

# GOW AT A GLANCE

*A Monthly News Snapshot from The Gow School*



PROM 2024

## RETHINKING LEARNING, REIGNITING LIVES

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### *Alumni and Faculty Highlights*



#### *Gow Alumni Spotlight* **JAY MANDARINO '79**

Combining the skills he learned at Gow with Jay's passion for skateboarding, he is a successful entrepreneur and owns the world's largest indoor skateboard park in Toronto.



#### *Campus Focus* **MARK SZAFNICKI**

Whether on the ski slope, tennis court, or in the classroom teaching Reconstructive Language, learn more about Mark Szafnicki's passion for changing lives.



### **GOW'S ANNUAL FUND**

*Inspiring student success since 1926*

Your Annual Fund gift makes Gow's small classes and life-changing programs possible. Please donate by June 30. Thank you!

KINDNESS HONESTY RESPECT HARD WORK

### **SAVE THE DATE**

May 16	Athletic Awards and Honors Convocation Senior Dinner - The Roycroft Inn
May 17	Commencement
May 22	Gow Speakers Series - Brian Thompson, Department Chair, Reconstructive Language at The Gow School
June 30-August 3	Gow School Summer Program
September 2	Gow School Year Begins
September 20	Grandparents' Day
October 11-12	Fall Parents' Weekend
October 12-20	Fall Break



## Gow Celebrates Howard Hall Groundbreaking

After years of planning, earth-moving equipment has arrived on campus, and Howard Hall construction has begun behind the Main Building. To celebrate this long-awaited addition to campus, alumni, current students, families, trustees, and friends gathered for a groundbreaking ceremony and speeches to thank those who have already donated \$8.4 million toward our \$10.5 million goal. This 17,000-square-foot

building will house ten flexible classrooms, a health center for boys and girls, a Commons area for quiet and collaborative study and conversation, a Little Senior entrepreneurial space with a patio overlooking Cazenovia Creek, ramps, and an elevator to be accessible for all.

*Pictured: Head of School John Munro, Board Chair Robert Warner '64, Student Council President Noelle '24, Trustee Creighton Murch '64, and a Kirst Construction representative*



## CONGRATULATIONS BRIDGE-BUILDING AND ROBOTICS TEAMS!



Mr. Gullo's 8th-grade bridge-building teams placed an exceptional first, fifth, and seventh out of 104 teams in the annual bridge-building competition. Many of the students from competing schools were sophomores and juniors, so the accomplishments of Gow's 8th graders were even more impressive! Students and Mr. Gullo (pictured right) did a presentation for parents at Spring Weekend.



During the weekend of April 26-28, Mr. Poblocki and Mr. Lindahl took Gow's twelve members of the Robotics Team to Pittsburgh for the BotsIQ finals. They placed fourth and sixth out of 68 teams, our best Gow performance ever! During the academic year, Gow students work in teams to design and build two 15-pound combat robots (bots) to battle in a gladiator-style competition. The mission of BotsIQ is to help students develop skills in machining, welding, mechanical and electrical engineering, critical thinking, project management, and communication.

## Crimson and Navy Spring Weekend Highlights

Fun with friends, student presentations and awards, off-campus dinners, the Auction, and more. Thanks for joining us!



**#1** John Coles '84, Jeff Swann '83, Tony Inksater '85, Eric Shallhorn. '85, Liam Devine '84, Andrew Thompson '85, Trey Roski '84, Trey Holmes '84, and Chris Saylor '85; **#2** Head of School John Munro presents TOM BROWNING AWARD to Shaina '27; **#3** Trustees Bob Warner '64 and Adam Kendrick '03; **#4** Nathan '26 was the 5K winner at the Dyslexia Dash; **#5** Tim Wells '08 and his girlfriend with Andrew Thompson '85; **#6** Luke Salerno presents JEFF FAZZOLARI AWARD to Kristine Mirsky and Finley '25; **#7** BARRY WARREN AWARD winners Tyler '24 and Woody Ferrell '79; **#8** TOM BROWNING AWARD recipient Anneleise '24; **#9** 1974 classmates John Beecher and Dave MacEllven; **#10** Jon Chafin presents HEADWAITER AWARD to Gabe '25; **#11** Makenna '25 and her mom; **#12** LYNN CHAFIN AWARD presented to Isaiah '24; **#13** Vanessa '28 and her dad; **#14** Gianna '25 and her parents; **#15** Luke Salerno presents TRIPLE C AWARD to AJ '28; **#16** Adam '24 and his parents; **#17** Student Council President Noelle '24 and Trustee Creighton Murch '64 at Howard Hall Groundbreaking; **#18** Andrew Thompson '85 ran the Dyslexia Dash as a raven because friends donated more than \$1,000 Pictured with Mark Camenzuli '14; **#19** Benj '29 and his mom; **#20** Jim Ayer and John Munro; **#21** David '25 and his mom at the finish of the 10K Dyslexia Dash.



## A Message from Head of School

John R. Munro, Jr.



Dear Gow Friends,

As we wrap up another inspiring year at Gow, I am grateful for the unwavering support of our families, friends, and alumni.

Your continued dedication and support have been instrumental in shaping the exceptional educational experience we provide for our students.

Many of you have asked how you can help Gow. One impactful way to support us is by telling your friends about our summer and boarding programs. Please think of others who need Gow and encourage them to visit [gow.org](http://gow.org) or call 716.687.2001. Use the QR code at right to learn more.

As we approach the end of Gow's fiscal year, June 30, I hope you will consider making a gift to our Annual Fund. Your contribution directly impacts our ability to provide scholarships, enhance academic programs, and support our school's growth and development. As we look ahead to the future, I am excited about the possibilities for Gow. Together, we can uphold our tradition of excellence and innovation, ensuring that future generations of students benefit from Gow's transformative education. Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to embarking on this exciting journey together. I wish you a wonderful summer!

With warm regards,

Changing Lives Starts Here



Volunteer to make a difference

The Gow School  
Office of Enrollment Management  
encourages you to get involved!

Parent Survey

<https://forms.microsoft.com/r/ucGuez58D9>



Alumni Survey

<https://forms.microsoft.com/r/ZyFGTrGmwK>



## GOW ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

### JAY MANDARINO '79

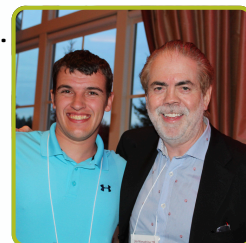
At the Crimson and Navy Spring Weekend Auction, Gow alumnus Jay Mandarino '79 served as the emcee and enthusiastically rallied fellow alumni, families, and students to support his alma mater. Celebrating his 45th reunion with the Class of 1979, Jay shared memories and stories about Gow's impact on his life and career.

As a young child in Ontario, Jay struggled in school and had difficulty making friends. "I was always a slow reader and had difficulty pronouncing words. Professionals told me that I would likely be a gasoline attendant or perhaps a mechanic's apprentice," he said. Life changed when he was diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD and discovered Gow.

"I entered The Gow School in Grade 10 with fourth-grade reading skills and sixth-grade math skills. Two years later, I graduated with honors and scored a 98% on my geometry Regents Exam. Gow taught me to think outside the box and to make friends. I am grateful for these life-changing skills."

Since his graduation, Jay has been a beacon of success and a testament to the transformative power of The Gow School. He previously served as the President of the Alumni Association and has created a scholarship for Canadian students. He leads The CJ Group of Companies, overseeing the daily operations of 37 companies, including several non-profit organizations such as CJ's SKATEPARK, the world's largest indoor, climate-controlled skatepark which starts with toddlers at age 1½ all the way up to adults and Olympic hopefuls. Jay was the 1st person to hippie jump a Ferrari in 1976 and as an avid skateboarder, he often shares his experiences as a motivational speaker around the globe.

"At Gow, I learned I had talents, a promising future, and how to make lifelong friends. Every student at Gow deserves that, and our gifts make that possible," he said.



Jay with his wife, Lorena;  
with Dan Kelley; and with  
Mark Camenzuli '14

## Campus Focus: MARK SZAFNICKI, Gow's Athletic Director

For 36 years, Mark Szafnicki has called The Gow School home. An avid tennis player, he learned about Gow through a friend and former Gow teacher, Mason Winfield. "When I first came on campus, I thought, 'This is like Shangri-La.' I realized through teaching tennis that I loved working with students, and a few years later, I applied for and got a teaching position at Gow," he said.

Mr. Szafnicki has taught Reconstruction Language, or RL, for over three decades. The cornerstone of a Gow education, it gives him great satisfaction to see students who struggle academically unlock the tools needed to read, write, and succeed. In addition to his passion for teaching and coaching tennis, he also assumed administrative roles, serving first as Director of Student Activities and, for the last 21 years, Director of Athletics.

"When I stepped into the role of Athletic Director, I knew I had found my true calling," he shares. "I am particularly proud of my work in expanding our athletic offerings." Under his leadership, Gow has seen the addition of various sports, including golf, cross-country, wrestling, squash, girls' volleyball and dance, weight training, and track and field.

"What I love about Gow's Athletic program is that it instills confidence in each student by giving them opportunities they could not get elsewhere. We have many individual and team sports; through those, we teach students to discover new talents, compete hard, and work well with others."

For Mr. Szafnicki, the future means inspiring and supporting Gow student-athletes and scholars. In his free time, he loves to ski and play tennis. We proudly announce that Mark Szafnicki will be honored for his tennis playing and coaching when he is inducted into the Buffalo Tennis Hall of Fame this summer.

Mark and his wife, Darcy, have three adult children: Chase, Kendall, and Tanner.

*Pictured: Mark with Steve Higgins (Former Faculty) in April; with Kuvaal Patel '15, with Sean Bridgman '91, and Dan Kelley (former Head Upper School)*

### THE GOW SPEAKERS SERIES

Informing and inspiring our community about learning differences



Meet our speaker

#### BRIAN THOMPSON

- The Gow School Department Chair, Reconstructive Language
- BA State University of New York at Geneseo
- MS Education Canisius College
- International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC) Outstanding Teacher Innovator Award
- Member - IMSLEC Board of Directors

Wednesday, May 22 at 7:00 p.m. (ET)

**READING WARS: HOW LITERACY INSTRUCTION HAS EVOLVED OVER TIME**

*Bonus: Summer Strategies for Success*

- No charge to attend
- Register to receive the Zoom link
- Please share this invitation with others!



Founded in 1926, Gow educates students with language-based learning differences. For more information about Gow's academic year boarding and five-week Summer Programs, please visit [gow.org](http://gow.org) or call 716.687.2001.



Gow juniors and seniors traveled to The Bank in East Aurora for a wonderful night of delicious food, dancing, and fun. Thanks to the Student Council for all they did to make it a memorable evening for all!

*Click to view the Media Gallery*



*Keeping in touch with Gow has never been easier!*



[the-gow-school](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-gow-school)



[thegowschool](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqWz8jKt8jKt8jKt8jKt8jK)



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