



# River Valley Current

May 30, 2017 No. 482

We should not let our fears hold us back from pursuing our hopes.  
~John F. Kennedy

## School Calendar

### This Week

#### Thursday, June 1

Board Meeting 6:30 pm  
Board Open Community Session 6:30-7:30 pm

#### Thursday-Friday, June 1-2

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Camping Trip to Tohickon Valley Park

### Looking Ahead

#### Friday-Friday, June 2-9

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Class Trip to Kroka

#### Tuesday, June 6

7<sup>th</sup> Grade to Philadelphia Art Museum  
Diversity Committee Meeting 3:30-4:30 pm

#### Wednesday, June 7

School Tour 9:00 am  
Parent Council Meeting 2:00 pm

#### Monday-Wednesday, June 12-14

6<sup>th</sup> Grade Camping Trip to Rickett's Glen

#### Wednesday, June 14

Last Day of School for Early Childhood

#### Thursday, June 15

Rose Ceremony 9:00 am  
Amanda Blanco Library Dedication 10:30 am  
Grade School Ends 1:00 pm

#### Saturday, June 17

Graduation

#### How to Contact Us

info@rivervalley.waldorfschool.org  
lc@rivervalley.waldorfschool.org  
bot@rivervalley.waldorfschool.org  
pc@rivervalley.waldorfschool.org

## Dedication of the Amanda Blanco Memorial Library

After the year-end Rose Ceremony on June 15th, we hope you will join us on the back playground at 10:30 am for the dedication of the Amanda Blanco Memorial Library; a tribute to our colleague, fellow RVWS parent and friend who passed away last summer.

This library cabinet is being built by dear friends of Amanda's and we hope to fill it with some of her favorite books for young children and parenting books. This cabinet will also house River Valley's diversity-themed lending library. These books will be available to be borrowed by RVWS faculty and parents.

As part of the dedication, we welcome book donations from this list of Amanda's favorites (or similar titles) which were passed along to us from her husband, Mac Parker:

#### Books for Little Ones:

Wait Till the Moon is Full by Margaret Wise Brown and Garth Williams  
The Little Boy and The Big Fish by Max Velthuis  
Apricot ABC by Miska Miles  
The Funny Little Woman by Arlene Mosel  
The Mitten by Alvin Tresselt  
Journey Cake, Ho! by Ruth Sawyer and Robert McCloskey  
Pop! Goes the Turnip by Harold Berson  
Little Fur Family by Margaret Wise Brown and Garth Williams  
Runaway Bunny by Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd  
Amos and Boris, Sylvester and the Magic Pebble by William Steig  
The Story of Jumping Mouse by John Steptoe  
Haystack by Bonnie and Arthur Geisert  
Unabridged Winnie the Pooh  
Beatrix Potter books  
The Little House, Choo Choo, Katy and the Big Snow, Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel by Virginia Lee Burton  
Grasshopper on the Road by Arnold Lobel (read without the 'stupid' parts, of course)  
Little Bear books by Else Holmelund Minarik and Maurice Sendak

#### Books on Parenting:

Simplicity Parenting by Kim John Payne  
You Are Your Child's First Teacher by Rahima Baldwin Dancy  
Your Self-Confident Baby by Allison Johnson and Magda Gerber

Please include a sticky note or slip of paper with each book to identify the donor, and any short message suitable for a bookplate that you would like attached to the book.

Please also include your contact information so that we may properly express our thanks for your gift.

**There will be one last Parent Council meeting Wednesday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm at the Homestead New members welcome!**

### Hoagie Day ended last week and Pizza Day ends on June 9<sup>th</sup>

Last Thursday was the last Hoagie Day so starting this Thursday, June 1, please be sure to send your child to school with lunch. Pizza Day ends on Friday, June 9th.

## From Administration

### **CONGRATS TO RVWS CLASS OF 2017 & 2018!**

Saturday, May 20th the 7th and 8th grade classes ran in the 'Finish the Fight' 5K run to benefit the American Cancer Society. These students have been training weekly (weather permitting) for the run since September. They were joined by their teachers, as well as some siblings, parents and RVWS alums from the classes of 2015 and 2016 who first ran during their 8th grade years.

The River Valley group created quite a stir! They won an award for the largest group participating. They were also commended for their team spirit that cheered and bolstered everyone in addition to supporting themselves and their teammates. People were asking where this group was from, where RVWS is located and were so impressed with the fun-loving, supportive community spirit that was contagious to all. Well done you all!

### **Reminder from Aftercare**

If your child is in Aftercare, please be sure to send a substantial, extra snack for after school. Children have been coming with very little to eat and they are hungry and Ms. McCracken feels bad when she has nothing to give them. Often a small piece of fruit just isn't enough.

### **Link to RVWS Videos**

Hilary Murphy has been creating videos in classrooms and at school events. To see them, go to:  
<https://vimeo.com/217324445>

### **Condolences**

We send warm condolences to Genevieve Solomon and her family (Eve in the Star Room and Calvin in the Acorn Room) on the loss of Genevieve's brother.

And to Sahara White-Wolf and her family (Yonas Rahman, G4; Yana Rahman, G2 and Yarina Rahman, Moon Room) on the passing of Sahara's mother in Austria.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

### **Donations to our School**

Thank you to everyone who shops at Giant and signed up to donate a percentage of their purchases to River Valley. We just received a check for \$327.08.

Our Box Tops for Education labels have been submitted, thanks to Jennifer Zosa (mother of Noah Buggel G-1), and we will be receiving \$200.80 for those.

So as you can see these donations add up. Thanks to all of you who make this possible.

## From the Faculty

### **What the Children are Learning:**

First Grade – Drama

Second Grade – Language Arts – Saints & Fables

Third Grade – Building Project

Fourth Grade – Local Geography

Fifth Grade – Botany

Sixth Grade – Review

Seventh Grade – History – Renaissance/Reformation

Eighth Grade – Chemistry

### **Looking for a Microwave**

We are in need of a microwave for the Faculty Room. If anyone has one that they are not using please let Maria Workman know. Thank you.

## From the Board

### RVWS Community Sessions

It is important that school leadership connects with the community to share plans, update progress, and gain input on the challenges that face the school as we chart our course for the next 10 years. The Board of Trustees has one more community session between now and the end of the school year to create this opportunity.

#### Date:

Thursday, June 1, 6:30-7:30 PM (Adult beverages will be served.)

#### Topics:

Each session will be about an hour with about 30 minutes of material and 30 minutes for discussion. Topics include: Sustaining the school: financial performance; Status of campus renewal project and capital Campaign; Administration update; Future directions and priorities for curriculum development; Fundraising update.

### Auction Items Still Available

If you missed the auction, there are still spots left in some of the Unique Experiences offered by members of the RVWS Community. You can still take part, purchase your spot here –

<https://mobilebid.greatergiving.com/r/index.php?sl=rvwsauction&s=&cat=reset&strt=350>

- Amy & Bill Nyberg are hosting an evening of fun & food in a Dutch oven over a camp fire. \$20 per person.
- Join Rebecca Arnold for her altered Book Workshop. \$50 per person.
- Have some fun learning to Salsa and Merengue with the Schillings and Candelos. \$60 per couple.
- You can also learn to ferment with RVWS gardener, Melissa Goldstein.
- Have some fun at the 4th Annual RVWS Farm to Table Dinner hosted by the Kovachs.
- Spend the night playing games with the 6th grade.
- Enjoy conversation and Pakistani hors d'oeuvres with the Ozairs.
- Gain some knowledge on Pet first aid at Doylestown Veterinary Hospital.

And there are also still items available. Donations to the scholarship fund as well as the fine arts program are also gladly accepted. **Bidding Deadline: May 31<sup>st</sup>**

## From Development

### Support the Annual Fund and Watch our Giving Tree Grow!

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. 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. Watch our tree bloom, from the roots to the canopy, as our Annual Fund grows!

The Development Committee would like to thank the following individuals for their support and generosity!

Eric Shubert and Melody Birdsong  
Joseph and Ann C. Giacchino  
Richard and Verla Jacobs  
Vern and Susana Lenox  
Nancy McKee  
Robbie Miller  
Shepard and Grace Morgan  
Steve Stave and Pam Reiss

Tom and Lyn Shields  
Carmela Thompson  
John Wesp and Tiffany Robinson  
Brian and Louanne Willard  
Jess and Lindsay Woodruff  
William and Amy Nyberg  
Michelle and David Bader Family Foundation  
Tony and Jane Stuart

## From the Community

### HUGE MOVING SALE

Indoor and outdoor furniture, tools and garden tools and equipment. clothes, kitchen ware, books, CDs and much more.

At the home of Carol Diven, 1496 Chestnut Ridge Road, UBE, SATURDAY, JUNE 3RD 9:00am-4:00pm

#### **MUST SELL EVERYTHING!!!!**

If you would like a preview before Saturday, contact Carol at: 520-209-2711.

### From Yoga Loka

Free Introduction to Yoga Class

Sunday June 4th at 1:00

Interested in Yoga but don't know how to start? Begin with this free introduction class! Bring your bodies, just as they are, your curiosity and a bottle of water. Wear comfortable clothing. We have everything else you need. No Charge! RSVP by emailing Bonnie@yoga-loka.com or call 908-268-7430

### Quilting Help Needed

If you're a seamstress or quilter with time on your hands, I need your help to build a simple quilt. Too many ideas, not enough time. We'll discuss terms. Chellie Bader michelle@smorgasb.org or 617-501-7517.

### MUSIC for your Child

RVWS alumnus and currently Berklee College of Music student, Kris Ramakrishna, is offering Guitar lessons (beginners to advanced, all styles), Music theory and music history, Introduction to composition, Song writing with professional software. From mid-May to mid-August at your house or ours in Riegelsville. Reasonable rates! For more information please email stramak@aol.com or call 610 749 2690.

### Free Used Wooden Swing Set

Two swings, a trapeze, a slide and an awning over the raised play area. Contact Kim 908-310-5613.

### Erwinna 1 BR Country Apartment for Rent

Available July 15<sup>th</sup>. 1 BR, private drive, private entrance and parking. Includes all utilities, washer/dryer, internet access, full attic storage. 1 month security - Rent \$1250 (negotiable) – 1 year lease. Prior tenant references available. Call 908-268-2122 or email [4rent.in.erwinna@gmail.com](mailto:4rent.in.erwinna@gmail.com)

If you are interested, speak with Tara Bowers (Alice's mom in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade) 908-674-2772.

### Home for Sale - Location, Location, Location!

Ever thought of moving closer to the school? Less than five minutes to RVWS, right next door to another RVWS family, and in an actual neighborhood with no through traffic, but also walking distance to all that downtown Milford has to offer!

I'm not receiving a commission — just want some great neighbors! Feel free to call me if you want to chat... Kathy Betz 908-892-4670, mom of Scarlett (grade 6) and Sawyer (grade 4).

### Camping gear request

If anyone would be willing to lend these items, I will guarantee their return or replacement. Men's wool long underwear (size medium), 15 degree sleeping bag. Thanks, Melanie 215-280-3154

### Gardening Help Needed

Chellie & David Bader (Noa, G8 & Faye, G4) are looking for maintenance help with vegetable and ornamental gardens this year. Some design work might be called for. We're in Erwinna. Please contact Chellie: michelle@smorgasb.org or 617-501-7517.

### House for Sale in Milford

Waldorf family is selling their 3 bedroom, 1.5 bath home in Milford. If you know anyone looking please share the link. Thank you!

[https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/23-Walnut-St-Milford-NJ-08848/38852406\\_zpid](https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/23-Walnut-St-Milford-NJ-08848/38852406_zpid)

### Teen/Young Adult Panel Discussion: Alternative Educational Paths

Hear current and past members of The Learning Cooperatives share their experiences of living and learning without school, including college and career. Teens welcome!

Tues May 30, 7:00-8:30pm, Flemington, NJ  
[www.RaritanLearningCooperative.org](http://www.RaritanLearningCooperative.org) - Accepting applications for Fall 2017!

### Items for Sale

On the occasion of our move to Europe, the next items we would like to sell are:

- A complete set of Stokke baby stroller in great condition ([www.stokke.com](http://www.stokke.com))
- Christmas tree (used only once): Holiday Living 7.5 ft Pre-Lit Englewood Pine Tree

Interested? Please contact Piergiorgio, Oscar's dad at 646 830 9250 or [pgv.pier@gmail.com](mailto:pgv.pier@gmail.com)

From The Waldorf School of Cape Cod via [waldorftoday.com](http://waldorftoday.com)

## **The Gift of Play**

Reflections of a Waldorf Nursery Teacher

by Kam Anderson, Beach Rose Nursery Teacher

I continue to be amazed by young children, their wonder and joy for life is infectious. However, they are still just landing and growing so rapidly. Four years of life go quickly for us as adults and yet for many of our children they were just a parent's dream.

I have been thinking about this quality of play and imagination that live so deeply in young children. It is a precious gift and one that is not offered at any other time in a human being's life. How do we as a culture and as parents and caregivers honor and support this time of childhood?

### **What's the rush?**

When children are in the womb the process of growth is nurtured and certainly not hurried. Mothers are encouraged to eat well, exercise and rest. Taking care of the mother is vital to a developing baby. We certainly don't rush this process and in fact have the mother rest when it seems that the baby might arrive too early.

However when the baby is born our culture seems to promote a different focus. Now the baby is encouraged to move along with a quicker pace. If a child can be upright and moving more quickly then perhaps this child will be brighter, better prepared for life in a way. There is a sense of impatience and even anxiety if a child is unfolding too slowly.

As parents and caregivers it can seem that our role when the children are young is to encourage and stimulate. I thought about how a child has grown for hundreds of years even thousands of years in a consistent way. A young child completes three vital tasks between birth and three which makes them truly human; they learn to walk, they learn to talk and they gain the capacity to have their own ideas or thoughts (I do it! Sound familiar?). If they are raised in an environment where they can imitate these capacities of walking and talking and being engaged with life then they do in deed complete the tasks without any real "help" or stimulation unless, of course, they have developmental issues.

### **Through play children learn what it means to be human**

Children who are three going on four have recently completed these basic developmental tasks and now their imagination is waking up. Why is this imagination and free play so important? It seems at times in our culture frivolous, useless even. Play in our culture is often seen as something to be done if there is time. Our modern early childhood programs now have pre-K children preparing for Kindergarten by learning numbers, letters and if they can read then even better. So why are we having our children play for large chunks of the day?

I have been observing children in play for many years and my reflections are that through play children are learning and experiencing in a deep and profound way what it means to be human. Young animals play to learn about how to hunt, to be still, to be agile etc... skills for their life as adult animals. Children are learning to be human by playing as well. They experience their environment and then like eating a bit of bread they chew up their experience until it is in tiny bits and so digest it and then release it through their activity of play. Young children engage with the world through their bodies, and their senses. Anything that surrounds a young child is fodder for play.

### **Imaginative play**

Imaginative play is vital for children since it allows them to gain experience and to make sense of the world. Here they learn what it means to be human. They watch the street cleaners, the fire fighters, the fishermen, the carpenters etc... and it then informs their play. Our culture is now providing fewer real images for children to imitate as our ways to work become less connected to the earth and daily needs. The baker, the miller, the cobbler etc... are becoming past images. Anytime we engage in work the children can see helps them engage and experience life. In my class we water plants because they need our care, we bake, we chop carrots, we shovel snow and pull weeds.

I so enjoy watching the children in my class catch clams, fish, build houses, care for babies, tend to domestic animals that need our care, and make pancakes. These are all activities of real daily life. When play revolves around these community activities often the play hums along and transforms from one event to another. There is an understanding of being able to sink into these human activities.

### **How media influences play**

As I continue to ponder play I notice when play can get too exciting and chaotic. This happens often when their play is difficult to really imitate. Often this can involve media images like batman or another superhero. They put on their capes and they are off running but to what? They are fighting bad guys but who are the bad guys?

Children this young just don't have the capacity to see life in a dual way. They are sorry when they hit a friend in an impulsive moment and we as caregivers help them with this process. They are still growing into their awareness as separate beings from others. These media images are often so intense that they can overstimulate and so make a child get stuck in their play so they have to replay the experience or image again and again and again as a way to make sense of it, to digest it and make it their own experience.

### **Preserving the magic**

When we as caring and excited teachers and parents bring our adult knowledge to a young child it too can do the same thing as media. It can jam up their play. Perhaps we are interested in cars, or sports or wild animals and so we bring our knowledge through instruction and so the little ones have so many images for example about how cars run, how they are made, the models of cars and so they can get stuck. When another child says "lets get in the car and drive to Grandmas" the child immersed in cars can say " wait no you can't drive that car" or "no it needs a certain kind of gas" etc... The child is losing the magical ability to be in the moment of free play and instead gets stuck in the content that the young child is just not ready developmentally to use. Then this child can lose their dreaminess which is important to imaginative free play.

### **The gift of time**

Finally my last reflection is the gift we can give at this age of time. There is truly plenty of time although our culture begs to differ. A child at this age is using a huge amount of energy to grow, we call it etheric forces. If a child is tired, hungry, overstimulated etc... these forces get used up more quickly and it can be difficult for children to be able to play. Their sense of life gets affected, they just feel off.

The most important gift we give to children now is time to grow and be physically solid and healthy. Time to use their bodies and be active through play and healthy movement like walks, climbing, etc... We as parents and teachers need to trust that they have all they need and we can protect and nurture this time of wonder and openness by creating solid rhythms, rituals and tending to their bodily and emotional care.

These are just my reflections as a teacher for many years. I feel honored to continue to watch little ones unfold each in their own special way. They are all wonderful beings and teach all of us adults the riches of life.

From Screenagers.com

## What App Developers Learn from Casinos

By Delaney Ruston

I just returned from Hong Kong, where I presented Screenagers at schools, churches, and associations. One of the most interesting screenings was at a conference for addiction professionals. Did you know that about 1% of the U.S. population has a gambling disorder? It is almost double that in Hong Kong.

For this TTT I talk about how app and game developers design their products using tricks that the gambling industry has been using for years to hook players in and keep them playing.

Near misses and short-term rewards that lead to promises of a bigger win are some of the tricks app and game developers have taken from electronic slot machine designers to keep players playing. In an article in The Economist writer Ian Leslie explains:

“The machines are programmed to create near misses: winning symbols appear just above or below the ‘payline’ far more often than chance alone would dictate. The player’s losses are thus reframed as potential wins, motivating her to try again. Mathematicians design payout schedules to ensure that people keep playing while they steadily lose money.”

Leslie goes on to talk about another trick designers use:

“A player who is feeling frustrated and considering quitting for the day might receive a tap on the shoulder from a ‘luck ambassador,’ dispensing tickets to shows or gambling coupons. What the player doesn’t know is that data from his game-playing has been fed into an algorithm that calculates how much that player can lose and still feel satisfied, and how close he is to the ‘pain point.’ The offer of a free meal at the steakhouse converts his pain into pleasure, refreshing his motivation to carry on.”

Apps and games also use the “pain point.” But instead of free dinners, players are offered incentives like a sale on coins or an in-game reward to keep the player playing. In reality, it only appears random. The game developers have analyzed data on the player so they know when they are about to quit (i.e. their pain point), which is when they step in with a pick me up (free dinner or in-game rewards) and sure enough, gamblers will stay longer.

MIT professor and cultural anthropologist, Natasha Schüll, explains these manipulations in her book *Addiction by Design*. She explores how the casino industry went from a social activity around a craps table or roulette wheel to a solitary experience of individuals zoned out in front of machines. Soon after her book was released in 2013, Schüll said, she began receiving invitations to speak at tech companies and conferences attended by marketers, developers, and entrepreneurs.

So for TTT let’s talk to our kids about some of the casino tricks and how they relate to the games and social media we all use on our devices.

What app or game do you find hooks you in the most?

Are you aware of how the game or app hooks you in, with rewards like streaks on Snapchat?

Do you think companies have a responsibility to monitor and limit their habit-forming games and apps or do you think it is okay that they hook us in?

For more discussion ideas, you can peruse past Tech Talk Tuesdays. If you are interested in seeing Screenagers, you can find event listings on our site and find out how to host a screening.

Stay in touch with the Screenagers community on Facebook, Twitter and at [www.screenagersmovie.com](http://www.screenagersmovie.com).