



FY2025 IMPACT REPORT IN THEIR HANDS: THE POWER OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



The Gloucester Education Foundation drives innovation, encourages creativity, expands student opportunities, and empowers educators to strengthen teaching and learning in the Gloucester Public School District.

Dear Friends,



As the Gloucester Education Foundation approaches its 20th anniversary in the fall of 2025, we find ourselves in a reflective mood. Despite the many challenges facing educators and public schools locally and nationwide, we are deeply grateful for how far we've come and are inspired by what's possible when a community values and invests in its young people.

For two decades, GEF has championed the kind of learning that stays with students long after the bell rings. This year's Impact Report, ***In Their Hands: The Power of Experiential Learning***, celebrates programs that put students at the center of their own discovery—where learning means ***making, building, performing, and exploring***.

Instead of simply learning at desks, students in GEF-funded programs are out in the field, on stage, in labs, and at job sites—learning by doing, and engaging deeply with their education. They're working with professional artists, scientists, and engineers. They're coding, creating, and collaborating. And most importantly, they're building confidence, curiosity, and a vision for their future.

As we begin to look back on twenty years of impact, we are more committed than ever to ensuring that Gloucester's students have access to the kinds of opportunities that spark passion and expand possibilities. They deserve nothing less.

This school year GEF awarded grants totaling \$475,000, thanks to big ideas from Gloucester educators, big energy from Gloucester students, and big generosity from our community. Thank you for your support, and for putting transformative learning experiences right where they belong: ***in students' hands***.

With gratitude,

Emily Siegel, Executive Director

Ted Costa, Board President



PS: put this magnet on your fridge so you remember to join us at GEF's 20th Anniversary Celebration on November 6, 2025!



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A YEAR IN NUMBERS

86 CUSTOM ICE CREAM FLAVORS

dreamed up by O'Maley students for the 2025 Arts Festival



131 GPS STUDENTS

involved in O'Maley's production of "The Descendants"



325 POUNDS OF CLAY

recycled and reused in the GHS Ceramic Studio's new pug mill



429 FISH FED, 630 HEADS OF LETTUCE GROWN, AND 2.1 X 10¹¹ BACTERIA COUNTED

in O'Maley Science Center 8th grade Aquaponics Unit



1,380 HOURS SERVED

by GEF volunteers, both GHS students and community members

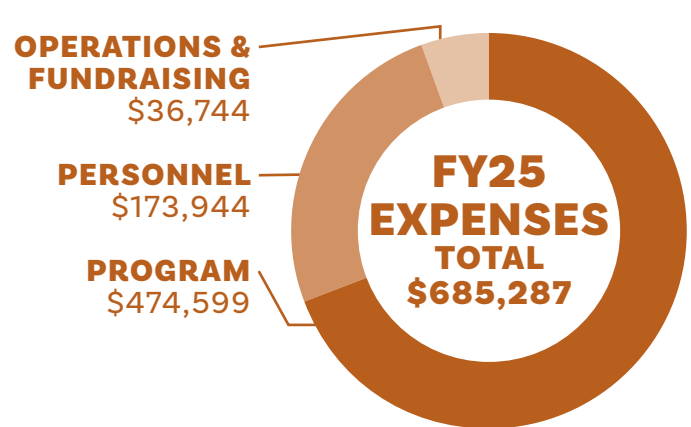
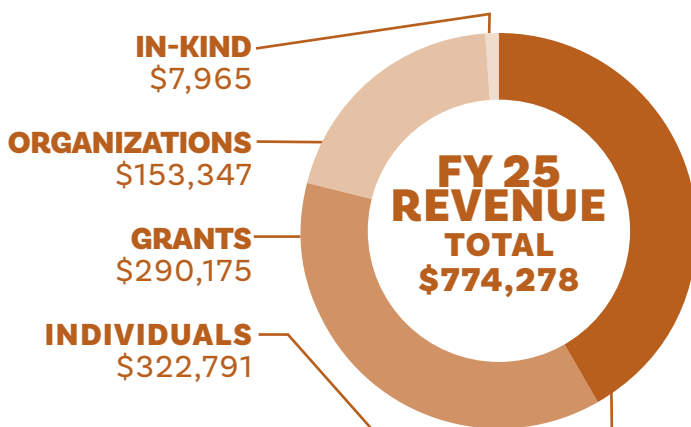


17,062 LEGO PIECES

used by 76 LEGO Engineers at the Gordon Summer STEAM Camp



FINANCIALS



NOTE ON FINANCIALS

GEF is committed to releasing our Impact Report each June so that the community can celebrate and reflect on the school year as it comes to a close. However, with our fiscal year ending 6/30, it is challenging to include a full year's financials in this report. The charts above represent our FY25 unaudited financials, with actuals

through April 30, 2025 and projections for the final eight weeks of the fiscal year based on prior years' spending. For complete, audited GEF financials for each fiscal year, visit www.thinkthebest.org/financial-information. FY25 audited financials will be posted there as soon as they are available.



"By unleashing the creative spirit of our teachers and school leaders, the Gloucester Education Foundation helps our staff deeply engage students in the type of learning that impacts them for the rest of their lives. GEF is a catalyst that builds programs, creates impact on a personal and community level, and changes the lives of our students and families."

—Ben Lummis, Superintendent



FY 25 PROGRAMS

Districtwide

DISTRICTWIDE MUSIC WORKING GROUP

\$5,103 ★

Piloting a new K-12 Music Working Group to strengthen horizontal and vertical alignment, and increase collaboration among all GPS music teachers

POWER OF PLAY 2025

\$10,000

Elevating the importance of play for learning and development at our annual "day of play for all ages"

GLOUCESTER STUDENT ARTS FESTIVAL 2025

\$20,000

Partnering with our schools and community to celebrate the creativity and talent of GPS students with a citywide spring festival

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL BANDS

\$109,100

Investing in the next generation of Gloucester musicians with instrumental lessons, ensemble rehearsals, and performances for 200+ students

Elementary

MULTILINGUAL BOOK PROJECT

\$500 ★

Helping the East Veterans Library purchase books in Spanish and Portuguese so their multilingual learners can read books in their native languages

COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN

\$2,000

Collaborating with the district and community to welcome the Class of 2037 to the Gloucester Public Schools

DISTRICTWIDE ELEMENTARY CHORUS

\$4,100 ★

Expanding the Beeman 4th and 5th grade chorus pilot to a citywide program serving all four elementary schools

WEST PARISH ARTS/THEATER INTEGRATION ★ ⓘ

\$6,800

Building student's artistic skills in grades 2-4 in preparation to create theater sets, costumes, and props in grade 5

4TH AND 5TH GRADE PLAYS

\$10,000

Co-funding each elementary school's annual musical with PTOs and community partners

GORDON SUMMER STEAM CAMP ⓘ

\$18,805

Funding the district's annual hands-on, experiential summer STEAM Camp

Middle School

ACORN PRESS PRINTMAKING WITH MARY RHINELANDER

\$1,557

Pairing a renowned local artist with O'Maley art teachers to implement an 8th grade project on the historic Folly Cove Designers Acorn Press

O'MALEY BAND ROOM IMPROVEMENTS

\$4,550

Providing funds to maintain the renovated O'Maley Band Room made possible by GEF in past years

ROMEO & JULIET WORKSHOP SERIES

\$5,795 ★ ⓘ

Bringing Shakespeare to life in English Language Arts classes with visiting artists from Lanes Coven Theater Company

★ New in SY24-25

👉 Launching in SY25-26

ⓘ Highlighted on page 6-8 or back cover

$a+b=c$



"Science Central would not be where it is today without the generous support of the Gloucester Education Foundation. GEF's enthusiasm in bringing this resource to O'Maley has made it possible to expand programming and deepen learning. We are proud to have GEF as a partner going forward."

*—Amy Donnelly,
STEM Coordinator*

SCIENCE CENTRAL AND UMASS MARITIME STATION PARTNERSHIP

\$6,300 📈

Launching a new partnership to support real-world marine science learning for O'Maley students

O'MALEY ART INSTALLATION: YEAR TWO

\$14,893 ⓘ

Engaging students in designing a seascape-themed installation for the exterior of O'Maley, in partnership with sculptor Tim Mears

O'MALEY SCIENCE CENTRAL

\$28,000 ⓘ

Enabling Science Central to hire a Resident Scientist and a Wilson Intern (named for the late Dick and Barbara Wilson) to work alongside O'Maley staff and students

O'MALEY ACADEMY

\$43,700

Sustaining O'Maley's popular after school and summer program, serving over 250 students with dozens of courses to choose from

6TH GRADE SEMINAR

\$26,787 ★

Supporting the transition from elementary to middle school with a course teaching social emotional learning and executive function

High School

ENGINEERING INDEPENDENT STUDY MATERIALS

\$1,902 ★

Supplying specialized materials for a GHS senior to complete an ambitious engineering project

DECA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

\$2,072 ★

Sponsoring GHS students to attend the DECA International Conference and showcase their award-winning project in this business and marketing club

GEF STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

\$2,400 ⓘ

Empowering GHS students to serve as GEF ambassadors and advisors in a stipended role

ADVANCED PLACEMENT SUMMER CLASSES

\$2,977

Preparing students for the rigor of Advanced Placement classes with summer seminars across content areas

NAVY JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICERS TRAINING CORPS (NJROTC)

\$10,000 ★

Providing specialized uniforms and equipment for the GHS JROTC program as it transitions from a Marine Corps unit to a Navy one. Made possible by a gift from Jim and Chris Barker.

VOCATIONAL UNIFORM JERSEYS AND AWARDS

\$10,000

Sponsoring trade-specific jerseys and portfolio awards for vocational students to boost professionalism and pride. Made possible through the generosity of dozens of local businesses.

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES

\$11,286 ★

Purchasing keyboards and recording equipment to support GHS music classes

GHS CARPENTRY ANNEX

\$17,000 ★ ⓘ

Supporting vocational students in building an annex to store and dry wood for the GHS carpentry shop. Made possible by a gift from Ruth Pino.

GENDER EQUITY IN STEM

\$17,500 ⓘ

Exposing diverse students of all gender identities to careers in STEM fields, with an emphasis on women in leadership roles

MEDICAL ASSISTING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

\$45,000 📈

Funding to purchase materials and supplies to launch the first year of the new Medical Assisting program

AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

\$50,000

Increasing the number of students served in Auto Tech by supporting a second teacher in the auto shop

"During my nine years as principal of Gloucester High School, the Gloucester Education Foundation has been an indispensable partner in finding and supporting innovative ways to help our diverse students learn and grow. I know that I will continue to count on GEF to support imaginative and responsive ways of deepening teaching and learning at GHS in the years to come."

— James Cook, GHS Principal



HANDS-ON PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

So much learning is theoretical, done at desks or computers. GEF-funded programs create opportunities for students to discover beyond the page and screen, and explore through doing, making, and building. Many culminate in products designed and crafted by students that represent weeks, months, even years of learning. The creations on these pages demonstrate the ways students are actively engaged across grades and disciplines, and how GEF investments enable this kind of real-world learning.



O'MALEY/GHS DO IT YOURSELF CLUB

This year, middle schoolers started coming to the GHS Engineering Lab three afternoons a week as part of O'Maley Academy, where they work alongside high school students. Students learn Computer-Aided Design in a classroom and then take that knowledge and apply it in the lab next door. It's a collaborative space; when a fresh 3D print doesn't work exactly as expected, or the machine stops working, everyone around stops what they're doing to help troubleshoot.

"I wanted to make a whistle. So I looked at a bunch of whistles to see how they're made. I looked at the mechanics, then integrated them into this cool skull design I liked."

—Alessandro, 8th grade



WEST PARISH ART/THEATER INTEGRATION

Artists are problem solvers. This year, West Parish fifth graders designed the props, sets and costumes for their spring musical "101 Dalmatians". Along the way, they discovered sometimes, in addition to being beautiful, their artwork had to be functional. Creating working, usable, wearable art required lots of trial and error, and constantly fixing things. Students walked away with deep ownership of their art and the play they had built with their own hands.

"We made this big prop and the handle broke off and we couldn't hold it up. So we had to come back here midshow and duct tape a bunch of stuff back together!"

—Olivia, 5th grade



GHS CARPENTRY

Carpentry students don't normally get to build an entire structure on-site. But with GHS's new Carpentry Annex, students in grades 9-12 are experiencing carpentry from the ground up, literally. They are learning to establish a grade, pull permits, and meet with the building inspector. There's no part of the process students aren't involved in, and the final product will be a highly functional - and much needed - wood storage and drying annex next to their shop.



"When a project is hypothetical, like a math problem, it's harder to see when you're making mistakes along the way and figure out how to fix them. With this, mistakes will be made. But here it's really easy to see how different factors change and impact what we're doing. And it means it's easier to fix those things that go wrong. So it really broadens our horizons for the skills we have."

—Charlotte, 10th Grade





O'MALEY SCIENCE CENTER

Gloucester Sea Serpent sighted riding the waves in O'Maley's Birdseye Hammond Tech Room! Sixth graders' automatas are colorful, moving machines which start from just one simple action: spinning a dowel in your fingertips. As the simple movement is converted into several, problem solving and creativity become key. Pieces must be lifted and lowered, not get stuck, and not run into each other. With no one right way to design, students get to play, combining and recombining shapes, alignments, placements and clearances to tell a story.

"We're always thrilled when students deviate from the path and create a solution that serves their vision of an end result. For many this is the first time they have been challenged with combining art and function. Lovely to see imaginations at work."

—Dave Brown, O'Maley Engineering Specialist

GORDON SUMMER STEAM CAMP

Every July in Gloucester, dozens of 4th and 5th graders from across the district become engineers. They build stomp rockets, design moon gloves, and test earthquake-proof LEGO houses; they code, iterate, and experiment, and start all over again when something crashes. This is the Gordon Summer STEAM Camp, a free summer program held at the new East Veterans School's project-based learning communal spaces and led by veteran Beeman teachers Erin Schondelmeier and AnnMarie Wentzel.

"One student in particular stood out for me last summer...I have known this student to struggle to work collaboratively, and frustrate easily. At STEAM camp, I saw a new kid! He was happy to come to camp, worked well with others in his group, helped his team, and communicated clearly with teachers and peers. He LOVED working to build rockets and space gloves, but has particularly thrived with the LEGO builds and coding."

—Erin Schondelmeier, Beeman teacher and STEAM Camp Leader

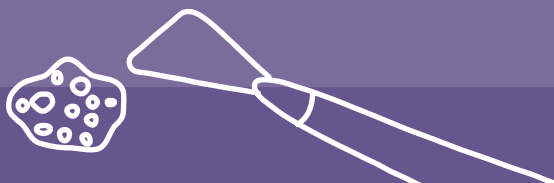


GHS CERAMICS

Students love trading in their chromebooks for a chance to get their hands dirty in the ceramics studio. GHS Clayworks classes tend to be crowded, and equipment was outdated as of 2023. Teacher Helen Duncan received a GEF grant in 2024 to upgrade the studio: a new kiln, more wheels, a slab roller, and more. The result has been a burst of creativity, with students spread around the studio, working independently on projects as varied as treasure boxes, taco holders, and tiles. You can see students' imaginations and fingerprints on each piece.

"With the slab roller, we're able to roll the clay out quickly so students can focus on the creative skills needed to craft their projects. We're able to recycle hundreds of pounds of clay in our new pug mill instead of it going to waste, and our new tabletop wheels make learning to throw pots much more accessible."

—Helen Duncan, GHS Clayworks Teacher



TRYING THEIR HANDS AT FUTURE CAREERS

Many GEF-supported programs introduce GPS students to future careers and connect them with caring adults eager to share their experiences. These hands-on, immersive opportunities go far beyond traditional “career days,” allowing students to explore real-world professions. Here are five standout programs doing just that:

GENDER EQUITY IN STEM CLUB

Gloucester High School

This club engages dozens of students of any gender identity in monthly homeroom sessions, field trips, and guest speaker events focused on STEM careers, and the challenges women and other historically marginalized groups face in leadership roles. Highlights from 2024-25 included visits to Hefring, MIT, and Applied Materials, and speakers in fields from clean energy to flavor chemistry.

“There’s definitely a stereotype that men are more common in science careers than women. Having this club encourages women at such a young age to explore more sciences, and to change that stereotype.”

–ELLA, GRADE 9



CAREER VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL EDUCATION WORK-STUDY

Gloucester High School

GHS vocational students can spend their junior and senior years gaining real-world experience through off-site work-study placements each afternoon. This year, students worked at a dozen places including the Manchester-By-The-Sea Harbormaster, Gorton’s, Fleet Machine, and Albano Electric, preparing to enter the workforce after graduating.

“Working with the Harbormaster gave me a front-row seat to the delicate balance between industry and nature. It’s what sparked my drive to become an environmental police officer—protecting the waters I once helped manage.”

–KADIN, GRADE 12

“ANNIE” WITH GLOUCESTER STAGE COMPANY

Beeman Elementary

In its third year, this partnership brings professional theater to Beeman students, with Gloucester Stage Company Teaching Artist Ts Burnham directing their spring musical. While students rehearse at Beeman, they move to Gloucester Stage for tech week and final performances on a professional stage, opening their eyes to a future in performing arts.

“Being on a professional stage feels different. Bigger chairs, more lights. I would never expect to be performing here—this is my first time being in a play.”

–AURELIA, GRADE 5



SHAKESPEARE WORKSHOPS WITH LANES COVEN THEATER COMPANY

O’Maley Middle School

GEF funded a new partnership that brought Shakespeare alive through classroom workshops led by Lanes Coven teaching artists. Using key scenes from Romeo & Juliet, students explored the language through engaging activities and movement. Seeing these visiting artists as teachers, performers, and mentors showed students the full scope of a career in theater.

“My favorite parts from the workshops in class were breaking down the scenes on the board. It helped me understand what was going on and what was going to happen next. I also liked rewriting the balcony scene in modern language which was fun to write and helped me understand the actions of Romeo and Juliet.”

–AVA, GRADE 8

O’MALEY ART INSTALLATION

O’Maley Middle School

In this ongoing collaboration, students are working with sculptor Tim Mears to design a new large-scale outdoor installation at O’Maley. Students create 2D and 3D design ideas to inspire Mears, and Mears in turn inspires students by visiting classrooms to share his work and his process of working with metal. His blend of fine art and practical applications like welding appeals to a broad spectrum of students.

“A few Fridays ago, we were all so surprised when we came to school and saw Tim’s fish sculpture on the side of the building – we didn’t realize he was actually going to create this from all of our ideas! Everyone was so excited, saying how cool they look and how talented he is and taking photos. It felt like a big morale boost.”

–PARKER, GRADE 8



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This list includes contributors who made gifts between May 1, 2024, and April 30, 2025. We make every effort to ensure accuracy; please let us know if we have made an error or inadvertently omitted your name.

Thank you to all who support GEF; we couldn't do any of this without you.

**Indicates supporter passed away*

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"We couldn't imagine a better cause to support. We love to support local activities and events that bring the community together around active, engaged learning."

-Doug Kerr





"I have supported GEF since the beginning. I support GEF because of its mission and goals to add enriching cultural and educational programs to the Gloucester Public Schools. The results are impressive!"

-Ruth Pino



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Ruth Shane
Dianne Shatford
Shaw's
Christine Sicard
Samuel Silverman
David and Patricia Slade
Alette Slobodien
Brian and Lisa Smith
Zachary Smith
Jack and Marie Sweeney
Brian Thompson and Nicole Newman Thompson
James and Robin Towne
Susan Towne
Christina Ursul
Roseann Vidal
Andrea Walsh
James and Lea Watson
Muffy White
Jenny Winter

GIFTS WERE MADE IN HONOR OF:

Dr. and Mrs. Osman Babson
Kathy Clancy
Karen Kenny
Joe Keogh
John Roner
James and Robin Towne
Dick Wilson

GIFTS WERE MADE IN MEMORY OF:

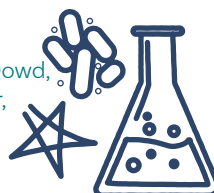
Judith Campbell
Kevin Clancy
Susan Destino
Jim Dowd
Rob Green & Peter Burnham
Fred Johnson
Thomas Lupo
Deb Olson
Roger Parody
Brian Tarr
Rick Wilson
Peder Wonson

HONOR-A-TEACHER GIFTS WERE DEDICATED TO:

Erin Avila
Dawn Burke
Shannon Comeau
Jeff Destino
Kerrie Donahue
Amy Donnelly
Anna Dutra
Max Feeley
Jessica Garbec
Lisa Groleau
Dan Gwirtzman
Lori Lukeford Johns
Evan Kidder
Budd Maciel
Beckie Mastandrea
Jennifer McKay
Carlos Menezes, Jr.
Laurie Mott
Carl Parkhurst
Jack Porter
Grace Scolia
Mariah Shannon
Penny Singh
Lars & Soren's Teachers at West Parish & O'Maley

THANK YOU!

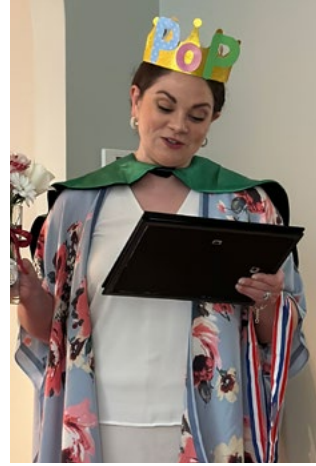
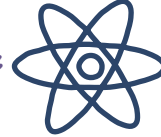
Photographs by Marty Del Vecchio, Lexi Thomas, Rebecca Dowd, Emily Siegel, Amy Donnelly, Dave Brown, Erin Schondelmeier, AnnMarie Wentzel, Roseann Vidal, and Lauren Grace





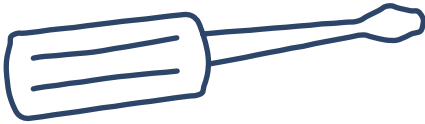
"Serving as the Power of Play Event Chair had many rewarding moments, but one of the most meaningful was the chance to partner with wonderful, passionate and dedicated volunteers. GEF is a pivotal resource that brings together thoughtful, committed individuals to do the essential work our community needs in order to better support our children, both in school and beyond."

—Jessica Margiotta



"Jeff grew up in Gloucester, so we were eager to support Cape Ann when we moved here in 2022. GEF is among the best local nonprofits and our collaboration to enhance science education has been tremendously rewarding."

—Jeffrey Silveira
+ Beth Logan



VOLUNTEERS AND IN-KIND SUPPORT

VOLUNTEERS

Michael Adams
Emma Allen
Max Alves
Michele Ameno
Misty Amero
Kerry Arsenault
Julitza Baez Rivera
Jacklyn Baldassano
Tricia Balsan
Michelle Blair
Kim Bouchie
Charlie Butler
Joe Calomo
Christine Castle
Amy Clayton
Wanda Cohen
Steve Conti
Ingrid Conti
Heidi Dallin
Marty Del Vecchio
Paul Donovan
Nicole Emo
Dan Errico
Meghaen Favazza

Dani Fuentes
Glennys Gill
Bob Gillis
Linda Gipstein
Alex Gold
Officer Kelley Gossum
Meena Gourley
Kelsey Gray
Megan Graziano
Abby Guelli
Pixie Harrington
Michael Adams
Lori Lukegord Johns
Taylor Johnson
Judy Keith
Doug Kerr
Julie Krueger
Toni LaPlanche
Joana Lima
Riley Linger
Eileen Little
Frank Margiotta
Jessica Margiotta
Tess McColgan
John McElhenny

Katie McGuire Winn
Kelsey McNiff
Erina McWilliam Lopez
Kristin Michel
Dean Murray
Mark Murray-Brown
Jennifer Orlando
Tori Perakis
John Piermarini
Anthony Prestigiovanni
Jessica Raine
Erica Raine
Marty Ray
Fernando Rebolledo
Sefatia Romeo-Theken
Steve Rossi
Jackie Rossi
Ann Sanfilippo
Mariah Saunders
Josie Schoel
Sarah Seber
Esta Siegel
Stuart Siegel
Sarah Slifer Swift
Mandi Stober

Nancy Sullivan
Carol Sweet
Christina Ursul
Lorenza Venegas-Villa
Roseann Vidal
Justine Vitale
Toni Waldron
Jim Watson
Eleni Webb
Randy Widtfeldt
Heather Widtfeldt
Bernica Wilcox
Krystal Williams
Norah Wylie
Plus over 125
Gloucester High School students
including members of the Boys' Baseball team, Girls' Lacrosse team, National Honor Society, National Arts Honor Society, Band, JROTC, DECA, Interact Club, and more.

IN-KIND SUPPORT

1623 Studios
Anna and Stephen O'Connor
Beaumont Hospitality Group
The Bookstore of Gloucester
Cape Ann Museum
Cape Ann Plein Air
Cape Ann YMCA
Carroll K. Steele Insurance Agency, Inc.
Castaways Vintage Cafe
City of Gloucester
City of Gloucester Public Health Department Prevention Team
DF Fitness
Doug Kerr
The Event Company
Fireflies Boutique
GHS Racial Equity and Advocacy Club
Gloucester Little League

Gloucester Stage Company
Holy Cow Ice Cream Cafe
Justine Laurie
Kindred Gardens Early Learning and Care
Manship Artist Residencies
Marty Del Vecchio
Meat and Sweets
North Shore Karate Academy
Oak to Ember
Saltwater Massage Studio
Sawyer Free Library
Schooner Adventure
Seaside Circus
Source Bakery
Streamography
The Open Door
Toodeloos





STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Now in its fourth year, the GEF Student Advisory Committee is made up of seven diverse GHS juniors and seniors. In addition to serving as GEF ambassadors in the community, these students assisted GEF staff, board and volunteers in ways big and small over the past year including:

- Strengthening the 8th to 9th grade transition
- Designing and promoting a new challenge grant for GHS students and staff
- Facilitating focus groups among elementary students

- Assessing new program ideas from teachers and reflecting on grant proposals
- Contributing to the planning of the Gloucester Student Arts Festival and Power of Play
- Recruiting and managing student volunteers for events

In sharing their experiences, expertise, and unique perspective to advise and assist on numerous projects, these students help GEF center students at the core of everything we do.



"I love learning and asking questions. As a GEF student advisor, I got to participate in conversations that were shaping learning in the Gloucester Public Schools. GEF's work is more authentic because it incorporates the voices of those it seeks to empower."

*-Hannah Olson,
Class of 2025*



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