer in time to the event, so watch your inboxes.

### **Supplies, Class Lists and Student-Family Handbook**

School supplies lists will NOT be emailed to families this year but will be posted on our web site by the second week of August. Class lists and the updated student-family handbook will be emailed to families around the same time. The handbook will also be posted at the web site and paper copies will be available upon request.

### **Staff News**

In addition to welcoming 70 new students this year, we are pleased to announce several additions to our teaching staff. We are fortunate to have hired well-qualified, exceptional people who are eager to be involved with your children's growth as scholars, stewards and citizens. If you have questions about teachers, please contact Vanessa Gray at [v.gray@fgcschool.org](mailto:v.gray@fgcschool.org) or 503-359-4600. Here is a brief introduction to each of our new teachers:

**Level 1 - Karen Thias** is new Level 1 classroom teacher. Karen has been a classroom teacher in single-age and mixed-age elementary classrooms for more than eight years. She has strong interests in science, art, and writing, and brings those passions alive in her classroom.

**Level 2 - Gretchen Ziemer**, while not a new staff member, will take on a different role at the school as our new Level 2 classroom teacher. Before becoming our Out and About teacher, Gretchen had experience teaching PE, health and environmental studies. Gretchen is also enrolled in Pacific's Master of Arts in Teaching program, so she'll have the opportunity to put theory into practice in a very real way!

**Level 3 - Shannon Perry** has been hired as the Level 3 (7th/8th grade) language arts and social studies teacher, replacing Megan Densky, who has accepted a teaching position in Portland. Shannon has many years' experience working with youth, first in social services and later in school settings. She has been an academic coach, led after-school programs and, most recently, taught language arts enhancement at Neil Armstrong Middle School.

#### **Level 4**

**Elizabeth Annis** will teach language arts and a first-year Spanish elective to Level 4 students next year. Elizabeth's teaching experience spans 15 years at several levels, including high school. She is qualified as an ESL instructor, taught after-school Spanish at FGCS this year and most recently worked with incarcerated youth earning their high school diplomas.

**Rick Boudreau**, who served as a Level 3 instructional assistant this year, will put his varied talents and experiences to work teaching PE to all classes and teaching civics and economics courses for Level 4 students. Rick, who has a graduate degree in political science, has been a journalist and worked with international, non-governmental organizations. He is also a former tennis instructor and competes regionally.

**Brook Waldman** will teach high school Algebra and Geometry, with an emphasis on applied skills, drawing on Brook's varied background, which includes teaching math and science, outdoor education and construction. Brook, who is working on his master's degree in teaching, may be the only person you'll ever meet who holds a certificate in bamboo building and lists cardboard furniture construction alongside welding, pottery and cooking under 'other skills' on his resume.

**Rochelle Auran** will teach high school biology. Rochelle holds a graduate degree in zoology, has taught college-level biology and has 20 years experience working in professional laboratories.

#### **School Schedule**

**Background:** As most of you know, we earlier announced plans to begin the school day at 8 a.m. rather than 8:50 in the coming school year. This change was suggested in response to desire expressed by some families for an earlier release that would make it easier for their middle and high school students to participate in after-school district sports and activities. Because this represented a significant schedule change, our Board of Directors took the matter under advisement and sought input from the school community through our web site feedback page. A synopsis of that feedback will be posted on the web site soon. After reviewing the matter, the Board decided to maintain the daily schedule we used this past year. The Board stated that it will

continue to study the matter and may consider schedule changes at a later date. Please contact board chair Terry O'Day at [t.oday@fgcschool.org](mailto:t.oday@fgcschool.org) with any questions about the Board's decision.

**Schedule:** School will begin for all students at 8:50 a.m. School doors will open at 8:35 and students should be in their classrooms, ready to go by 8:50.

Dismissal times will be as follows:

Level 1: 3:05 p.m.

Levels 2& 3: 3:20 p.m. (please note this is a change for Level 3)

Level 4: 3:35 p.m.

### **School Calendar**

The first day of school for FGCS is Monday, September 8. A complete school calendar is attached. If you have trouble opening or printing this document, you can pick up a copy in the school office. Please note: Although we follow the District calendar in most respects, we have some days off when other District schools are in session and are in school on some days when other District schools are closed. Our calendar will be posted on the school's web site: [www.fgcschool.org](http://www.fgcschool.org) and will be regularly updated with special events. For questions about the calendar, please contact Vanessa at [v.gray@fgcschool.org](mailto:v.gray@fgcschool.org).

### **Facilities Update**

As many of you know, we learned shortly before the end of the school year that our landlord was unable to proceed with plans to renovate the third floor of our building to add new classrooms because the project was simply too expensive. We are now planning to construct a second school building on site, while continuing to occupy two floors of our current building. Planning and construction of the new building will take one to two years but will ultimately result in a beautiful, functional school campus.

Meanwhile, here is how we are making room for our three new classrooms. We plan to place two modular classroom buildings on the property to house our Level 3 (7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>) and Level 4 (9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>) classrooms. These buildings each have two 850-square-foot classrooms and will be completely refurbished with new paint, flooring and extra windows. Although they won't have the character of our current building, they will be large, comfortable spaces. Placing the modular classrooms requires a city permit, for which we have applied; a hearing is set for Monday, August 4 at the Community Auditorium. The FGCS Board has approved hiring an architect to provide technical support on this project.

In our current building, there will be some changes, too. Karen Thias, our new Level 1 teacher, will move into Veronica's old room while Veronica and Gretchen, our new Level 2 teacher, will move into the downstairs classrooms. Sherry, Rachel and Charlie all will remain in their same classrooms. This interim plan is intended to keep our whole school community in close proximity and keep all classes in a level in the same building while we make permanent plans for the future. If you have any questions about facilities issues, please contact Karen at [k.torry@fgcschool.org](mailto:k.torry@fgcschool.org).

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

FGCS is a school created by volunteers and are ongoing success depends on the strong support of parents, friends and community volunteers. Here are just a few ways you can help:

The downstairs classrooms will get a fresh coat of colorful paint over the summer, so please contact Gretchen ([g.ziemer@fgcschool.org](mailto:g.ziemer@fgcschool.org)) or Veronica ([v.dolby@fgcschool.org](mailto:v.dolby@fgcschool.org)) if you'd

like to join the paint crews. We will also need volunteer help setting up the modular classrooms, assembling classroom tables, hanging bulletin boards and doing other tasks to get our facilities ready for students. If you'd like to be notified about work days, please send your contact information to Karen at [k.torry@fgcschool](mailto:k.torry@fgcschool) (or leave a voice mail at 503-359-4600).

We also have an immediate need to develop a core of volunteers able to help with computer and other technology issues. We have a small core of extremely talented, hardworking volunteers who help in this area, but we need a larger group as our school grows. Specifically, we need people to contact local businesses and organizations who may have computers to donate, to pick up those donations, to upgrade systems, install software and install desktops and printers in classrooms. Tech-minded students are more than welcome! To help in this way, please contact Karen at [k.torry@fgcschool.org](mailto:k.torry@fgcschool.org).

Our intrepid fundraising work group can also use more volunteers to help with Pizza Wednesdays, Scholastics book fairs and other efforts. Please contact Misty Lewis at [semile@verizon.net](mailto:semile@verizon.net).

Unlike other public schools, FGCS depends on volunteer help to supervise lunch times and recess to allow teachers to take a short break during the school day. Helping out at lunch and recess is a great way to get to know students and it provides a tremendous support to our hardworking teachers. To volunteer at recess or lunch, contact Vickie Jares at [v.jares@fgcschool.org](mailto:v.jares@fgcschool.org).