

# What's Blooming

A NEWSLETTER FROM BLOOMING GROVE ACADEMY

CELEBRATING OUR 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY THIS SCHOOL YEAR!

VOLUME 25 NO. 2

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## From the Director...

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Dear Parents,

I feel blessed and privileged to be a part of Blooming Grove Academy. I am thrilled the Board and search committee felt that I was a match to the Mission/Vision/Philosophy of BGA. Although I've only been Director for just a few short weeks, I feel I am becoming an integral part of the Blooming Grove family.

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It truly is a family oriented atmosphere. We (staff and teachers) are fortunate to get to partner with you in the nurturing and growth of your child(ren). I am enjoying every minute in getting to know them better. They all show true enthusiasm for learning and their potential is beyond our grasp. I am a believer in the fact that great things are happening with the education of your child.

I have never met a more dedicated and eager set of teachers who have put your child and their well-being first. They have a rich history with this school and are a big reason why we are all celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> season of Blooming Grove Academy this year.

I know having someone new at the helm can be a bit overwhelming and uneasy, but I guarantee you I am a listen first, act second, type of person. I will only implement change, if change is warranted and/or is for the betterment of the school. I believe in the positive things that have been occurring here at BGA, and intend to build on that with the assistance of the Board, the Staff, and you - the Parent.

We have a lot of exciting things that will be happening throughout this anniversary year and I hope you will remain a valuable, active participant along the way. There are and will be many ways in which you can obtain your service hours and I encourage you to sign up for our email list if you haven't done so already. Opportunities will be sent out through this list – along with other important school information. As always, our website is a great resource for you.

### 4 R's

Responsibility

Respectfulness

Resourcefulness

Responsiveness

Communication among a parent and their child's school is a huge factor in the success of the educational plan. Our teachers have committed to the school year and to your child (based on your goals and aspirations and interests) and in order to gain the most benefit, we all need to share, learn and grow together.

I look forward to guiding all of us through this exciting school year and my door will remain open at any time. If we haven't met, please stop in and say Hello very soon.

Please be sure to review this newsletter for all of the exciting things happening. I hope to see you all at orientation very soon.

Your partner in education,  
Karen

## NEWS FROM THE OFFICE

### TUITION

Please remember that tuition payments are due on the 10<sup>th</sup> of every month. Late fees will be assessed 5 days after the due date and each week thereafter, so PLEASE be prompt in your payments.

### CHECK SUBMISSIONS

Due to accounting procedures please submit checks in the following manner:

- Tuition/Extended day may be included in one check. If you have a sibling group, you may include all sibling payments (tuition & extended day) in one check.
- Hot Lunch, Blooming Bucks, spirit wear, swimming and any other checks you write, must be separate and not bulked with any other item. Please include in the memo line what the check is for.

## EXTENDED DAY

Did you know that our Extended Day Program has many different ways to help suit the needs of your family??

Extended Day offers 3 monthly programs:

- For \$64/month you can bring your child in every morning from 7:00-7:50AM
- For \$120/month you can have your child stay every day after school from 3:00-6:00PM
- For \$170/month you can have your child at BGA from 7:00-7:50AM and 3:00-6:00PM every day.
- For \$6.00/hr you can bring/leave your child at BGA for occasional or emergency circumstances.

Unsure of what program is best for your family?

We encourage parents to do the following: 1. Calculate the number of hours they need care for. 2: Multiply that number by \$6.00 (hourly drop in service). 3. If that dollar amounts does not exceed the monthly program amount, you should use the drop in service. If it does, you should opt for a monthly program.

If you have any questions about what program is best suited for your family, please contact Jodi at any time.

## STUDENT PICTURE DAY!

We are in the process of scheduling picture day. It should be sometime in October. Watch for further details in your child's backpack.

Call Marcia in the office with any questions.

## EMERGENCY SHEET UPDATE

Have you moved, changed jobs or received a new cell phone number over the summer? **It is so important that emergency sheets be kept up-to-date.** Visit our website @ [www.bgakids.net](http://www.bgakids.net), Classroom News/Parent Information, Forms, Information Change Form, and download one today. **Return that to the office immediately.** Thank you!

## WISH BOARD

A Teacher Wish Board is in the making! Teachers will be posting items that they need for their classrooms, and for each \$30 you spend, one volunteer hour will be credited toward your total. More information will follow in the October What's Blooming.

If you are interested in helping create this board, (a great way to get service hours) please see Karen in the office.

## PARENTING CORNER

### CALLING ALL PARENTS AND TEACHERS!

The Parent/Teacher organization (P/T Crew) is looking for new people and fresh ideas! Yes, that means you! Our goal is to have fun and get to know each other while finding ways to support our school!

Since this is the beginning of a new year, we would like to invite new faces to participate in the P/T Crew. We are also looking for a new chairperson. If you are interested or want further information, contact Karen at the school office or email her at: [director@bgakids.net](mailto:director@bgakids.net).

## BARNES AND NOBLE DAY

Once a year, Blooming Grove Academy sponsors a day at Barnes and Noble. This is a fundraising effort for the school, but at the same time, your family will enjoy the books that you purchase! The date for this year is **Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup>**.

A portion of each sale on this day, made by family and friends of BGA, goes to our school. In years past our school marked the highest fundraising amount of all schools that participated!

We encourage all parents to purchase Barnes and Noble gift cards from our Blooming Bucks program so that they may use them on this day. The school will make an extra 9% if you purchase your items with gift cards bought through our Blooming Bucks program.

## MEDICINE ADMINISTRATION

Please be sure to use the medicine administration form (**now available for download on our website**) when asking the school to give your child medication. A doctor's signature is required for both over-the-counter and prescription medication. (We can accept a faxed copy from your doctor's office)

Inhalers for any Early Learner child must be administered by the parent. Elementary and Middle school students may carry their inhalers and self-administer, if they have a Medicine Administration Form completed and signed by the doctor.

Please note: All Nebulizer treatments must be administered by a parent.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

September 3 **NO SCHOOL-**  
Parent/Teacher/Child Conferences  
8:00am-11:30am & 1:00-4:30pm

September 6 **NO SCHOOL** – Labor Day

September 15 Kick Off for Read-A-Thon

September 18 All-School Family Picnic/Potluck  
Maxwell Park 4:00-6:00PM

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Looking ahead:

October 11 **NO SCHOOL-** Columbus Day

October 22 **NO SCHOOL-** In-Service

## P/T/C CONFERENCES

If you have not called for your child's conference, please do so right away. They take place on **Friday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>**, and this is a very important meeting you won't want to miss.

## BOARD MEETINGS

The BGA Board of Directors monthly meeting will be held on the **3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday** of every month.

Meetings are open to everyone and start promptly at **5:30PM in the Community Room.**

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

BGA is looking for several volunteers:

1. Blooming Bucks-We are looking for people to help Marcia process Blooming Bucks. This involves a few hours on Monday and Friday mornings.
2. Vision and Hearing Screening- 1 or 2 mornings. (Date to be announced)
3. IT Team
4. Classroom Aides
5. Substitute Teachers
6. Lunch/Recess Aides  
11:30-1:00 daily
7. Extended Day Aides  
3:00-6:00 daily
8. Selective Teachers -  
For Elem/MS School  
Contact: [Meghanh@bgakids.net](mailto:Meghanh@bgakids.net)
9. Assist with Art, PE, Music, Library, Writers Workshop, and Theater  
9:30-11:00 Monday-Thursday

Contact Heather Hall @  
[thehallz4@yahoo.com](mailto:thehallz4@yahoo.com) if you can help!

**PLEASE NOTE: ANYONE WORKING DIRECTLY WITH CHILDREN WILL NEED TO COMPLETE BACKGROUND CHECKS TO DCFS (free) AND THE STATE OF IL (\$16.00).**

**REPORTS TAKE 1-2 WEEKS TO BE RETURNED, SO PLEASE GET THOSE COMPLETED ASAP.**

**PLEASE GET YOUR FORMS IN THE MAIN OFFICE.**

## MEET THE BLOOMING GROVE STAFF

**Karen Bruning:**

Hello! I have an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education from ISU and hold the State of Illinois Teacher Certification. I completed my Masters in Education Administration from National-Louis University. I have been in education for 25 years. Previously, I owned and operated my own pre-school, was an administrator at Parkland College Child Development Lab School, and worked at the state level in early childhood on policies and guidelines around early childhood professionals. I bring years of grant writing, fundraising, leadership training and staff development to this position. I am very anxious to get to know the parents and children that belong to the BGA family. I am looking forward to a very positive school year. Please plan to come visit me and introduce yourself.

**Kris Barnett:** Hello! I'm glad to be back for another great year at BGA! This year I am teaching full day 3-4 year olds! I live in rural Bloomington with my husband, Ron. We have four sons. I am a graduate of the University of Evansville with a Bachelors degree in Elementary Education. I received my masters degree in education from Indiana State University. I love working with the staff, children and families at BGA!

**Kathy Bihn:** Hi! This is my 12<sup>th</sup> year at BGA. My family includes my husband and our 2 daughters. I have a bachelors degree in Early Childhood Education and a masters degree in Education with an emphasis in reading. This year I am teaching EL II full day. I am looking forward to a great year!

**Pushpa Chaudhari:** This is my 16<sup>th</sup> year at Blooming Grove. I have a husband, two daughters and 2 grandchildren. This year will I will be working with Kris and Kay in the two 3-4 year old rooms. I am looking forward to an exciting and fun-filled year!

**Marcia Esparza:** Hello, everyone. I'm very excited to start my 7<sup>th</sup> year as Administrative Assistant at Blooming Grove. I would like to give a warm welcome to all of our new and returning BGA families. We are going to have a great year at BGA! The school office will be open from 7:45AM – 4:30PM Monday – Friday. Stop by or call anytime you need assistance. I am here to help make your transition back to school an enjoyable one.

**Kay Griepentrog:** Hello! We are going to have a wonderful year! Thank you for sharing your children with me. I have enjoyed teaching at Blooming Grove for 20 years. I am very fortunate to be involved with the Early Learner team. My husband, Dennis, and I live in Eureka with our cat, Marlow and yellow lab Porter. We have two children. Our son, Jon, and his wife, Tonya, live in Waukegan. Our daughter, Jodi, her husband, Jason, and their daughters, Kayse Jane and Shelby Lynn, live on a farm between Gibson City and Bloomington.

**Meghan Hillebrandt:** Hello! This is my 4<sup>th</sup> year at BGA and my 5<sup>th</sup> year of teaching. I graduated from Illinois State University in 2005 with a B.S. in Elementary Education. My husband, Aaron, and I live in Normal with our two cats, Reeses and Moo! I am very excited for another wonderful year of teaching the middle school students at BGA!

**Jodi Stalsworth:** Hello! I have been the Business Manager at BGA since March 2005. I love working with all of our families, as well as seeing your children on a daily basis! I have lived in Bloomington since 1984 when I came to the area to attend Illinois State University. I have since obtained my Bachelors degree and have worked in many areas of the financial industry. My family consists of my husband Paul, and our 2 sons Joshua and Daniel. Both of my children have attended Blooming Grove Academy and the things that they have learned and gained from this school will last them a lifetime. Our family is very grateful for BGA in so many ways!

**Cristen Susong:** This is my 4<sup>th</sup> year at BGA. I will be teaching working with the elementary and middle school students as well as teaching Drama. Previously, I taught 7th grade history at Garrison Forest School, where I also created the school literacy magazine and served on the faculty council. In Baltimore, I also taught for 4 years as a Language Arts teacher, where I served on the council for gifted and talented curriculum. I am currently pursuing my MA at ISU. I look forward to another great year!

**Gayle Uphoff:** This year is my 18<sup>th</sup> year at BGA and will be teaching one of the Early Learner II classes. I have 3 grown children and 6 grandchildren. I recently obtained my Master's Degree in reading and am looking forward to another great year with your children!

**Jay Regennitter:** This is my first year at BGA, and I am excited to be teaching Music. I have a BA in Choral Music Education and a MA in Organ Performance from Western Illinois University. I also have a Master of Divinity from Duke University. My teaching experience ranges from public to private, preschool to college. My wife, Sarah, and I live in Normal with our three children and two dogs.

**Sujatha Easwaran-** 3 day Teacher

**Sonyta Adkins-**Physical Education

**Chloe Whiting Stevenson-**Extended Day Director

## BLOOMING BUCKS

The Blooming Bucks Program is a great & easy way to support the school and shop at the same time! Hopefully, you have placed your first order with us and are pleased with the program!

There are many vendors that are participants in our Blooming Bucks program that are not listed on our weekly order form. Please visit [www.glscrip.com](http://www.glscrip.com) (or see the link on our website) for a full list of participating businesses.

If you would like to purchase any scrip that is not on our list, please talk to Marcia in the office. She will be happy to assist you!

## IESA

BGA is looking into joining the Illinois Elementary School Association (IESA). Participation in interscholastic activities provides students with great, unique learning opportunities. We are hoping to give our students the opportunity to achieve recognition for themselves, BGA and our community.

Activities we are considering for our 5 year olds and up:

- Art workshops
- Chess clubs
- Music
- Scholastic Bowl
- Speech
- Sports with minimal team requirements such as cross country, bowling and golf.

In order to participate, we need a sponsor or parent who would be willing to organize each activity. Please see Karen if you are at all interested. GO BGA!

## PARENT ORIENTATION

Please plan to join us for Parent Orientation. (Date and Time Announcements will be very soon!)

*Meet new staff, Hear about volunteer activities, Learn about our P/T Crew involvement, fundraising ideas and more!*

## READ-A-THON KICKOFF

The annual Read-A-Thon kickoff is **September 15th**. For those of you new to the school, this is a project that we have participated in for many several years. The Read-a-thon sharpens reading skills and allows families to actively participate in a **FUN** fundraising event that does not require selling anything.

Our goal is for each child to find a minimum of 8 sponsors who would be willing to pledge 25 cents, 50 cents, \$1, or even more, for every book they read; or for pre-readers, for every book a parent reads to them. Each student will have four weeks to reach the reading goal that they have set for themselves. When the Read-A-Thon ends, simply collect the funds from your sponsors based on the number of books your child has read. It's actually a simple process, and the benefit for our school can be HUGE if we all participate!

Watch for more information and a sponsor sheet to come home with your child, but start recruiting sponsors now!

**Please feel free to contact the office if you have any questions. Thank you for your support!**

## **Campbell's** Labels for Education

Labels for Education™ awards free educational equipment to BGA in exchange for proofs of purchase from the Campbell family of brands.

*Please help by clipping all UPCs and saving lids from the below participating Labels for Education Brands, and bring them to BGA.*

- Campbell's®
- Campbell's® Soup At Hand®
- Campbell's® Chunky™ Soup
- Campbell's® Healthy Request
- Campbell's® Supper Bakes®
- Campbell's® Select™
- Campbell's® Soup to Go!
- Franco-American®
- Pepperidge Farm®
- Swanson®
- V8® beverages
- Prego® Pasta sauces
- Campbell's® Foodservice

If you would like to help our staff by working on the Labels for Education program, please call the office. We need volunteers to organize and submit the items for redemption.

## **NETWORKING/VOLUNTEER OP**

Do you want/need space when you drop your children off and or pick them up to visit/network with other parents and get resources? If you are interested in helping get a parent area set up in the community room, please see Karen!

## **General Mills, Ziploc® and Kleenex® BOX TOPS**

The Box Tops program has three ways that you can help Blooming Grove earn money.

Box Tops Coupons - Clip Box Tops coupons from hundreds of participating products found in the local grocery stores and turn them into BGA. We earn 10¢ for each Box Top redeemed.

The Box Tops Marketplace<sup>SM</sup> - Shop online at your favorite stores like JCPenney and Lands' End, through the Box Tops for Education Marketplace. BGA earns a percentage of each qualifying purchase at no additional cost to you.

The Box Tops Visa® Card - Use the Box Tops for Education Visa card and BGA earns 1% cash back every time you charge.

For more information about these programs, please go to:

[www.boxtops4education.com](http://www.boxtops4education.com)

*Please help by clipping out all of your General Mills, Ziploc® and Kleenex® products boxtops and bring them to BGA.*

If you would like to help our staff by working on the Box Tops program, please call the office. We need volunteers to organize and submit the items for redemption.



## SCHOOL HOURS / DROP OFF / PICK UPS –KEEPING KIDS FIRST

**Drop Off Time: 7:50 – 8:00AM**

**School Hours: 8:00AM – 3:00PM**

**Pick Up: 3:00-3:10 Early Learners**

**3:05-3:15 Elementary & Middle School**

Research shows that when children and adults have a consistent schedule their workday goes much smoother. Research also shows that children who attend school on time do better in school. It is frustrating for children to enter their classrooms when lessons have already started. We need to have scheduled times for students to maximize their learning time at school and to start and end consistently. This is one way we can all work together to keep students' needs first.

Additionally, teachers and teaching assistants need to be in the classrooms ready for their first lesson at 8:00AM. Therefore, before school duty has to have an end time. We appreciate your help with this.

A few reminders:

- **Please do not leave your car during the 7:50 – 8:00AM drop off time.** Unfortunately, the police have informed us that this year we can no longer park on Evans Street. This will also help with traffic that can sometimes get backed up on Washington Street making it a danger for motorists. **If you want to be in the building with your child, *even for just a minute*, please park in the next block or in the church parking lot located on the corner of Washington and Evans Street.**
- **Please do not stop in the middle of Evans Street to load and unload your child.** This is dangerous for the children and it blocks the flow of traffic.
- **Do not park in the parking lot across from the main entrance on Evan Street.** This is a residential lot for the tenants in the adjoining buildings. We don't want you to be towed.
- **We encourage children to come into the building without their parents after the first few weeks of school.** BGA personnel will direct your children to their classrooms.
- **All visitors who come to school after school has started and throughout the day should sign in at the office.**

Thank you very much for your respect and support with our schedule!

## ALL-SCHOOL PICNIC

It's time to start thinking about the All-School Picnic. You won't want to miss this annual event! It is a GREAT opportunity to meet the other children from the school, their families, and teachers. So mark the date on your calendar and plan to attend!

WHEN: Saturday, September 19th  
4:00-6:00 PM

WHERE: Maxwell Park

FOOD: This is a POTLUCK.  
Last names starting with A-F; please bring a dessert to share.  
Last names starting with G-Z; please bring a main dish to share.

ADDRESS: Just South of the intersection of Parkside and Gregory Street, Normal  
(and just North of Parkside Jr. High School)

**\*\*Please remember to bring table settings for your family\*\***  
**See you there!**

