

Community and traditions remain important at George Walton Academy

By Dan Dolan | Posted: Saturday, December 9, 2017 12:00 am

Believe me. I understand. You barely have time to catch your breath during the holidays. This season is filled with busy days and long to do lists. And although it all seems to go by in a blur, there are certain things we always remember.

Think about it for a moment. What stands out in our memories are: people and the traditions we enjoy with one another. At George Walton Academy, we understand the importance of people sharing special times together, building meaningful relationships and creating lasting memories.

Why are traditions and community so important? As we build meaningful relationships and support one another, not only do we benefit individually, but we teach students how to be active, supportive and engaged members of society. Within strong communities, we learn about one another, and develop a sense of appreciation for other people. Children try new things, take needed risks and spread their wings when they feel surrounded by a community of supportive teachers, parents and peers.

“The GWA community was all that I could have asked for as a high school student. The traditions I took part in remain with me today,” said Benjamin Eady, UGA student, GWA Class of 2014. “The teachers fostered a learning atmosphere that challenged me to critically analyze my own viewpoints without compromising my beliefs, allowing other students and myself to have meaningful conversations on pertinent issues in a safe and understanding classroom space.”

We are committed to providing opportunities for the members of our community to gather together in both celebration and appreciation. Traditions and special events are a key component of the life of our school and our events have purpose, designed to be both educational and enjoyable!

We have daily traditions that include standing together for the pledge of allegiance and opportunities for prayer are provided through many student life programs and bible classes. We also gather for time-honored annual traditions: Homecoming, Dawgs Unleashed, Grandparents’ Day, the Lucky Dawg Gala, our moving Veterans Day salute and the popular program when each senior dedicates a personalized Christmas tree to a first grader. That senior-first grader connection continues throughout the year and even beyond. “The senior-first grader relationship means a lot to me,” said senior Susanna Grimsley, who has attended GWA since K4. “I was once one of the first graders walking across the stage to receive my tree, and I have been looking forward to presenting a tree to my own first grader. I love that we have the opportunity to build a relationship with a younger student. My own senior continued to stay in touch with me after graduation and I want to do the same for my first grader.”

Our appreciation for the importance of community extends beyond the walls of our school. Since 1969, GWA has been proud to be a part of the Monroe and surrounding community. We believe in contributing to our local area and throughout the world. Our students are committed to service and donate their time and talents to organizations including Operation Christmas Child and F.I.S.H., as well as projects in Costa Rica.

I am inspired by their dedication and giving spirit. For example, GWA is Walton County's largest contributor to the Empty Stocking Fund canned food drive.

As we approach the celebration of our 50th year, GWA will look to the future, as we expand and enhance many exciting programs in technology, global studies, athletics and the arts — but we will also keep our feet firmly planted in the strong roots of the community and traditions that make us who we are.

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