

DECEMBER 2023

# NEWSLETTER



## Welcome to Grace Christian Academy!

### School Contact

13000 Zekiah Dr  
Waldorf, MD 20601

(301) 645-0406

Office Hours: 7:30-4:00 M-F



### Important Dates:

- 12/5 - Mid-Quarter
  - 12/12 - PreK - Kinder Christmas Program 7pm
  - 12/14 - 1st - 5th Christmas Program 7pm
  - 12/14 - TAG Day
  - 12/15 - Christmas Spirit Day
  - 12/18 - Ugly Christmas Sweater Day
  - 12/19 - Favorite Christmas Sweater Day
  - **12/19 - JANUARY LUNCH FORMS DUE**
  - 12/20 - HALF DAY, NO AFTERCARE
  - 12/20 - All-School Christmas Breakfast, Red/Green Shirt Day
- Lunch Forms Found [HERE!](#)

### Message From the Office

Greetings GCA Family and Friends,

As we come to the end of this year, I am writing to personally thank you for your continual support and for entrusting us with your most prized possessions every day – your amazingly brilliant children! This has been a busy year, and I am so proud of our students, teachers, and you, our school community. As we step into 2024, we are committed to our mission and vision of developing “Kingdom Kids”, who live and love like Jesus.

Grace is a community with many gifts and talents, which we share daily with one another and most importantly, our students. From the classroom to our living room and all points in-between, our collective efforts to raise the whole child are filled with passion, commitment, and a willingness to make decisions that may be hard in the present but will have a positive and lasting influence in the future for all.

In the spirit of this holiday season, I want to extend my thanks to all of you for everything that you do for our school. As we enjoy the upcoming holidays, it is my prayer that each of you receive and return the seasonal bounty of blessings and good tidings that make these days truly special. From all of us here at Grace Christian Academy, we wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! We pray for your well-being this holiday season and look forward to seeing you all back after the season on Wednesday, January 3, 2024.

In His Service,  
Dwayne Johnson  
Director of School





# GCA's Christmas Programs And Concerts

December 12 @ 7PM: Prek and Kinder \*

GCA Strings

December 14 @ 7PM: 1st-5th Grade \*

GCA Band

All students should arrive at 6:30PM.

## PIZZA, PANDA EXPRESS AND CHICK-FIL-A



January lunch forms are due  
December 19. Many families ordered  
lunches for 2022 only and have not  
yet ordered for 2023. If you want  
your child to receive pizza or Chick-  
Fil-A the first week on January you  
**MUST ORDER BY DECEMBER 19,**  
**NO EXCEPTIONS!**



**We're**

**Hiring**

GCA is looking to hire a couple  
additional substitute teachers and  
aftercare workers. If you are  
interested in more information,  
please reach out to  
[megan.schanziel@graceknights.org](mailto:megan.schanziel@graceknights.org).

# Spiritual Coach

[stacie.buhl@graceknights.org](mailto:stacie.buhl@graceknights.org)



Dear Parents,

*As we immerse ourselves in the joyous festivities of the holiday season, it is essential to pause and reflect on the profound significance of Christmas beyond the glittering decorations and cheerful melodies. At GCA, we hold dearly to the belief that Christmas embodies the ultimate act of divine love and salvation for mankind through the birth of Jesus Christ.*

*The birth of Jesus marks a pivotal moment in history—a gift from God that brought hope and salvation to humanity. His arrival heralded a message of redemption, grace, and eternal love. Christmas isn't merely about exchanging gifts or relishing in seasonal delights; it is a reminder of the incredible sacrifice and ultimate purpose of Jesus' life—to bring salvation to all.*

*It is through Jesus Christ that we find the path to forgiveness, grace, and eternal life. His teachings of compassion, humility, and selflessness continue to inspire us to this day, guiding us to live in harmony and love with one another.*

*During this season, we encourage you to share the significance of Jesus' birth with your children. Engage in conversations about the profound impact of His life, teachings, and the salvation He offers to all who believe. Encourage them to embrace the values of kindness, forgiveness, and empathy that Jesus exemplified.*

*As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, let us not forget the immense gift of salvation that He brought to mankind. Let this Christmas be a time for reflection, gratitude, and renewed commitment to embodying the spirit of Jesus in our daily lives.*

*If you have any questions or concerns regarding your personal salvation, I would love to chat with you this season, please feel free to reach out to me at [Stacie.buhl@graceknights.org](mailto:Stacie.buhl@graceknights.org).*

*May your homes be filled with the joyous celebration of His birth and the awareness of the divine gift of salvation this Christmas season.*

Warmest regards,  
Mrs. Buhl  
Spiritual Coach

Merry Christmas





**December 14**

**Tag Day**

Is an optional activity  
sponsored by the Middle School Student Council

**Thursday, December 14, 2023**

\$1.00 for your own shirt

\$1.00 for your own pants

**\$2.00 total for your own outfit,  
if paid in advance!**

**\$4.00 if paid on Tag Day**



*"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:11*

**\$2.00 is due Wednesday, December 13, 2023**

*All clothing and shoes must meet GCA Standards. Reminder no jeans with holes.*

*No athletic slides or hats on tag day.*

Those who have paid the Yearly Tag Day Fee are paid in full.

No further payment is required!

**WE ARE GRACE**

**Christmas Spirit Day**

**December 15, 2023**

**Preschool: Polar Express Pajama Day**

Wear your favorite pajamas

**Kindergarten: Presents/Gifts**

Wear bows/gift tags

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade: Christmas Accessories**

Socks, Hats, Jewelry, Hair Accessories

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: Green Grinch**

Wear Green

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Snowmen**

Wear white and snowman accessories

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade: Mad About Plaid**

Wear plaid/flannel

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Blue Christmas**

Wear Blue

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Shine Bright**

Wear bright/shiny/glittery attire

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Candy Cane**

Wear red and white or stripes

**Ugly  
Christmas  
Sweater  
Day**

This is a free optional event sponsored by: The MS SGA

**Monday, December 18, 2023**

Christmas Sweaters, Sweater Vests and Sweatshirts!

Red and Green Christmas Shirts are allowed.

Must wear uniform pants.



**WE ARE GRACE**

**Wear your  
Favorite  
Christmas  
Sweater  
Day**

This is a free optional event for grades PK-8  
Sponsored by: The MS SGA



**Tuesday, December 19, 2023**

Christmas Sweaters, Sweater Vests and Sweatshirts!

Red and Green Christmas Shirts are allowed.

Must wear uniform pants.

*Merry  
Christmas*



# Christmas Breakfast Volunteers Needed!

Dec. 20



Approx.  
8:30-11:45



We need volunteers to help make our annual Christmas breakfast another success! Volunteers will help setup, serve, and cleanup. Please email [amanda.reed@graceknights.org](mailto:amanda.reed@graceknights.org) if you are interested.

## ILLNESSES/APPOINTMENTS, ETC.

Now that we are back to school, viruses and such will begin to make its way through the school sooner than later. Please express importance of handwashing, cough/sneeze etiquette, consuming enough water, eating a healthy diet, and getting a good nights rest to your student.

Doctor's notes can be sent to [healthnotes@graceknights.org](mailto:healthnotes@graceknights.org)

Please be sure to inform Healthnotes as well as your student's teacher if your child is receiving a surgical or medical procedure, or have any changes to their health during the school year. This is to ensure they are properly cared for in the event complications arise.

# GCA Teacher

## Classroom Library Wishlists

Last year, our used book drive was a huge success! The purpose was to increase the quantity of books in our classroom libraries.

This year, we are looking to increase the quality of books.

Teachers have put together Amazon wishlists to enhance the selection of books in the classrooms. If your student's teacher is not listed, consider blessing another classroom or the school's library. Simply click on the teacher's name and it will take you directly to their Amazon list.



[School Library](#)

Thank  
you



[PK4 ChyAnn Richie](#)

[PK4 Michelle Goodson](#)



[PK3 Shelby Ericson](#)

[1st MaryEllen Goodson](#)



[3rd Jennifer Heusted](#)

[5th Kelly Rolfe](#)



[Learning Lab](#)  
[Debbie Collignon](#)

[Music Rebecca Clark](#)



# Behavior Incentive Program

[stacie.buhl@graceknights.org](mailto:stacie.buhl@graceknights.org)

*Please check your email for letter on Behavior Incentive Plan, but here is how it will work.*

## How the Behavior Incentive Program will work: (BIP)

### Kindergarten through Second Grade:

Each month teachers will be given a student behavior chart. The chart will have the teacher's roster and a box for each day of the month. At the end of each day teachers will mark only the students who are on or above the good behavior mark for their individual classroom discipline system. At the end of each month students who receive marks for 80% of the month will receive an Icee at the end of the day.

Students who go above and beyond each month can be nominated by their teacher to come to our school store to pick out a prize such as candy or a small toy.

### Third Grade through Eighth Grade:

The BIP will be based off students receiving tickets for having good behavior displayed, being prepared for class, helping students in need, and/or going above and beyond what is expected of them. At the teachers' discretion, tickets will be given out to students who display the above attributes. At the end of each month students will come to the school store to spend their tickets on various prizes. Some of the prizes include candy, trinkets, game time in the game room, gym time, lunch with a teacher or administrator, gift cards, and much more.

### Here are some key factors:

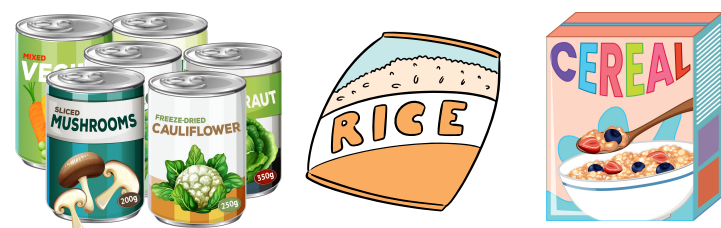
- Students are responsible for keeping their own tickets.
- If tickets are lost, they will not be replaced by the teacher.
- Students can save their tickets month to month to buy a bigger prize.
- Tickets will expire at the end of each school year.
- Students cannot give other students their tickets.
- The school store will happen the last Thursday of each month starting in January.

*Any parents who want to donate an item to the school store, we would greatly appreciate it.*



# SGA-SPONSORED CANNED FOOD DRIVE

GCA is collecting non-perishable items to donate to our local community that could be in need of additional help. Middle School students should drop off canned food items to their homeroom teachers. Preschool and elementary students can bring their items to the main office.



Applying  
for high school?

Please email all records and recommendation requests to [megan.schaniel@graceknights.org](mailto:megan.schaniel@graceknights.org). Please allow 3-5 business days for records requests and 5-7 business days for recommendation requests.

## GCA Athletics

[john.somerville@graceknights.org](mailto:john.somerville@graceknights.org)

Just a reminder that if your student is interested in playing sports, an updated physical form must be completed and turned into the main office.

12/15 - Basketball home game vs. The Calverton School @ 4pm

12/18 - Basketball away game vs. Lanham Christian School @ 4pm

The entire sports schedule is found on the [school's website](#).

**Go Knights!**

# FOLLOW US ON



# Instagram

We have kicked off a new Instagram page for Grace. Follow us to see more of the great things that happen during the school day!

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

We are pleased to announce that GCA packed **272 boxes** for Operation Christmas Child! We have already found out that some of our boxes went to Tanzania. Thank you so much to everyone who donated!





# TARDY!

**Student tardies are becoming very frequent. Please review the school's tardy policy from our handbook. Student tardies to school and to classes can and will effect their enrollment at Grace and their class averages. We need your help in getting students to school on time.**

## **ATTENDANCE**

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*Good attendance and punctuality are not only critical to the overall academic success of students, they are also important for the development of personal responsibility. Not only is the absent or tardy affected, but the teacher and the entire class may be affected by the need for adjusted instruction. Please join with us in training your child to possess these qualities.*

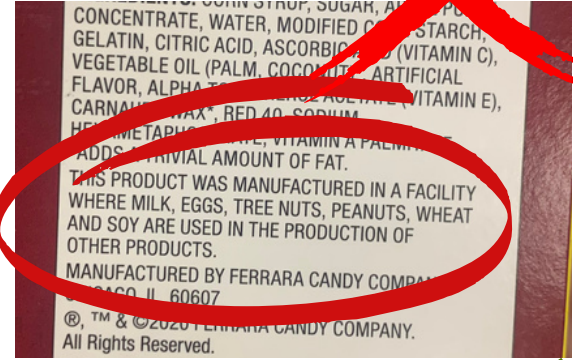
- Students are expected to be in school every day that school is in session. If a student is absent twenty (20) days during the year, the school may either retain or not allow the student to return the following year. A student who achieves passing grades will be promoted if the parents withdraw and place their child in another school. Absences due to extenuating circumstances, such as extended illnesses, will not apply if the parents keep in constant communication with appropriate school personnel and provide the school with necessary medical documentation.
- An elementary student who has a total of forty (40) tardies to school (excused and unexcused) may not be permitted to return to Grace Christian Academy. Students will be counted as on time if they are with their teacher by the start time. Students leaving before 2:00 p.m. shall be credited with one-half day in attendance.

### **Unexcused Tardy to Class (Middle School)**

Students are expected to be in their seats, ready to work at the start of the period. Students who fail to reach their next class period during the allotted time without a valid pass, note from teacher, or note from office, will be unexcused tardy. The student should not argue with the teacher or try to explain the tardiness. One point will be deducted from the student overall class average at the end of the quarter for every 3 unexcused tardies to class.

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

## Birthday Parties



**Want to celebrate your student's birthday at school? Treats such as cupcakes or cookies are allowed and must abide by the following:**

- **A notice must be made to the homeroom teacher a week in advance to include what will be brought in and when.**
- The homeroom teacher will email a notice out to parents of what is being brought in and when. If your student is not allowed to consume the birthday treats, please notify the teacher.
- **All food and/or drinks MUST be SEALED from a STORE AND MUST have a NUT FREE Label.**
- All food/drinks must be brought to the office, not given to the teacher directly or sent in with the student.
- NO balloons or treat bags. The school cannot be held responsible for any items that may contain an allergen in a treat bag, nor can we search each bag that is brought in.

If your student has allergies or diet restrictions such as nuts, dairy, eggs, soy, wheat, vegan, etc. You may send in a separate treat with your child to be enjoyed on that day.



Date	Day	Event
08/17/2023	Th	Binder Orientation and Study Skills, 6pm (All 3rd graders and new 4th-8th graders)
08/21/2023	M	Meet and Greet, 4pm – 6pm
08/23/2023	W	First Day of School – Begin 2023 – 2024 School Year – Q1
09/04/2023	M	School Closed – <b>Labor Day</b>
09/15/2023	F	Half Day for Students (Teacher Professional Development) <b>AFTER CARE OPEN</b>
10/06/2023	F	Full Day for All – <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
10/09/2023	M	School Closed – <b>Columbus Day</b>
10/25/2023	W	End of Q1 for 2023 – 2024 (44 days)
10/26/2023	Th	No School for Students (Teacher Professional Development)
10/27/2023	F	No School for Students (Teacher Professional Development)
10/30/2023	M	Begin Q2 for 2023 – 2024
11/06/2023	M	No School for Students – Parent Conference Day (Teacher Workday)
11/10/2023	F	School Closed – <b>Veterans' Day</b>
11/21/2023	T	Half Day for All – <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
11/22/2023	W	No School – Thanksgiving Break Begins
11/24/2023	F	No School – Thanksgiving Break Ends
11/27/2023	M	School Reopens
11/28/2023	T	Giving Tuesday – Please consider Donating to GCA
12/20/2023	W	Half Day for Students (Teacher Workday) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
12/21/2023	Th	No School – Christmas Break Begins
01/02/2024	T	No School – Christmas Break Ends
01/03/2024	W	School Reopens
01/12/2024	F	Full Day – <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
01/15/2024	M	School Closed – <b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</b>
01/18/2024	Th	End of Q2 for 2023-2024 (44 days)
01/19/2024	F	No School (Teacher Workday)
01/22/2024	M	Begin Q3 for 2023 – 2024
02/16/2024	F	Half Day for Students (Teacher Professional Development) <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
02/19/2024	M	School Closed – <b>Presidents' Day</b>
03/21/2024	Th	End of Q3 for 2023 – 2024 (43 days)
03/22/2024	F	No School (Teacher Workday)
03/25/2024	M	Begin Q4 for 2023 – 2024
03/28/2024	Th	Elementary Grandparents Day – Half Day for All – <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
03/29/2024	F	No School – Easter Break Begins
04/05/2024	F	No School – Easter Break Ends
04/08/2024	M	School Reopens
05/03/2024	F	Half Day for All - Quarter Break <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
05/06/2024	M	No School – Quarter Break
05/24/2024	F	Full Day for All – <b>NO AFTER CARE</b>
05/27/2024	M	No School – <b>Memorial Day</b>
05/28/2024	T	Half Day for Students (Teacher Workday)
05/29/2024	W	Half Day for Students (Teacher Workday)
05/30/2024	Th	Half Day for Students (Teacher Workday)
05/31/2024	F	Half Day for Students – <b>Last Day for Students – NO AFTER CARE</b>
05/31/2024	F	End of Q4 for 2023 – 2024 (Teacher Workday) (42 days)

Three inclement weather/snow days have been built into the school calendar.

After two inclement weather days are used, the following will modify the school year:

- June 3, 2024 (Snow day number four)
- June 4, 2024 (Snow day number five)
- June 5, 2024 (Snow day number six)