STEP UP TO STEM
from Ms. Greer, Technology Integration Specialist

Update 1: New Robotics Programs at Girard College (Grades 1-2)

Robotics in the first grade?

Yes! It's true. To ensure that students at Girard are exposed to STEM curriculum (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) right from the start, we have launched a robotics pilot program this year. Gerry Cordero and I have been co-teaching a unit to introduce first- and second-grade students to simple engineering principles and concepts.

Students work in pairs to explore engineering though a variety of activities. Much of the excitement around the program is the use of a simple robotics kit called the LEGO WeDo kit. The kit includes standard LEGO bricks, (similar to those you may have played with as a child), as well as gears, belts, bushes and cams. But, surely, the coolest part about the kits is that they also include a motor, tilt sensor, light sensor and USB hub! Students are able to plug their models into the computer to program and automate their model's movements.

The unit doesn't focus solely on the WeDo kits. We also use the StarBoard to keep track of our learning using a Voicethread K-W-L. We watch videos and read stories in Prezi. We use a modified version of “Simon Says” called “Computer Says” to reinforce the idea that the computers send commands to initiate a robot’s movements.

So far the program is going well, and Mr. Cordero and I are learning plenty too! If you'd like to see the students in action, just let us know! We welcome visitors and have had quite a few already including Mrs. Becker, Rebecca Stein from U. Penn SEAS, and Sarah Kinder from the Agnes Irwin School. Mr. John has been regularly helping out as well.

Look for updates in future newsletters!
Musicians Visit Girard

On Wednesday, February 16, Upper and Lower School students had a treat: Ira Shickman (producer, songwriter and musician for Chaka Khan, Ace Freiley/Kiss, Kylie Minogue, and Stevie Wonder) and Nikki Glaspie (drummer for Beyoncé) performed and talked at February’s chapel.

After chapel, they held a drum clinic in the Lower School, and they concluded their visit in the Upper School auditorium where they held a “meet-and-greet.”

Thank you to Mr. Eaton for bringing these specials guests to our school!
Order & Pay in Development Office:
Feb. 25, March 11, 25

Pick-up at the Armory:
Feb 18, March 4, 18, April 1

Please note: Dates adjusted due to weather

Did you know that news and photos of school events are posted on Facebook at “Friends of Girard College (FOGC)”?

Join us, and tell your friends.

On February 28, select seventh and eighth graders will go to St. Joseph's University to enjoy an unusual science field trip called “Celebrating African-American Scientists and Inventors Through Live Science Demonstrations.”

The event consists of live science demonstrations, where each lesson features a biographical look at an African-American scientist and/or inventor who influenced the science behind the experiment. The activities are aligned with the School District of Philadelphia's Science Core Curriculum for grades 4-8 and 9-12. One of the goals of this event series is to pique the interest of hard-to-reach and even harder-to-interest, at-risk students, and provide them with a foundation on how science has evolved over the years with the help of African-American scientists and inventors. Another goal is to cultivate more scientifically literate students as we enter a new phase of standardized testing in science education.

Seventh- and Eighth-Graders will go on Black History Month Science Field Trip

Peer Support Group Begins Soon

The Upper School Office of Family Services is sponsoring a peer-support group for students in seventh through twelfth grades who are grieving the loss of a parent, sibling and/or primary care-provider – no matter how long ago the death occurred. It will be an eight-week group beginning in later February/early March. If you have questions, are interested in receiving more information about the group, or finding out if your child might benefit from this supportive service, kindly contact Anthony Morelli, Family Services Social Work intern at 215-787-2600 Ext. 3442 or e-mail him at amorelli@girardcollege.com.
Visit the
Fifth-Grade Blog

From Heidi Levin, Fifth-Grade Teacher:

Please visit my student’s blog at http://kidblog.org/MsLevinsBloggers/. Please feel free to comment on the students’ posts. We're hoping as we get used to using the blog we will be able to get more creative and add some multimedia pieces to it. So, please check back periodically and watch us grow.

You can also get to our classroom blog by going to our class homepage on Girard's Web site.

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Grade 3 is Proud of Math Skills

Mrs. Donnelly’s third grade class took a ten page Math test. The concepts included telling time, using a calendar, reading bar graphs and pictographs, using tally charts to organize data and graphing ordered pairs. Every child in the class earned an A or a B. The children were very happy when Mrs. Polak, the Math specialist, stopped by to congratulate them. Their fantastic papers are proudly displayed in the hall.

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Students Twitter News & Newspaper

A student group will help you keep up on Girard happenings if you access Twitter online. Look for “thegcbuzz” or “thegcbuzz@twitter.com.” http://twitter.com/TheGCBuzz.

Scroll down to the reference to the latest issue of the student newspaper - great job, team!

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Annual Stacking Contest Friday February 18

from Gary St Cyr, Lower School P.E.

The Lower School will host its Annual Cup Stacking Championships next Friday, February 18, 2011 in the auditorium beginning at 2:15 sharp. With Mr. Gallagher accepting the role as Master of Ceremonies, the Speed Stacking competition promises to be more exciting than ever. Representatives from third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade classes have been working hard, improving eye-hand coordination and quickness as they hope to dethrone returning champion Reggie Morgan in the 3-6-3 event. New this year will be the “Cycle Relay”, a demonstration of unbelievable quickness and agility, featuring the fastest students in each class. Education Works’ Mr. John Brown will introduce yet another featured event this year … a “Minute to Win It” challenge. If you're on campus Friday, this is an event you won’t want to miss.

Lower School teachers are asked to have classes seated in the auditorium no later than 2:10 p.m. on Friday. Contestants are invited to practice stacking in the Science Lab from 3:00-3:30 every day after school next week leading up to the event. In addition, those competing will have a short mandatory meeting Friday morning following opening exercises to walk through the afternoon's logistics.

For more information on the International Speed Cup phenomena visit http://www.thewssa.com/
GC Cheerleaders Have Got the Spirit!

from Rosilyn Munoz

I am proud to announce that the Girard College cheerleading squad participated in a competition on February 5, the Bicentennial Athletic League Competition. The girls came home with two 3rd-place trophies, and the all-around, coveted Spirit Award for the entire competition. This is the last year for our seniors Jennyfer D., Andrea C. and Jamila F.

There is another competition at William Tennent High School on Sunday, February 20. Come along and “cheer us on;” we appreciate your support!

New Environmental Club on Campus

Krista Matatt is happy to announce that the new environmental club, known as the Girard Green Team, held its first official meeting this week. The Girard Green Team consists of students in grades 4-6 who are dedicated to raising awareness about sustainability, recycling, energy conservation and other environmental issues in the Lower School classrooms and sections.

The club meets on Wednesday afternoons at 3:45 and will allow students to participate in various projects and activities related to the environment.

Spanish Students Make Internet Pals in Madrid

Students in Ms. Alvarez’s Spanish Honors III and IV class will connect with a school in Madrid and investigate life of a Spanish teenager. Students will exchange e-mails with students of similar ages and correspond about academics, music, food and customs. At the end of the project, students will use multimedia to present their experiences with students from a different culture.

Students will also reflect upon the possibility of becoming a foreign exchange student in Spain if giving the opportunity. This will be part of their presentation.

This project was created and all connections were made through Ms. Jara.

Congratulations to Girard Basketball Stars!

The B.A.L. All-League Teams included:

Chris B., Girls Basketball First Team
Joyce R., Girls Basketball Second Team
Krystal C., Honorable Mention Team

Tyreek P., Boys Basketball First Team
David W., Boys Basketball Second Team

Additionally, Tyreek P. was named Player of the Year.