

Dates to remember

Monday-Friday, December 20-31 – *Holiday Break* 

Monday, January 3-Thursday, March 10 – *Open Enrollment Period for 2022-23*

A message from the superintendent

Dear GTA Families,

As students and staff begin (a bit early!) what I hope to be an amazing holiday break with their families, I simply cannot express my gratitude enough for this incredible Grand Traverse Academy community. I must admit that until last week, I was struggling to get into the holiday spirit. The anticipation of the holidays was lacking, the darkness of the long December nights seemed to be darker than usual and the weather just didn't seem wintry enough. That is when the GTA community (and the weather) seemed to spring into action.



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For the first time in two years, we were able to have our holiday band and choir concerts last week! Along with a heavy dose of snow the afternoon of the band concert, the holiday decorations, and the metaphorical bright light of our families and musicians entering the gym for an evening of music and celebration pulled me right out of that funk, and the anticipation began to build!

This week I was able to really see the wonderful things that this school community does that make me grateful for and proud of the character that comes with being a Mustang. The overwhelming support of the GTA Cares Christmas project, the random acts of kindness that have taken place throughout the school and the focus on building quality relationships through Choice Theory are just some of what has saved the season for me. I certainly hope that you have all experienced something similar that you can trace back to GTA.

Please accept my heartfelt wishes to you and your family for a wonderful and uplifting holiday season. I very much look forward to 2022 and the growth that comes from the anticipation of great things! I am so thankful for all of our stakeholders who share their children, their talents, their time and their spirit with all of us here at school.

Peace,



Jim

GTA Cares Holiday Help project results in overwhelming response

Thanks once again to your kindness and generosity, 12 GTA families in need (with a total of 84 members) will have a brighter holiday season this year. A total of 46 families from our GTA community donated a multitude of toys, books, clothing, food and more, which was distributed this week. We so appreciate these gifts, which fill needs, create smiles, warm hearts and mean so much to their recipients.

School wide service learning project benefits cancer patients

Many students throughout GTA (both Elementary and



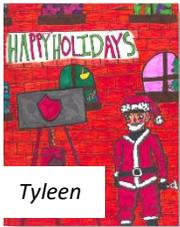
Secondary) participated in a service learning project to show their character and extend kindness and empathy

towards others in our community by creating 179 greeting cards for the Cowell Cancer Center. Due to COVID restrictions, patients undergoing treatment may have to endure them alone during the holiday season.

This project will allow these individuals to receive words of encouragement at this difficult time. Our students did a wonderful job doing their best quality work, which allowed them to also discuss the conditions of quality we emphasize daily at GTA. Kudos to all of the participants in this project!

GTA students honored in art contest

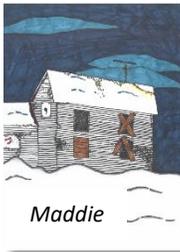
Congratulations to **Tyleen Priest** (grade 8) and **Shelby**



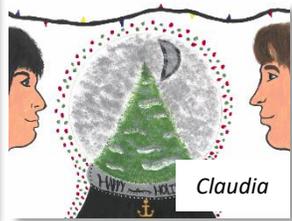
Tyleen



Shelby



Maddie



Claudia

Jesse (grade 10), whose artwork will

grace the cover of one of two official holiday greeting cards for Lake Superior State University. **Maddie McPhilitym**

(grade 8) and **Claudia Burley** (grade 12) earned honorable mention recognition in the contest. We have some talented young artists!

Elementary Students of the Month named

Congratulations to our Elementary Students of the Month for November, chosen for their demonstration of the character trait of Responsibility. Here's what their teachers had to say about why they were nominated:

Emma Rasmussen, kindergarten, is the daughter of Leah and Ray Rasmussen. Ms. Myers said, "Emma is a role model in our classroom for responsibility. She keeps her space organized, completes her assignments, and always remembers to take home important announcements. But more than just being responsible for



herself, Emma takes on the role of being responsible for our classroom, as well as other students, and she does this with a smile. She's always going out of her way to show others how to do things and ask if they want her to help them. She shows great enthusiasm to help with unstacking the chairs, setting out trash bins and getting out materials each morning. She loves being

responsible for our classroom setup with other students!"

Isaiah Maidens, kindergarten, is the son of Britney and Brian Maidens. Ms. Johnson said, "Isaiah is incredibly responsible. He always is making sure he is in control of himself and he also takes care of his surroundings. He is the first student to offer to help. He always keeps his space organized and clean. He is a great example for the other students."



Evelyn Bates, grade 4, is the daughter of Fawn and Andrew Bates. Ms. Olsen said, "Evelyn is always prepared. She is one of the most respectful people I have met. In her very quiet way she cares for everyone. While others are doing what they do, Evelyn quietly gets her things together and is always ready for what comes next. Her quiet thoughtful preparedness is very appreciated and acknowledged frequently."



Titus Allen, grade 6, is the son of Heidi and James Allen. Mr. Thomas said, "Titus likes to visit my classroom every morning and lunch period to hang out with his friends. As a responsible GTA student, however, I constantly find him helping my class to pick up the room. This morning, he showed up to my class before any other student and put all the stacked chairs out so they were ready for my students. I did not ask him to do this, he saw what needed to be done and decided to do it on his own. Titus is a great exemplar of responsibility!"



Our character is showing

We received this nice note from Jen Willoughby, a GTA parent who attended our recent Mustang girls' basketball game against Leland (which the girls lost):

"Shelley and Jim, Please pass this on to the girls' JV and varsity coaches. A parent from the Leland team reached out to me and wanted to let me know what a 'class act' of girls we have. She said they were smiling, friendly and any words exchanged were nice... I hope as GTA we will always be a class act to others and great examples on how we should live our lives."

Cookie Day returns!

To paraphrase the US Postal Service motto, “Neither wind nor fallen trees nor power outages stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed



rounds.” After a COVID-related hiatus from their traditional Cookie Day, during which holiday goodies in the office are for students only, Secondary staff resurrected the event this year and had dozens of cookies ready and waiting. What to do when school was cancelled and the event appeared to be foiled? Bring them in anyway and serve them to students and parents who stopped by to pick up belongings to take home for the Holiday Break, as well as fellow staff members. A big “thanks” to the GTA elves who did the baking and set up the display!

Open Enrollment period begins

Grand Traverse Academy’s Open Enrollment period for the 2022-23 school year **begins on Monday, January 3 and continues through Thursday, March 10**. Several Enrollment Information Meetings are planned as shown below. Each includes a brief presentation, time for Q & A and a tour of our facilities. Masks are required and safe distancing will be practiced.

Enrollment Information Meetings		
Day	Date	Time
Tuesday	January 11	9:30 am
Thursday	January 20	9:30 am
Wednesday	February 2	6:00 pm
Tuesday	February 8	9:30 am
Monday	February 21	6:00 pm
Tuesday	March 1	9:30 am
Thursday	March 3	6:00 pm
Monday	March 7	9:30 am
Wednesday	March 9	6:00 pm

If you have friends or family members who are interested in learning more about Grand Traverse Academy for their children, please invite them to contact Amy Truesdell at (231) 932-0665 or enrollment@mygta.us to reserve their spot at one of our meetings.

Holiday concert videos available

In case you missed them, our Holiday Choir and Band Concerts were recorded and are available for your viewing and listening pleasure with your families during the break. So make some hot chocolate, grab a few cookies, sit back and enjoy!



[Elementary and Secondary Choirs](#)

[Cadet & Concert Bands](#)

[Jazz, Varsity & Symphonic Bands & Symphony Winds](#)

Science students participate in art challenge

Mrs. Callahan’s Junior High Aerospace Exploration class is participating in NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope #UnfoldTheUniverse Art Challenge. The organization’s biggest and most powerful space



telescope ever is launching soon and will travel a million miles away, looking at the first stars and galaxies, study distant planets, solve mysteries in our solar system and look back in time at 13.5



billion years of cosmic history! Students across the country have been challenged to create an image of what they think the telescope will discover. Here is a sampling of what

our students have submitted. If an image is selected by NASA, it may be considered for the Webb telescope’s launch broadcast or other digital products!



\$1,000 school survey sweepstakes announced

Year after year, our enrollment applications tell us that the recommendations of friends, relatives or satisfied GTA parents are the number one reason why parents choose to pursue Grand Traverse Academy for their children's education. We'd like to introduce an opportunity to not only share your thoughts about our school with others but to **have your name entered for a chance to win \$1,000** for doing so! Parents, students and recent alumni are all eligible. For details and a link to a short survey, go to the [Niche website](#) and choose Michigan and Grand Traverse Academy in the selection box. Responses are anonymous and will be displayed on the Niche site to help others find a school that is just right for their children! **Don't delay – the deadline to enter is December 31, 2021 at 11:00 pm EST.**



Save the date

GTA sophomores will take a field trip to the Career-Tech Center on **Wednesday, February 2** for a tour and information sessions designed to inform them of their opportunities during their junior and senior years at the CTC. Over 20 different career and technical programs are offered to area students, from agriculture to robotics! Watch for details as the date approaches.

Choice Theory: The Ten Axioms

by Mindy VanHouzen

An axiom is defined as a statement that is regarded as being established, accepted, or self-evidently true. For the next few weeks we will be exploring the Ten Axioms of Choice Theory. The axioms help us to understand ourselves and each other.



Axiom #9: All Total Behavior is chosen, but we only have direct control over the acting and thinking components. We can only control our feelings and physiology indirectly through how we choose to act and think. This axiom explains why the front wheels of the "behavior car" are labeled as Acting and Thinking. Like a front-wheel-drive car, how we act and think will pull the rest of the car along. Our feelings and physiology will fall in line with our acting and thinking. The component that we have the most control over is acting, followed closely by thinking. So if

we want to change the way we feel, we must first change the way we think and act!

Axiom #10: All Total Behavior is designated by verbs and named by the part that is the most recognizable.

For example, instead of saying, "I am frustrated," I would say, "I am choosing to frustrate," or "I am frustrating." We do this to recognize that we have control over how we feel rather than allowing our emotions to have control over us.

Don't forget our survey!

As part of our Continuous Improvement Plan, we have committed to collecting feedback from our stakeholders (parents and staff) on the current status of GTA, as it aligns with the Glasser Quality School criteria, twice per school year. **Parents were sent a survey via email on November 18.** If you have not already filled it out, we encourage you to check your inbox and take a few minutes to complete and submit it. Your responses will provide school leadership with the opportunity to both identify areas of improvement and receive positive feedback. Thank you for your participation.

At-home health screening reminder

Our goal for the 2021-22 school year and beyond is for our students and staff to stay healthy so that we may remain open for in-person instruction. With COVID-19 cases on the rise in recent weeks, it is so important for parents to screen for illness **before** bringing your children to school, especially for COVID-19 symptoms, and keeping them home if necessary – both in their best interest and for the protection of others. Please check for the following: *fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, sore throat, new uncontrolled cough, new absence of taste or smell, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain or new onset of a severe headache (especially with a fever).* Please keep children home with any of these symptoms. If your child is symptomatic, please refer to the attached Student Screening tool to determine if they should be tested for COVID-19 and when they may return to school, based on the guidance for their symptoms. **If a member of your family has had a positive result on a home test, it is important to tell your health care provider as soon as possible so that the Health Department can begin the contact tracing process to alert those who may have been exposed.** With your help, we can all stay healthy and in school, where students learn the best!

School absences or late arrivals

If your child will be late for school or absent for the day, please notify the office by 8:30 am. Parents will be called to verify any unexcused absences after that time.

Elementary 995-0665 / Secondary 932-6038

GTA Family Council fundraising opportunities

Bracelets. GTA Pride bracelets are now available to all students in grades K-12! These fun bracelets sport our school colors to show our MUSTANG PRIDE! See the attached flyer for an example and to place your order, or order here: [GTA Pride Bracelet Order Form](#).

Questions? Contact Kristin Boogaard at (616) 328-4646 or kristinboogaard@gmail.com.

Car wash coupons. Car wash coupons are a convenient way to keep your ride clean and tidy. Purchase a Mirror Image single basic wash coupon for \$7 or a book of five for \$35. Full-service interior & exterior washes are available for \$25 each or \$125 for a book of five. Profits will support the GTA Family Council's efforts throughout the school year. Follow this link to purchase: [GTA FC CAR WASH](#) or contact Kristin Boogaard at (616) 328-4646 or kristinboogaard@gmail.com.

👉 Reminder: Be sure to join the Facebook group, **GTA Family Council**, to stay connected and keep up to date with all the amazing service opportunities.

Dad jokes from Don

A chef was making eggs benedict and needed a good recipe for Hollandaise sauce. His colleague suggested he visit Alaska. Why? Because "There's No Place Like Nome for the Hollandaise"!



Ongoing events

Secondary Pizza Days – Every Thursday (order and pay on Tuesdays using forms provided in Advisory classrooms), \$1.50 per slice of cheese or pepperoni

Secondary Bagel Sales – Every Wednesday in Multipurpose Rooms 3 & 4, 7:40-8:00 am, \$1.50 each for several varieties

Fill the Pantry Jeans Days – January 13, March 24, May 26



Student Screening

Screen your child for the following symptoms daily before they leave for school. Follow the directions below if your child displays symptoms or has been exposed.

Symptoms

- Temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Sore throat
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

Close Contact/Potential Exposure

In the past 14 days, has your child:

- Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19; OR
- Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with person under quarantine for possible exposure to COVID-19; OR
- Had a travel history

If the answer is **YES** to any of the **symptom** questions, keep your child(ren) home from school.

If the answer is **YES** to any symptoms question and **YES** to any close contact/potential exposure question, call the school as soon as possible to let them know the reason your child(ren) won't be there today. Call your healthcare provider right away. If you don't have one or cannot be seen, go to www.mi.gov/coronavirustest or call 2-1-1 to find a location to have your child(ren) tested for COVID-19.

If the answer is **YES** to any of the symptom questions, but **NO** to any close contact/potential exposure questions, your student may return based on the guidance for their symptoms (see "[Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools](#)"):

- Fever: at least 24 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications
- Sore throat: improvement (if strep throat: do not return until at least 2 doses of antibiotic have been taken);
- Cough/Shortness of breath: improvement
- Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain: no diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours
- Severe headache: improvement

DISCLAIMER: This screening tool is subject to change based on the latest information on COVID-19.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; [Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19: Limitations and Considerations](#)





Order [HERE](#)
Now

Grand
Traverse
Academy

Family Council

GTA Pride Bracelets

\$8 each or

2 for \$15 or

3 for \$20

Want to do something nice
for another student?

Consider buying an extra one
and giving it to a friend!