



River Valley Current

February 7, 2017 No. 468

If a man is to shed the light of the sun upon other men, he must first of all have it within himself. --Romain Rolland

School Calendar

This Week

Wednesday, February 8

School Tour 9:00-11:30 am
Parent Council Meeting (Homestead) 2:00 pm

Thursday, February 9

6th Grade Parent Evening

Friday, February 10

Grade School Ice Skating Party

Looking Ahead

Monday, February 13-Friday, February 17

Winter Break – No School

Monday, February 20

Faculty In-Service – No School

Thursday, February 23

EC Parent Enrichment Evening 6:30 pm
Board Meeting 6:30 pm

Wednesday, March 8

School Tour 9:00 am

Saturday, March 11

2nd grade Workday

Saturday, March 18

All-School Open House

How to Contact Us

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

Upcoming Parent Council Meeting

Wed. Feb 8th at 2:00 pm at
Homestead General Store.

Pizza Update

There will be no Pizza this Friday because of the Ice Skating Party. The new session begins after Winter Break on Friday, February 24th. Order forms are at the end of the Current and are due back this Thursday, February 9th.

Auction Seeking Handcrafted Works

Are you a visual or fiber artist? Potter, wood, metal or stone crafts person? The auction committee is asking for donations of hand crafted items from the community. We are also looking for unique experiences such as Melissa Goldstein's fermenting class or Saba Siddiqui's Pakastani dinner or Paul Smith's dinner and a movie night, or Ron Ferguson's book club.

If you have an idea for a unique experience or artisan item to donate, please contact the auction committee at auction@rivervalleyschool.org

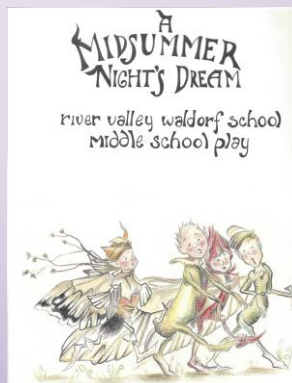
Grade School Ice Skating Trip

On Friday, February 10th, the grade school will have their annual Ice Skating Party. This is a field trip for grade school students only. We ask families who have early childhood children to please send them to school as usual and not bring them on the ice skating trip.

There are many reasons for this. Most importantly, it is not safe for little children to be skating in between older, faster, more experienced skaters. Also, it is not fair to early childhood children who don't get to go, while some of their friends are off skating and they are not invited.

In an effort to avoid hurt feelings and hurt bodies and to give the younger ones something to look forward to when they are in the grade school, we ask that only grade school children come to the skating rink on the 10th.

There will be no pizza on 2/10 as stated on the order forms.



A Midsummer Night's Dream DVD's

A professional videographer filmed the Friday, January 27th performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and is making DVD's available to the RVWS community.

The cost of the DVD is \$15. Order forms are in this week's Current and on the wall next to the office and are due back by Friday, February 24th. We will place an order based on the number that have been sold by that date so this is a hard deadline.

Please place forms in the folder on the office door. This would be a perfect gift for relatives and friends and will help defray costs of the production.

From Administration

RVWS All-School Open House Saturday, March 18th – YARD SIGNS?

The day of our annual all-school Open House is rapidly approaching (March 18th) and we would like your help promoting it in a new way. We are printing yard signs to announce it and would love to see them placed all around our far-flung 'sending district'.

If you are willing to have a sign in your yard, or if you have other locations for which you are willing to both place and remove a sign, please let us know by Friday, February 10th. Just reply to this email with the location and number of signs you would like.

There will also be postcards and flyers to distribute for this event, which is another way to promote our Open House. If you are able to spread the word that way, we'll happily supply you with materials.

Thank you in advance for your help ensuring that River Valley continues to grow and thrive!

2017-18 INTENTION FORMS OVERDUE

Forms were emailed to each class on 1/20, are attached to this week's Current and may also be found in the Parent Forms bin next to the front office. No deposit is due right now; we simply want to know what your plans are for next year since the faculty, staff and board are all building the framework for the upcoming school year at this time. If you haven't yet, please email your completed forms to Cindy (cschretlen@rivervalleysschool.org) or return them to the INTENTION FORMS folder on the front office door. Thank you!

2017-18 TUITION ASSISTANCE

February 28th is the due date for Tuition Assistance requests to be included in the primary round of grants. The Tuition Assistance Committee will review all requests received on or before 2/28 and plans to send out responses before River Valley's spring break in April. To submit a request for Tuition Assistance, please review the TA Policy (attached to the Current), fill out your Parent Financial Statement online and submit copies of your 2015 and 2016 income tax returns to Cindy Schretlen by 2/28/2017.

Lost and Found

We have too much lost and not enough found and our basket is overflowing. Please claim what is yours by Thursday. On Friday, take what you can use. The rest will be donated.

Stainless Steel Water Bottles

An RVWS parent sent us an article about high lead content in some types of stainless steel water bottles. More information can be found at this link:

<http://thenaturalbabymama.com/baby/toxic-levels-of-lead-found-in-stainless-steel-water-bottles-are-you-or-your-child-using-these-water-bottles/>

Attendance Policy Reminder

If a child is absent in the grade school, a note from a parent is required within three days of his or her return. The same is true for Lateness and Early Dismissal. If you take your child to the doctor (or dentist) please bring us a note from them.

Notes may be emailed to attendance@rivervalleysschool.org or brought to the front desk. Please remember to follow this new attendance policy and don't make us hound you for a note. Thank you for your cooperation.

Housing Needs

At this time of year we have teacher candidates visiting and they often need a place to stay for a few nights. If you have a guest room that you wouldn't mind sharing we would greatly appreciate your hospitality. Please let Robbie know if this is a possibility for you.

Capoeira Update

A new Capoeira registration form is at the end of this week's Current for classes from February 27th - April 3rd.

GARDEN GATE Parent/Child Classes & 2-Day Nursery with Molly MacDonald Spring Session Now Enrolling!

Garden Gate: for children under 3 years, together with a parent or caregiver.

Spring session begins February 6, 2017.

Space available on Wednesday - 9 until 11:30am.

Class size is limited to 6

Tuition/fees are \$420

Garden Gate provides a warm, supportive atmosphere for children and adults alike. This welcoming environment allows children to develop their social capacities, expand their interests, motor abilities and problem-solving skills. Songs, games and parenting tips are part of the valuable exchange of ideas and information that is enjoyed by participating adults.

2-DAY DROP-OFF NURSERY CLASS IN THE SUN ROOM – One spot available!

Sun Room Nursery: 2-day, drop-off class for children 2 ½ to 3 ¾ years.

Began February 2, 2017

Class meets Thursday & Friday from 8:30 – 11:30am.

Class size is limited to 8

Tuition/fees are \$1,125

A day in the Sun Room includes time to explore and play both within the classroom and substantial time out of doors. There is time for practical work and care for ourselves and our environment and a gathering time for finger games, songs and stories. Warm, wholesome snack-time is a favorite time for conversation and sharing amongst the group. This busy day wraps up in time for lunch and rest in the comfort of home.

Please contact Cindy Schretlen with any questions you may have, 610-982-5606 or email: admissions@rivervalleysschool.org

From the Faculty

What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Language Arts

Second Grade – Language Arts – Saints/Fables

Third Grade – Language Arts

Fourth Grade – Class Play

Fifth Grade – Geometry

Sixth Grade – Geography

Seventh Grade – Physiology

Eighth Grade – History

From Development

Watch our Giving Tree Grow by Giving to the Annual Fund!

Did you know that your tuition only accounts for a portion of the funds needed to operate our beloved school? Because we are a tuition-based school, we are not eligible for most grants and subsidies that other schools may qualify for. Additionally, we offer financial assistance for many of our families. Our ability to invest in our programming, support our faculty, serve our students, and maintain our facilities depends upon additional funding from events, gifts and sponsorships. This is why we ask our community to support the Annual Fund each year. In the next several weeks, you may receive a letter, note, email or call asking for your support of the Annual Fund. Please give what you are able so we may provide all the wonderful things that enrich your children's education. When you give, your generosity will be recognized as a leaf on a Giving Tree in the lobby. Each class will be represented by its own leaf color. Additionally, your generosity will be recognized in the River Valley Current and the Annual Report. Watch our tree bloom, from the roots to the canopy, as our Annual Fund grows! Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

Stephanie Spencer

Development Coordinator

From the Community

Network Chiropractor Extraordinaire

Hello friends! Dr. Renee Sexton, Chiropractor, will hold sessions at 3163 Main St, Springtown, PA, February 22, 2017, 4-6 PM. Please RSVP to Rose Litschauer asap! 610-570-7408. Adults \$50.00, Kids \$25.

Help Available

Isabella Blasucci (RVWS Class of 2012) and her friend Noah from High Mowing Waldorf School are living in Milford, NJ for a month (till March 5th or so) and trying to save up money to travel in Europe! They can babysit, paint, build stone walls, polish shoes, sweep, sing or tackle any other projects one might have in mind. They can be reached at 603-498-9076 or isabellablasucci@gmail.com or through Facebook as Isabella Blasucci.

Book Discussion in Alpha, NJ

The Alpha Mennonite Church is hosting a book discussion on the book "Between the World and Me" by Ta-nehisi Coates on Friday, February 24 at 6:30pm. All are invited to participate in a discussion about current racial divides and how we as a larger community can come together and encourage healing. There will be a dessert potluck!! For more information go to:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1883913398506639/?ti=as>

"Into the Woods" at the Solebury School

This year's musical at Solebury School is Stephen Sondheim's "Into the Woods."

RVWS alumni Teva Rose Skovronek, Safwa Ozair, Ava Smith and Dominique Wander are all in the cast. The show will be performed on Thurs, Feb 16th at 7:30 PM, Fri, Feb. 17th at 7:30 PM, Sat, Feb. 18th at 2:00 PM, Sat, Feb. 18th at 7:30 and Sun, Feb. 19th 3:00 PM

For tickets go to: <https://solebury-school.ticketleap.com/>

Footloose, the Musical at Kimberton WS

Kimberton Waldorf High School invites you to a performance of Footloose, the Musical. River Valley alumni Lauren Goodyear and Gabe Martinez will be playing the roles of Ariel Moore and Ren McCormick! We hope to see your familiar faces in the audience!

Footloose is teenage coming of age story set in the fictional town of Bomont. On its surface, this is a story about parents and teenagers, small town life, and young love. More deeply, it is a story about loss and grief, love and redemption. Our cast is very enthusiastic about this production. It is full of humor, fun, great depth of emotion, and lots of great music. Songs like *Footloose*, *Let's Hear It For the Boy*, and *Almost Paradise* became popular hits and still keep our toes tapping today!

Thursday, March 2nd, 7 pm, Friday March 3rd, 7:30 pm, Saturday, March 4th, 2 pm & 7:30 pm

Adults \$15, Seniors \$12, Students \$10

Kimberton Waldorf School, 410 West Seven Stars Road, Phoenixville, PA 19460, 610-933-3635 x111,

WANTED

Newspapers, old sheets and towels needed. Please leave in designated box out in front of the school. Thank you, Hilary Murphy

WANTED

I am looking for used plastic feed bags to upcycle into little bags. So, if anyone has large, plastic feed bags left over from their rabbits, chickens, or other critters, please save them for me. Thank you, Elizabeth McCracken (Aftercare teacher), juliam57@aim.com

Looking for a Dollhouse

If your family has a large wooden dollhouse that you are no longer using, we would love to buy it from you! Contact Sara, mother of Isaiah in Mrs. Atkinson's first grade. 908-323-9691 sarajoyfishkin@gmail.com

Teen & Young Adult Panel: Alternative Educational Paths

Local teens Miranda & Stephen Evarts, current and past members of The Learning Cooperatives, will share their experiences of living and learning without school. Teens welcome!

Wed Feb 22, 7:30-8:30pm - Flemington, NJ
<http://raritanlearningcooperative.org/get-involved/events/>

NEW Mosaic Center for Wellness and Creativity

23 Bridge Street, Milford, NJ

Kundalini Yoga and Unity Meditation with Felicia Ruth

Tuesday 2/14 9:30-11AM (first of four sessions) drop ins welcome

Vacation Valentines art activity with Autumn during yoga 2/14 \$10 per child pre-register children by 2/13 and for more information please contact Autumn@motherarts.com

Nia with Autumn Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9:15-10:30

STANCE: A Party with a Purpose

Saturday Feb. 25, 6-10 PM, Nurture Nature Center, Easton PA.

A unique and fun night out for a great cause, STANCE is an evening kicked off by (optional) all-levels yoga & songs led by Kira Willey, accompanied by DJARM18--RV's own Andrew McIntosh—plus hearty hors d'oeuvres, beer & wine, and a set by River Valley parent bluegrass band, Moonshine & Millet! All proceeds benefit Shanthi Project, which brings mindfulness and therapeutic yoga to prisons, detention centers and underserved schools. Advance tickets: \$30 at shanthiproject.com.

Rieglesville Public Library - Valentine's Design Drop-in Day

Saturday, February 11th 10am – 12pm

Rieglesville Borough Community Room, 615 Easton Road, Rieglesville, PA – 610.749.2357

Drop in between 10 and 12 to design you own Valentine for a loved one. We will provide the craft supplies, you bring you imagination!

Parents should be on hand to assist younger children with their craft. Please arrive no later than 11am so you have enough time to finish your card. Time permitting, participants may complete multiple cards.

Need A Babysitter?

Marcella Harvi, a 16 year old RVWS alum from Easton, PA, with certified CPR training is available for \$10/hour. Call: 203-343-2500 or email: mharv.jp@gmail.com

A Midsummer Night's Dream DVD Order Form

A professional videographer filmed the Friday, January 27th performance of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and is making DVD's available to the RVWS community.

I would like to order _____ DVD's @ \$15 Total _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Deadline for Orders – Friday, February 24, 2017

Prepaid orders only, please.

Make check payable to River Valley Waldorf School. Put "DVD" in the memo.
Bring form & check to office.

RVWS After-School Capoeira Program

Open to grades 5-8

Monday afternoons from 3:30-4:30 pm

Capoeira at River Valley is taught by renowned Contra-Mestra Gata Brava (Leigh Robertson) from New Hope's Morro Verde. The art form of Capoeira combines elements of dance, acrobatics and music, all within the context of Brazilian culture. It traces its origins back to the 1600's when West African slaves in Brazil developed it as a mean of resisting oppression.

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Registration Form

Student's Name _____

Student's Teacher _____

Parent's Name _____

Parent's Phone 1: _____ Phone 2: _____

Email 1: _____

Email 2: _____

I would like to register my child for Capoeira:

Mondays, 3:30-4:30 \$15/class

_____ 1/30 and 2/6/2017 **\$30** (only if you are not already registered for the January session)

_____ 2/27 through 4/3/2017 (6 classes) **\$90**

Payment in full must be attached to the registration form. Payment is non-refundable and is set regardless of the number of classes actually attended by your child. Classes will be filled on a first come first served basis.

ADULTS ARE ALSO WELCOME TO ENROLL

PIZZA DAY! ROUND TWO!

Once again the 3rd graders will be offering pizza from **Galasso's** in Frenchtown as well as organic lemonade on Fridays, starting February 24th until June 9th.

Please return payment to the front office by FEB 9th with payment to RVWS.

This payment is for 13 weeks of pizza

***This is part of an annual fundraiser for our trip to Hawthorne Valley Farm
Thank you for your support! Sincerely, Mrs. Niemczura's 3rd Grade Class!***

Child's Name: _____

Grade and Teachers name: _____

_____ 1 slice & lemonade: \$52.00

_____ 2 slices & lemonade: \$84.50

_____ 1 slice/no lemonade: \$32.50

_____ 2 slices/no lemonade: \$65.00

_____ Lemonade Only: \$19.50

LAST DAY OF PIZZA - Friday June 9th

Gluten free pizza may be available if interested please email: ericakellyr@yahoo.com

Questions please contact Erica Nichols at 908-303-2255 or ericakellyr@yahoo.com

Pizza will be delivered to each classroom as ordered. The children are distributing the pizza and lemonade and have had a great time being involved in this fundraiser.

Pizza dates are as follows: 2/24, 3/3, 3/10, 3/17, 3/31, 4/7, 4/21, 4/28, 5/5, 5/12, 5/19, 6/2, 6/9

From the Huffington Post

4 Things Worse Than Not Learning To Read In Kindergarten

By Gaye Groover Christmus

The year Sam started kindergarten, he turned 6 in October. He was one of the oldest children in his class, and he didn't know how to read. When he started first grade he was almost 7, and he still didn't know how to read. Fortunately for Sam, he entered first grade in 1999. And his teachers, Mrs. Gantt and Mrs. Floyd, didn't panic if a child didn't learn to read in kindergarten. In fact, they expected that most children would learn to read in first grade. (They also supported and encouraged children who learned to read easily in kindergarten, like Sam's brother Ben.)

If Sam had started first grade this year, however, he probably would have been labelled as "slow" or "behind." Because the new standard is that children should learn to read in kindergarten. Even though most educators know that many children aren't ready to learn to read until first grade. Even though countries like Finland educate kindergarteners by allowing them to play, not teaching them to academic skills. And even though the new standard causes teachers, parents and even children themselves to worry that something is "wrong" if children aren't reading when they arrive in the first grade classroom.

But guess what? Sam wasn't "slow" or "behind," and neither are most of the other children who don't read in kindergarten. Sam became a fair reader by the end of first grade, and a good reader by third grade. By the time he reached high school he was an honors student. And last weekend, he graduated from college - with a 3.93 grade point average.

So what happens when education standards require that children like Sam learn to read in kindergarten and that teachers like Mrs. Gantt and Mrs. Floyd had better make it happen? Many educators say the result is ineffective and counterproductive classroom practices. Which means that many children actually learn and retain less than they would in a developmentally-appropriate kindergarten classroom.

So here's my advice. (You can take it with a grain of salt if you like, because I'm not a teacher. But I am Sam's mom.) If your son or daughter doesn't learn to read in kindergarten, relax. Because many, many things are worse than not learning to read in kindergarten. Here are four of them:

Limited time for creative play. Young children learn by playing. They learn by digging and dancing and building and knocking things down, not by filling out piles of worksheets. And they learn by interacting with other children, solving problems, sharing and cooperating, not by drilling phonics. Mrs. Gantt and Mrs. Floyd created fabulous centers and units that allowed children to learn about everything from houses to trucks to pets to oceans. And they snuck in some reading and math skills that the children didn't even notice, because they were so busy playing and creating! Teachers today, however, often have to limit (or even eliminate) time for centers and units, because the academic requirements they are forced to meet don't allow time for creative learning.

Limited physical activity. Few things are more counterproductive than limiting recess and other types of physical play time for children. Children learn better when they move. Parents and teachers know this intuitively, but research also confirms it. Children who have more opportunities to run around and play have better thinking skills and increased brain activity. And don't assume that young children are naturally active and are getting all of the exercise they need; researchers have found that children as young as three and four are surprisingly inactive. Yet many schools are limiting or even eliminating recess, even for very young children.

(Continued on next page.)

Teaching that focuses on standards and testing. Teachers are increasingly under pressure to prepare their students to perform on standardized tests. This means that their focus is shifting from teaching children in ways that match their development and learning styles to "teaching to the test." As one teacher reported, "I have watched as my job requirements swung away from a focus on children, their individual learning styles, emotional needs, and their individual families, interests and strengths to a focus on testing, assessing and scoring young children..." This shift in focus means that teachers have less time to nurture and develop children as lifelong learners, because they're required to focus their efforts on standards that are unrealistic for many children.

Frustration and a sense of failure. Children know when they aren't meeting the expectations of teachers and other adults. What they don't know, however, is that those expectations often make no sense. And because they don't know that, they experience frustration and a sense of failure when they don't measure up. So the boy who thrived in his experiential preschool, but struggles in his academic -focused kindergarten may become frustrated to the point that he "hates school." And the girl who can't sit still for 30 minutes and fill out worksheets knows that she's disappointing her teacher, but doesn't know that the task isn't appropriate for her. Which means that many normal children are becoming frustrated - and are being labelled - by an entirely unrealistic system. As one report has bluntly stated, "Most children are eager to meet high expectations, but their tools and skills as learners as well as their enthusiasm for learning suffer when the demands are inappropriate."

If your child is in kindergarten or first grade and hasn't yet learned to read, don't panic. Talk with his or her doctor about any concerns you have, but recognize that he or she is probably developing normally. If your child's school is pushing academics in kindergarten in place of play-based learning, talk with the teacher. Chances are, she's frustrated and under enormous pressure to get her students ready to "perform." If you're stuck with a kindergarten curriculum that seems unrealistic to you and doesn't fit your child (and assuming that changing schools is not an option), let your child know that you're not worried about reading in kindergarten (or even early in first grade). Talk about people who learned to read later (like Sam!) and are doing just fine. Then do things that promote real learning, like reading books he or she enjoys, playing games, teaching useful skills and getting outside as often as possible to have fun, be active and learn together.