



The Graham School

2008-09 Annual Report to the Community

Introduction

The Graham School, founded in the year 2000, is dedicated to preparing students to be life-long learners through rigorous core academics and experiential education. In the 2008-2009 school year The Graham School continued its mission to educate students through focused academics, self-directed learning, and meaningful internships throughout Columbus.

Successful results of standardized tests and good reviews of the education offered at TGS have encouraged the school to expand its community. The Graham School's success was vital to the school being able to open a second school, The Charles School at Ohio Dominican University in 2007(see p.3)

Board Of Directors; Sponsor

The Graham School Board of Directors meets monthly. A schedule of meeting dates and times, as well as a record of actions taken, are kept at the school's office and are available for review by the public. Board members in 2008-09 included: **Sally Speer Leber**, President; **Chuck Graham**, Vice President; **Melody Steely**, Secretary; **Tom Copeland**, Treasurer; **Peggy Fein** and **Joe Busch**. In 2008-09, the school and its Board reported to the Delaware-Union Educational Service Center, as its sponsor, until that entity merged with the Franklin County Educational Service Center and formed The Educational Service Center of Central Ohio (ESSCO) in January 2009. The new entity conducted annual program and fiscal reviews of the school's work.

Graduation: Another Class of Life-Long Learners

The Graham School commencement ceremonies for the class of 2009 were held on June 7th at the Fawcett Center for Tomorrow on The Ohio State University campus. Parents, families, friends, board members, community partners, and staff celebrated with our 40 students as they graduated. Prior to the ceremony, a brunch was held for the seniors and staff at the school. Graduates presented to the community the details of their individual culminating experience at The Graham School, Walkabout.

As we ended another year at The Graham School and added these 40 students to our list of graduates, we now have more than 240 over the last nine years. Our graduates have gone on to universities outside Ohio including Boston University, Columbia University, DePaul University, Reed College, Thiel College, Knox College and Sarah Lawrence, and universities within Ohio including Ohio Dominican University, The Ohio State University, Columbus State Community College, Heidelberg College, Ohio University, Ohio Northern University, Hiram College, Bowling Green University, Wittenberg University, Shawnee State University and others. We also have alumni who have gone on to serve in the military.

2009 graduates of The Graham School included: **Jack Addison**, **Aaron Anderson**, **Tracie Batts**, **Noah Campagna**, **Jenny Colditz**, **Marta Csejtey**, **Raleigh Denig**, **Brandon Dixon**, **Tiffanie Donohoe**, **Elemuo Ify**, **Logan Faller**, **Jesse Flowers**, **Michelle Fritchle**, **Eric Haefner**, **Ameri'ca Harrison**, **Joe Hartnett**, **Amanda Luff**, **Anzel Maloney**, **Charlie McChesney**, **Rose McKibben**, **Ryan Naus**, **Elaina Pfeiffer**, **Max Pinsonneault**, **Carley Pugh**, **Lauren Pugh**, **Leslie Reece**, **Alex Rich**, **Mandy Rodgers**, **Courtney Schneider**, **Tyler Schrader**, **Katie Smith**, **Shannon Taylor**, **Braden Tizzano**, **Gabriella Tizzano**, **Kas Toplak**, **Hannah Torma**, **Candie Vazquez**, **Daniel Wehner**, **Ellen Wells**, **Ebonie Williams**.

Brenda Gerhardt, an employee, volunteer and friend of the school, again presented the Follow Your Dream Award that she and husband **Mark Gerhardt** established. The award, given to a graduating senior who displays a great willingness to take risks and seek challenges in their learning, helps to financially support the next level of a student's education. The recipient of the 2009 Follow Your Dream Award was **Anzel Maloney**.

Donna Cohen, who formerly worked at TGS with the experiential program, particularly with our seniors, along with her

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husband **Roy Cohen**, created The True North Award to help financially support TGS students in their post-high school academic experiences. A student receives this award based on his or her daily reflective journals, senior seminar participation, and commitment to Walkabout. The recipient of the 2009 True North Award was **Lauren Pugh**.

The Graham School Parent Group presented three awards recognizing achievement by senior students in areas of special importance to the focus of the school. These awards included the Open Hands Award, the Open Heart Award, and the Open Mind Award. **Toni Gilson**, president of the Parent Group, presented the awards. Recipient of the Open Hands Award was **Tiffanie Donohoe**; the Open Heart Award was **Candie Vasquez**; and the Open Mind Award was **Ebonie Williams**.

Honors/Recognitions/Special Occasions

The Graham School presents several awards each year in June to students who exhibit achievement and leadership in a variety of categories important to the work of the school. In 2008-09 the following students were honored as recipients of these awards: Fine Arts, **Jessica Nicholson**; Cultural Studies, **Maria DiSabato**; Foreign Language, **Myca Preest**; Science, **Ian Moran**; English, **Tenara Calem**; Mathematics, **Micah Gerhardt**; Technology, **Daniel Wehner**; Health/Physical Education, **Lauren Pugh**; Photography, **Anissa Sapp** and **Brandon Dixon**; Experiential Education Research, **Jen Colditz**; Experiential Education Teaching, **Leslie Reece**; Experiential Education Service Learning, **Micah Gerhardt**; Perseverance **Joe Hartnett**; Reaching for the Stars, **Eric Haefner**; Pat Clancy Drama Award, **Zach Bynes** and **Lacey Adkins**; Most Influential Student, **Gabriella Tizzano**; Tenacious Dedication **Iffy Elemuo** and **Jessica Nicholson**; Dean's Award for Leadership, **Curtis West**; Dean's Award for Courage, **Anzel Maloney**; True Dragon Award, **Ian Moran**.

Financial Status

In fiscal year 2008-09 the school received \$1,583,703 in state funds. The school also received \$80,821 in federal Title funds and \$370,811 in development funds, among other separated categories. Sources of income totaled \$3,130,254. In fiscal year 2008-09 the school paid \$2,573,431 in employee salaries and benefits, including payroll taxes and retirement; and \$75,705 in mortgage and loan payments on the purchase of the building. Uses, including the aforementioned items along with classroom support expenses, utilities, insurance and assorted services to and purchases for the school, totaled \$3,180,347. When the current cash in bank was added to the sources, the year-end adjusted cash balance was \$46,560 to be carried over to 2009-10. The school conducts its own on-going internal financial audit under the direction of its Board Audit Committee and treasurer Brian Adams, MBA, CMA, CFM, CGFM. Finances also were audited by the school's sponsor in 2008-09. And, the school is audited annually under the auspices of the State of Ohio Auditor's Office. All found the finances to be accurately and appropriately accounted for.

Our Sister School – The Charles School at Ohio Dominican University

As The Graham School is now expanding into The Graham Family of Schools, we are excited to have had The Charles School at Ohio Dominican University finish its second academic school year. The Charles School is one of only 160 early college high schools throughout the U.S. Charles School students took accelerated college prep courses and all students participated in three experiential expeditions throughout the year, adapted from The Graham School's successful experiential curriculum. Each student at The Charles School was required to meet specific standards in order to advance to the next year through the gateway process. There are five gateways required before students' junior year when they are recommended to Ohio Dominican University to begin their first college courses. As part of those requirements each student created an online portfolio using state-of-the-art technology through 21st century skills. For more information about The Charles School visit the website www.thecharlesschool.org.

Celebrating Our Work Together

The Graham School has many events that celebrate our work together including such annual events as the Open House/Spaghetti Dinner, the Silent Auction, Have a Heart, Winterim presentation night, Spring Carnival and Craft Sale, Prom, our third annual Alumni Reunion, Community Presentation Days, Walkabout presentations, and of course, the Commencement ceremony. Many individuals and groups made these celebrations possible including Student Board, the Parent Group, TGS staff and students as a whole, alumni, friends of the school, and all families who work hard to support the school. All affiliated with TGS are grateful to the many individuals dedicated to the work of the school on behalf of educating students through our academic and experiential programs.

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Parent Group; Parents

The school's Parent Group met monthly on the second Tuesday from 7:00-8:30PM at The Graham School. **Toni Gilson** served as the 2008-2009 Parent Group President and **Sherri Hayes** served as Treasurer. The Parent Group sponsored fund-raising events including a silent auction in December, which raised nearly \$5,000; a Rummage & Craft Sale, which raised \$531.55. The proceeds from these fundraisers were used to purchase art supplies, French textbooks, chemical cabinets, rain garden supplies, supported prom, presentation day lunch, graduation, senior Walkabout initiation, construction supplies for office renovations, and tuned pianos.

The group also used proceeds from the silent auction to present its three awards to senior students recognizing significant student contributions that support the school's mission. These awards were presented at this year's graduation ceremonies (see graduation story above for recipients). Parent Volunteers helped support *The Annual Campaign for Excellence* by phoning parents about the funding needs of the school. **Toni Gilson** chaired the 2008-09 annual campaign, which raised nearly \$38,000 for the school. Parent volunteers also donated time, food, holiday gifts & energy to a variety of events supporting both staff and students. Members of the parent group also attended the elegant *Have a Heart* event at Franklin Park Conservatory, which raised \$24,460 for the school. The Graham School is indebted to all its families, and is particularly grateful for the work of the Parent Group.

Academic Curriculum Requirements

The Graham School develops classroom work in traditional and non-traditional courses in order to help students acquire basic conceptual and factual knowledge and to develop our students' study habits, self-discipline, research skills, and teamwork. The Graham School curriculum includes courses in all required core academic areas as designated by the State of Ohio for graduation. Students must progress experientially and academically in order to meet the requirements for graduation. Academic requirements include: 4 credits in English, 3 credits in mathematics, 3 credits in science, 3 credits in social studies, 2 credits in foreign language/cultural studies, 1 credit in fine arts, 1 credit in technology, 0.5 credits in health, 0.5 credits in physical education, and between 1.5 and 4.5 credits in experiential education depending on how many years the student has been attending The Graham School. Approximately 75 different courses were offered over the school year in all academic areas.

Experiential Education Curriculum

The Experiential Program's purpose is to provide students with research, teaching, and service learning experiences in community organizations and businesses. These experiences enable students to develop confidence in their abilities and give them opportunities to engage in significant work while fostering a tangible commitment to the community in which they live. Students meet in advisory groups before and after their time at their sites to reflect on what they are learning and to follow a curriculum-guided education plan that focuses on developing skills such as interpersonal communication, professionalism and goal-setting.

Beginning in their freshman year, students work in groups of 12-14 at The Habitat for Humanity Restore, The Holy Family Soup Kitchen, Meadow Park Children's Center, The Mural Project at The University Area Enrichment Association, and The Academy of Columbus. Just over 150 10th -12th grade students interned at over 110 different sites through the 2008-09 school year.

In Spring of 2009, 40 seniors participated in The Graham School's culminating experiential internship; The Walkabout. Walkabout provides students with the opportunity to participate in two nine-week, full time (twenty to thirty hours per week) internships. The objective of Walkabout is to provide seniors with an intense and significant internship, that helps students mature in the responsibilities of self-direction and connection to the community. In 2008-09, senior experiences included interning and volunteering with: Habitat for Humanity; Darby Creek Metro Park, a welding internship in West Virginia; Otterbein College's Music Department; Melt Magazine; The John Glenn Institute at OSU; Independent Study in Berlin, Germany; Cap City Diner; a local Buddhist Temple; deep sea diving certification; The Homestead House at Dennison University; Spindle Studios; The National Park Service of Costa Rica; North Carolina Police Department; The American Institute of Alternative Medicine in Columbus, OH; and traveling and studying in Ireland; among others.

Staff Members

The full-time and part-time staff roster in the 2008-09 school year included: **Pam Boseker, Greg Brown, Todd Burger, Mike Butsko, Pat Clancy, Doug Desiderio-Finley, Susan Frank, Zachary Franklin, Elaine Fujimura, Holly Garden,**

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Julia Gebhart, Brenda Gerhardt, Hannah Givler, Loren Hughes, Bill Jordan, James Kutnow, Katie Logan, Cheryl Long, Amy MacKenzie, Lindsay Matthews, Marianne McCulloch, Eileen Meers, Megan Mosholder, Roger Naus, Maureen O'Brien, Anna Parker, Sally Polk, Evan Rulong, Melissa Rulong, Andy Shields, Mary Slaback, Rebecca Stadler, Amy Vickory, John Violet, Fred Whiteman, and Chelsea Zimmerman.

Ohio Graduation Test; State Report Card of TGS

Another graduation requirement is passing all five parts (Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) of the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT), which is given for the first time in 10th grade. The results, as published in the Ohio Department of Education's "2008-09 School Year Report Card" for The Graham School are as follows:

TGS 10th graders, passing rates were: Reading, 92.5 percent; Writing, 92.4 percent; Mathematics, 77.3 percent; Science, 73.1 percent; and, Social Studies, 65.2 percent. The school was considered by the state to be proficient (75 percent or higher passing rate) for the Reading, Writing, and Mathematics categories.

TGS 11th graders, passing rates were: Reading, 97.7 percent; Writing, 95.5 percent; Mathematics, 79.5 percent; Science, 86.4 percent; and, Social Studies, 93.2 percent. The school was considered by the state to be proficient (85 percent or higher passing rate) in Reading, Writing, Science and Social Studies.

Regarding student attendance rate, the school had a percentage of 94.5 percent daily attendance. The state requirement is 93.0 percent. Regarding graduation rate, the school had a percentage of 72.9 percent. The state requirement is 90.0 percent.

The school met the state requirement in 7 of 12 indicators placing the school in a rating of "Effective." On the Report Card the state compares The Graham School to other public school districts in similar communities across Ohio. For a more detailed report of this information please visit the Ohio Department of Education's web site www.ode.state.oh.us/reportcard and search for The Graham School in Franklin County, or ask for a copy of our grade card at the school's front office.

The Graham School Mission

The Graham School has a particular mission to urban students in Central Ohio preparing them for life-long learning and informed citizenship through real-world experiences and rigorous academics. Fostering ownership and responsibility for their education prepares our students to be successful in college, the workplace, and other endeavors they undertake upon leaving Graham.

The Graham School Vision

The vision that formed and fuels TGS is as a school that:

- Treats all students humanely and individually.
- Serves the urban community of Columbus.
- Enlivens the human spirit via concerned and positive ways mature, wise adults interact with teenagers and serve as role models for them.
- Causes students to become more thoughtful, inquisitive people particularly in core literacy areas including: science; math; the arts; communication through literature, writing, and oral presentation; technology; social studies; languages and cultural studies; and community engagement.
- Respects the need for students to establish their own independence while at the same time developing in them a sense of commitment to their community.
- Is a place where adults working at the school always exhibit respect toward students and other adults.
- Serves every child equally who desires this kind of experiential education.

Contact:

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