

## School Calendar

### This Week

**Thursday, Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> & Friday, Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>**  
3<sup>rd</sup> grade pumpkin pie bake sale. 1pm and 3 pm

**Saturday, November 7**  
Workday – 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> grade

### Looking Ahead

**Monday, November 9**  
Tea & Play at Morning Glory 10-11:30 am

**Wednesday, November 11**  
Diwali in-school celebration 2:00 pm  
Lantern Walk – EC, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> grades 4:45 pm  
(Afterschool Programs will end at 4:30)

**Saturday, November 14**  
Holiday Bazaar 11:00 am-4:00 pm

**Monday, November 16**  
Tea & Play at RVWS 12:00-1:00 pm

**Wednesday, November 18**  
6<sup>th</sup> grade Parent Evening

**Thursday, November 19**  
School Tour 9:00-11:00 am  
Board Meeting 6:30 pm

**Friday, November 20**  
Fall Assembly (Grades 3 and up) 6:30 pm

### How to Contact Us

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

### Reminders:

**Due to the Lantern Walk on Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, After-school programs will end at 4:30 pm.**

**Thank you to everyone who attended our Community meeting last Thursday.**

For those who couldn't be there, the notes from the meeting are at the end of this week's Current.

## Come to the Holiday Bazaar Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 11 am – 4 pm

River Valley Waldorf School  
**Holiday Bazaar and Café**  
1395 Bridgeton Hill Road  
Upper Black Eddy, PA  
Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>  
11am – 4pm

### Martinmas Coat Drive

Yea! River Valley community! Thank you so much for the incredible outpouring of coats for our coat drive. Please keep them coming!!

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!

**The drop box in the school lobby will be there until November 20<sup>th</sup> to receive your generous donations!**

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

### Parent Council Corner

Next PC meeting will be the evening of Tuesday, Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30, location TBA.

### Parent Teacher Conferences

Parents will be providing nourishment for our busy and beloved teachers on Nov. 24<sup>th</sup> & Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>. Each class will take care of their own teacher. PC would love some volunteers to provide food for the specialty teachers as well.

## From Administration

### AFTERNOON GARDEN

Star and Moon Room parents, please think ahead and schedule any Afternoon Garden needs (1:00- 315pm) you may have, heading into the November/December holiday season. The classes are quite full and only Friday has more than 2-3 spaces left to accommodate last minute additions! Contact Cindy by email (cschretlen@rivervalleysschool.org) or use the form attached to this week's Current to secure a spot for your child.

### An apology

Apologies for the "questionable" email about Winter Fair. I sent it out the same way I always do and for some reason all of those question marks jumped aboard. Maybe the goblins were having their way with us over the weekend?? Sorry if you had trouble figuring it out. The message can be found in an easier to read format in the Parent Council section of this week's Current. Thank you, Robbie

### Plants?

Do you have any plants that need a new home? We are looking for a few plants to brighten up the offices and freshen the air. Hanging or tall standing varieties would be most appreciated.

### 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@rivervalleysschool.org](mailto:hmurphy@rivervalleysschool.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

### Thank You

Huge thanks to Grace Morgan for hosting the 7th and 8th grade middle school dance at Ottsville Traditional Arts Center. Your space and generosity are a huge gift to our tween/teens and entire community. Thanks DJ Jens Christensen for your skills, style and patience. Thank you Andy Wander for your behind the scenes tech support. Thanks also to the parents who organized and chaperoned the event.

## From the Faculty

### What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Language Arts

Second Grade – Language Arts

Third Grade – Language Arts

Fourth Grade Language Arts

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!

### **After-School German & Schuhplattler**

A new round of German Songs & Games will begin this Wednesday, Nov. 4, and the NEW STARTING DATE of the next round of German Tutoring is TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10. Both classes will now include some Schuhplattler lessons, as well as songs, conversation, games, and a German-style snack.

A new round of our regular Monday Schuhplattler class will begin on Nov. 16. As always, these classes will run for 6-7 weeks, with breaks for school vacations. Contact Peter Ray at peter.ray@comcast.net or info@schuhplattlerkids.org.

### **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 Development**

### **Fundraising and Development at RVWS**

If you are a new or even a returning family to RVWS, you may have wondered why the school conducts fundraising and development activities. Maybe you would like to volunteer for a special event and are not sure how? Maybe you are not sure exactly what development means? Over the next few weeks, the Development Committee will contribute a series of short articles about fundraising at RVWS to help answer some of your questions.

**What is development?** Essentially, it means to grow or progress in a financial sense. Fundraising is the way in which this financial growth is accomplished. For RVWS, we are always seeking to grow the community, cultivate supporters in the wider community and, in return, our budget grows. Seems pretty simple, right? So why does RVWS seek financial support? Tuition revenue at RVWS only covers a portion of the actual operating expenses incurred by the school. This is why fundraising activities are a critical part of the RVWS revenue stream.

RVWS has a Development Committee which is comprised of parent volunteers, Board of Trustees members and professional staff. The Committee's role is to oversee an annual schedule of non-pedagogical activities that provide fiscal sustainability for RVWS. These activities include the Annual Appeal, the Auction Gala, school sponsorships, the Holiday Bazaar, and the EITC program. Additionally, RVWS is conducting a Capital Campaign for a future building expansion.

The Development Committee includes many in the RVWS community who have made a commitment to serve the school in this important and satisfying work that ultimately improves the RVWS experience for children and faculty. The members are: Renell Carpenter, Kathy Betz, Ron Ferguson (Trustee), Rich Kroth (Trustee), Kristyn Lederer (Development Committee Chairperson, Trustee), Amy Nyberg (Trustee), Saba Siddiqui (EITC Coordinator) and Stephanie Spencer (Development Coordinator). If you would like to learn more about the Development Committee, please contact Kristyn Lederer at 1134zar@gmail.com.

Next week, this article will continue with descriptions of the fundraising activities that are held at RVWS.

## **From the Leadership Council**

### **What we are working on?**

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.

## From Parent Council

Hello friends!

This September Parent Council (PC) invited the community to give their feedback on our annual Winter Fair festival, as we did not have committee chairs in place to hold Winter Fair and contemplated taking the year off. The survey results were almost evenly split between disappointment around not having WF this year and relief or indifference to either moving it or skipping the festival altogether. Slightly more folks voiced disappointment at losing the event, so Parent Council searched for a solution. PC has found a dynamic, 3 person group to chair the event: Kymm Phibbs, Erica Nichols and Zsuzsi Mekki. We all agree that WF adds more work during an already busy time, so sharing the duties held by the chair will lighten that load. We are also simplifying the event a bit. Secret Garden will not be part of the festival this year and we are limiting the craft activities to 2, plus King Winter. The fantastic, live stage performances and the cafe will run as usual. We hope that this format will be appealing to those who love the Winter Fair tradition, and acceptable to those who desire simplicity. Please show your support to our intrepid volunteer Winter Fair chairpeople by stepping up as much as you're able as the needs are shared through the Current and through your class coordinators!

Please email PC with any questions or comments you may have to [pc@rivervalleysschool.org](mailto:pc@rivervalleysschool.org).

### 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 (3rd Wednesday of each month). Keep a look out in the Current for subjects and times.

## 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](mailto: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 – 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> 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

## Class Fundraisers

### Beautiful Seasonal Flowers for sale at Holiday Bazaar

The 8th Grade will have lovely red and white poinsettias in various sizes and amaryllis bulbs available for sale at the Holiday Bazaar. We will also be taking orders that will be delivered to the school the first week of December. All proceeds support the 8th grade class trip!

### "Savoring the Seasons" Cookbook / Local Directory

Sneak Peek! Yummy, homemade baked pumpkin treats by the 3rd grade class from their own pumpkin harvest will be sold at both the 1pm and 3pm pick-up times on Thursday, November 5th and Friday, November 6th. (There will be a special diet or gluten free/vegan option as well.) It is now time to get excited for the G3 Seasonal Cookbook & Area Resource Guide while trying some of our Autumn baked goods. It is true! 150+ DELECTABLE RECIPES fill this community cookbook and the AMAZINGLY HANDY AREA RESOURCE GUIDE will bring ease and joy into your life as it contains all of our latest community recommendations for children's theater, hiking, biking, dining, local health care providers, coffee shops, pumpkin patches, trades people, children's clothes & toys and Much, MUCH more (80+ categories)! Coming soon ....so we will keep you posted on when they will be available for purchase! Thank you for supporting the Third Grade Class AND your Community!



## **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>. 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

## **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— Limited dates available so email Renell Carpenter ([renell@rcn.com](mailto:renell@rcn.com)) or Kira Willey ([kira@kira.net](mailto:kira@kira.net)) to reserve your party now!

## **Alumni News**

### **How are our alumni doing in the world?**

**Luke Bernhardt** (RVWS class of 2010) just completed a three month long pilgrimage on the Camino De Santiago (1000 Kilometers, roughly) which began in France and ended in Spain. As a history major, this experience served as his fall semester, offered through Franklin Pierce University in Ringe, New Hampshire, where Luke is currently a sophomore.

**Greta Bernhardt** (Class of 2012) is currently in her senior year at Delaware Valley Regional High School. She will be performing in the fall play "The Bold, the Young and the Murdered" on November 19, 20 & 21 at 7:00 pm. Greta has applied the Culinary Institute of America, located in Hyde Park, NY and is eagerly awaiting an acceptance letter!

**Noa Robinson** (Class of 2015) has just received Distinguished Honor Roll in his first term at Quakertown Community High School. Through his first course in computer programming, he is confident he has discovered his career path!

**Julian Kendter** (Class of 2015) has been adjusting beautifully to public school. He has made new friends and has joined Student Council and History Corp. When he discusses subject matter at home, he often brings up material that he studied at RVWS that pertains to what he is currently learning--It's great to see how what he's learning now continues to build upon what he learned previously!

**Kathryn Warner** (Class of 2015) is settling in nicely and loves it at Solebury! Isabel Dieterly-Malone loves it at Solebury, is making new friends and is playing Titania in Midsummer Night's Dream. Kathryn, Isabel, and Bianca (all 2015) and Teva and Cornelia (2014) will be in the performances at 7:30 pm on November 5, 6, and 7 and at 3 pm on Sunday Nov. 8th. Tickets are \$10 adults, \$5 for students. You may call 215-862-5261 for information and reservations.

## From the Community

### Dig Yoga

"One Kirtan" this Saturday, November 14 at 7PM at Dig Yoga, Lambertville, NJ . Felicia Holtz, vocals, guitar, harmonium, Karttikeya on drums and vocals, Jim Roney lead guitar. This meditative musical journey will bring you to the center of your heart after a day of shopping. \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. Kids may come for free.

### Twelve Angry Jurors comes to George School

Friday and Saturday, November 6 and 7, 2015.  
The George School Arts Department will present Twelve Angry Jurors on Friday and Saturday, November 6 and 7 at 8:00 p.m. in Walton Center Auditorium. With an outstanding cast of young performers, an incredible true-to-life set designed by Stagecraft students, and costumes by Linda Bee, the show promises to be a hit. Don't miss this free performance that offers nonstop fascinating debate and discussion.

### Lost

Zohra Mekki (Grade 7) is looking for a purple Gap hoodie and a green lunch bag with a "Whole Foods" logo. If you find either item, please let Zohra know or return them to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade classroom.

### Lenape Chamber Ensemble – Concert in the Round

Saturday, Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>, 10-11 am, for children 4 – 12 yrs.  
Featuring music by Bach, Telemann, Vivaldi, Biber & Cellos for Violins, Viola, Cellos, Bass & Harpsichord  
Refreshments and Instrument Demonstrations  
At Delaware Valley University Life Sciences Auditorium  
700 E. Butler Ave. Doylestown, PA 18901  
Children \$2.00 – Adults FREE  
For more info please call: (610)294-9361

### 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](http://www.roxeyballet.org) and used the fundraising code: RVWSCHOOL when buying your tickets.

### A Midsummer Night's Dream at Solebury School

Come see RVWS William Shakespeare's delightful comedy, "A Midsummer Night's Dream."  
November 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm and November 8<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm.  
You will truly be amazed at the talent of the students and the beauty of this set! Please call 215-862-5261 for information and reservations. Performances will be held in the Barn Theater on the Solebury School campus.  
Added Bonus: Isabel Dieterly-Malone, Kathryn Warner, and Bianca Sessegolo (Class of 2015) and Teva Skovronek and Cornelia Pierce (Class of 2014) are all in the cast.

### Palisades High School presents... "SNOW WHITE"

Friday, November 13 at 7PM and Saturday, November 14 at 1PM  
Dr. Francis V. Barnes Auditorium, Palisades High School, Kintnersville, PA

### New Children's Store in Easton

**Polliwogs & Petunias** has opened in Easton with many beautiful wooden toys and other items of interest to children. Some of them are:  
Elves and Angels kitchen (which retails for about \$180) for \$75 including some wooden food and two pans, a wooden toaster with two slices of toast and butter for \$15, a wooden rocking horse for \$37, a sweet little wooden chair for \$27, and a wooden school bus for \$12.

If anyone is interested they can reach the owner, Michelle Maher, at Polliwogs & Petunias 917 355-4953. They are open Th & Fri from 12 to 6, Sat 10 to 6 and Sun 12 to 5.

### Free Rototiller

Troy build horse tiller...from the 80's...won't start, low compression...repair project or for parts. Call Lolo at 215-297-0203.

### 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

## 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

#### NOVEMBER

November 13<sup>th</sup>

Please join us for our first

#### Second Friday Family Friendly Open Mic Night at OTAC

6:00 - 8:00 Children

7:00 Guest Musician this week is Pete Guvstanson, musician, singer and River Valley parent

8:00 -10:00 Adults

Bring the kids and share some music!

#### 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.

*Philadelphia-based Coracree plays roots music from the heart, melding a mixture of Celtic, Old Time, European and Original music with an old and contemporary sound. Featuring the playing of award-winning fiddler and clawhammer banjo player Janie Rothfield, the silver-throated singing (and bass playing) of Scotsman Allan Carr, multi-instrumentalist extraordinaire Bill Quern, and the inventive and driving guitar of clog dancer Sarah Gowan, Coracree sets the house on fire with lively fiddle tunes, soulful Scottish and Appalachian ballads, great singing and harmonies, a bit of raucus southern Old Time and an occasional clog dance by Sarah.*

*An evening with Coracree equals a fun evening of music, dance and humor!*

*More at [coracree.com](http://coracree.com)*

#### 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](http://ottsvilletradarts.weebly.com) • 250 Durham Rd. Ottsville Pa.

## Art in the Library

### Drawing the Still Life and Figure in Charcoal with George Thompson

November 9 & 16 6:00pm – 9:00pm This is a two-part workshop - Open to ages 16 – adult

This two-part workshop will explore the challenges of drawing a still life and working from a live model using only charcoal. All levels are welcome.

### ADVENTURES in COLLAGE with Emily Thompson

Saturday, November 14 10am – 12 noon, for ages six and over.

In this workshop we will discover the beauty of collage using a variety of materials to create a beautiful composition. We will experiment with paper, fabric, plastic, wood, found objects and more, using textures and layering techniques working with torn paper and everyday objects to create colorful, dynamic collages. Supplies will be provided, but feel free to bring any paper scraps or other materials you may want to incorporate into your artwork. Please bring a smock to class. Parents are welcome to stay and participate!

The workshops are held in the Community Room at Riegelsville Borough Hall, 615 Easton Road.

To sign up for workshops and our mailing list, please contact the Riegelsville Library, 610-749-2357 or

[Riegelsville.Library@gmail.com](mailto:Riegelsville.Library@gmail.com)

## 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 1<sup>st</sup>), 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](mailto:info@spacialdynamics.com), 518-695-6377, [www.spacialdynamics.com](http://www.spacialdynamics.com)

## Community Meeting Notes – October 29, 2015

Annie Porter began by explaining the purpose and structure of the meeting.

### First Topic:

The intention, outlined by the faculty in the Strategic Plan, to move to offering one language school-wide rather than two in the 2016-17 school year.

### Second Topic:

As a school we are beginning to speak of teaching at RVWS as "annual teacher placement" rather than an 8-year journey. Years could continue consecutively, but we want to allow flexibility.

### Introduction of the first topic: Language Program

We have been looking at our language program for many years. We didn't want our middle school students to be spread too thin with two languages. We have tried different ways of teaching languages and each year the faculty has been looking at the program and what has worked. Last year we brought in a language evaluator.

In middle school we feel it is very important for the students to go into more depth. The younger children are more able to skim the surface, but many of them are also struggling to put their energy into two languages instead of one. This dovetails with another strategic plan goal of having more fulltime faculty sitting in our faculty circle to carry on the work of the school.

Karen Atkinson described that a year ago the faculty began the process of looking at world languages along with other AWSNA member schools. We talked to many other schools and formed a small group to go out to other schools and get ideas to help us strengthen our language program. We have done the same thing with music, movement, and gardening. We invited a trained, experienced Waldorf language teacher to come evaluate our program. She recommended that we have one language with a Waldorf trained language teacher. We will post the position; we hope it will be Spanish or German and we hope it will be a fulltime position. We have worked through the many pros and cons and we want to hear your questions.

### Sampling of parent comments:

Is it possible the language will be French or Chinese? Answer: Possible, but not our intention. If that happens how would the middle school students be supported if they only have one year of a language?

I think it's fantastic, long overdue. I didn't start a language until I went to high school. My bigger concern is the person. I'm glad this is being addressed and the teacher will be a Waldorf trained teacher.

My boy is in first grade and it's really nice to see him speaking a foreign language. I like the depth of one language.

I support the in depth concept so they speak better. Young children have the ability to pick up anything. If children have learned the sounds of different languages in the early years that will benefit them.

I love that my daughter was exposed to both languages but she doesn't speak either. I like the idea of depth.

My son doesn't like the 3 week cycles, I like the idea of one language in depth.

I hope it will be German. My son already speaks German well.

I have heard from a lot of people that a big selling point of a Waldorf schools is two languages, but I like the idea myself.

(Continued on next page.)



I don't like the idea of giving up a language. What about having two languages until 5<sup>th</sup> grade and then one? In their younger years they don't have to learn the language.

I am supportive of this in upper grades, in a school our size one teacher fulltime and trained. What about the 8<sup>th</sup> graders that are here? They are not getting what others will be getting in the future. What are we doing this year for our 8<sup>th</sup> graders?

My wife runs a high school language department and speaks French, German, Chinese, Latin and other languages. The experience she has had in high school from feeder schools is that those people who sample languages over time get virtually nothing. She finds this frustrating. A deep dive is important, this is a good idea. It allows teachers to introduce cultural elements as well. Be aware of the frustration of the younger children who can't remember what they learned.

My son has said that. He wants to learn only one language.

There is an appeal of the exposure of multiple languages, but I endorse the in depth study of one language in our school. It would behoove us to choose the language that best suits our curriculum and stick with that one.

What is being done in other Waldorf schools? Answer: Here, in the mid-Atlantic and northeast we have the oldest established Waldorf schools and many of them are going to one language.

Let's say we do move forward with this and we don't find a teacher? Answer: There are now substantial training programs as close as Sunbridge and at other schools in the area. We have funds to support training. We have spoken to our language teachers to see if they are interested in going on that journey.

#### **Introduction of the second topic: Annual Teacher Placement**

This could mean consecutive years of a teacher moving with the same group. The goal is to establish flexibility in thinking of what the journey looks like with a teacher. What is the right journey for the class? In the Strategic Plan this is being addressed. The 1-8 journey is the exception. Now outreach no longer says that it is the ideal picture that a teacher goes from 1 through 8 with the class. This is true in other Waldorf schools all over the country. We brought this to our community meeting a year ago. Many teachers have a particular strength and it would benefit our community to align teachers with their skill set. There is also a value in having a teacher carry a class for a longer period of time. We are looking at the concept of flexibility. We want to combine this with scheduled parent communication.

We need to work with how we see the teachers of the community and how the teachers see the students. If someone has the skill set and wants to go all the way through 8<sup>th</sup> grade we want to support that teacher, but we also want to support a teacher who has the skills to go 1-3 or be a dedicated first grade teacher.

Sometime in March before intention forms are due, an announcement will be made so parents will know who the class teacher will be for the following year. This is an opportunity for us as a faculty to look at this differently. We are looking at the evaluation process, calling it more of a review/mentorship, finding ways to support all of the teachers. This allows us as teachers to recognize and capitalize on each other's strengths. Instead of this is 'my' class, we want to all consider each class and how we, as a group can best meet the needs of each class rather than how 'I' alone can carry the class.

#### **Sampling of parent comments:**

Determine where the greatest skill is and allow that to happen. If you want to retain the faculty, mining the greatest strengths of the teachers is a good idea. Consider who has the strongest spiritual connection to the class. If there is a relationship with a mentor, the mentor is there as a resource. Students can continue the spiritual relationship with the first teacher even if that teacher doesn't remain the teacher of the class.

I am really touched. This is so wise; it shows such flexibility; it is real. It meets your needs and the children's needs. This feels really right. You'll know if something needs to be changed. Thrilled beyond belief in the changes that have happened in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class.

What does the faculty think? Are you excited about having the flexibility? Answer: We are all here to bring it to you; the idea came out of our discussions.

(Continued on next page.)

How is this decided? Do the teachers decide? Does a teacher say I want to go 1-8? How is the decision made?  
Answer: TDC looks at it, TreeAnne is involved as Pedagogical Chair and the faculty guides the decision.

It feels very authentic to look at it every year.

I love the looping concept, that for some it might not make sense to go through 8th grade.

I am supportive. If you are working with your strengths you are happier, working with your strengths while stretching yourself. As for a spiritual leader – in high school there was the guidance counselor anyone could go to with their problems. Very helpful.

I see value in the flexibility and the long term relationship. The idea I would have is to let it be. The rock that they need as a relationship that continues is important. We've only just begun our journey.

Not being stuck to an ideal (i.e. if they don't make it they failed) is good. The depth of relationship over the years really matters. It's one of the reasons we came here. Flexibility sounds good, but I would like it be more long term. The word annual makes me cringe, the idea of a new teacher every year is uncomfortable.

I'm fully supportive of it, I agree with the last comment.

I think it's great. I'm sad our school didn't come to this a few years ago because we had a wonderful teacher who was a great early grades teacher. I think the middle school is fantastic, it's less scary if that rotation changes. Having a younger child as well, if you had tried to take her teacher away in second grade it would have been scary for her and for me. That is the delicate dance that you'll have to do. For a long-term goal for our school, it's fantastic.

Would we be able to count on having a teacher for 4 years? Answer: I can see what is making you uncomfortable and it makes us uncomfortable too. We see the value of the long-term relationship.

I would like to hear the intention is that the teacher will continue for 5 years. Answer: We do not hold the intention that a teacher would necessarily go 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup>. That doesn't mean the teacher won't continue. We want to be open to the situation each year. We do value continuity, we are not throwing that out. It lives in us very strongly.

I think it's undeniable that when adolescents reach a certain age they begin to question authority. In our school, the teacher becomes a maternal or paternal figure for better or for worse. The student is going to do the same butting of heads with the teacher as they do with the parents. In some ways it might be healthier if we do have a break around middle school if it doesn't work for the teacher or the student. Secondly, I am very grateful to have been close to what has happened in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the past two years. We have been very lucky to have an organic experiment going on. The great collaboration between Sharon Ferguson and Laura Birdsall and bringing in experts from our community to speak to the children to deepen the experience makes it more dynamic for the children.

All of the teachers know the students here. Because of the nature of our school, it won't be a brand new teacher, it will be someone they already know.

The teachers know the children better than anyone. We need to trust them. We can't just hold onto them if the teacher feels they are better suited for younger grades.

The heart of Waldorf education is the relationships we have with the children and that will not change. The beauty of the curriculum is what is important, that a loving adult is caring for them.

What propelled this decision? Answer: A long drawn out meditation on where is it that we want to go. Many factors came together. One big one was the threshold of 5<sup>th</sup> grade and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade evaluation not meeting the needs of what we are trying to accomplish. We had an AWSNA delegates meeting. It was reported to us that this is something that came loud and clear in their meeting. 1-8 isn't the reality of what is happening in our schools. We have to look at it differently. We want to get away from there being a value placed on the length of one journey vs another. We don't want that to be a judgement. We want to experience flexibility.

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I am comforted that we are not throwing up all the pieces every year, so it is unlikely that a child will have a different teacher every year. I was excited to see the shift into the middle school model, it was really valuable for our school. Our middle school allows for flexibility, which is good for students and the teachers. Neither of my children had the same teacher 1-8. In each case it was a positive experience.

My child has felt held by both of his new teachers. He has changed twice in the past two years.

We welcome additional questions if anyone has any. Please direct them to TreeAnne; she will bring them to the faculty and we will get back to you with answers.

Thank you, it feels really good that this conversation is happening now. Applause.

From the New York Times

## **How to Cut Children's Screen Time? Say No to Yourself First.**

By JANE E. BRODY

Parents are often at fault, directly or indirectly, when children and teenagers become hooked on electronic media, playing video games or sending texts many hours a day instead of interacting with the real world and the people in it. And as discussed in last week's column, digital overload can impair a child's social, emotional and intellectual growth.

This sad conclusion of many experts in child development has prompted them to suggest ways parents can prevent or rectify the problem before undue damage occurs. "There's nothing about this that can't be fixed," said Catherine Steiner-Adair, a Harvard-affiliated psychologist. "And the sooner, the better."

As Susan Stiffelman, a family therapist, put it in The Huffington Post, today's parents are unprepared "to deal with the intense pull and highly addictive nature of what the online world has to offer. As parents, we have an opportunity to guide our kids so that they can learn habits that help them make use of the digital world, without being swallowed whole by it."

Two experts at the Harvard School of Public Health, Steven Gortmaker and Kaley Skapinsky, offer a free guide, "Outsmarting the Smart Screens: A Parent's Guide to the Tools That Are Here to Help," as well as healthy activities to pursue to counter the weight gain that can accompany excessive screen time. Young children should not have their own cellphones or televisions in their bedrooms, they say, adding that even with teenagers it is not too late to set reasonable limits on screen time.

Dr. Steiner-Adair, author of "The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age," cited two common parental behaviors that can strongly influence a child's tendency to abuse electronic media. Some parents are perpetually tuned into their own devices, responding to every ping of their cellphones and tablets, receiving and sending messages at times that would enrage Miss Manners. Other parents fail to establish and enforce appropriate rules for media engagement by their children.

Young children learn by example, often copying the behavior of adults. I often see youngsters in strollers or on foot with a parent or caretaker who is chatting or texting on a cellphone instead of conversing with the children in their charge. Dr. Steiner-Adair said parents should think twice before using a mobile device when with their children. She suggests parents check email before the children get up, while they are in school, or after they go to bed.

One girl among the 1,000 children she interviewed in preparing her book said, "I feel like I'm just boring. I'm boring my dad because he will take any text, any call, any time, even on the ski lift." A 4-year-old called her father's smartphone a "stupid phone."

Dr. Jenny S. Radesky, a pediatrician at Boston Medical Center who with two colleagues observed 55 groups of parents and children at fast-food restaurants, noted that 40 of the adults immediately took out mobile devices and used them throughout most of the meal. Often more attention was paid to the devices than to the children.

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The researchers also found that when parents were absorbed in their own devices, the children were more likely to act out, apparently in an attempt to get their parents' attention.

Dr. Steiner-Adair is especially concerned about parental failure to pay full attention to their children "at critical times of the day, like when taking children to and from school. This should be a cell-free zone for everyone — no Bluetooth for parents or devices for the kids. The pickup from school is a very important transitional time for kids, a time for them to download their day. Parents shouldn't be saying, 'Wait a minute, I have to finish this call.' "

Likewise, she said, when parents come home from work, "they should walk in the door unplugged and use the first hour they're home as time to reconnect with the family. Kids hate the phrase 'just checking' that parents frequently use to justify a very rude, infuriating behavior."

Nor should parents or children be using devices when the family dines out, the psychologist said. "The art of dining and the connection between delicious food and nourishing conversation is being lost, not just in restaurants but at home as well," she said.

Dr. Steiner-Adair attributes a recent 20 percent increase in accidental injuries seen in pediatric emergency rooms to caretakers' failure to pay full attention to those they are supposed to be watching, like infants and toddlers in the bathtub or children on the jungle gym. "Your reaction time and attention is not the same when you're texting or talking on a cellphone," she said.

Ms. Stiffelman, author of "Parenting With Presence," realizes that attempts to change digital behavior can meet with resistance. But, she said, it is important to be fearless and decisive, and to avoid negotiations. "Acknowledge your kid's upset without delivering long lectures about why they can't have what they want," she said. "Children grow into resilient adults by living through disappointment. It's O.K. for your kids to be mad, bored or anxious about missing out on what their friends are up to online."

She and other experts urge parents to establish device-free times of day, like the first hour after school and the hour before bed. Cellphones and tablets should not be allowed at the dinner table.

Ms. Stiffelman suggests parents "make time for real-life activities with your kids that let them know that they're worth your time and undivided attention. Do things together that nourish your relationship."

As for controlling the time children spend on digital media, the Harvard guide states emphatically that it is the parents' responsibility: "Since the devices can be turned on anytime, you as a parent need to monitor their use, keep track of time, and then make sure the agreed upon rules are followed."