

Success Stories of GVA Happiness Activities

Submitted December 13, 2022 by Tina Lowell, Office Manager, GVA Modesto



“Going Above and Beyond”

Kristen Zuidema demonstrates **Acts of Kindness** each and every day. We have witnessed her work with parents over and over again to help sign their students up for lunch. She is patient and kind as she walks them step by step. Kristen knows the importance of a healthy, nutritious breakfast to start a student’s day, so she orders additional meals each week to ensure that even if a family forgets to sign up, that there is food available. Kristen really is a Food Service Rock Star! Thank you Kristen for keeping our students at their best so they can learn each and every day.

Submitted December 15, 2022 by Stephanie Ariza, Attendance Secretary , GVA Modesto



“True Vision”

A couple weeks ago third grade teacher, Mrs. Bass, called into the office asking if we could call maintenance and see if they had any materials to help her clean a student’s glasses. The glasses had been repaired and needed a little extra clean up that day. Mrs. Bass wanted the student to have a great classroom experience and really clean glasses would go along way in supporting that. Between Mrs. Bass and maintenance, they were able to clean up the glasses and help out the student. **Acts of Kindness** are not just taught here at GVA but are lived out here on a daily basis around our campus.

Submitted October, 2022 by Mike Ruehle, Principal, GVA Modesto



“Connecting to College and Career”

GVA’s monthly spirit events build **social connections** and career objectives. At our most recent event, College and Career Day, students wore clothing that represented the college they may want to attend. Or, they may have chosen to dress in relation to the career they want to pursue for later in life. It is great as a principal to hear students asking each other about colleges they like and jobs they want. It is an easy and fun way to learn more about each other and strengthen our bonds together as a school.

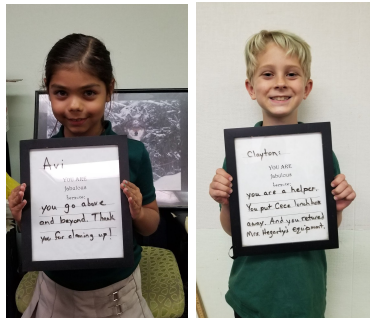
Submitted September, 2022 by GVA Music Department, GVA Modesto



“Morning Music on The Quad”

Last Friday a group of students from the Jr. High Ukulele Elective and the Rock 101 Elective joined together to perform at GVA’s Friday Rally! It was great. As a totally volunteer-based activity, the turn-out was amazing. Almost 100% of the elective students chose to participate in the live performance. Nothing builds **social connectedness** like a collectively-shared experience like this. Students being brave together and supporting each other to be on stage in front of their peers and respected adults became an incredible ‘happiness-building’ experience for all involved.

Submitted August 2022, by Mr. Franklin, 3rd Grade Teacher GVA Salida



“Go With Your Gut!”

Mr. Anderson presented his idea of a Happiness Campaign during our all-staff ‘before school starts’ meetings. I took notes and it seemed to me to fit nicely into our school ethos. I wanted to share this information with my students during the first week of school.

Students: I had two goals in mind for my students: 1) a shared writing activity with some note taking and 2) introduce the five Happiness topics. I listed a topic, students took notes, shared their thoughts, and we co-authored a sentence to summarize the topic.

Parents: We take seriously the importance of Safe, Loved and Learning. I expect my class to learn about and demonstrate these character traits. Doing so will help create a more successful classroom and future citizens. Our topics include * **Social Connections**, * **Acts of Kindness**, * **Gratefulness**, * **Mindfulness** of our emotions, and * **Being compassionate with ourselves**.

This conversation landed with my students and they are bearing fruit! In developing our final sentence about showing ourselves compassion and trusting ourselves to do the right thing, one student volunteered to summarize our group thoughts with the sentence, “Go with your gut!” and it stuck.

As a note, I was very excited to get Mr. Franklin's call inviting me to his classroom to participate in this activity. Students were engaged, had great ideas and were very thoughtful about intentional actions that make them and others happy. Thank you for including me.

Tom Anderson, GVA Superintendent

Submitted August, 2022 by Tom Anderson, GVA Superintendent

“Let Me Help You With That”

In observing an intermediate-grade classroom at GVA Modesto, I was lucky enough to witness what GVA is well known for in the community. As students were finishing a whole-class lesson and breaking into groups for guided and independent work, most took out or retrieved their chromebooks, logged in and began to work on the assignment. As the teacher worked her way through the group, repeating instructions, helping with technology issues, etc. I noticed a student with his laptop open but simply sitting quietly and watching the other students work.

To support the busy teacher who was working her way over, but would be another minute or two, I decided to walk over and see if I could help the student get started. Before I could get to him, a young lady from his group popped out of her seat and walked around the desks to him and whispered in his ear. He smiled, took his pencil box out of his desk, took a look inside, put it away and started typing on his computer. Within seconds he was incredibly focused on the assignment at hand, as were his tablemates. The teacher walked by and congratulated the table group for getting started on their own as she “had to spend a little extra time on the other side of the classroom.” It struck me that the teacher had obviously done a good job practicing class procedures with students, but even moreso, the interaction between the two students and the smile on the boy’s face after his partner had seemed to whisper a secret to him.

I couldn’t help myself. I had to know what she had said to him. I walked around class reinforcing students’ hard work and stopped by the girl’s desk. I bent down and asked her quietly what she had told her friend. She grinned at me and said, “He sometimes forgets his password for the chromebook. I just reminded him that he has it written down on a sticky note in the box in his desk. Mrs. G likes it when a whole table gets started without help.” I told her that she was a good friend and thanked her for sharing it with me. **Random acts of kindness** like this are not uncommon at GVA. In fact, they happen every day in every classroom and all over campus. Sometimes you have to be looking for just that sort of thing to notice it. I’m lucky that I was paying attention that day.