



GECC Meeting Minutes**July 7, 2008**

A meeting of the *Granby Early Childhood Council* (GECC) was held on Monday July 7, 2008 in the Farmington Valley YMCA Community Room. In attendance were:

Janet Ford, GECC Chairperson
John Kroninger, Parent
Bonnie Quinlan, First Grade Teacher, Granville MA
Celeste Hassel, Preschool Director, Creative Learning
Gary Ebersole, Parent
Evie Caranchini, Granby Public Library Children's Librarian
Sara Kleinman, Parent and Parent Educator, Hartford
Dot Muszynski, Child Development Director, Farmington Valley YMCA
Doreen Hoddinott, Director, Small World Learning Center
Deb Payne, 2nd Grade Teacher, Kearns Primary School
Kim Dessert, Principal, Kearns Primary School
Karen O'Keefe, Co-Director, Patchwork Schoolhouse
Mary Myers, Parent
Beth Galloway, Parent
Amy Rooney, Parent
Joan Rogers, Discovery and GECC Coordinator
Cindy Guerreri, Graustein Memorial Fund Community Liaison
Sheri Litchfield, GECC, Secretary

The July 7, 2008 meeting began at 6:25 in the community room of the YMCA. Janet Ford, Chairperson of GECC, welcomed Council members and several guests.

Janet asked if there were any additions, deletions or revisions to the minutes from the June 2, 2008 meeting. A motion was made to accept the minutes by Dot Muszynski and seconded by Bonnie Quinlan. The minutes were unanimously approved.

It was discussed at the June meeting that in an attempt to simplify the transitions on the GECC Executive Board, the Council Chairperson's term will end in January 2009, and the Committee Chairs' term will end in June 2009. A search to replace these positions will begin in September, and all Council members are encouraged to consider their interests and talents for these needed positions.

A small committee is needed to re-evaluate and update the GECC By-laws. It is recommended that the committee meet two or three times over the summer and be ready

to make suggestions to the Council at the September meeting. Sheri Litchfield offered to contact Nannie Brown and Linda Marshall who worked together on the original By-laws Committee. Anyone else interested in joining, please contact Joan Rogers or Sheri about your availability.

Dot Muszynski, GECC Treasurer, reported that the current account balance is \$36,027.26. The Granby Education Foundation has provided a mini grant to the GECC in the amount of \$990.00 to be used for parent and childcare provider workshops for 2008-2009. For the 08' calendar year, the Granby Community Fund, however, has denied the GECC's request to become a member organization. This is because it could not be demonstrated to them that the GECC has the support of the local elected boards, and therefore, the Granby Community Fund believes that the GECC is still in a period of uncertainty with respect to its long term future. The Granby Community Fund did suggest, however, that the Council apply for a special grant in the fall, since they support the goals of the Council and are therefore willing to consider a special grant for some aspect of the Council's work. Lastly, the GECC is still awaiting a response to its request of the Drummer Fund to partner with the Council to provide a preschool scholarship for a needy child in the Granby community. The Drummer Fund will reach its decision by sometime in November.

Bonnie Quinlan shared with the Council the work in progress on the Granby School Readiness Booklet. This booklet will be a guideline that speaks to parents about what children need to arrive prepared for kindergarten. Information is being collected from a variety of sources and will be reviewed by teachers and providers before it is made available to parents, hopefully in time for the fall preschool conferences.

Gary Ebersol gave an update on the GECC event called, "Are You Smarter Than a Granby 2nd Grader?" Gary has been in contact with the GEF members who have organized the "Gran-Bee" for several years and has been given great feedback on ideas they found helpful. Deb Payne has offered to join the committee and help to organize the classroom teachers and children to participate in this family event. It is hopeful that a November 2008 time frame can be achieved. Two or three more volunteers are needed to help on this organizational committee. Please contact Gary if available.

Joan Rogers distributed a copy of the six month review of the GECC 08' Action Plan that is required by the Graustein Memorial Fund. In the review, Joan shared the progress the GECC has made, and discussed two of the elements that the Action Plan speaks to: the work towards establishing a Family Resource Center, and a Parent As Teachers pilot program in Granby. The GECC is at a critical juncture, and it is imperative that the direction the collaborative is taking is supported by all Council members. Cindy Guerreri facilitated a discussion to ensure a common understanding of what a Family Resource Center is, and what the goals and objectives are of piloting a Parent As Teachers Program. Mary Myers shared with the membership information on FRC's that have been explored in other communities. Mary explained that many had started with very small playgroups and have expanded to meet the needs of the community over the years, with the support of their Boards of Education. Some FRC's are supported and receive funding

from the Connecticut State Department of Education. FRCs that do receive state funding are required to have the following seven components:

- 1) Full day/ full year preschool
- 2) Before and after school care- summer care
- 3) Families in Training, CT uses Parents As Teachers Program
- 4) Positive Youth Development for 4-6 graders
- 5) Family Care Providers
- 6) Adult Education (GED process)
- 7) Resource and referrals

Because the GECC is not receiving state funding to develop its FRC, the GECC can develop its FRC Program where it feels there is community need, and tailor its FRC offerings accordingly. The Graustein Funding is not about funding a program, rather it is to be used for “seed money” and the GECC will need to work to seek funding for ongoing support.

The discussion ended with agreement that the Council hire a consultant to complete a feasibility study, inclusive of meeting with members of an Ad-hoc FRC Committee of the GECC and convening focus groups, with regard to utilizing existing appropriate and available space for a FRC. The study will outline a plan for and consequent establishment of a FRC with ongoing programming, including a plan for eventual financial sustainability

Janet Ford shared information on the history of the Parent As Teachers Program as well as the goals and opportunities that would be offered to Granby families. PAT is a voluntary program that seeks to support parents as their child’s first teacher in developing physical, social and cognitive skills in their child. A Parent Educator is trained through the Parent As Teachers curriculum and works with the family in their home or in a group setting to share information on child development from birth to age 5. Suggestions and materials for learning opportunities that encourage language and intellectual growth, as well as physical and social skills, are shared with the families. It was agreed that the GECC will work towards the hiring of a parent educator(s) that will be able to participate in the late October PAT state training opportunity.

There is no GECC meeting scheduled for August. The next meeting will be on the second Monday of September, due to the Labor Day Holiday. That meeting will be September 8, 2008 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at the YMCA.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectively submitted,
Sheri Litchfield, GECC Secretary

