



River Valley Current

October 20, 2015 No. 421

"Every leaf speaks bliss to me, fluttering from the autumn tree."
- Emily Bronte

School Calendar

This Week

Wednesday, October 21

Parent Council Meeting 2:00 pm

Thursday, October 22

Auction Meeting at the Ship Inn 6:30 pm

Looking Ahead

Thursday, October 29

Community Meeting 6:30 pm

Friday, October 30

Fall Festival & Open House at Morning Glory
7th & 8th Grade Halloween Dance at
Ottsville Traditional Arts 6:30 – 9:30 pm

Saturday, November 7

Workday – 6th/7th grade

Monday, November 9

Tea & Play at Morning Glory 10-11:30 am

Tuesday, November 10

Lantern Walk – Early Childhood

Wednesday, November 11

Lantern Walk – 1st & 2nd grades

Saturday, November 14

Holiday Bazaar 11:00 am-4:00 pm

Monday, November 16

Tea & Play at RVWS 12:00-1:00 pm

How to Contact Us

info@rivervalleyschool.org
lc@rivervalleyschool.org
bot@rivervalleyschool.org
pc@rivervalleyschool.org

November Lunch Menu

It's time to order lunch for November. The form is attached to this week's Current.

Martinmas Coat Drive

"Did you feel Jack Frost nipping at your bones this morning? Do you know that King Winter is lurking around the corner?"

Please consider donating your gently used coats and jackets to our First Annual Martinmas Coat Drive. Our music teacher Carol Diven is organizing the drive through the not-for-profit organization, One Warm Coat, as part of River Valley's celebration of the legend of Saint Martin. The coats received will benefit A Woman's Place of Doylestown, PA.

New or gently used women's, men's and children's coats are all welcome and needed!

A drop box will be located in the school lobby from October 20-November 20 to receive your generous donations!

Thank you Carol for organizing this wonderful way for RVWS to support to our greater community!

River Valley Ski Club Forms Due Monday, Oct. 26th Come Ski Blue Mountain with your River Valley Friends

We will meet on six Friday evenings, from 4 pm to 10 pm starting January 8th through February 12th. Forms and instructions are attached. **The deadline for sign up is October 26th.**

Place forms and payment in the folder on the office door.

Contact Christine Aherne with any questions you may have.
cmaherne@epix.net 267-614-5021

8th Grade Yard Sale this Saturday, October 24th. See inside for details.

Parent Council Corner

Parent Council's **next meeting is Wednesday October 21st at 2:00** in the RVWS Garden (weather permitting). If the weather is bad then we will meet at Homestead General Store. Topics to be covered include Back To School Night review, Winter Fair, and the Auction among others. All are welcome!!

SAVE THIS DATE! - Saturday, June 4th, 2016

~ COUNTRY FORMAL AUCTION ~

The Auction Team is already diligently working on this year's exciting event. We want you there with us so be sure to mark your calendars right now. This Auction event will not disappoint! Think delicious BBQ along with additional Nelli Rae's creations - yum! Oh, and throw in some great music, free beer & wine, great auction items and Ron Ferguson burning up the MIC! Hmmmmm, sounds like a party NOT to be missed... So, see you then!

Auction Team: Erica Nichols, Clare Wargaski, Tracy Fly, Ron Ferguson, Kristyn Lederer, Kathy Betz, Rich Kroth, Tracy Euler and Paul Ritchie. We are always looking for dynamic folks to help us out! Come join the fun! **Next meeting:**

Thursday, October 22nd, 6:30 at The Ship Inn in Milford

From Administration

A Call for Housing

River Valley has been chosen to host the next session of "Teaching Sensible Science," a training for Waldorf Science teachers from all over the country. There will be approximately 25-30 teachers attending the course and they will all need a place to stay.

Below are the dates that we would like to find housing for them. The guests will pay \$30 for a shared room and \$40 for a private room per night to the host. Attendees should have their own transportation so the host would just be responsible for providing a room. Faculty or families of River Valley that are interested can contact Hilary at hmurphy@rivervalley.school.org

The course will be divided into three week-long sessions:

SESSION 1: Friday evening February 12 – Thursday noon February 18, 2016

SESSION 2: Monday evening June 20 – Sunday noon June 26, 2016

SESSION 3: Wednesday evening October 5 – Monday noon October 10, 2016 (Columbus Day weekend in the U.S. and Thanksgiving in Canada)

Administration Work Schedule

Cindy Schretlen – every day

Renee Goodyear – Monday all day, Tuesday and Wednesday until 1:30

Robbie Miller – Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Hilary Murphy – Wednesday and Thursday until 1:00

Pamela Hobson – every morning until 10:00

Charlene Chapman – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday until 12:00

James Hagan – Tuesday, Thursday

TreeAnne McEnery – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday until 1:00

Van Drivers

Are you interested in driving one of the school vans for field trips or other school events?

If so, please contact Lorraine Sharaf (mother of Eve G-5) lorraine.jenkins@comcast.net for information about taking the required training course.

Congratulations

Congratulations and welcome to Wren David Euler, brother of Paige in 2nd grade and Wyatt in the Moon Room, who was born on October 14, 2015. We send our good wishes to his parents, Tracy Alverson-Euler and Phillip Euler, and the whole family.

Condolences

We send our heartfelt condolences to Laura and Mark Birdsall on the loss of Laura's sister, Lisa Ann Freeman. Lisa, a beloved Waldorf kindergarten teacher, riding instructor, and camp leader, died on Oct. 16 surrounded by her family. She was 61 and lived in Peterborough, New Hampshire.

In Lisa's memory, and in lieu of flowers, her sons request that those who wish extend a generous hand to someone in need, carrying forward a bit of the kindness and compassion that Lisa offered to all who crossed her path.

To read more about Lisa go to:

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/ledgertranscript/obituary.aspx?n=lisa-freeman&pid=176160283>

THANK YOU

The seventh grade and Mr. Santiago would like to give a great THANK YOU!!! to Dave Goldstein for helping make our curriculum a living experience. The sight of a living knight approaching our class through the dense autumn woods is an image that will stay with us for a long time. The Middle Ages are alive and well because of men like you! (For photos see page 7.)

A big thank you to Ms. Melanie Niemczura for accompanying the seventh grade on their recent adventure to the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire. We even got back earlier than expected!

From the Faculty

What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Language Arts

Second Grade – Form Drawing

Third Grade – Arithmetic

Fourth Grade – Math/Norse Mythology

Fifth Grade – Botany

Sixth Grade – Physics

Seventh Grade – Algebra

Eighth Grade – Physiology

A Request from the Garden

Dear Friends, If anyone is cleaning out their garage, or visiting a garage sale and would like to donate to the garden...We could use hand pruners and rakes! Thank You So much!

Looking for a sitter!!!

The MacDonald children (Oliver and Edierose) need a friend to pick them up on Thursdays at 3:20 and either bring them home or keep them until around 6:30 when Molly gets out of her faculty meeting. Please call Molly at 610-349-3536

From the Leadership Council

What we are working on?

Preparing with the faculty for the Community Meeting on October 29th.
Working with EC to start a new mixed age kindergarten class after January.
Working with TDC on teacher mentoring and evaluation.

The LC has open hours every Tuesday from 3:30-4 for anyone who would like to meet with us. If you have a question or a concern, please stop by. All are welcome.

Community Meeting on Thursday, October 29th at 6:30

The LC and the faculty will be sharing intentions about the future of some of our programs and policies, some important communication dates that are going into our calendar, and some more ideas about the journey of the class teacher.

We look forward to sharing these intentions with all of you, and hearing your responses, which will help inform next steps as we work towards implementation and the growth of our school.

Building & Grounds

School Work Days

Below is the calendar of the upcoming workdays. Please note that some changes have been made from the school calendar. Please RSVP to Mary K. Till (mtill@rivervalleysschool.org), to let us know if you will attend. This way we can plan what projects can be undertaken. Mary K. Till and Lynne Allbaugh - Building and Grounds

2015-2016 Work Days

November 7- 6th grade and 7th grade
December 13 - 5th grade
January 23 - 4th grade
February 27 - 3rd grade
March 12 - 2nd grade
April 23 - 1st grade
May 14 - Early Childhood

From Parent Council

Parent Discussion Group

A few parents met in the garden with TreeAnne McEnery, our wonderful Pedagogical Chair, and discussed the article 'Confessions of a Waldorf Parent'. I found this meeting to be warm and thoughtful. Sharing my thoughts with others was energizing and fun....sometimes I forget to take time out to enjoy others. So if you are like me and would like to learn more about Waldorf Education and have meaningful adult conversation then please join us for monthly Parent Discussions (on the 3rd Wednesday of each month). Keep a look out in the Current for subjects and times.

Class Fundraisers

MASSIVE MULTI-FAMILY YARD SALE

Come Help Your 8th Grade Reach Its Fundraising Goal!

Collectibles, Furniture, Mirrors, Lighting, Décor, Kitchenware, Glassware, Toys, Dolls, Clothing, Bedding, Electronics, Antiques, Sporting Goods, Camping Gear, Books, Christmas Decorations and so much more! Incredible bargains! Free raffle giveaway! No early birds! Rain or Shine! Sat. Oct. 24th 9-4. 255 Island Rd. Kintnersville, PA.

Handmade, Sustainable, Balsam Fir Wreaths to Support the Eighth Grade!

Order your Holiday Wreaths early & Support the Eighth Grade Class Trip Fundraiser! We are taking orders for fresh & fragrant, handmade Balsam Fir Wreaths sourced for us from Minnesota by Evergreen Industries.

Generous 25" decorated Wreaths are offered for \$25 & can be picked up at RVWS mid November. They will be individually bagged for easy transport and to retain freshness. 22" Wreaths are available for \$35 & Will Ship Anywhere in the U.S.! They arrive in a beautiful Gift Box & you may include a Gift Card message! Evergreen Industries is committed to sustainability. Their bough harvesting takes place after successive hard frosts in late September each fall. The raw materials used in the wreaths are cut from federal and state lands, privately owned properties, and land ceded to Native Americans. Generations of families work for Evergreen Industries picking thousands of tons of boughs. The Evergreens are all hand-cut, bundled and delivered.

We are thrilled to partner with Evergreen Industries for our 8th Grade Trip fundraiser! There are order forms conveniently attached to the Current or you may visit our online store at <https://store7524428.ecwid.com>. All Pickup Orders must be received by OCTOBER 31. Direct Ship Orders must be received by NOV 12. Check & Credit Cards accepted and hard copy order forms should be placed in the Folder on the Office Door.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT! Love, the Eighth Grade

"Savoring the Seasons" Cookbook / Local Directory - Place an Ad!!

There's still time to place an ad in our book. This is an opportunity to enable a recommended business to promote themselves and provide additional information about their services. The promotional space is very reasonably priced and as this resource will be referred to again and again, it is a GREAT value! Prices are as follows: 1/3 page - \$35, 1/2 page - \$50, Full Page \$100. Details in attachment.

Should you NOT want to be included in the directory, please contact Tracy Fly, otherwise we are doing our best to include everyone that has been recommended to us."

Planning your child's birthday party?

Let the energetic, fun-loving eighth graders help — and help them raise the funds they need for their class trip! We'll make your child's party one they won't soon forget! Now booking dates for October, November, and December— please see attached form for more information. Limited dates available so email Renell Carpenter (renell@rcn.com) or Kira Willey (kira@kira.net) to reserve your party now!

From the Community

Roxey Ballet Presents Dracula and The Nutcracker

Roxey Ballet is presenting Bram Stoker's Dracula October 23-November 1 at the Canal Studio Theater, 243 North Union Street, Lambertville, NJ and The Nutcracker, November 28-December 7 at The College of NJ Kendall Theater, 2000 Pennington Road, Ewing, NJ.
Roxey Ballet will donate 20% of every ticket purchased by River Valley families to our school. Go to www.roxeyballet.org and used the fundraising code: RVWSCHOOL when buying your tickets.

Offices Available at Brick House

8826 Rte 611. Ottsville/Revere, PA (Above Nelli Rae's Kitchen)
Available immediately, 3 offices and waiting room, art studio, therapy, classes, conferences, business office, ample parking, rent whole space or personal office. CALL 610-570-7408.

House for Rent in Ottsville on Geigel Hill Rd.

3 Bedroom, Large Kitchen, Large Dining, 2 baths, Great room, Living room, Full basement, 2 car garage, Oil heat, Yard care included, Large deck, 6 acres. Available for 6-7 months. Asking \$1750 (but willing to negotiate because of shorter lease)

Please contact David Ledger, (671) 688-3352
davidledgerguam@gmail.com

Art in the Library

There are several art classes being taught at the Riegelsville Library in the coming weeks.
October 22nd and 29th – Still Life Painting in Pastel with Susan Ketcham – 10 am-1 pm. all levels, age 15-adult
The workshops are held in the Community Room at Riegelsville Borough Hall, 615 Easton Road.
For more information or to sign up for workshops and our mailing list, please contact the Riegelsville Library, 610-749-2357 or Riegelsville.Library@gmail.com

FALL FESTIVAL @ OTAC

Fun Fall Events at the Ottsville Traditional Arts Center. Concerts, dances, lessons and jams Oh My! All family friendly. Stay tuned for special student jam and pot luck evenings as well as some off campus RVWS school community events. Check us out!

Ottsville Traditional Arts Center Events

OCTOBER

Sat. Oct. 24 Scandinavian Workshops with Lydia & Andrea

3-4:40 pm Melody instruments workshop • \$15 4:30-6 pm Slängpolska dance workshop • \$15
\$25 for both workshops!

Please join us for a special day of Swedish music and dance! Lydia & Andrea perform an energetic and engaging program of traditional waltzes, schottises, polskas, and more on fiddle, 5-string fiddle, nyckelharpa, and voice.
lydia-andrea.com

NOVEMBER

Sun. Nov. 22 Family Contradance with Coracree

3:30 pm beginners' workshop & caller **Melissa Taggart**
4:00-7:00 pm dance • \$10 adults \$8 kids free under 6yrs.

DECEMBER

Wednesday, Dec. 9

Jam Workshop with Daniel Hawkins 6 - 8 pm - \$10 suggested donation

Friday, Dec. 18

The Elftones in Concert – Timing and pricing TBA!

Every Wednesday

Open Jam with Richard Finch

6:00-8:00 pm • \$5 suggested donation

More at ottsvilletradarts.weebly.com • 250 Durham Rd. Ottsville Pa.

Moving Through Childhood

A workshop with Jaimen McMillan, Director, Spacial Dynamics Institute

November 13-14, 2015 at Kimberton Waldorf School
Friday, November 13, 7:30-9:00 pm, Saturday,
November 14, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Workshop Fee: \$125 (early bird \$100 before November 1st), Friday lecture only, \$20

Learn how parents and teachers can best support healthy development through movement. "Play rises above other activities. It is the creation of space in which new activities can take place...a world of untold possibilities."

For more information: info@spacialdynamics.com, 518-695-6377, www.spacialdynamics.com

Free Piano

Spinnet, needs tuning, no bench. 610-346-7108

Open House

SuperNatural Salon & Spa

Thursday, October 22nd from 6-9 pm

SuperNatural strives to use only eco-conscious, natural and organic products while providing the utmost quality of services for your natural beauty and your super being. We are here to help bring forth the light that is already within you in the most soothing and sacred ways.

Stop by, enjoy refreshments and take a look around!

121 Delaware Road, Riegelsville, PA 18077, 610-749-2051,
www.supernaturalsalon.com

Savoring the Seasons" Cookbook / Directory: Place an Ad!!

Here is an opportunity to further enable a recommended business to promote themselves and provide additional information about their services. The promotional space is very reasonably priced and as this resource will be referred to again and again, it is a GREAT value! **PLEASE DO NOT DELAY! We must receive the following information by Friday, October 23rd:**

1) name _____

2) business name (if applicable) _____

3) brief description of skills/services offered (1-2 sentences)

4) website (if applicable) _____

5) phone number _____

6) address (if applicable) _____

Yes, I'd like to Place a Black & White Advertisement (indicate #)

1/3 page (4.5"W x 2.25"H): \$35 _____

Half page (4.5" wide by 3.5" high max): \$50 _____ Full page: (4.5" wide by 7.5" high max): \$100 _____

*1/3 page accommodates a business card and couple lines of text (just submit business card if available, email best). **Electronic format greatly preferred but can scan images. Please make checks Payable to RVWS, with "3rd gr, Ad Space" in memo.***

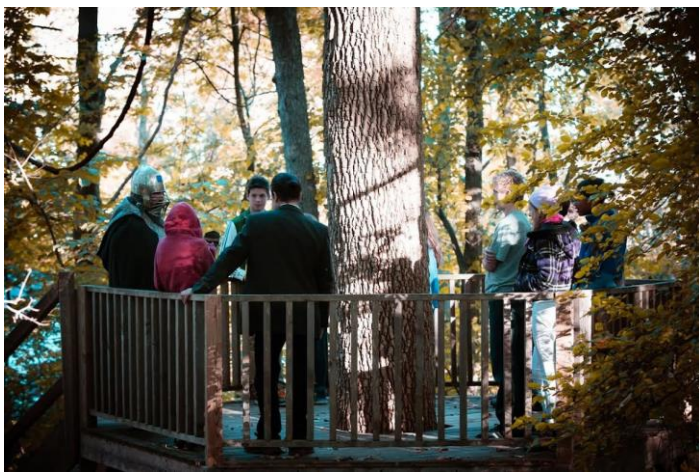
Thank you but please do NOT include me and/or my business.

business/name _____

That's it! Just turn in this form, business card (if applicable), and check to Mrs. Atkinson's G3 table outside her classroom (labeled manila envelope) or give to Tracy Fly or Jean Tuma by Friday Oct 23rd. You may also email the information or logos/jpegs to tumas@rcn.com. **THANK YOU** for taking the time to help us make this a **great resource for the community** and be sure to have a fantastic week!

A Knight in the Woods

It happened on Friday. The 6th grade was out in back of the school and all of a sudden one student said, "There's a knight coming out of the woods!" And sure enough, a knight dressed in full regalia emerged and talked with the students about life in the Middle Ages. Thank you, David Goldstein (father of Aidan in 2nd grade) for your reenactment and the valuable information you shared.



The Value of a Mess

You should let your kids totally botch household chores from an early age.

By Jessica Lahey

A friend told me recently after she'd had a car accident that left her unscathed but chastened that in the midst of the crash, she'd realized she needed to make lists of all the small details her family would need to know if she was not there to take care of them.

Her son needed to know that his soccer clothes had to go into the laundry Sunday so he'd have what he needed for Monday's practice. Her daughter needed to know which fabrics can go in the dryer and which cannot and what happens when wool sweaters sneak into the dryer by mistake. The kids should know how to fix the toilet when it clogs, and reset the water pressure tank after a power outage, and change a fuse, and winterize the lawn mower, and the million other things she'd taken care of herself rather than burden her kids with.

I pointed out that if she were to die in a car accident, the location of the reset lever on the water tank would be the least of her family's worries, but I understood her point.

She'd gotten a glimpse of just how paralyzed and incompetent her kids would be in her absence. When we don't allow our children to participate in the business of running a household, they are quite helpless without us. Worse, we don't expect competence from them, and when they do give household duties a shot, we swoop in, and we fix.

We swoop in after our kids make their beds and smooth out the lumps and bumps. We swoop in after they fold the laundry and straighten the misfolded towels. I've actually taken the sponge out of my son's hands because he was making more of a mess of the milk he was supposed to be cleaning up. I understand the impulse to want things done better, or faster, or straighter.

But what's more important—that the dishes are immaculate, or that your child develops a sense of purpose and pride because he's finally contributing in a real and valuable way to the family? That the bed is made without wrinkles, or that your child learns to make household tasks a part of his daily routine? All this swooping and fixing make for emotionally, intellectually, and socially handicapped children, unsure of their direction or purpose without an adult on hand to guide them.

Just because your child has never done the laundry, or loaded the dishwasher, does not mean she is not capable of doing just that. And kids want to feel capable. They are creative and resourceful, and even tasks that seem unmanageable due to limits of heights or dexterity can be accomplished with the aid of a step stool and simple directions.

Those dishes that belong in the high cabinets above the counter? It took a half hour, but when my younger son was first assigned dishwasher duty at 6 or 7, he dragged a chair from the living room to reach the shelves. One by one, he put those plates away where they belonged. When I had asked him to "unload the dishwasher," I'd forgotten about the high shelves but he'd figured a way around that obstacle himself. The look of pride he gave me when I said, "Wait—you did all of it? Even those plates?" was utterly gratifying. Failure has been a part of that process, of course. Since that first day, he has broken dishes in the process of learning how best to carry, stack, and load them, but who cares?

I'd trade 10 broken plates for his smiles of competence and pride.

Explain to your children from an early age that you expect them to contribute to the running of the household. If they are older and have never been asked to contribute before, be honest. Cop to the fact that you failed yourself and have been underestimating their abilities all along. Set clear expectations, and hold your kids accountable when they don't meet those expectations.

If your daughter's job is to clean up her place after meals and rinse the dishes before putting them in the dishwasher, and she forgets, leave the dishes out. Explain to her that the once-easily-rinsable food dries over

(Continued on next page.)

time, and it will be much harder to clean it off when she finally gets around to it, but the dishes will remain on the table, waiting for her to clean them up. Even if that dish sits on the table for two days, don't nag or hover, and absolutely no swooping or fixing, but be present and help problem-solve. Be there to help if your son is not sure about a cycle setting on the washer or if something goes horribly awry with the fabric softener, but find something absorbing to do while he goes about the work. If you go behind your child's back and redo the chore he has just finished to his satisfaction, even if it's after he's left the room, he'll notice. You will be telling him through your actions not only that he is incompetent but that you will finish the job if he's careless.

And no bribes or rewards of cash payment—those kinds of short-term incentives can be used to kick-start motivation but don't work as a long-term strategy. When I praised my son for putting those plates away in the high cupboards, I was not praising him for taking on the task, because he knew I expected that of him. Rather, I was praising him for the extra effort, determination, and perseverance he showed when he hit a roadblock.

Even toddlers, with their diminutive hands and limited attention spans, can begin to explore their abilities and competence in shared household responsibilities. When dealing with younger children, be sure to make your expectations clear and age-appropriate. Communicate family participation as a privilege, or even a game, and toddlers can accomplish more than you might expect. Here are some examples of the kinds of tasks toddlers are capable of learning:

-
- Put their dirty clothes in a basket or hamper.
- Dress themselves with clothing that's not too complicated.
- Fold simple items of clothing or linens such as pillowcases or washcloths.
- Put their clothes away in drawers.
- Follow two- or three-step directions in order to complete tasks. ("Get your toothbrush, put toothpaste on it, brush your teeth.")
- Throw trash and recycling away in the proper place.
- Put toys away in tubs and baskets when they are done playing with them.
- Get out and put away their dishes as long as you arrange their cups and bowls on a low shelf.
- Feed the dog or cat.

As children graduate from toddlerhood and move toward preschool, start teaching them how to manage more complicated duties. Kids between 3 and 5 are big fans of counting and sorting, so give them jobs around the house that encourage them to practice these skills while instilling responsibility. Ask them to put five books on that shelf, or ask them to count out five oranges and place them in a bag at the store. Kids this age are perfectly able to:

- Make their bed.
- Straighten their room.
- Sort and categorize items, such as utensils in a drawer or socks in the laundry.
- Water plants.
- Clear their place at the table.
- Learn to not freak out and cry about spills, but get a towel or sponge and clean them up by themselves.
- Prepare their own snacks.

Children as young as 5 can understand and accept the consequences of their actions (and inaction) but only if they experience those consequences. Forgot to put her favorite DVD away in its case after she watched it? The next time she wants to watch that movie, don't help her look for it in the pile of loose DVDs, and remind her why she can't find it.

Between the ages of 6 and 11, children should grow more and more capable. They understand the concept of cause and effect and can predict that if the clothes don't go into the laundry basket, they won't get clean. If the dog does not get fed, she will be hungry. Capitalize on this understanding and help children see how being proactive around the house can lead to positive effects. At this point, kids are able to be responsible for all sorts of household tasks, such as:

- Peeling and chopping vegetables. (Teach knife safety early, and always use a sharp knife, which is safer than a dull one.)

(Continued on next page.)

- Laundry—all of it, from sorting to putting it away. Post a list on the washing machine and dryer after you've conducted the requisite one-on-one lessons in order to provide reminders for all the steps. One mom pointed out that dry-erase markers write and erase well on the side of washers and dryers, so she simply writes instructions on the appliance itself.
- Replacing the toilet paper when it's gone. Leave the direction the roll spins to your child's discretion!
- Setting and clearing the table.
- Outdoor work such as raking leaves, weeding, and hauling wood.
- Vacuuming and mopping floors.
- Helping to plan and prepare grocery lists and meals.
- As your child discovers her significance and purpose, she's going to make a mess of things from time to time as she learns. Her contribution to the household is not simply an item on a checklist you post on the refrigerator but a process, an education. You know how to fold laundry just the way you like it folded; your daughter does not. Let her muck it up the first couple of times; let her brother get frustrated with her because his pants are inside out and damp because the dryer twisted the leg in a knot. Let her discover for herself that when she leaves the clothes in the dryer overnight, her favorite shirt becomes hopelessly wrinkled.

And it's important that school-age kids plan and prepare their own lunches. They need to be disappointed in their own choices once in a while. They need to find out that when they pack yogurt under the ice pack rather than on top, it gets squished, and the entire lunch bag becomes a sticky, vanilla mess. They need to know what it feels like to clean that sticky lunch bag and avoid the same mistake next time. They need to discover all the small details, workarounds, and solutions we devise in order to avoid the million small disasters that plague ordinary, everyday obligations.

From 12 on up, I can't think of many household duties beyond their abilities. The more competent teens I've talked to are responsible for:

- Household repairs, such as painting, replacing light bulbs, and simple car maintenance.
- Grocery shopping. (Given some teens' quirky dietary habits, some parents provide pretty specific lists.)
- Planning and preparing more complicated meals.
- Caring for and teaching younger siblings about their roles in the household responsibilities.
- Taking the dog to the vet for his shots.
- Cleaning out the refrigerator.
- Chopping kindling and firewood.
- Clearing leaves out of the gutters.

It's never too early—or too late—to teach children how to contribute and problem-solve under their own power. Despite all the protests to the contrary, kids want to play useful roles in their family's success. As parents have slowly but systematically deprived them of those roles, we owe them the patience and time it takes to give that purpose and responsibility back. The contribution of your children to the daily work of keeping a house and running a family will not only be a boon to the family now, but your kids' increased competence and sense of responsibility will set them apart from their more coddled peers when they head off to college or land their first jobs. They have had opportunities to fail, to mess up and fix their errors, and won't be fazed by a misstep here and there as young adults.

Excerpted from *The Gift of Failure: How the Best Parents Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can Succeed* by Jessica Lahey. Out now from HarperCollins Publishers. This excerpt from slate.com.