

Yard Sale in the schoolhouse!

Sat. June 1st
9am - 12pm

Donations can be
dropped off in the
admin building.
Funds go to support
the senior trip and
senior class gift!

School Calendar

MAY

- 27 Memorial Day - No School
- 29 Early Dismissal - SDM
1pm
- 30 Local Legislators visit
Gillingham Charter School

JUNE

- 1 GCS Yard Sale - 9am - 12pm
- 3 Early Dismissal - Exams
1pm
- 7 Early Dismissal - Last
Day of School
1pm
- 7 Graduation
6:30-8:30pm
- 10 Teacher In-Service Week
Mon, June 10 - Fri, June 14
- 20 Report Cards Available
8:30-9:30am
- 20 Board of Trustees
6:30pm-7:30pm
- 24 Office Closed
Mon, June 24 - Fri, June 28

STUDENT & PARENT THOUGHTS

"I tell you what. GCS teachers really rock! I feel that GCS is the best school for me."

- Overheard during 2nd graders' conversation

Advice to a new Gillingham student:

"I would tell them that it doesn't matter what color or what age you are, you will fit in because we are the wolf pack."

- Kira Nagle, 3rd Grade

"GCS is easier to get from one place to another; it's small and not big like other schools. GCS is a comfortable place. Here we learn Latin... not many schools teach it. Gillingham has very nice teachers."

-Ravin Chandler Haas, 5th Grade

"I truly think the ideas and philosophies that were put into this school are absolutely phenomenal. Thank you for creating an amazing learning environment that allowed me to feel respected, comfortable, and well-educated. I have been treated like a student, not a number. The phrase 'Children are Persons, thus they have the innate desire to learn and to live fully' has definitely been put to use here. Thank you for all of these opportunities, although a simple 'thank-you' does not do justice."

- Tony Reilly, 10th Grade

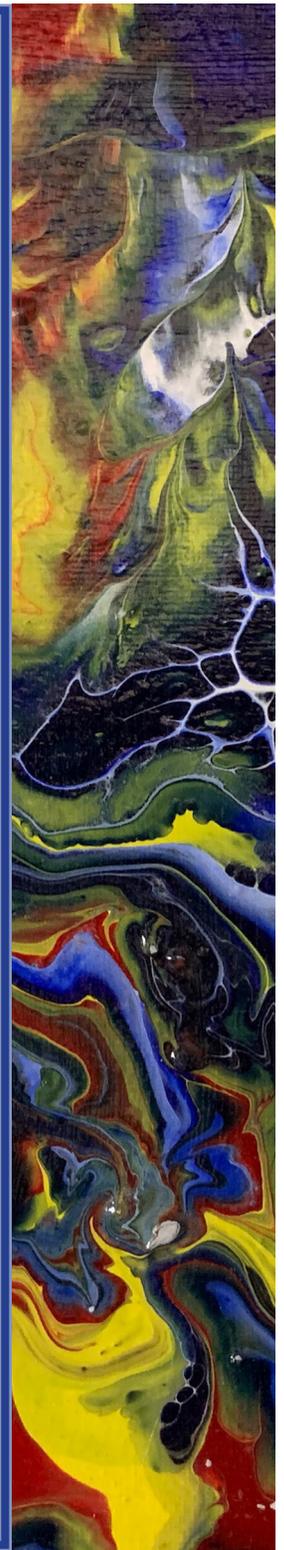
"A positive cultural and social experience of four years of high school cannot be underestimated for a teenager's self-esteem. The Gillingham experience for Tony has been a true blessing! My wish for my son is for him to continue to grow as the caring and intelligent young man who I've seen grow since the start of the school year."

- Jack Reilly, Tony's Father

the **GRAND
CONVERSATION**

The Weekly Howler and The Grand Conversation are posted on our website:
www.gillinghamcharterschool.org
We welcome your submissions, responses, news, or questions. Email ehutchinson@gillinghamcharterschool.org.

915 Howard Avenue, Pottsville, PA 17901
(570) 955-3830



Alaina Walton, 11th Grade - Acrylic Pouring

“ Give your child a single valuable idea, and you have done more for his education than if you had laid upon his mind the burden of bushels of information. ”

-Charlotte Mason

The GRAND CONVERSATION

Volume 8 / Issue 2

May / 2019

THE NEWSLETTER OF GILLINGHAM CHARTER SCHOOL



WE ARE ENTERING A NEW PHASE OF GROWTH!

- Nicolle Hutchinson, Gillingham CEO
- Anna Brovont, Research & Development Coordinator

Can you believe it, Gillingham?! We're finishing up our 8th year as a school, and since the rechartering, two very exciting developments have organically "popped up!"

1. SUPPORTING MASON EDUCATION AS A MODEL SCHOOL

Now that we have rechartered, over 30 different schools, organizations, and individuals have contacted us for support. Some want to tour the school or to meet with admin and teachers to learn from our experience. Others ask to use copies of our programs.

As these doors open, we see them

as a fantastic way to spread our philosophy and share the hard work we have accomplished together over the past few years.

In response to this interest, Gillingham faculty and staff have formed a voluntary Think Tank to strategically plan how to become a model school! We want to be the best that we can be at offering Charlotte Mason's relational education in a public charter school setting!

2. SUPPORTING GILLINGHAM THROUGH A FOUNDATION

We are also in the process of starting a nonprofit Foundation to raise money for our school! Many of you have already helped us raise funds for the initial start-up costs by searching for a little stuffed wolf, by purchasing raffle tickets for a getaway vacation, and by

signing up to support Gillingham with your purchases! Thank you so much!

Why do we need a foundation? So far we've relied mostly on enrollment numbers for the funds to keep our school running smoothly. However, there are limits to space and to how many students we can enroll while maintaining our family atmosphere. The foundation gives us another layer of financial stability by allowing us to pursue grants, donations, and fundraisers to support our students' learning and growth. We plan to use these extra resources for scholarships, VoTech opportunities, and other means of helping our students prepare for life beyond school. We also want to designate funds to support our excellent teachers and administrators so that they have a healthy workload and enough time to pursue their own growth and training.

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Staff BIOs



Anna Brovont

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

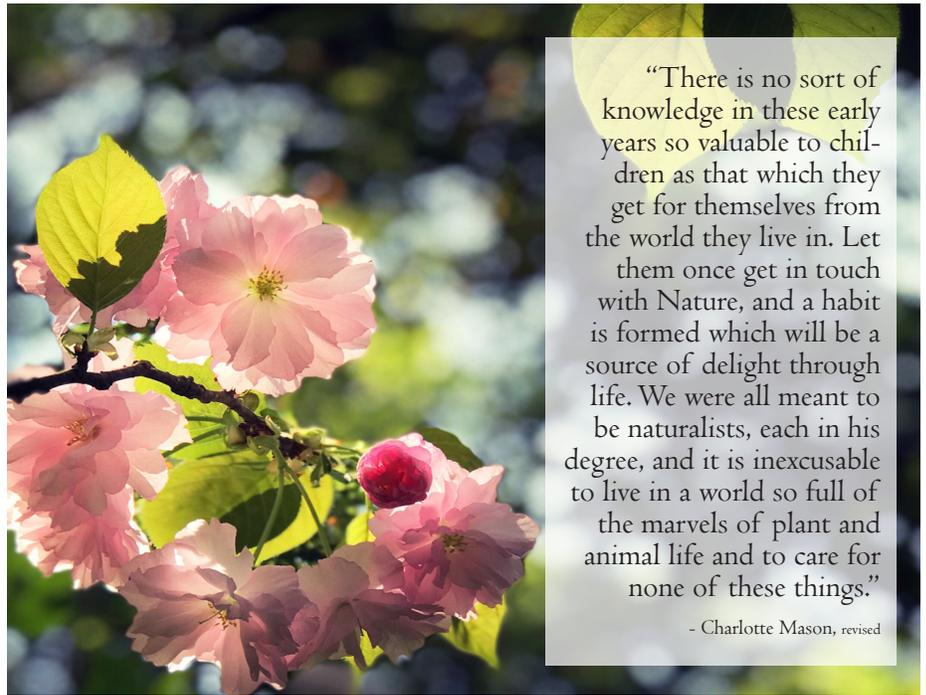
I am a parent of two thriving Gillingham kids and have joined the admin staff to create a Foundation and build ties with the community to raise awareness and funding for the school. I grew up in a family publishing business and have worked in sales and marketing positions for many years. I also freelance in writing, editing, & transcribing projects. I was introduced to Charlotte Mason's books as a homeschooled child and am honored to be a part of a school that brings these principles and ways of learning to Schuylkill County.



Megan Sirkot

SPECIAL ED TEACHER

I grew up and live in the Hazleton Area. I received my Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood/Special Education from Misericordia University in 2017. I will be graduating on May 10th with my M. Ed in Reading with a Reading Specialist Certification from East Stroudsburg University. I have enjoyed my time thus far as a member of the Wolfpack!



“There is no sort of knowledge in these early years so valuable to children as that which they get for themselves from the world they live in. Let them once get in touch with Nature, and a habit is formed which will be a source of delight through life. We were all meant to be naturalists, each in his degree, and it is inexcusable to live in a world so full of the marvels of plant and animal life and to care for none of these things.”

- Charlotte Mason, revised

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We are currently filing the paperwork for the Foundation, which has to go through an approval process by the IRS. In the meantime, we are researching and learning more about applying for grants and other federal and private funding. Right now we are using a matching grant fund that we won through the Lowes Foundation to renovate the Bunker Hill playground. This is good for Gillingham AND good for our community!

SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Have you noticed that many of our local friends have heard of Gillingham in passing but don't really understand who we are? When they visit us for ARTSpring, meet our students, or take a tour to see firsthand what we are learning and reading, they are amazed. Over and over we hear, “I had no idea!”

We want to change that, so over the next few months, we are working on building closer relationships with our community. We enjoyed being part of Block of Art last month, and have reserved a booth at Arch Street Farmer's Market over the summer, where we'll meet our neighbors and our Young Entrepreneurs Academy graduates will be able to sell their products. We would like to sponsor a street in Pottsville, where we'll get hands-on experience planting and caring for flowers, keeping our city clean, and creating beauty. This is citizenship at work!

JOIN US IN THESE NEW VENTURES!

All of these good things require input from all of us! Over the next few months, we will be updating you through emails and social media, and we would love to have your feedback. Feel free to share our Facebook and Instagram posts, and stay tuned for summer projects. Let us know if there is an event in your community that we can assist with, and we look forward to speaking with each of you at our orientation meetings this summer. In the meantime, we would love to hear how being a part of Gillingham has shaped your lives!

Please contact Anna Brovont (abrovont@gillinghamcharterschool.org) to see how you can help this summer or to share a story with the Gillingham family.

“WHY LEARN A DEAD LANGUAGE?”

- Brent Potteiger, Latin Instructor

As a Latin instructor, I've gotten that question more times than I can remember – and not without reason. After all, Latin hasn't been commonly used as a spoken language for nearly a millennium. Yet, as one of my students pointed out recently to a peer, “You actually use Latin words all the time!” That's so true! In fact, in the paragraph you just read I count at least 17 words that come from Latin.

Then there are Latin words, expressions or abbreviations you see and use regularly, like...

- “et cetera”
- “a.m./p.m.” (from “ante meridiem” and “post meridiem” meaning “before noon” and “after noon”)
- “R.I.P.” (from the Latin “Requiescat In Pace,” which means “May he/she rest in peace”)

Convinced yet? Here are a few other ideas to think about:

It's estimated that roughly 50-60% of English words and expressions come from Latin. Many of these words are identical to their original Latin root – or at least easily recognizable. Which means that learning Latin can broaden your vocabulary. That percentage goes up drastically, by the way, in certain fields. The sciences—especially the medical field—utilize a lot of terminology that either comes from Latin, or from other languages (like Greek) through Latin. (Interestingly, I once gave a lesson to a high school anatomy class, just by teaching the Latin words for a variety of body parts.) And don't forget the legal field, which uses numerous Latin expressions like “ipso facto,” “habeas corpus,” “ad hominem,” and “cui bono.”

A recent study found that learning more than one language makes it easier to learn additional languages. This is particularly true of Latin, which is the mother of several modern languages (known as the Romance languages): French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian. The study also showed that a second language can make you more proficient at your own native language. I've heard many people say—and I agree completely—that they never really understood how English works until they learned another language, like Latin.

Latin is the language through which much of our culture has come down to us. Like all those myths about gods and heroes that show up everywhere from poetry, to art, to that staff with a snake wrapped around it which you see on ambulances. And there are all those great Latin stories about noble people like Cincinnatus, Cicero and Caesar...and horrific examples of vice like Coriolanus, Nero and Domitian—and the lessons they have taught to many generations, including our own. And did you know that many world-changing books were originally written in Latin? Newton, Copernicus and Galileo—to name a few—all wrote in Latin. So, sure, Latin isn't spoken much anymore (though we do speak it at Gillingham). But its influence and benefit to our souls is far from dead—Latin is immortal!

Around the County

Sweet Arrow Lake Memorial Day Concert

May 27 | 6-8 pm

Sweet Arrow Lake County Park

108 Clubhouse Rd, Pine Grove

www.sweetarrowlakepark.com

Kids Paint for Dave Day

May 28 | 6-7 pm

Pottsville Library

Canvas and paint sets available. Cookies will be served.

Call 570-622-8880 ext. 12 or email potchild@pottsvillelibrary.org to register.

Spring BOGO Booksale

May 29 | 10 am - 4 pm

Pressed Coffee & Books

Books are buy 1 get 1 half off!

www.pressedpottsville.com

Spring Cleaning Yard Sale

May 30 & June 1 | 10 am - 3 pm

Council for the Arts

Office furniture, sheet music, art supplies, books, pamphlets, memorabilia, art supplies, vintage items, and more!

1440 Mahantongo St, Pottsville

Visit [Schuylkill Council for the Arts](https://www.facebook.com/schuylkillcouncilforthearts) on Facebook.

Arch Street Market

June 1 | 9 am - 1 pm

Every other Saturday, located in the Arch Street parking lot on Centre Street. The day will feature farmers, live music by local musicians, and other carefully curated, locally sourced products.

email for info: hello@ember.marketing



Above: Eliot Herbert, Gillingham senior, spoke at the press conference.

Several representatives, charter school leaders, students, and a parent took the floor to speak in front of a staircase packed full of students holding signs, PA lawmakers, and several news cameras. Speakers shared their stories and some called on the General Assembly and Governor Wolf to support the families who have chosen a charter school for their child. Among the speakers was Gillingham's VERY OWN senior, Eliot Herbert. He shared his story and why he feels that school choice is a necessity. We wrapped up our day with a picnic in the Soldier's Grove before heading back home.

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“Despite the extraordinary parent satisfaction and increasing demand for expansion, charter schools are under relentless attack from the traditional public education establishment,” said Ana Meyers. “The students that joined us today at the Capitol have chosen a public charter school and are flourishing in these environments. They deserve the same consideration and respect that our lawmakers and Governor Wolf give their peers in traditional district schools.”



Above: Students sat on picnic blankets with their homerooms to enjoy a picnic lunch before heading home.

DIY PARENTING

Summer Field Studies

Gillingham students LOVE field studies. There are plenty of activities in and around our county. Check out this list of ideas below and find more on our website: www.gillinghamcharterschool.org/resources.

- Hike and birdwatch at Hawk Mountain
- Take a pottery making class at Mud and Maker
- Register for a John O'Hara Walking Tour
- Explore GoggleWorks Art in Reading, PA or Walk In Art Center in Schuylkill Haven
- Road trip to Philadelphia to see the Liberty Bell & Independence Hall

Charlotte Mason Institute Community Study Groups

Gillingham is accredited by the Charlotte Mason Institute, and now you can join one of their educational communities for FREE to study and grow as you apply the beauty of Mason's philosophy and practice. The reading schedule will be light (only about 20 pages a month) so you can process and apply it while you learn throughout the whole study.

The NEW FORMAT begins in July 2019 giving you more flexibility and support! You can register for all six sessions with all the resources provided or join for an individual session by topic of interest.

RALLY AT THE CAPITOL

- Elisabeth Hutchinson



On May 8th, 2019, Gillingham joined over 500 charter school students and supporters at the State Capitol building to fight for charter schools and school choice. Students from Kinderleben through twelfth grade were invited to attend and bring along family and friends. This was Gillingham's first all-school field study, and we travelled to Harrisburg in FIVE coach buses!

When the buses arrived at the State Capitol, we divided up into 10 teams with a game plan. Working together, these teams of charter school students and supporters visited every single legislative office in the Capitol! Lower, Middle, and Upper School students had the incredible opportunity to personally ask legislators to consider supporting charter schools.



Upon arrival at the Capitol, students found their Team and prepared to meet the legislators!



Upper School Students were able to sit around Governor Wolf's office table where state laws are made official.

Gillingham's voice was heard in the Rotunda during the annual press conference hosted by the Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (PCPCS) in celebration of National Charter School Week. Ana Meyers, Executive Director of PCPCS, organized the event and worked personally alongside GCS and other schools to ensure that charter schools were well represented to make an impact. PCPCS tirelessly works for the survival and growth of charter schools across the state:

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Staff BIOs



Frank McDonough UPPER SCHOOL TEACHER

I'm a first year teacher at GCS. I attended college at Penn State University, Alvernia University, and University of Phoenix, earning an Associates in Human Development and Family Studies, Bachelors in Education, and Masters in Criminal Justice. I've worked in a multitude of educational and mental health environments over the last 21 years. In my personal time my wife and I run Grass Hollow Archery, an archery training center in Orwigsburg, PA, and shoot competitively, pursuing a spot on the United States World Archery Team.



Jessica McCready SCHOOL NURSE

I am the school nurse at Gillingham Charter School. I became a certified nursing assistant when I was 17. From there I got my LPN in 2012 and my RN in 2016. It is my first year at Gillingham, and it has been a great experience for me. Outside of work, I enjoy cooking, cleaning, and spending time with my family.