



Granite Academy Hosts Legislative Day

On February 24 Granite Academy hosted a MAAPS sponsored Regional Legislative Meeting. Granite Academy is a member of MAAPS which stands for The Massachusetts Association of Approved Private Schools. These regional events are designed to inform our legislators about how private special education helps students realize their full potential and the challenges that we face in today's world of declining resources - a challenge shared by public schools as well.

Parent Joan MacDonald spoke about the importance of Granite Academy's educational and therapeutic services for her son Taylor, a 2009 West Campus graduate. East Campus graduates Stephanie Wong and Lauren Psaros spoke of how Granite Academy provided the stability they needed and that enabled them to graduate. All three graduates are now attending state college.

We appreciate representatives Bradley and Cusack attending this event and hope that the experience will inform them as they deliberate on the important decisions facing the Commonwealth.



From left to right: Left to right: parent Joan MacDonald, Rep. Garrett Bradley, D-Hingham, East Campus 2010 graduate Stephanie Wong, East Campus Director Jane Beckler, Rep. Mark Cusack, D-Braintree, and Executive Director Jim Bertram

Celebrating Student Accomplishments

West Campus held the first of its bi-annual awards ceremonies this past month and as always it was a triumphant success for the both staff and students. The mid-year awards ceremony is much more than an awards banquet: it is a retrospective of student academic, artistic and vocational work from the beginning of the school year. The event opens with hors d'oeuvres that are prepared and served by Granite Academy students. Meanwhile, parents and community-based service providers are encouraged to spend time talking with staff members and perusing the display of student work that staff assembled for the occasion.

This year was particularly special as the ceremony opened with a performance by Granite Academy's Drum Corp, directed by Martin Isaac. Students were recognized for their many accomplishments with awards given by each teacher and counselor. What makes these events so special is seeing the students' smiles and the proud looks from parents in attendance.

\$10,000 Challenge Grant from Alden Trust

We are pleased to announce that the John W. Alden Trust has awarded Granite Academy a \$10,000 **challenge** grant in support of our Natural Lighting Project. The awarding of this grant is contingent upon Granite Academy successfully raising an additional \$10,000.

The Natural Lighting Project is part of our ongoing effort to improve the learning and working environment and to direct the cost savings into program services. The grant will fund the installation of the Solatube™ lighting system which minimizes the need for florescent lighting. Research has linked natural lighting to improved learning and test scores.

You can help us meet this challenge by mailing a contribution to the address below. Donations in any amount are needed and welcomed. We will update our progress in the next issue of **Connect**.

Volunteering for a Good Cause

East Campus student Robert Michaud is a proud volunteer at the New England Wildlife Center in Weymouth. Robert, who says “I love animals and want to learn more about them” helps with animal care and cage cleaning and gives tours to Center visitors. Volunteering is a win-win proposition, giving Robert valuable experience while caring for these vulnerable animals until they find a new home.



Robert holding a Blue Tongue Skink

Happenings at Granite Academy

March 17th | PhotoVoice comes to East Campus Café

Week of March 14th | Rocks basketball team competes in the SSBL League Tournament

March 31st | Successful Employment Program presentation to students

“Seeing is Believing”: Life is Cellular!

There is an old saying that goes “seeing is believing.” A great example of this is the discovery of the cell. You cannot see cells with your eyes alone. For centuries, without tools to make cells visible, scientists did not even know that there were cells. The microscope changed all of that!

Students at Granite Academy have been busy learning all about cell theory, a fundamental concept of biology, as part of the new two year integrated science curriculum. Our science teacher Ben Walsh has taught all of the students about light microscopes and the use of glass lenses to focus light and magnify the object. Over the past quarter, our student scientists have been exploring the cell structure by looking at both animal and plant cells including honey bee, goldfish, plant leaf and stem, fruit fly, silk worm and butterfly through a light microscope. Students also participated in a live cell cheek lab and were amazed to find living bacterial cells in their own mouths! Students viewed these cells, drew sketches of their observations and really understood the concept that cells have specific structures and functions that make them distinctive.



Science teacher Ben Walsh assists student Michale Rocha

Interested in learning more about Granite Academy? Please feel free to contact one of our administrators.

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