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# Glenwood Country Day School Elementary: Marketing Plan

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**Running head: Marketing Plan for Glenwood Country Day School Elementary**

**Glenwood Country Day School Elementary: Marketing Plan**

**Class: MNM 697- Final Project**

**Professor: Mary Stenger**

**By: Heather Ferragut**

**Date: April 23, 2006**

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### **Abstract**

Glenwood Country Day School Elementary, a newly expanding soon-to-be nonprofit, is in dire need of marketing assistance. This paper presents a marketing plan comprised of a mix of marketing strategies. In an effort to fill its classrooms, the school had previously advertised in a few local magazines. However, the response was poor. To obtain a more thorough understanding of the problem facing the school, multiple sources were consulted. Interviews were conducted; a survey was administered; a literature review was performed. Through research and analysis, seven marketing goals were proposed. These include adding clients, expanding current partnerships with the local community, increasing community awareness of the school, educating the new board on the importance of marketing, and improving the image of the school. In order to achieve these goals, five specific strategies are presented: an annual promotional event, improved communication, better handling of the issue of cost, and better use of volunteers and staff members. Specific techniques for implementing these strategies, as well as means of evaluating their success are described. The cost of implementing these marketing strategies will come primarily from the savings from ceasing to advertise in the local magazines and from the added revenue of enrolling additional students. The personnel needed to implement the strategies will come from parents, board members, and a newly hired part-time marketing and admissions director. Additional potential obstacles, beyond cost and personnel, are the board's lack of experience, the lack of time, and a possible delay in achieving nonprofit status. These obstacles are discussed.

## **Introduction and History of Glenwood Country Day School Elementary**

### *Introduction*

My name is Heather Ferragut. My final project for the MNM 697 class and completion of the Master's of Nonprofit Management Degree at Regis University will be a marketing plan for Glenwood Country Day School Elementary (GCDS Elementary). I will refer to myself as "this author" throughout this document. I am a parent of two children attending Glenwood Country Day School and a part-time teacher's aid at GCDS Daycare and Elementary. Before presenting the strategies and market analysis, this author will present a brief history, define the marketing problem, describe the research methods used, and briefly discuss the most significant issues and results found in current marketing and school marketing literature. The bulk of this paper will be comprised of target market identification and needs analysis and marketing strategies. The end of this paper provides obstacles, future suggestions, and concluding thoughts.

### *History*

Glenwood Country Day School, a private twenty-year old daycare/kindergarten in Glenwood, Maryland branched out this past year as an elementary school. A new facility was rented near the day-care location and classrooms were created for pre-first/first and second/third grades. The elementary school houses twenty-three students. The creation of the elementary was done by request of current parents. Current parents and Cheryl Stradling, the Director and owner of the GCDS daycare/kindergarten worked together to open the new school. The parents and Ms. Stradling both agreed from the beginning that the elementary would be a nonprofit school and the daycare/kindergarten would remain a private entity, which the Director owns. Ms. Stradling promoted her head teacher to the

position of the daycare/kindergarten Director, and she herself took on the role of Director for GCDS Elementary. However, as owner of the daycare location she is still the ultimate authority for both schools at this time. The elementary is not a nonprofit at this time. The finances have been separated from the daycare and the elementary in anticipation of the transition. Another step towards the nonprofit transition has been the creation of a strategic board for the elementary. The board consists of Ms. Stradling, who is the Director and president, Mr. Stradling, who is the vice president, and six other elementary student parents. The status of the nonprofit transition will be further discussed at the end of this paper.

### **Marketing Dilemmas Facing Glenwood Country Day School Elementary**

The Director of Glenwood Country Day School Elementary, Ms. Stradling, approached this author for advice regarding marketing the new elementary school. She expressed the hope that with the author's nonprofit background, this author could help her devise a plan to better market the school. She presents the problem as follows. While Ms. Stradling has no problem filling the GCDS daycare and kindergarten, she is having a horrible time getting clients for the GCDS Elementary School. She said the maximum capacity for the current school location is 100 students. Ms. Stradling expressed that ideally the enrollment would more than double this next year. She said she feels like the tens of thousands of dollars spent on marketing resulted in almost no response. Ms. Stradling told this author in an interview on March 17, that in the spring of 2005, before the elementary school opened, she spent \$45,000 in advertising to target parents with ads in local, large-circulation magazines. These magazines included *Baltimore's Child*, *Frederick's Child*, and *Kidstreet News*. The contract was for one year and expires in the

spring of 2006. Ms. Stradling also sent out one bulk mailing of four thousand brochures in the spring of 2005 to local zip codes. She said very few people have attended open houses or called about the school. Ms. Stradling said she is frustrated that she cannot get the word out about the school, and, at this point, it is crucial to get more interest before the fall of next year. Another main issue is that overhead to start the school and expensive rent mean that if the school does not attract more students it may need to close. A significant limitation is the need to put marketing strategies in place immediately while starting to implement longer-term plans.

Ms. Stradling incorrectly assumed that the advertising avenue she chose would be enough. She also wrongly assumed that being located on a prominent road would be enough to attract clients. This author contends the two major reasons Ms. Stradling's marketing attempt failed are: (a) she did not do analysis on where bulk mailing should be directed in 2005 or customize the school brochure, and (b) she only chose a few high-priced advertising venues that did not necessarily reach the local population. Ms. Stradling informed this author that nothing else was done to promote the school. A marketing expert was not consulted. There was no staff or volunteer person with marketing experience involved in any part of the marketing.

### **Marketing Plan Rationale**

The marketing plan is specifically designed to benefit Glenwood Country Day School Elementary. This project is important to help save the school for current families, give local parents a choice to pick a school with small classes and Spanish that meets each child at their level. On a broader level, this author hopes that this plan can be used to help other new nonprofit educational institutions become more marketing savvy and



better serve their clients. This author's motivation is to help support alternative nonprofit educational choices that help build the youth of the future.

### **Marketing Plan Research Methods**

#### *Interviews*

This author chose interviewing as one of the research methods. Carter McNamara (1999), nonprofit and business expert, says interviews are useful to both gather in-depth information and to obtain the story behind their particular experiences. This author interviewed three individuals from the GCDS community for this project:

(1) Cheryl Stradling, Director and owner of Glenwood Country Day School was interviewed for one-hour on three different occasions (3/17/2006, 3/24/2006, and 3/31/2006).

(2) Kathy Barry, an active parent volunteer at GCDS Elementary was interviewed for one-hour on 3/24/2006.

(3) Another GCDS Elementary parent who would like to remain anonymous was interviewed on 4/4/2006.

This author will also include information gained from a marketing interview conducted as an assignment for MNM class 697: Final Project. For the class assignment, Tianne Collins, co-chair of Relay for Life, was interviewed on 3/28/2006.

This author found that Carter McNamara was right in that the interviews conducted were both very informative and very specific to each interviewee's personal experiences and beliefs. These interviews also validated and humanized this author's research. This author did find negatives in the interview method. (a) Interviews are very subjective, and it is hard to identify what is accurate and what has been verbally altered

for the interviewer. (b) This author sometimes found it difficult to keep interviewees focused on questions and answers this author desired. A lot of dialoging and tangents occurred. This produced both positive and negative results for the interviews.

### *Questionnaire*

Barnes (1993) says distributing a questionnaire to survey current parents can be an effective way to measure clients' needs and opinions of the school. Barnes (1993) did note that the effectiveness of this data collection method depends on clarity of questions, relevance of questions, ease of use of survey, and distribution and collection methods. This author wrote a two-page easy-to-use questionnaire that focused on current GCDS parents' educational needs and their opinions of the school's marketable traits. Questions were close-ended, but further open-ended feedback was asked for. This survey and cover letter can be found in Appendix A. On March 20, 2006, this author placed eighty paper surveys in school parent folders at the elementary and kindergarten locations. Both parents in each household were provided a survey where applicable. The cover letter included with the survey instructed that the surveys should be returned in the provided collection folder by March 31. This author sent out an email reminder to all questionnaire recipients on March 31 to return surveys by April 7. The number of surveys returned was poorer than expected. Thirteen percent were returned. This author is an optimistic and a positive spirit. A lot was learned from the ten surveys returned. Results and tabulation of survey responses can be found in the Appendix B.

This author realizes, in retrospect, that it was unrealistic to expect both parents to fill out the survey. It was also misguided to attempt to solicit information from kindergarten students' parents. While they had insight and opinion on GCDS marketing

and were prospective clients for GCDS Elementary, many probably did not feel they had enough experience to discuss the school. This author also learned through interviewing a parent that the low survey return rate may be due to the fact that some parents are not continuing their children at the school for a variety of reasons. Those parents most likely did not desire to be involved with helping the school further.

### *Book Research*

This author conducted book research on image, customer needs, target markets, and effective marketing strategies. The bulk of this paper uses this research method to support the ideas and conclusions presented by this author. The main themes presented by the book research will be provided in the following literature review section.

## **Literature Review**

The general marketing and school marketing literature examined for this project yielded a variety of current trends and ideas that directly pertain to marketing a new nonprofit private elementary school. These trends and ideas include: understanding the Generation X target market, utilizing technology in today's marketing mix, recognizing today's image driven market, and creating a core marketing strategy that is customer focused.

Knowing the target market for one's product is a key marketing fundamental. In the case of private education, one must sell to the parents of today's youth. Understanding Generation X parents of today's elementary age children is crucial to being able to market one's school. Crystal Newman (2001), in Chapter One, "Marketing in the New Economy," from the book, *Marketing Independent Schools in the 21st Century*, explains that school marketers must realize and adapt marketing strategies to

suit the Generation X culture. Newman (2001) describes Generation X traits as technologically savvy, well educated, mix of nontraditional and traditional values, and a high consumption culture.

A lot of current marketing research identifies technology as an important factor that must be addressed to successfully market a product. The web and email are the two most relevant technologies for nonprofit private education. Time conscious Generation X-ers are very comfortable using the Internet to find product information and to communicate through email. Chris Barnes (1993) stresses the need to use the Internet to strengthen internal marketing in his book, *Practical Marketing for Schools*. Barnes contends that using email and a website is an important way to communicate one's image to current parents, create parent support, and create loyalty. Andersen & Kotler (2003) present additional general nonprofit benefits to utilizing the Internet in marketing. They contend that an organization's web site is a valuable and affordable way to provide information about an organization and to make contact with potential customers.

A central theme in the current marketing field is that image matters. Andersen & Kotler (2003) describe image as a central way to convey the meaning and emotion behind one's nonprofit. They discuss how the nonprofit's name, logo, and mission statement all play an important role in creating awareness about the organization. Heather Hoerle (2001) in Chapter Five, "A Question of Image: Who Do They Think You Are?" from the book *Marketing Independent Schools in the 21st Century*, discusses at length the need to know how the school is perceived in order to debunk myths or stress the positives about the school. Dr. Chris Barnes (1993), an education management professor, dedicates a whole chapter, "Image-building," in his book, *Practical Marketing for Schools*, to the

subject of image and marketing. In the opening of the chapter, Dr. Barnes (1993, p. 58) writes, “It is incontestable that parents and prospective pupils are inordinately influenced in their choice of school by consideration of reputation or image.... For this reason, corporate image-building is usually central to a school’s marketing strategy.” Barnes describes the importance of creating and managing an image that fits the school’s character and message. He discusses the importance of the logo as a visual image and gives information on how to distribute the school’s message and build its image internally and externally.

At the core of many of the current articles and books reviewed for this project, was the idea of creating customer-focused marketing strategies. Marketing experts, Perna (2005), Espy (1993), Barnes (1993), Andreasen & Kotler (2003), and Wack (2001) all discuss the importance of centering marketing strategies on the customers and their needs. Dr. Jeffery Wack (2001, p. 21) in Chapter 3, “What Marketing Should Be,” in the book *Marketing Independent Schools in the 21st Century*, writes, “The savvy school listens, really listens, to its customers.” Andersen & Kotler (2003, p. 51) say that, “In a sophisticated marketing organization, all marketing analysis and planning begin and end with the customer.”

This literature review has revealed that understanding the customer, using technology, and focusing on image and customers are key aspects of creating a successful marketing strategy for a nonprofit private school. Of these aspects, most recent literature on marketing in general and on marketing private schools in particular seem to agree that being “customer focused” is the most important. Experts also recognize that it is crucial to know the school’s market, which means understanding that a huge percentage of

today's buying market are technologically savvy Generation X-ers. This literature review showed that embracing the client and who they are means that nonprofits must recognize that people make decisions to buy based on an organization's appearance, image, and reputation. Nonprofits must learn to do their best to express their mission and strengths to their customer and work hard to maintain a relationship. This will help retain customers and create a welcoming atmosphere to attract new customers.

### **Target Markets**

“Successful school marketing involves identifying relevant target groups, both internal and external, and adopting appropriate communication strategies to reach them.” (Barnes, 1993, p. 5)

The previous quote by Dr. Barnes, marketing professor and researcher encapsulates target market awareness as a vital first step in creating a marketing plan. Target marketing is segmenting the population to see what opportunities and clients fit that particular organization (Andersen & Kotler, 2003). This section will define and discuss the internal and external target market for GCDS Elementary. The second part of the Barnes quote, which discusses reaching the target market, will be discussed in the following sections under customer needs and marketing strategies.

#### *Internal and External Nonprofit Target Markets*

Dr. Barnes (1993) defines the primary internal and external target markets for schools in Chapter 2, “Targeting the Marketing Message,” in his book, *Practical Marketing For Schools*. He states that the primary internal target market is the parents, staff, governors (board members), and students. He states that the internal market members are important because they contribute to running the school and promote the school through word of mouth. This author also sees current parents as an important

target market because they are returning customers for new enrollment contracts that are signed yearly. Dr. Barnes (1993) states that the external markets include parents of elementary school age children, local businesses and organizations, and local media. Barnes maintains that while parents are the direct target market, businesses, media, and organizations help advertise and promote the school. Espy (1993) in *Marketing Strategies For Nonprofit Organizations* also includes government funding sources, donors, volunteers, and referral agents as important external target markets for nonprofit organizations.

#### *Segmentation of Target Markets*

Espy (1993) writes that a nonprofit must be able to break down into segments the types of people who are most likely to want their services. After segmenting the population, marketers target certain sub-populations with certain forms of marketing. Espy (1993) lists a variety of ways to segment a market. This author believes Espy's segment examples of age, education, affluence, and geographic location best fit this research project. This author conducted a target market analysis using those segmentations to create a spreadsheet of which zip codes would be most appropriate to send a mass mailing to. The demographic data is in Appendix C of this document.

#### **Matching Target Market Needs with GCDS Offerings**

“Potential customers simply were unwilling to ‘buy’ a service that they did not feel would meet their wants or needs.” (Espy, 1993, p. 10)

#### *School Customer Needs*

The above quote illustrates the importance of understanding the customers' needs in creating and marketing a product. Customer needs must be at the center of all

marketing analysis and strategies (Andersen & Kotler, 2003). The most important customers for GCDS Elementary are local parents of elementary school age children. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, it is important for school marketers to understand that they are marketing schools to Generation X parents. Michael Conner (2001), in Chapter nine of the book, *Marketing Independent Schools in the 21st Century*, discusses research on what private school customers, who are Generation X parents, want. He said that the following traits were taken from an opinion poll on *Perceptions of Independent Schools* taken in 1999 by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). Conner (2003) reports parents are looking for schools that (a) have small class size, (b) have quality teachers, (c) have high motivation for students, (d) have discipline, (e) have a challenging curriculum, (f) have a supportive environment, (g) focus on parent involvement, (h) pay attention to individual academic needs, and (i) prevent drug abuse. This author found that, on average, GCDS parents surveyed ranked class size, teacher quality, and teaching philosophy as the most important factors in choosing a school. On average, GCDS parents also found academic result, nurturing atmosphere and teacher/parent contact to be important. GCDS parents found discipline, classroom physical environment, and affordability to be less important. GCDS survey participants on average ranked extracurricular activities, test scores, and commute times as least important.

#### *Obstacle and Promise in Needs Analysis of the GCDS Elementary Local Community*

This author found through school performance records at great schools.com and talking with local parents that there is a large target market obstacle in marketing GCDS to parents within the local community. The research yielded that public schools within a



fifteen-minute radius of GCDS are extremely high performing and very well regarded by the local parents. Class sizes are also kept at or below twenty students. Demographic research combined with analysis of school performance through great schools.com showed that beyond the fifteen-minute radius there is a large untapped market for GCDS Elementary. Those schools are more crowded and lower performing academically. Parents in those areas are also well educated and affluent.

#### *Applying the Marketing 4 Ps to Customer Desires & Marketing*

The desires of parents can also be placed in a well tested marketing practice of judging marketability by the 4 P's of marketing (Sensiper, 1999). These are (a) product, (b) price, (c) place, and (d) promotion. *Product* traits were described above as those that parents are generally looking for in choosing a school. *Price* plays a large role in determining whether a school suits a parents needs. Sensiper (1999) says research shows that price and other non-monetary costs like commute time or investment must fit the level of desire for those services, or the customer will not buy. If a customer can get the desired traits at a cheaper private school or public school, GCDS Elementary will not be chosen. That is why it is important for a private nonprofit elementary like GCDS Elementary to differentiate itself from other local schools. This author will list the traits that are differentiated from other local educational institutions in the following section. *Place* involves physical location and classroom environment. GCDS Elementary parents ranked this less important, but this author found through observation and research that place does play a large role in determining how much a customer desires to send their child to a particular school. This will be discussed further under image. *Promotion* affects

customer desire because a school not properly or accurately marketed will not create satisfied clients.

### *GCDS Marketable Traits*

Now that a brief overview of the traits parents are seeking in choosing a school has been presented, this author will present the marketable traits that GCDS Elementary possesses and must capitalize on in the marketing of the school. The survey and observation showed that the most marketable traits of GCDS Elementary are class size, teacher quality, teaching philosophy, safety, diversity of student body, and daily physical education program. These are all very important traits that match well with the research presented earlier in the poll conducted by NAIS. This author has found through observation of local school websites that GCDS Elementary is unique in all local school offerings in that they have daily physical education classes, group by ability and not by age, and use a significant level of learning games and educational play within their curriculum. These traits that differentiate GCDS Elementary need to be a focus of all marketing strategies. An important marketing trait that permeates a school that must be addressed is school image. This author will dedicate the entire next section to the importance of image. It will show the positives and negatives GCDS is exhibiting regarding image and the need to understand and promote image when marketing to all internal and external markets.

### *Image and Marketing*

Image is central to marketing a school (Barnes, 1999). Parents build perceptions before, during, and while their children attend a particular school. Andreasen & Kotler (2003) content that an organization must use their name, logo, mission, and reputation to

position themselves in their particular market. It is crucial to understand how your organization and competition are perceived. Image is a way to convey to target markets who you are and what you can offer them. Marketing expert, Mark Perna (2005) says that building emotional attachment and loyalty to your brand is essential in this competitive society. Perna (2005) says, “Keep in mind that people will remember 33 percent of what they read, 50 percent of what they are told, and 100 percent of what they feel!”

#### *GCDS Elementary Internal Image*

The survey this author conducted showed that GCDS Elementary parents thought the mission of the school was made known to them through literature and staff. The survey takers also felt the philosophy of the school was of neutral value in marketing to prospective students. This author found mission- or philosophy-like statements in GCDS material but no cohesive mission statement. Some of them include: “We personalize your curriculum,” “Children are grouped by ability,” “Focus on Diversity,” and “Teaching and learning take place on an intimate scale (9:1 average).” Mission statements are not displayed at school. While surveyed parents believe in the philosophy, only six out of ten feel comfortable recommending the school. Six of the 10 survey participants were positive about image and their experiences with GCDS. An interesting indicator of what factors are hurting GCDS’s internal image can be gleaned from the survey results of those who did not feel comfortable recommending GCDS. Almost all of those that did not feel comfortable recommending the school indicated that mixed grades, school name, tuition price, and level of parent/teacher communication hurt GCDS’s marketability. This indicates GCDS does have an image problem that needs to be addressed. Communication and classroom appearance are central to the image of a school. In addition, there has been

very low participation at PTO meetings, which is another indicator that parents are not feeling connected to the school. An interview with a current parent that did not want to be identified also gave this author indication that there are internal image issues hampering the marketing effort. The interviewee stated that many parents are choosing to not come back to GCDS next year. The interviewee stated that there are problematic issues surrounding the mixed classroom set-up, academics, and level or style of communication with staff. The person interviewed indicated that they did not receive the level of academics and support that they perceived they would receive from the school.

### *GCDS External Image*

As mentioned earlier, a negative image or perception by the outside community may occur regarding GCDS because it is a new private school located in a strip mall in an area with good schools. The newness of the school means many do not know or know very little about the school, so there is no perception or understanding of the school. A positive for GCDS Elementary's external image is the partnerships they currently have with the community center and public library located next to the school. This helps show the community that GCDS Elementary is credible, and it is a community partner. The excellent reputation of the GCDS Daycare/Kindergarten and camp programs also helps the reputation of GCDS Elementary. The external community can see that GCDS does run successful, quality programs.

### *Image Analysis*

#### *Externally.*

GCDS Elementary Board and Director need to be more familiar with the educational trends and needs of the local population. They would benefit from doing

additional research and observation of who is choosing their school. Under the strategy section this author will discuss further how to reach target populations for the school and how to enhance the school's image with the community. It is important for GCDS Elementary staff to be aware of the image and emotions they are projecting to prospective clients at open houses, tours, and phone inquiries.

*Internally.*

It is important for GCDS Elementary staff to be aware of the emotion they create with current students and parents. GCDS Elementary board and staff need to work to uncover and acknowledge that "the grapevine of informal communication" is yielding some unpleasant and popular statements about the school that can spread like cancer through the school. The GCDS Director, staff, and board must work together to identify and do their best to rectify class set-up and communication issues. This author feels the transition to a nonprofit school will greatly benefit GCDS's image internally. Nonprofit status will give more power to the board and parents. This will allow for changes and a sense of ownership that is desperately needed by parents. The GCDS Elementary community, under their new nonprofit status, must work to build a cohesive mission statement and vision for the school. This will help with image, communication, and marketing.

*SWOT Analysis*

Further analysis of internal and external image and traits that must be capitalized on and addressed can be found in Appendix D. This analysis is called a SWOT analysis. SWOT stands for strength (internal), weakness (internal), opportunities (external), and threats (external). Barnes (1999) says the SWOT analysis is an important step in the

marketing plan. It provides review of internal and external environment that must be considered when creating marketing strategies. The appendix provides the internal and external strengths and weaknesses in a chart. The SWOT analysis portion of the SWOT gives specific suggestions and analysis of what GCDS Elementary characteristics need to be maximized and what traits need to be reformed. The SWOT for GCDS Elementary was discussed with and feedback received from the Director, Ms. Stradling. Book research, personal observation, and feedback from interviews are also reflected in the SWOT.

### **Marketing Goals**

Now that the target market has been determined along with the GCDS Elementary marketable traits and obstacles, the next step is to define marketing goals and present strategies and techniques to achieve those goals. The general goal of marketing is to create behavior change of our targeted customers and whole target community (Sensiper, 1999). We want the target markets to buy our service, recognize our organization, recommend our organization, or donate to our organization.

From extensive discussion with the Director, observation, and recommendations from research and interviews, this author has created seven marketing goals for GCDS Elementary. Goals for both 2007 and 2008 will be presented.

#### **GCDS Marketing Goals for 2007 and 2008**

- (1) Significantly increase prospective interest in the school. (Phone call and web inquiries, tours, and open houses should increase from 10 to 50 families the first year and to 75 the subsequent year).
- (2) Increase GCDS Elementary Summer Camp Program by 50% next year (Summer 07) and 75% the subsequent year.
- (3) Increase numbers of old and new clients signing contracts by 50% for Fall 07 and 60% by Fall 08

- (4) Expand current partnerships with local community. Expand from two to four for 07 and to a total of 6 partnerships for 08.
- (5) Increase business, community, and media awareness of GCDS. It is currently low due to it being a new school, so the measure for the next two years could be to have moderate community participation in one GCDS public event.
- (6) Educate GCDS's new nonprofit board by Fall 07 on how to evaluate, rework, and move forward on this marketing plan and future marketing goals.
- (7) Enhance internal and external image of GCDS. This can be measured by administering a survey at the end of 07 and 08 regarding internal image.

### **Marketing Strategies**

This author will present a diverse marketing mix to address the above goals. Five different strategies will be presented. They include: (a) a major annual promotional event, (b) dissemination of GCDS information into the community, (c) improvement of clarity and amount of internal and external communication, (d) reduction in costs at GCDS, and (e) promotion of marketing as a priority to the GCDS Director, board, staff, and parents.

The internal and external perception of GCDS will heavily influence its marketability. It is crucial for GCDS to have a good image and reputation within its internal community and with the external public in order to cultivate partnerships, volunteers, board members, donors, and clients for the school. Within each strategy section, there will be a discussion of how the strategy will positively impact the GCDS image.

Various marketing techniques will be presented for each strategy. Evaluation methods will be given for the different strategies. Cost to implement, obstacles, and implementation methods of these techniques will be discussed following the presentation of the individual marketing strategies.

#### *Strategy 1: Promotional Event*

Marketing consultant, Jay Levinson (1990) writes there are three major reasons why holding a promotional event is an effective marketing strategy. They include: (a) an organization's best clients usually attend, (b) they generate free media publicity, and (c) they strengthen the relationship with customers. An annual public event such as an Educational Expo held at GCDS Elementary could help propel many of GCDS's marketing goals. The event could allow for displaying student work, showing the school, and communicating all the positive things about GCDS. This would help facilitate a positive internal and external image. Inviting local organizations and businesses to participate in the event would also enhance partnerships. As Levinson mentioned, an important benefit of promotional events is free press. Ms. Collins, a local volunteer chair for a large community event, stated that free media coverage was one of her greatest marketing assets. As a new school, GCDS must get more exposure in the community. Creating a community event focused on education would help do that. A promotional event that has educational speakers and activities for kids will draw parents that will be potential clients for the school and camps. Filling the summer camps helps pay for the Elementary facility in the summer and create potential customers for the Elementary program.



*Evaluation method for Strategy 1, promotional event.* The measurements of success for this type of event could include: an informal verbal inquiry of the event participants, the number of prospective customers interested in more information after attending, and the level of media and business support for the event. A verbal survey of external prospective and public event attendees can also provide a rating of the school's external image.

*Strategy 2: Dissemination of GCDS Information to the Community*

The most central marketing goal is to attract clients for GCDS Elementary. In order to attract clients, GCDS must be able to effectively share their school's offerings with the community. Techniques such as (a) mass mailings, (b) advertisement flyers, (c) letters and information to businesses and organizations, and (d) website development are the techniques that would be most effective in disseminating information about GCDS Elementary.

*Mass mailings.* Levinson (1990) says, "One of the most effective, inexpensive, proven, and reliable methods of marketing is direct-mail postcards." Michael Fleischner (2006) writes in his article, "Marketing to Generation X and Y," that people born between 1965 and 1994 are very open to mass marketing techniques. Levinson reports that people of Generation X and Y view ads and coupons they receive in the mail as valuable and respond to them. Using demographic research in creating effective brochures or postcards to highlight GCDS qualities is very important. Besides emphasizing the qualities of GCDS, it is important to include the logo and the mission statement in mailings to help create brand recognition and help explain the school's image.

*Advertisement flyers.* This author has found from personal experience that advertising with both tear-off flyers and non-tear-off flyers can be a very effective means of marketing in the community where GCDS resides. This author has advertised for two nonprofits successfully using this technique. Placing these tear-off flyers in libraries, grocery stores, and places parents frequent is a great way to share information about GCDS. This author has created a tear-off flyer for both the camp and the school. These can be found in Appendix E. The Director of GCDS and this author agreed that getting out flyers now would be important for the school. This author has disseminated flyers to local libraries and stores, and mailed them to local preschools and schools. The Director recruited three other parents to place flyers in the surrounding community. Like mass mailings, flyers should reflect the image of GCDS.

*Letters and brochures to businesses and the community.* An important marketing technique is to alert organizations, including businesses, of one's services, selecting only those organizations that would see your product as valuable to their clients. This author has sent business letters to preschools, local elementary schools, the Sylvan Learning Center, and mothers' groups. Other possibilities would be pediatricians, or any other professional that serves youth. It is important to pick businesses that complement the service and do not compete with it. This technique is a great way to increase client referrals and to create business partnerships within the community. Building bonds with local businesses improves external image. For example, this author created a flyer and letter that specifically and exclusively discussed GCDS Elementary camp opportunities to local elementary schools. This author emailed eight local school principals about displaying camp information. Four school principals responded and allowed this author to

deliver one hundred camp flyers to each school to be displayed in a parent pick-up area.

This author will provide the school business letter in Appendix F.

*Using the Internet as a marketing tool.* Andersen & Kotler (2003) discuss in their book, *Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations*, that an organization's website serves a variety of marketing functions for a nonprofit. The website is a form of communication with current clients and a way to disseminate information to prospective clients about what the organization can offer. A website is also an effective way to get prospective clients to sign up for tours or more information. GCDS Elementary is already in the process of revamping their website. They have hired a website creator to model the site after some top local private school websites, but to infuse the site with GCDS's own personal feel and message. This website consultant also has worked to optimize the website so that it is easily found by users of Internet search engines. *Promoting Your School* (2006) from a Private School Guide at About.com lists optimizing your website as one of the top three ways to get your school noticed. This site says it is not that hard to do, and it is very effective. When someone does a search for private schools in this area, the GCDS website should be within the top ten hits. Besides the website itself, GCDS could use the website and email to share information with current clients and prospective clients. This will be discussed further under the communication strategy.

*Evaluation method for Strategy 2, information dissemination.* Evaluation of the methods for Strategy 2 could be as easy as recording how prospective clients heard about the school on a spreadsheet. The success of each type of method is judged by the number of responses of that type. A yearly review of which media was most successful in attracting clients will determine future marketing strategies.

*Strategy 3: Improve Internal and External Communication at GCDS*

There are a variety of ways to improve both internal and external communication. This author will first present strategies to improve internal communication, and next present ways to improve external communication.

*Improving internal communication.* It was mentioned earlier in this paper that some parents did not feel that the level of parent-staff communication was sufficient. Moreover, poor attendance of meetings of the parent-teacher organization indicates that a mix of communication and image problems has arisen at GCDS Elementary. Ways to improve internal communication include:

(1) *Improve the quality of the newsletters reaching parents.* Creating newsletters that include youth accomplishments, test scores, and school advancements make parents feel connected to the school and happy about the choice they made to send their child to GCDS. Barnes (1993) says that newsletters serve a variety of functions. He says they address mission, objectives, parent and teacher involvement needs, PTA updates, Director's vision, and national educational issues.

(2) *Increase the number of parent-teacher conferences.* Parents will feel more connected and will better understand their role in their child's education if there are monthly mini-conferences with teachers. This could be as simple as signing up to stay 15 minutes after pick-up to discuss your child's progress.

(3) *Use the Internet to connect with parents.* Using the GCDS website to communicate with parents by posting information, test scores, present and future accomplishments and plans, as well as using internet features like forums and mass emails will help keep parents informed.

(4) *Create a satisfaction committee.* Going hand-in-hand with good lines of communication is the ability for parents to feel safe and comfortable expressing themselves. One way to do this would be to create a satisfaction committee within the Board of Directors. This committee would elicit opinions from parents in various ways, such as placing suggestion boxes out in the school. Gaining feedback from parents will be valuable when making changes needed to propel a positive image and when working to keep current clients at the school. Parent surveys could be used to gauge the successfulness of attempts to improve internal communication.

*Evaluation method for Strategy 3, internal communication improvement.* This author feels that the best way to evaluate this process is to combine surveying parents yearly regarding communication with an informal annual PTO discussion focused on getting feedback on the level of success of internal communication at GCDS.

*Improving External Communication.* Improving external communications is important for GCDS Elementary. The staff, board, and current clients must project their image and keep potential clients interested in their school. Strategies 1, 2, and 3 are forms of communication that may indirectly improve external communication. Techniques that would directly address communication with potential clients include newsletters or school updates for prospective clients, regular invitations to school open houses, and the promotional event described in Strategy 1. These techniques will help promote the school's image and remind prospective clients of the services GCDS can provide them.

*Evaluation method for Strategy 3, external communication improvement.* Create a survey for incoming clients that asks if the previous communication attempts influenced their decision to choose GCDS Elementary.

*Strategy 4: Address Cost at GCDS*

The cost of tuition and the way money is managed for the school affects the school's image, ability to acquire external funding, and the main goal of enrolling new students. Parents will not be attracted to a school they feel is overpriced or wasting money.

*Communicating openly and honestly about cost.* Parents want to trust that they are getting their money's worth and that all reasonable measures are being taken to keep costs down. Mitchell (2001) in "The Affordability Dilemma," from the book, *Marketing Independent Schools in the 21st Century*, discusses cost and private education. Mitchell states that private schools must provide prospective clients with a lot of information about the value and worth of their school to help offset the shock of the cost of private education. He also states that schools must fully disclose their expenses. To gain the support of parents, it is essential that the school is honest about the cost that goes into creating such a great program by showing how the money is being spent. Full disclosure also helps in acquiring funding for the school. Parents will have a positive image of GCDS if they perceive that the school is financially smart and is offering their children a lot in return for the tuition paid. GCDS must release their financial statements and work hard in written materials and open houses to stress the benefits of paying for private education.

*Fundraising and seeking external grants to keep down tuition cost.* A key benefit of GCDS Elementary becoming a nonprofit is the fundraising, tax, and grant benefits that go along with that status. GCDS Elementary tax savings coupled with a few government or private grants could significantly benefit the school. Another key point is that

nonprofit status means that parents, community members, businesses, and media are more willing to volunteer services and donate money or supplies. Nonprofit status benefits the school's image and helps reduce costs. Espy (1993) notes that there is a lot of competition for funding for education. He says it is important for a nonprofit to do all it can to seem more appealing than its competition. This is why image, product development, and product differentiation are so important for GCDS Elementary.

*Tuition reduction plan.* As a new school that is currently in debt, GCDS cannot offer a financial aid program. However there are two suggestions to help create diversity and allow parents who could not otherwise afford the school. (1) The Director, Ms. Stradling, came up with the idea that parents with need can fundraise the portion of their tuition they cannot afford. (2) This author has found that other private nonprofit schools offer reduction in tuition fees in exchange for services such as cleaning, lunch duty, recess duty, or classroom help. The Blacksburg New School (2005) in Virginia offers such a tuition reduction plan. Parents receive \$50 off per month for serving on the board, cleaning, and supervising children. The Blacksburg New School website says, "These jobs provide parents with the opportunity to not only participate in their children's school, but also to reduce the cost of tuition." This author feels this type of option would be very beneficial to help keep GCDS diverse, show parents that keeping cost down is a priority, and encourage parent involvement. The success of this method could be evaluated by seeing how many parents participate in tuition reduction programs and how satisfied they are with the program. This could be done through a simple survey.

*Evaluation method for Strategy 4, addressing cost.* Internally and externally, parents need to be asked in survey and interview form if cost is a main reason affecting

their decision to not choose GCDS Elementary and how, if at all, the proposed cost reduction and cost explanation have helped address cost issues.

*Strategy 5: Involve the Board, Parents, and Staff in Marketing GCDS*

In Chapter 7 of *Marketing Strategies for Nonprofits*, Espy (1993) describes who within an organization is responsible for marketing. He says the board, top management, staff, volunteers, marketing committee, and outside consultants can all be utilized in marketing a nonprofit. It is crucial for GCDS Elementary as they transition over to nonprofit status to start immediately through board training and committee development to make marketing a priority. The board is responsible for budget allocation, fundraising, and strategic planning so they must play a central role in marketing the school. It is essential to notify parents through PTO meetings and newsletters what GCDS Elementary is doing to market the school and how they can help. All ten survey participants said that parents should play a role in marketing their school. Eight survey participants said parents should play some role. Two parents said parents should play a large role. Besides board members and parents, staff members need to know that every time they have a potential client observe their class, or they interact with parents or children, they are setting the school's image and indirectly marketing the school. Staff members need to be told by the board and management how important staff communication, creating a nurturing environment for students, and quality teaching are to marketing the school and making the school thrive, all of which benefits all participants of the school.



*Evaluation method for Strategy 5, improved board, staff, and parent involvement.*

Observation of the level of participation in marketing by staff, parents, and the board will indicate whether trying to include all the GCDS community has been successful.

### **Cost and Manpower to Implement the Proposed Marketing Strategies**

The previous section introduced the topic of who is responsible for marketing at GCDS. This section will cover who would be responsible for implementing the strategies presented above. It provides a general overview of how cost could be handled for these marketing tasks.

#### *Manpower*

*Parents.* This author has discussed in previous sections that parent volunteers can help the school through word-of-mouth recommendations and help with tasks such as hanging up flyers to advertise the school. Parent volunteers could also play a major role in designing and coordinating the annual public event described as Strategy 1 in the previous section.

*Director and Board.* The Director and board must make time to help with strategic planning, fundraising, promotion of the school, and budgeting for marketing. The board and Director must play a central role in creating mission statements and language to use in promotional materials.

*Marketing Staff.* This author feels that the hiring of a staff person to handle marketing and admissions is crucial for the implementation of this marketing plan. Currently the Director, staff, and teacher's aids handle all the administrative and teaching duties. Currently, no staff member has the job of handling marketing and administration. Having a part-time staff person handling mailings, flyers, inquiries, promotional events,

newsletters, and media and business contact would greatly improve GCDS Elementary's chances of marketing success. Eight participants of the GCDS marketing survey said staff needed to be hired to help with marketing. A comment given by survey participant, Carolyn Pasquino, said that, "... She [Ms. Stradling] needs a paid employee (not consultant) - even if 2-3 days per week - to raise awareness and market the school." The two participants that did not recommend staff being hired said that a consultant should be hired to help with marketing.

### *Cost*

The GCDS Director has changed marketing strategies this year. She has spent \$20,000 in paper advertisement, \$3,000 in web development, and \$4,000 for one bulk mailing. This means that \$27,000 has been spent this year directly with marketing in mind. The good news is that the web development is a one-time cost, and the last mass mailing was sent out based on demographic research of the area. This author recommends that the \$20,000 paper advertisement not be renewed and this money instead be redirected to cover new marketing expenses. This author does not believe tuition hikes should be used to cover marketing expenses. High tuition is counterproductive to the marketing effort. Instead, the marketing plan this author presents allows for a significant increase in clients. Each additional client that is brought to the school will bring \$10,000 in tuition. The increase in tuition received should provide more revenue to cover marketing expenses. This author has presented a variety of inexpensive marketing techniques, such as postcard mailings, free media coverage, newsletter reforms, and utilization of free labor from the board and parents. These should help keep marketing costs down. GCDS marketing survey participants all believed that part of the GCDS

Elementary budget must go to marketing. The elementary had a budget last year of about \$240,000 income and \$300,000 expenses. A lot of this was due to start-up cost and fewer students enrolled than expected. Since the new nonprofit board has not yet been installed for the GCDS Elementary, this author is not sure about how the budget will be altered for this coming fall, and how that will in turn affect a marketing budget. Four participants of the survey thought that between 1% and 3% of the school's budget should be spent on marketing. Four participants thought that between 3% and 5% should be spent. One participant said more than 5%, and one said less than 1%.

### **Obstacles to Implementing the Proposed Marketing Strategies**

This author sees three major obstacles in making the above marketing plan a reality. They are lack of board experience, lack of time, and a possible delay in achieving nonprofit status.

*GCDS Elementary board and staff have no nonprofit or marketing experience.* If GCDS Elementary creates their board this coming summer for the fall, they will have a lot to learn and a lot to manage to run the school well. It is possible that they will be overwhelmed and spend a year of trial and error figuring out how to be an effective board. This is a huge concern since the school may be unable to afford any wasted time.

There are two main ways to overcome this obstacle. First, the Director needs to educate the new board this summer as soon as possible on the seriousness of the situation and how important marketing must be if the school is to succeed. Second, the board must prioritize marketing strategies to prepare for the possibility that there is insufficient time or skill to implement all of the strategies. This author believes the mailings and flyer advertisings, which are part of Strategy 2 described earlier, are the most important

marketing techniques. Clients need to know about the school before more can be done.

The second most important techniques are from Strategy 3 and include internal and external web and newsletter communication. This will both improve clients' and potential clients' image of the school and teach internally and externally about what the school has to offer.

*Time constraints to implement marketing strategies.* It takes time for an image to be built, volunteers to get involved, and grants to come through. The GCDS community must be diligent in their marketing efforts and at the same time be patient. They must recognize that this takes time and that the school may be in debt during the first few years, but that the school can succeed through smart marketing. Once again, a strategy for dealing with time constraints is to prioritize and implement the most productive strategies first.

*A possible delay in achieving nonprofit status.* This author found out at the very end of this project that the Director is having second thoughts about the timing of becoming a nonprofit. The Director assured this author that the school would become a nonprofit, but that she is hesitant to release her power over the school to others now because of the school's volatile financial state. This author tried to assure the Director that becoming a nonprofit would be the best thing for the school and that she needed to further consult nonprofit experts. The Director said she would keep an open mind and further explore a transition sooner rather than later. This plan is written for a nonprofit, and while some things can be implemented while still in private form, the full benefits of the plan cannot be realized until it is a nonprofit.

### **Discussion of Results and Further Research Recommendations**

This author sees the previous plan and research conducted as a starting point for the GCDS board and Director to begin their marketing journey. This author firmly believes that some positive results have already come from this project. Already the Director, Ms. Stradling, is feeling more confident that marketing can succeed if done well. Already hundreds of flyers or brochures have been strategically placed in the community by this author. The Director has used this author's demographic study for a mass mailing. This author will be able to see in the next couple of months how successful these initial efforts have been. This author believes that further study and evaluation is needed of the marketing efforts already in place and of whatever marketing efforts are later put in place. This author believes that further internal and external study by the board must be conducted regarding client needs, image, and product development.

### **Summary & Conclusion**

GCDS Elementary is struggling to gain clients. It is crucial for the GCDS Elementary Director to gain more clients to cover start-up costs and to cover future costs if tuition is to be kept at a reasonable rate. No marketing staff or experts planning marketing strategies, a lack of understanding of the target market, limited dissemination of marketing materials, and image and communication problems all contribute to the current difficulties in obtaining new clients. GCDS marketing goals focus on increasing the client base, enhancing the school's image, improving communication, keeping cost down, and increasing participation of staff, board, and parents in marketing. Some of the main strategies to reach these goals included: promotional event, newsletters, web development, flyers and brochures, measures to reduce tuition and cost, and cultivation of

the GCDS community to help with marketing. In order to succeed, GCDS needs to keep costs reasonable, needs to get board, staff, and parents involved, and needs a dedicated staff person to handle marketing and administration. Obstacles to the school's success in marketing include the facts that the school is not now a nonprofit and it is not known when it will be, that building a good marketing program takes time, and that the board and staff need to be trained on the importance of marketing. The only way for this new school to be successful is to embrace tried and true marketing strategies and advice, and to make the transition to nonprofit status. This author has presented a variety of inexpensive and reputable marketing strategies and concepts that GCDS can implement to help guarantee the client growth the school needs in order to remain open. This author hopes this plan will show the board and Director that there are real tools and solutions to marketing their school. This author hopes this plan will be used as a guide by GCDS Elementary to create a sound marketing plan for the school.

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Appendix A:

(1) Survey Cover Letter

Dear Parents,

3/20/06

Hi. My name is Heather Ferragut My twin boys, Jacob and Nathan are in Ms. Christina's class. I am currently taking my last course to get a Masters Degree in Nonprofit Management. I have been working on my master's for the past 6 years. I am so excited to be finally completing it this spring.

My last class is a capstone/final project class. With Ms. Cheryl's permission, I have decided to write a marketing plan for Glenwood Country Day School as my final project. It will include a parent survey. I am asking all current parents in the elementary school and parents who plan to put their children next year into the elementary school to complete this simple survey. I would like both the father and mother to complete separate surveys if applicable. We all have our own unique point of view and comments.

Note: I feel parents placing children in the elementary next year should also take the survey because they are familiar with the teaching philosophy, school, and marketing that has been done in the past. School marketing has been done in a joint manner to this date.

**This survey is anonymous. However you can choose to put your name on the survey if you want.**

**It will only take a few minutes to complete.**

Completing this survey will not only help a mom complete a master's degree, it will also help support GCDS. It will help bring in the students, retain students, enhance the image, and spread the word about GCDS's program. These things are vital to GCDS's success as a new and growing private elementary. Completing this survey and adding comments will greatly benefit the school. Parents know what the school needs to change and what they are doing right. Constructive criticism combined with acknowledgement of what is working is what is needed to keep the school on track for the future.

I will be writing a full marketing plan for the elementary school that includes data collected from this survey. I will be providing this valuable information to the GCDS PTO.

*So please fill out these surveys and place them in the envelope marked completed surveys by March 30th.*

Thank You So Much For Your Participation.

\*\*Also if you want to further support my project please email me at [heatherferragut@hotmail.com](mailto:heatherferragut@hotmail.com) with any testimonials you have about the school. I am writing up marketing materials, and words from a parent or child can be a very effective marketing tool.

**You may also email me with any questions or comments about this project.** Thank You

Sincerely, Heather Ferragut

**(2) Survey**

2006 Marketing Survey for GCDS

*Please check off or place an x in the boxes for the answers for questions 1 –8.*

**1. How did you first find out about GCDS?**

- individual (friend, neighbor, or family member)
- print advertisement
- through participation in camp, tutoring or other service
- web search or website

**2. Did you attend an open house or tour?** yes no

**if yes, did the open house or tour play a major role in your decision to choose GCDS**

- yes no

**3. How much of a role should parents play in marketing.** (spreading the word about GCDS)

- none some role large role

**4. Should GCDS hire additional staff to help in marketing and admissions?**

- Consultant yes no Part-time staff yes no Full-time staff yes no

**5. How much of the GCDS elementary school’s budget should be spent on marketing?**

- less than 1% 1% to 3% 3% to 5% more than 5%

**6. Do you feel you understand the mission, vision, and philosophy of GCDS?**

- yes no

**7. Do you feel GCDS’s mission, vision, and philosophy are adequately presented?**

- a. Displayed in the classroom yes no
- b. Displayed in GDCS brochures and literature yes no
- c. Verbally presented by staff at school meetings yes no

**8. Do you feel comfortable recommending this school to others in the community?**

- yes no

*Please rate all slots for question 9 on a scale of 1 to 5. 1-- being the least important factor and 5 being the greatest factor in choosing a school.*

**9. What in your opinion are the greatest factors in choosing an educational institution?**

**Scale 1 to 5** 1= least important 5 = most important

- class size teacher quality teaching philosophy
- discipline academic result friendly/nurturing atmosphere
- test scores reputation classroom physical environment affordability of program
- parent/teacher contact extracurricular activities commute time to school

**10. What in your opinion are GCDS current program strengths and weaknesses in regards to marketability? Place an x in the appropriate slot for A-Q.**

A. Class Size

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

B. Teacher Quality

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

C. Teaching Philosophy

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

D. Current Amount of Extracurricular Activities

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

E. Spanish Classes

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

F. Mixed Grades (1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades combined etc.)

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

G. School Location

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

H. School Name

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

I. GCDS Mission

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

J. Physical Education Program at GCDS

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

K. Setup of Classroom Space at GCDS

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

L. Tuition Price of GCDS

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

M. Safety of facility at GCDS

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

N. Level of Teacher/Parent Communication found at GCDS

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

O. Set up of GCDS Website

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

P. Admission standards at the school

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

Q. Level of Diversity found within the student body at GCDS

helps marketability  hurts marketability  not a factor in marketability  don't know

**\*Any additional comments regarding image, marketing strategies, and the GCDS program are greatly appreciated. Please place them on the back of this survey.**

## Appendix B: Survey Results and Tabulation

		Survey									
	Question	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	How did you first find out about GCDS?	through camp, tutoring, or other service	individual	print advertisement	print advertisement	print advertisement		print advertisement	print advertisement	individual	web search
2	Did you attend an open house or tour?	yes	no	yes	no	no	no	yes	yes	no	no
	If so, did it play a major role?	no		yes				yes	yes		no
3	How much of a role should parents play in marketing?	large role	some role	some role	large role	some role	some role	some role	some role	some role	some role
4	Should GCDS hire additional staff to help in marketing and admissions?										
	consultant				no	yes		no		yes - full or part	yes
	part-time staff	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes - full or part	yes
	full-time staff				no	no		no		no	yes
5	How much of the GCDS elementary school's budget should be spent on marketing	don't know	3-5 pct	more than 5 pct	1-3 pct	1-3 pct	3-5 pct	3-5 pct	1-3 pct	1-3 pct	3-5 pct
6	Do you feel you understand the mission, vision, and philosophy of GCDS?	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
7	Do you feel GCDS's mission, vision, and philosophy are adequately presented										
	in the classroom?	no	no	yes	yes	not always	yes	no	no		somewhat
	in the GCDS brochures and literature?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes
	verbally by staff at school meetings?	yes	no		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
8	Do you feel comfortable recommending this school to others in the community?	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no

		Survey									
Question	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	
<b>9</b>	<b>What are the greatest factors in choosing an educational institution</b>										
	class size	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	4
	teacher quality	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
	teaching philosophy	3	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
	discipline	4	4	3	3	3	3	5	3	4	3
	academic result	5	5	4	5	3	5	5	3	5	4
	friendly/nurturing atmosphere	5	3	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5
	test scores	3	4	2	3	1	4	4	2	4	3
	reputation	5	4	2	2	1	4	3	5	4	4
	classroom physical environment	4	3	3	2	3	2	4	4	5	4
	affordability of program	5	4	5	4	2	2	3	5	4	4
	extracurricular activities	3	1	3	1	3	2	3	3	4	3
	commute time to school	3	2	1	4	3	2	2	5	4	3
	parent/teacher contact	4	5	4	4	3	4	5	5	4	5
<b>10</b>	<b>What in your opinion are GCDS current program strengths and weaknesses in regards to marketability?</b>										
a	class size	helps	hurts	helps	helps	helps	helps	helps	helps	helps	helps
b	teacher quality	don't know	helps	helps	helps	don't know	teacher 1 - helps; teacher 2 - not a factor	helps	helps	helps	helps
c	teaching philosophy	don't know	don't know	helps	helps	helps	helps	helps	helps	helps	helps
d	current amount of extracurricular activities	hurts	not a factor	don't know	not a factor	not a factor	not a factor	not a factor	don't know	helps	don't know
e	Spanish classes	helps	not a factor	not a factor	not a factor	not a factor	not a factor	not a factor	don't know	helps	not a factor
f	mixed grades (e.g., 1st and 2nd combined)	don't know	hurts	helps	hurts	helps	hurts	hurts	hurts	don't know	hurts
g	school location	hurts	helps	don't know	helps	not a factor	hurts	not a factor	don't know	helps	hurts
h	school name	not a factor	hurts	helps	helps	don't know	helps	hurts	not a factor	helps	hurts
i	GCDS mission	helps	don't know	helps	helps	helps	helps	not a factor	helps	helps	helps

		Survey									
	Question	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
j	physical education program at GCDS	not a factor	not a factor	don't know	helps	helps	not a factor	helps	helps	helps	not a factor
k	setup of classroom space at GCDS	hurts	hurts	not a factor	hurts	don't know	hurts	hurts	don't know	don't know	not a factor
l	tuition price of GCDS	don't know	hurts	hurts	hurts	helps	helps	hurts	hurts	don't know	hurts
m	safety of facility at GCDS	don't know	helps	helps	helps	helps	helps	helps	helps	don't know	hurts
n	level of teacher/parent communication	hurts	hurts	don't know	hurts	helps	helps	helps	not a factor	don't know	hurts
o	set up of GCDS website	hurts	hurts	helps	helps	don't know	not a factor	hurts	helps	don't know	not a factor
p	admission standards at the school	helps	helps	don't know	helps	don't know	helps	not a factor	not a factor	don't know	not a factor
q	level of diversity in student body at GCDS	helps	helps	helps	helps	don't know	helps	not a factor	don't know	don't know	not a factor

		Survey									
Question		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
11	Comments						Cheryl is a wonderful educator; marketing is not a strength. She needs a <u>paid</u> employee (not consultant) – even if 2-3 days per week – to raise awareness and market the school.	As an expanding school, there needs to be more of an explicit plan than just adding more classes. Why is GCDS better than the local public school? The argument is not entirely clear and convincing. Also, I'm hesitant to donate or volunteer since it is a for-profit organization.			will e-mail

Question		Answer 1	Count 1	Answer 2	Count 2	Answer 3	Count 3	Answer 4	Count 4	Answer 5	Count 5
1	How did you first find out about GCDS?	individual	2	print advertisement	5	through camp, tutoring, or other service	1	web search	1		
2	Did you attend an open house or tour?	yes	4	no	6						
	If so, did it play a major role?	yes	3	no	2						
3	How much of a role should parents play in marketing?	none	0	some role	8	large role	2				
4	Should GCDS hire additional staff to help in marketing and admissions?										
	consultant	yes	2	no	2						
	part-time staff	yes	7	no	2						
	full-time staff	yes	1	no	4						

	Question	Answer 1	Count 1	Answer 2	Count 2	Answer 3	Count 3	Answer 4	Count 4	Answer 5	Count 5	
5	How much of the GCDS elementary school's budget should be spent on marketing	less than 1 pct	0	1-3 pct	4	3-5 pct	4	more than 5 pct	1	don't know	1	
6	Do you feel you understand the mission, vision, and philosophy of GCDS?	yes	8	no	2							
7	Do you feel GCDS's mission, vision, and philosophy are adequately presented											
	a) in the classroom?	yes	3	no	4	not always	1	somewhat	1			
	b) in the GCDS brochures and literature?	yes	9	no	1							
	c) verbally by staff at school meetings?	yes	7	no	2							
8	Do you feel comfortable recommending this school to others in the community?	yes	6	no	4							
9	What are the greatest factors in choosing an educational institution											average
	class size		56		44		30		20		10	4.6
	Teacher quality		58		42		30		20		10	4.8
	teaching philosophy		57		42		31		20		10	4.6
	discipline		51		43		36		20		10	3.5
	academic result		56		42		32		20		10	4.4
	friendly/nurturing atmosphere		57		41		32		20		10	4.5
	Test scores		50		44		33		22		11	3
	reputation		52		44		31		22		11	3.4
	classroom physical environment		51		44		33		22		10	3.4
	affordability of program		53		44		31		22		10	3.8
	extracurricular activities		50		41		36		21		12	2.6



	Question	Answer 1	Count 1	Answer 2	Count 2	Answer 3	Count 3	Answer 4	Count 4	Answer 5	Count 5	
	commute time to school		51		42		33		23		11	2.9
	parent/teacher contact		54		45		31		20		10	4.3
10	What in your opinion are GCDS current program strengths and weaknesses in regards to marketability?											
a	class size	helps	9	hurts	1	not a factor	0	don't know	0			
b	Teacher quality	helps	7	hurts	0	not a factor	0	don't know	2			
c	teaching philosophy	helps	8	hurts	0	not a factor	0	don't know	2			
d	current amount of extracurricular activities	helps	1	hurts	1	not a factor	5	don't know	3			
e	Spanish classes	helps	2	hurts	0	not a factor	7	don't know	1			
f	mixed grades (e.g., 1st and 2nd combined)	helps	2	hurts	6	not a factor	0	don't know	2			
g	school location	helps	3	hurts	3	not a factor	2	don't know	2			
h	school name	helps	4	hurts	3	not a factor	2	don't know	1			
l	GCDS mission	helps	8	hurts	0	not a factor	1	don't know	1			
j	physical education program at GCDS	helps	5	hurts	0	not a factor	4	don't know	1			
k	setup of classroom space at GCDS	helps	0	hurts	5	not a factor	2	don't know	3			
l	tuition price of GCDS	helps	2	hurts	6	not a factor	0	don't know	2			
m	safety of facility at GCDS	helps	7	hurts	1	not a factor	0	don't know	2			
n	level of teacher/parent communication	helps	3	hurts	4	not a factor	1	don't know	2			
o	set up of GCDS website	helps	3	hurts	3	not a factor	2	don't know	2			
p	admission standards at the school	helps	4	hurts	0	not a factor	3	don't know	3			
q	level of diversity in student body at GCDS	helps	5	hurts	0	not a factor	2	don't know	3			

## Appendix C: Demographic Methodology and Data for Target Market Research

A search on a popular web search engine revealed many sites of demographic data by zip code. The web site [www.dataplace.org](http://www.dataplace.org) was selected. By going to the web page [http://www.dataplace.org/area\\_overview](http://www.dataplace.org/area_overview), one can enter a zip code in the search bar to obtain the following demographic statistics, grouped as described below. However, in some cases the statistic is not given, but just marked as NA. The 12 statistics used in the analysis are indicated by use of a bold font.

### Population, total and by age

- **Total population (2000)**
- Estimated population (2004)
- Projected population (2030)
- **Population density (people per square mile) (2000)**
- **Pct. population under 18 years old (2000)**
- **Pct. population 65 years old and over (2000)**
- Population by race/ethnicity (2000 def.)
- Pct. non-Hispanic White alone population (2000)
- Pct. non-Hispanic Black/African American alone population (2000)
- Pct. non-Hisp. Asian, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander alone pop. (2000)
- Pct. non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native alone population (2000)
- Pct. non-Hispanic other race alone population (2000)
- Pct. non-Hispanic multiracial population (2000)
- Pct. Hispanic/Latino population (2000)

### Household size and type

- **Total households (2000)**
- Average household size (2000)
- **Pct. married-couple hhlds. with own children under 18 years old (2000)**
- Pct. single-parent-headed hhlds. with own children under 18 years (2000)
- Pct. family households without own children under 18 years old (2000)
- Pct. nonfamily households (2000)

### Education

- Pct. persons 25+ yrs. old with no high school diploma or GED (2000)
- **Pct. pers. 25+ yrs. old with a bachelors or graduate/prof. degree (2000)**

### Income/employment of residents

- **Median household income last yr (\$) (2000)**
- Average household income last yr (\$) (2000)
- **Poverty rate (2000)**
- Pct. pop. 16 years old and over who are employed (2000)
- Unemployment rate (2000)

### Income/credits for tax filers

- Average Adjusted Gross Income (2002)
- Pct. of low-income returns that receive EITC (2002)
- Average dollar amount received from EITC (2002)

### Economy

- Total number of establishments (2002)
- Number of establishments per 1,000 population (2002)
- Estimated employment (2002)
- Estimated employment per 1,000 population (2002)

## Housing

- Total housing units (2000)
- Median year structure built (2000)
- Pct. housing units in single-family detached homes (2000)
- Vacancy rate (2000)
- **Homeownership rate (2000)**

## Housing costs

- Median gross rent of specified renter-occ. units with rent (\$) (2000)
- Average gross rent of specified renter-occ. units with rent (\$) (2000)
- **Median value for specified owner-occupied housing units (\$) (2000)**
- **Average value of specified owner-occupied housing units (\$) (2000)**

## Housing hardship

- Pct. hhlds. with inc. 0-80% of area median with hsg. cost burden (2000)
- Pct. hhld. w/inc. 0-80% of area median w/severe hsg. cost burden (2000)
- Pct. housing units that are overcrowded (2000)

## Mortgage lending

- Mortgage loans (all purposes) (2003)
- Home purchase mortgage loans per 1,000 housing units (2003)
- Median amount of mortgage loans for home purchase (\$) (2003)
- Average dollar amount of mortgage loans for home purchase (\$) (2003)
- Pct. of conv. home purchase mortgage loans by subprime lenders (2003)
- Pct. of conv. refinancing mortgage loans by subprime lenders (2003)

## Borrower characteristics

- Median borrower income for owner-occupied home purchase loans (2003)
- Pct. of owner-occ. home purchase loans to low-income borrowers (2003)

By using local road maps, exhaustive lists of all proximate zip codes were made. Each zip code was looked up on the web page, and the data were copied into the spreadsheet and double-checked. Additionally, the distance to the school was looked up on maps.google.com and included in the sheet. Each column was sorted, and the best rows were colored green, the worst red and yellow. Using these indicators, recommendations were made about which zip codes to target.

**Statistics and Features Used**

Town – Name and county used to describe the zip code

Zip – Zip code to which all other demographics apply

Mi – Miles from zip code to school address as calculated by maps.google.com

Min – Minutes from zip code to school as calculated by maps.google.com

Hhlds – Total number of households in 2000

Income – Median annual household income (\$) for 2000

Homeval – Average value of specified owner-occupied housing units (\$) in 2000

Owners – Homeownership rate in 2000

Retired – Percentage of population 65 years old and over in 2000

Kids – Percentage of population under 18 years old in 2000

Families – Percentage of married-couple households with their own children under 18 years old in 2000

Educated – Percentage of persons 25 years or older with a bachelors or graduate/professional degree in 2000

Poor – Poverty rate in 2000

Density – Population density (people per square mile) in 2000

People – Total population as of 2000

No. Fam – Families percentage multiplied by number of households



Appendix D:  
GCDS Elementary SWOT, Analysis

### Strengths (Internal)

- Quality of teachers (excellent credentials and ability)
- Quality of educational program and curriculum
  - Retention of quality teachers
  - Good location (on major road and next to public park/community center/library)
  - Open & pleasant classroom space
  - School philosophy of meeting each child's needs academically
  - Extra activities offered, like Drama, Spanish, and Lacrosse
  - Handful of extremely dedicated parents that are bringing enthusiasm and their professional expertise to the school
  - The school is very "client focused"
  - The school staff put forth a positive attitude
  - There are more parents that can be tapped for knowledge, assets, and volunteer time if approached correctly
    - Web site is currently being redone to better reach the target markets and community
    - Creative and money-conscious Director
    - Starting camps at school to help cover costs of space not used in Summer
    - Have differentiated product (small, group by ability, an hour of P.E. daily)
    - The nonprofit elementary will have a partnership with the for profit daycare of the same name

### Weaknesses (Internal)

- It's a new school
- PTO is not as active as it needs to be when starting a new school
  - There are not enough extra funds at this time to buy extras for educational programs or to reduce tuition
  - Current Marketing Strategies are not bringing in enough students or quality desired
  - Cost could become an issue. School is not fundraising at rate necessary to sustain itself comfortably.
  - Communication and marketing to current parents by the school to create brand loyalty could be stronger
  - Director has experience in running the private daycare but no experience in running a full elementary school. Director admits she does not know a lot about business and her main knowledge and focus is on teaching.
  - Lacking vision for the future of the elementary school
  - There is not a strategic plan for the elementary school
  - School has mission-type statements but not a consistent communicated mission
  - Current/Past website has been hard to navigate and not up to the standard it needs to be to communicate our school's philosophy and attributes
    - There is currently no admission staff person or marketing person
    - Staff wear many hats and have a lot of responsibilities which could eventually cause burnout
    - Expensive location rent. Needs to be paid for over the summer when school not in session.
    - Reputation may become strained because there are a few unhappy clients

### Opportunities (External)

- Many untapped community partnerships to be created (nonprofit clubs, libraries, parks, community centers, and local universities. Professors and students are a valuable asset. They can be teachers' aids, help with clubs, marketing helpers, fundraise helpers, etc.)
- There is money and support out there by government and other nonprofits to support a soon-to-be nonprofit school like Glenwood Country Day School (GCDS). Provide reduced or free management or legal help. Offer grants or other materials.
- Local businesses in the community are often willing to help a nonprofit school with marketing and donations.
- There is a strong home school market in the area, which can turn into customers. Could appeal to home school families that feel they can no longer teach at the level necessary for their child. It would also be possible to devise particular programs to target home school families. It would create potential clients in the future.
- There is a very well educated and wealthy population in the surrounding area of the school. This helps create desire for high quality education and meeting each child at their level is very appealing to well-educated parents. Also well-educated parents tend to have higher paying jobs, which means they can afford the school.
- Target market is very technologically advanced. This means there is an opportunity to reach them through the web. This is an easy and cost effective way to reach the public.
- The school is located in an area that serves multiple counties. Market is large area.
- Partnership with Howard County Public Glenwood Library
- Partnership with Howard County. Community Center

### Threats (External)

- Competition from local public schools. Some of the best schools in the state are located near Glenwood Country Day School (GCDS).
- Competition from other nearby private schools.
- Competition from the home school market.
- It is hard for a nonprofit like GCDS to find funding or assistance as a nonprofit because they are not in a poor area and are not in a desperate situation.
- Negative attitudes and misperceptions about private independent schools.
- Slow economy and rising interest rates. People have less money so are less willing to pay for private education.
- Long commute times and reduction in family time could mean that parents are not willing to drive their kids very far to a private school when a public school is closer and picks them up
- Consumer culture places priorities on consumption of so many goods that parents do not feel they can invest a large chunk of money into school tuition.

## Glenwood Country Day School SWOT Analysis

Unfortunately, many internal weaknesses now need to be addressed. Many can be attributed to the newness of GCDS. Not having a completed strategic plan, an understood vision, and a developed board are all serious issues that weigh heavily on the school. Fortunately, the dedication and talent of parents, the director, and staff can remedy these issues in the near future. It is crucial for parents and staff to install the nonprofit status and develop a nonprofit board, define the mission, and complete a strategic plan. The active parents and staff must do all they can to inform and gain support of newer or inactive parents. It is crucial for the school to increase the level of fundraising and marketing, and, because of the need to keep cost down, the parents are going to need to supplement and help with fundraising and marketing. The internal strength of the redone website will definitely make the marketing of the school an easier task. The school must do all it can to capitalize on their good product, quality teachers, client-focused nature, and location. The school director and board must do a better job stressing and showcasing these attributes. Behind these changes, planning will be the key to success. With a proper strategic, marketing, and fundraising plan in place, staff and volunteers can work together to make GCDS successful.

Externally, it is great that GCDS already has formed partnerships with the local library and community center. It will also help the new nonprofit to keep ties with the private daycare of the same name. It will be important for GCDS to keep working on creating partnerships in today's slowing economy and highly competitive environment for grants and support. GCDS could create valuable ties with local businesses and area colleges. In order to battle the external competition threats, GCDS is going to have to rely



on their internal strengths of unique product, creative director, pleasant atmosphere, academic results, and dedicated staff. There is no indication that there is not a market out there for services. It is a matter of finding the customer.

While there is a longer list of internal weaknesses, this author contends the internal strengths are enough to prevail. The GCDS community has all the internal and external strengths to combat the weaknesses and threats. However, it will take time and dedication of staff and parents to make it work.

Appendix E: Tear-off flyer for GCDS Camp and School (shrunk to fit)

# Glenwood Country Day School Summer Camps (2½ to 12 yrs old)



## Adventure Camp

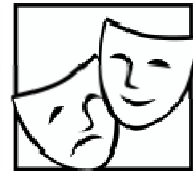
(games, crafts, & outdoor fun, 2½ to 12 yrs)

## Learning Camp

(math & reading fun, 4 to 12 yrs)

## Drama Camp

(4 to 13 yrs)



Camp Open House

April 30 & May 21

1:00 to 3:00 PM

Located at Routes 70 and 97  
in Glenwood, MD.

Please call 410-489-5203 for more information  
or to RSVP for the open house.

[www.glenwoodcountrydayschool.com](http://www.glenwoodcountrydayschool.com)

Glenwood Country Day  
School (pre-1st-5th grade)  
& Camps 410-489-5203

Glenwood Country Day  
School (pre-1st-5th grade)  
& Camps 410-489-5203

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& Camps 410-489-5203

Glenwood Country Day  
School (pre-1st-5th grade)  
& Camps 410-489-5203





Newly Exp

## Open House Dates:

April 30  
&  
May 21

Please call 410-489-5203  
for directions and to RSVP for  
the open house.

[www.glenwoodcountrydayschool.com](http://www.glenwoodcountrydayschool.com)

## We offer

- Small class sizes
- Grouping by ability not by age
- Safe and nurturing environment
- Diverse student body
- Spanish classes for all grades
- Hands-on learning (learning games)
- Support for each child at their educational level
- Daily physical education classes
- Quality teachers and educational specialists
- Pre-first class for those not quite ready for first grade
- On-site before and after care
- Prices similar to or lower than other private schools
- Over 20 years experience in educating youth
- Specialty and academic summer camp programs

Glenwood Country Day  
School (pre-1st-5th grade)  
& Camps 410-489-5203

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Glenwood Country Day  
School (pre-1st-5th grade)  
& Camps 410-489-5203

Appendix F: Business Email to local schools about GCDS Camps

14785 Bushy Park Rd.  
Glenwood, MD 21797  
March 24, 2006

Dear Principal Heisey,

Glenwood Country Day School is a newly expanded accredited private elementary school located on rt. 97 in Glenwood, MD. We are trying hard to get the word out about our new learning camps (ages 4-12) and drama camp (4-16). As fellow educators we would really appreciate if you could pass on information about our camps to the parents. There are very few camps in the area that can offer summer math/reading educational programs by certified teachers. Our learning camps can be a fun way to help your students stay prepared for their next year of school. Cheryl Stradling, Director of Glenwood Country Day School, a former public school teacher, with 20 years teaching experience, developed and leads the educational summer camp program.

If you could place a small blurb in your next school newsletter about our learning camp we would greatly appreciate it.

Glenwood Country Day School in Glenwood, MD is offering summer learning camps and drama camps. Camps are led by certified teachers. Open Houses April 30 and May 21. Call 410-489-5203 for more information or to RSVP for an open house date.
--

If placing information in your newsletter is not something that your school can do, we would appreciate any way you could help in getting information out about our summer educational camps. We would happily drop off flyers or brochures for a display area or set up at a Spring Fling event. Please call Cheryl Stradling at 410-489-5203 if you would like more information about the educational camps, are willing to place information in your newsletter, or are willing to place brochures or flyers at your school.

Thank you very much for taking the time to learn about G.C. D.S. educational and drama camps.

Sincerely,

Heather Ferragut,  
Glenwood Country Day School Parent Volunteer