



# NEWS & EVENTS

## Resounding Endorsement of Preschool

"Children who attend high-quality preschool enter kindergarten with better pre-reading skills, richer vocabularies, and stronger basic math skills than those who do not."

*W. Steven Barnett, PhD  
National Institute for  
Early Education Research*

## Long-term Benefits

Research shows preschool has "long-term effects on important societal outcomes such as high school graduation, years of education completed, earnings, and reduced crime and teen pregnancy..."

*"Investing in Our Future:  
The Evidence Base on  
Preschool Education" (2013)  
The Society for Research  
in Child Development and the  
Foundation for Child Development*

## Learn More

Each year in the Tri-Cities, many families are unable to afford quality preschool for their children. While some are helped by federal and state programs, it is estimated that approximately 250 children are not receiving this support. Our donors make it possible for GHSF to help fill the gap by providing preschool scholarships. Last year we granted full or partial scholarships to 81 three- and four-year-olds. Please visit [ghsf.org](http://ghsf.org) to learn more.



Four-year-old Vivi Anne reviews the alphabet with her preschool teacher, Deb Kaminsky.

## One Family's Story

"Umbrella. Three," four-year-old Vivi Anne told her mother. She had recently learned the concept of syllables and eagerly shared her new knowledge with mom, Natalie.

"Well, who taught you that?" Natalie asked her daughter.

"Miss Deb," replied Vivi Anne in her sweet, soft voice.

Deb Kaminsky is Vivi Anne's preschool teacher in the Preschool Development Program at Griffin Elementary School. Natalie had always wanted her daughter to go to preschool to further develop socially and academically. She began early to put aside as much money as she could in anticipation of Vivi Anne's attendance, concerned the cost would be a burden on the family. When she learned that Vivi Anne would receive a scholarship from GHSF for preschool tuition, Natalie says it "changed everything."

After one year of preschool, Natalie speaks highly of how it has made a difference in her daughter's life. She said Miss Deb's emphasis on respecting peers in the classroom is obvious in the way Vivi Anne is so polite and well-mannered. Vivi Anne is also more confident and has gained greater independence.

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GHSF is dedicated to providing three- and four-year-olds with critical early learning opportunities to help ensure kindergarten readiness.

# Ten inducted into GHHS Hall of Fame

Last November, GHSF celebrated its fourth GHHS Hall of Fame event at the Grand Haven Community Center. This event honors the achievements of Grand Haven High School graduates and those who have served our school district. We inducted an artist, a cancer researcher, an education pioneer, a science educator who helped establish GHHS as a Science Olympiad powerhouse, a former assistant superintendent of GHAPS, two community leaders, a swimmer, a diver, and a standout in softball and basketball. Our Master of Ceremonies, Ed Post, kept a full house entertained throughout the evening. Thank you, Ed!



The audience enjoyed an evening of celebration at the 2014 Hall of Fame.

## Hall of Fame Inductees



**Cultural/Performing Arts Achievement:** Wanda Gringhuis Anderson '58

**Athletic Achievement:** Ryan Kosanic '95, Abby Seskevich Voss '02, Jane Robinson Zych '76

**Career Academic Achievement:** Steven Goodman, Ph.D. '77, Jonathan Irish, Ph.D. '94

**Service to GHAPS/Society:** F. Martin Johnson '53, Gerald A. Witherell '55

**Honorary Award for Service to GHAPS:** Ronald L. Anderson, Walter W. Bright

## One Family's Story continued from page 1

The transformation that Natalie saw in her daughter speaks to the power of preschool. Deb said early education provides much more than basic academic skills, such as writing one's name, letter recognition, counting, and rhyming. A child has the ability to learn conflict resolution, responsibility, empathy, and respect. Deb calls preschool the foundation that makes a child flourish and grow.

Natalie couldn't agree more. She says Vivi Anne is always asking questions about the world around her. She has developed a thirst for knowledge and an inquisitive mind.

**"As a parent, you want to give your kids the best of everything. At the same time, it takes a village... And the Grand Haven Schools Foundation coming alongside and really being part of that village, it was such an invaluable help."**

*Natalie, mother of scholarship recipient*

"She is dying to learn how to read," Natalie said excitedly. "She has gotten so excited about reading over the course of this year."

Natalie is grateful to GHSF for making quality preschool easily available for Vivi Anne. She added that the scholarship "eased some of the tension" that might have been in her family without it.

"We work hard, and we do the best we can. We just need a little extra help," Natalie said.

GHSF is proud to be that extra help for families like Natalie's — ensuring little Vivi Anne will be kindergarten-ready and an avid reader for years to come.

# A Healthy Donation



Dr. Matt Dirkse, director of Health Zone (at right, with his daughter) presents a donation to Lana Jacobson (left) and Anne McLaughlin during Ladies' Night Out 2015.

On March 26 at the Tri-Cities Historical Museum, Health Zone Chiropractic of Grand Haven threw a party for ladies of the Tri-Cities. All the food and fun had a purpose: to help GHSF provide preschool scholarships for children. Dr. Matt Dirkse, owner of Health Zone, presented a \$6420 check to GHSF from new patient fees collected in 2014. Many thanks to Dr. Dirkse, his wife, Kate, who organized the event, and to the entire Health Zone crew. To learn more about Health Zone, visit [www.healthzonegrandhaven.com](http://www.healthzonegrandhaven.com).

## Words of Praise for GHSF

"The percentage of our students eligible for free and reduced lunch has increased from 19% in 2004 to 38% today. Yet, our district's academic achievement has continued to improve. I attribute this, in part, to the work of the Grand Haven Schools Foundation. Their commitment to providing preschool scholarships for three- and four-year-olds has enabled hundreds of children to become kindergarten-ready and succeed academically in ways that might never have been possible."

*GHAPS Superintendent  
Keith Konarska*

## The President's Pen



*Leslie Cassis-Withun*

It has been a busy and productive school year for GHSF. In the fall, we hired our first executive director,

Anne McLaughlin. Anne brings many years of nonprofit volunteer experience, including work with a large California-based education foundation. Prior to that, Anne was executive vice president of a national retail chain, a banker, and a CPA. At GHSF, Anne has utilized her insight and skills to spearhead a successful year-end fundraising effort, lead the board in strategic planning, help launch a new donor database, and enhance our financial reporting.

I would like to recognize longtime trustee and corresponding secretary Louann Werksma for nine years of service and offer congratulations on her promotion to the Grand Haven Schools Foundation emeritus board. Louann, along with an esteemed group of board pioneers, uncovered the need for preschool scholarships in our community and realigned our board mission to fill the gap.

We wish a joyful summer to all teachers, administrators, and staff, and we extend our gratitude to our generous donors and sponsors who have supported the efforts of the GHSF.

## Leadership Team

### Officers:

Leslie Cassis-Withun – President

Jay Greer – Vice President

Lana Jacobson – Vice President  
of Development

Sandra Huber – Secretary

Melinda Smith – Treasurer

### Trustees:

Todd Anthes, Kate Augustyn,  
Christine Baker, Patrick  
Boruta, Jake Hogeboom,  
Linda Lukasik, Barb Rickard,  
and Louann Werksma

### Executive Director:

Anne McLaughlin

## Contact

(616) 850-5066

[www.ghsf.org](http://www.ghsf.org)

GHSF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with an endowment fund held at the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation.

 Like Grand Haven Schools Foundation/Hall of Fame

# Chamber of Commerce Presents Spirit of Community Award to GHSF Trustees

At the Chamber Annual Dinner on May 7, GHSF board members Lana Jacobson and Kate Augustyn (pictured here) were recognized for their passionate and committed leadership in early childhood education and advocacy. Together they have led the collaboration of GHSF and other community leaders to strengthen the investment in our children, our community, and our future — Kate in her role as Director of Special Education and Early Childhood Services at GHAPS and Lana over nine years with GHSF and as a founding director of Tri-Cities College Access Network (TCAN).



Lana and Kate possess a steadfast commitment to creating the best outcomes possible for the children we serve. With support from donors, businesses, and community organizations, they are helping to ensure that all children have access to quality preschool programs, so that they begin kindergarten with a solid sense of security in a school setting, positive self-esteem, and a zest for learning.

We are grateful that our local Chamber of Commerce recognizes the critical role early childhood education plays in lifelong learning and economic and workforce development.



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