

## School Calendar

### This Week

#### Thursday, January 11

Diversity Committee 6:40pm – 8:30pm

#### Friday, January 12

Ski Club 4:00pm – 10:00pm

### Looking Ahead

#### Monday, January 15

MLK, Jr. Day of Service — SCHOOL IN SESSION  
Social Inclusion Study Group 3:30 pm

#### Friday, January 19

Ski Club 4:00pm – 10:00pm

#### Thursday, Jan. 25 – Saturday Jan. 27

Middle School Play – Peter Pan

#### Monday, January 29

The Four Temperaments Discussion 6:30-7:15 pm  
4th and 5th grade Class Meetings 7:15-8:00 pm

### How to Contact Us

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

## Pizza Day

The new session of Pizza Day begins on Friday, February 2nd

**The deadline for ordering is Monday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

Order forms can be found at the end of this week's Current.

## Parent Council meeting this Wednesday night 6:30 at the Ship Inn.

Folks who plan to attend should rsvp to [pc@rivervalleyschool.org](mailto:pc@rivervalleyschool.org)

### Girl Scout Troop Forming

for grades 2-5 led by River Valley parents.

See page 3 for more details.

## Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

This year's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service at River Valley will be a combined effort of grades 1-8 providing food for homeless children via HomeFront's tutoring program at the United Unitarian Universalist Church of Washington's Crossing, NJ. The individual classes will be making dinner and bags of fruit to take home for 60 people. Your child's teacher will be in touch if you can help in providing ingredients.

### From HomeFront:

HomeFront's mission is to end homelessness in Central New Jersey by harnessing the caring, resources and expertise of the community. We lessen the immediate pain of homelessness and help families become self-sufficient. We work to give our clients the skills and opportunities to ensure adequate incomes, and we work to increase the availability of adequate, affordable housing. We help homeless families advocate for themselves individually and collectively.

To learn more, please visit <https://www.homefrontnj.org/>

## Social Inclusion Study Group

Genevieve Solomon, our 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, will be leading a study group about Social Inclusion. The group will meet on Mondays after pick-up once per month from 3:30 to 4:30 or 5. **The first meeting, originally scheduled for last night has been moved to Monday, January 15<sup>th</sup> due to inclement weather.** The next two will be on February 5<sup>th</sup> and March 5<sup>th</sup>. Attendees will read and discuss "The Soul of Discipline" by Kim John Payne. If you would like to join, please buy the book and read Chapter 1 before our first meeting. Staff, faculty, and parents are welcome.

The purpose will be to build toward a group that can help integrate this work into our school culture.

## Parent Enrichment Evening

Rachel Howard and Melanie Niemczura will present a Parent Enrichment Evening on January 29<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-7:15 pm, entitled **The Four Temperaments**. This is part of the faculty's series of discussions that will be held throughout the year and are open to the entire school. Fourth and Fifth grades will hold individual class meetings immediately following, from 7:15-8 pm.

## Diversity Committee Meeting

In October the RVWS faculty participated in a two-day Undoing Racism training. Come and learn about the efforts of the Diversity Committee, who helped bring this workshop to our school. Our next meeting is Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup> 6:40 pm to 8:00 pm. Please note start time is 6:40, not 6:30. Location: music room.

## From Administration

### Auction News

The Auction Committee is looking for some assistance. Our annual Auction provides valuable funding for our scholarship fund and for special curriculum programs. The Auction committee needs help soliciting donations from online sources. This is something that can be done via email from home or remotely from now until mid February. If you can help, please contact us at [Auction@rivalvalleyschool.org](mailto:Auction@rivalvalleyschool.org)

### Photo Forms

Order forms for photos are once again at the end of the Current in case you would like to order and haven't yet.

### Writing Opportunity from Renewal Magazine

Renewal, A Journal for Waldorf Education is interested in receiving article submissions for upcoming issues. If you have written something related to Waldorf Education, parenting, etc. for a school newsletter, blog, or other venue, please send it to us. If you have an idea for a relevant article, but haven't written it up, send us an outline summary. In both cases, your submission will receive careful consideration by our editorial review board. Articles should be between 1200 and 2000 words in length and sent as Word docs, attached to an email. Writers are paid between \$100.00 and \$250.00 for a published article, depending on length.

Please feel free to call if you have a question. Thank you very much, Ronald E. Koetzsch, PhD, Editor, 3911 Bannister Road, Fair Oaks, CA 95628, 916-965-1341, [rkoetzsch@awsna.org](mailto:rkoetzsch@awsna.org)

### Thank yous

Dear RVWS Parents,

Thank you for your generous and thoughtful holiday gifts. It meant more to me than you can imagine. I am deeply touched by your kindness and consideration. Wishing you and your families the best this New Year.

From Lynn Vazquez.

Thank you to the parents who installed and took down the candelabras for the Holiday Concert. Your high-wire acts were much appreciated.

Thanks also to everyone who made the Shepherds Play a success, from the cast who worked hard for many weeks to the helpers who stayed late to put away the stage and props and clean up backstage. We are grateful for your commitment.

## From the Faculty

### What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Language Arts

Second Grade – Math

Third Grade – Math

Fourth Grade – Language Arts-Norse Myths

Fifth Grade –Ancient Persia and Mesopotamia

Sixth Grade – Middle Ages

Seventh Grade – Drama-Middle School Play

Eighth Grade – Drama-Middle School Play

## Alumni News

### RVWS Graduate an International Baccalaureate

Storey Deerhake (RVWS, Class of 2014) is featured in this post from George School about their International Baccalaureate program. Way to go Storey!!

<http://www.georgeschool.org/students-engage-in-local-politics-for-ib-assignment/>

Looking for a fun evening out, with great people, while supporting a worthwhile cause?

## POP-UP CHOIR

Friday, January 19th, 6pm-9pm  
Early Bird Espresso & Mercantile  
Frenchtown, NJ

Enjoy the groovy sounds of DJ ARM 18!  
Participate (or not) in a Kira Willey-led song!

Suggested donations benefit  
Frenchtown Boro Park

[www.pop-upchoir.com](http://www.pop-upchoir.com)



## From the Community

### Girl Scouts for Grades 2-5

Troop 21321 is ready to embark on a Girl Scout adventure this Friday, January 12th. The fun, no obligation, meeting for the girls will be held directly after school from 3:30-5:00. An information session for parents will follow. This will include the calendar, schedule, fees, and commitment for January- June. We will also be available to answer any questions.

Presently, we are serving grades 2-5 in Troop 21321. Of course, we are happy to assist if there is interest in the other grade levels. Questions are always welcome! We are thoroughly excited about embarking on this new journey with the girls. Please email [troop21321@gmail.com](mailto:troop21321@gmail.com) or contact us by phone for immediate questions.

Lizette 908-892-4220      Karen 267-261-2114

## The Lotus School of Liberal Arts Presents

### Waking up to the Crisis of Teen Sleep Deprivation: An evening with Dr. Gail Karafin

**Wednesday, Jan 17<sup>th</sup> 5:30-7:30 pm**

Join Dr. Gail Karafin and The Lotus School of Liberal Arts for a light meal and a presentation on the current research on adolescent sleep deprivation. This is a significant problem that has long term health and safety implications. Dinner will be at 5:30, the presentation and discussion from 6 to 7:30. This event is free.

Car accidents, chronic absence, poor judgment, and academic underperformance all can be linked to too little sleep in teens. We will explore the developmental and neurological impacts of healthy sleep and discuss ways to improve sleep patterns. After the presentation we will discuss how to advocate for House Bill 1912, which seeks to study how later start times in high school can help our students flourish.

Dr. Karafin is a certified school psychologist in with an independent practice in Doylestown and who consults for the Bensalem School District. She is president of the Philadelphia Society of Clinical Psychologists and a former executive committee member of the Pennsylvania Psychological Association.

Lotus School for Liberal Arts – Grades 9-12 – 85 Sherman Way, Ottsville, PA 18942.

## January Films at Artyard in Frenchtown

Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, **3 pm – Fantastic Planet**, 1973, rated PG;

Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, **7:30 pm - Jane**, 2017, a documentary about Jane Goodall also rated PG

Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, **3 pm – The Red Balloon**, 1956

Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, **7:30 – Loving Vincent**, 2017, rated PG-13

Artyard, 62A Trenton Avenue, Frenchtown, NJ, 908-996-5018, [www.Artyard.org](http://www.Artyard.org)

## Code Blue Shelter

If you're lacking inside shelter in Upper Bucks County during periods of extreme, life-threatening weather (temperature or wind chill of 26°F or below) between November 15 and April 15, your neighbors and friends are ready with an Upper Bucks Code Blue Shelter at the Quakertown Masonic Lodge (501 W Broad St, Quakertown, PA 18951) from 8:15 PM to 7:00 AM the following morning. We'll have a hot meal and breakfast for you as well as shelter.

Car rides will be provided from the following stops—call 267.450.5191 to request a ride:

Turkey Hill @ Ottsville/Harrow 7:45 PM

Perkasie Square Shopping Center 7.45 PM

To find out if the shelter is open, contact the Code Blue Status Line: 267.450.5191 after 1:00 PM

The Upper Bucks Code Blue Shelter is a ministry of Advocates for the Homeless of Upper Bucks (AHUB)

From Famly.co

## 'Say Sorry' Doesn't Help - 10 Better Ways to Do It: How to really foster empathy in children.

By Matt Arnerich

'What do you say?'

'Use your manners.'

'Say sorry!'

How many times have you caught yourself saying this? Or heard parents doing so? And how many times do you feel like it really helped the situation you were dealing with?

Whether they are intentional or a complete accident, conflicts happen in any childcare setting. It's easy to ask children of any age to apologize, and preparing children to understand why apologies matter is a crucial part of their development.

But so often, this approach forces apologies that come without meaning or a real understanding of exactly what's happened. We're going to take a look at what's wrong with forcing apologies like this, how empathy works in young children, and some tools you can use instead when faced with a situation that makes you want to say 'Say Sorry'.

*(Continued on next page.)*

## **What's wrong with 'Say Sorry'**

To start with, we need to think about exactly what we really want an apology to mean. In short, it shows that someone: Accepts blame for an action: Has the empathy to understand that they've bothered someone else in some way, Has remorse or regret for what they did, Not quite as simple as it seems.

Asking children to expect to understand this full range of emotions is a lot. What can often come out instead is a robotic apology that means very little, because the child knows saying sorry is what is expected of them, even if they don't really understand why. What's more, it's teaching children a magic word that can get them off the hook. And even more importantly, the practitioner is missing out on an opportunity to work through some crucial empathetic progress. To better understand what might work instead, we need to know a little more about this whole empathy thing...

## **What about empathy?**

Empathy isn't easy. Putting yourself in another person's shoes is really difficult to do, especially for young ones who are still developing an understanding of their own emotions.

In fact, empathy tends to be one of the last social skills children develop fully. It starts with having self-awareness and then being able to project this onto the way other children might be feeling. Heather Shumaker, author of the brilliant 'It's OK not to share...' explains the problem with young children and remorse.

"Most children are not capable of being sorry yet. Children differ—you may have an early bloomer—but most children simply lack the emotional and cognitive development to feel remorse. Expecting young kids to say "Sorry" teaches them nothing more than a misguided lesson in sequence: kick, say "Sorry," move on."

Piaget focuses on this a lot in his understanding of the Preoperational stage (from 2-7), where he says many children are still egocentric and find it difficult to fully take the point of view of others. So when fully fledged empathy is not yet complete in many pre-school children, why are we asking them to apologize? Instead, you need to start seeing these moments as excellent opportunities to develop their empathy, rather than a few more empty words.

## **What to do instead?**

It looks like 'Say Sorry' isn't the answer. So what can practitioners do to use these situations to actually develop a child's empathy?

### **1. Recognize a different type of resolution**

Just because children can't always understand the complexities behind an apology, doesn't mean they can't resolve the situation in a different way. Many of you will have witnessed beautiful moments without a hint of a 'sorry'. Of children giving a helping hand to a friend they accidentally knocked over. Of them offering a toy or treat to someone they have upset. These moments show children starting to recognize feelings they have felt themselves or simply acting on instinct.

By barging in with a 'Say Sorry', you're stifling the opportunity for a more genuine resolution. Make sure that you're recognizing all different types of resolution and not simply insisting on an apology.

### **2. Give them time**

Time is also important here. It is often rushing in with this forced apology that prevents children from really taking a look at what's happened before they are made to feel like they've 'resolved' the matter. Of course, this requires children to be present in the moment after the incident, which is why you need to...

### **3. Bring the children together**

One way is to simply bring the children together. If they realise they've done something wrong, sometimes children simply want to remove themselves from the situation. They're not alone either – many adults take a similar approach. But by telling them clearly what's happened and explaining that they need to stay, they have to take a clear look at exactly what happened.

*(Continued on the next page.)*

#### **4. Explain clearly what happened**

Heather Shumaker also covers many ideas for how to better resolve these situations in her book. Another key point she makes is the importance of explaining exactly what has happened. This is especially important for younger children, who in the most literal sense may not have even realised exactly what has happened. "When you were playing with blocks, you knocked over Alice's tower too." "When you were jumping around you hit John in the face with your hand."

These comments shouldn't come with judgment, they are just there to help the child understand what they have done, even if this seems obvious to you.

#### **5. Repair the damage**

It's important for children to be involved in the actions to resolve the conflict too. This isn't a 'consequence' or 'punishment', but simply encouraging them to take a step towards improving the situation. Modelling this behaviour can also help to show them how it's done, and you may find them taking the steps to resolve the situation by themselves in the future.

#### **6. Describe the effect**

Describing the effect of what's happened starts to bring the relationship of cause and effect into focus. "When you hit Amelia, it scratched her face. That must hurt." This might look like a guilt trip, but that's not the point. It's another way of encouraging empathy and being clear about how what's happened might have caused the upset.

#### **7. Don't focus on blame**

As you might have noticed, this really isn't about punishment or blame. Understanding your role in a conflict is crucial to a meaningful apology, but it's not as simple as trying to dish out blame. The kind of descriptive conversations we've been talking about so far are key to this, as it allows children to develop a constructive understanding of remorse, rather than one linked to shame.

#### **8. Model by apologizing in your own life**

One of the greatest ways we can foster empathy is by apologizing in the correct way ourselves. You can model empathy straight away, by asking the hurt child if they are OK. But you can also take steps to apologize when you might have done something wrong. Some good ways to model quality apologies include: I'm sorry for... Explain specifically what it is that you did. It was wrong because... Why what you did was wrong. In the future, I will... Say what you will do, rather than what you won't do. If you're interested in this idea of a better way to model apologies, this is an interesting piece.

#### **9. Ask them to make a guarantee**

For younger children, a guarantee is more meaningful than a forced apology. Ask "Will you do that again?" and encourage them to make a reassurance to the other child. This helps to reestablish trust between the children, which is crucial to repairing the relationship after the conflict.

#### **10. Teach empathy**

As we've already mentioned plenty of times, the advantage of these approaches over 'Say Sorry' is that you actually have the chance to teach full empathy to children in your setting. Understanding the ages at which children are likely to feel empathy should be your starting point. At a very young age, all you can do is simply describe the feelings of others and why they might feel that way, as well as guiding their play towards empathy. For example, you might say about a toy they're playing with that "The baby is hungry! Are they going to get some food too?"

As the children grow you can start to ask more open-ended questions to give them the opportunity to think about others' feelings. Questions like "How can we help John feel better about his sore foot?" are a good start.

# 14 more weeks of PIZZA FRIDAYS!

Miss Hummel's 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are offering a second classroom delivery session of organic lemonade and Galasso's Frenchtown, NJ pizza for lunch on Fridays beginning February 2, 2018.

This fundraiser will continue to support the 3rd grade week-long Hawthorne Valley Farm trip.

**Please return this form and payment (made out to RVWS)**

**by Monday, January 22, 2018**

to the folder on the office door labeled "Pizza". Blank forms will be placed in your classroom mailbox and may also be found on the wall slots outside of the office to the left of the door.

This payment is for pizza and lemonade options listed below and will be delivered by third grade students on the following 14 Fridays through June 2018

**(2/2, 2/9, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 4/6, 4/13, 4/27, 5/4, 5/11, 5/18, 6/1 and 6/8)**

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade and Teachers name: \_\_\_\_\_

_____	1 slice & lemonade:	\$52.50
_____	2 slices & lemonade:	\$87.50
_____	1 slice/no lemonade:	\$35.00
_____	2 slices/no lemonade:	\$70.00
_____	Lemonade Only:	\$17.50

Pizza is \$2.50 per slice and lemonade is \$1.25 per cup

Gluten-free pizza may be available upon request.

Please contact Melody Birdsong-Shubert at [mbirdsong1975@yahoo.com](mailto:mbirdsong1975@yahoo.com) with any questions you may have regarding Pizza Fridays.

**Thank you so very much for your support of the 2023 third grade class!**

Dear Parents,

Euclides Santiago will once again be taking our school photographs this year.

A package will cost \$30.00. The package consists of: one 5x7, 4 wallet size of your child and one 5x7 of the entire class. If you buy the package and would like an additional 5x7 print or set of 4 wallet size, you may order them for \$9 each. Individual prints will not be available to those who do not order the package. You may order one 5x7 of the class only for the cost of \$9.

Please return the slip below, with payment. The sooner your order is in, the quicker you will receive your pictures. There will be a folder on the door of the office. Please return a separate form for each child, as we will organize by class. In the case of two house families, each parent needs to fill out his or her own form.

Thanks! Cindy

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**PAYMENT MUST BE INCLUDED WITH YOUR ORDER**

I would like an individual photo package of my child \_\_\_\_\_ \$30.00 (includes 1 5x7, 4 wallet size and 5x7 class picture)

I ordered the package and would also like additional 5x7 prints \_\_\_\_\_ \$9.00

I ordered the package and would also like an additional set of 4 wallet size \_\_\_\_\_ \$9.00 I would like only a class picture. \_\_\_\_\_ \$9.00

Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this slip to the folder on the office door with payment - make checks payable to Euclides Santiago**

**2017-18 After-school Program  
Winter-Spring Registration Form**

Our 2017-18 Winter-Spring After-school Program will begin on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Josh Laker will be back to challenge and entertain RVWS grade school children. Below is a description of activities that will be held on each day.  
**PLEASE NOTE: The Tuesday and Wednesday activities have been switched.**

Classes will be held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from January 3<sup>rd</sup> through April 26th. Dates are listed next to each class because the program will not be held during vacations, assembly days and early dismissals. **Please note that there will not be afterschool program for the week of March 20-22.** The cost is \$20 per class with a \$10 materials fee for the session.

**Tuesday – Sports and Running Games (recommended 5<sup>th</sup> grade and up)**

January 9, 16, 23, 30, February 6, 13, 27, March 6, 13, 27, April 3, 10, 24 – NO CLASS 3/20  
Total – 13 classes = \$270

Any and all sports, indoor and out, four square, battleship, shark attack, capture the flag, flag tag, handball, wall ball (big and small), indoor Olympics, obstacle courses, etc.

**Wednesday – Games, Drama, Challenges and Puzzles, Outdoors**

January 3, 10, 17, 31, February 7, 14, 28, March 7, 14, 28, April 4, 11, 25 – NO CLASS 1/24 OR 3/21  
Total – 13 classes = \$270

Park bench, improv, Dinner party, dramatic reading, hunter, skits, storytelling, treasure and scavenger hunts, simple ball games, group challenges, nature art, cooperation puzzles, hand and nature crafts if desired, etc.

**Thursday – Cooking**

January 4, 11, 18, February 1, 8, 15, March 1, 8, 15, April 5, 12, 26 – NO CLASS 3/22  
Total - 12 = \$250

Baking bread (especially in the outdoor wood burning oven) pasta, tomato sauce, pickling, desserts, bagels, pizza, sushi, etc. These are just some of the things that were and could be done again, it will be tailored to students' desires.

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Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Phone Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to register my child for the following After School Program(s):

- |                          |        |           |   |                        |
|--------------------------|--------|-----------|---|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tues.  | 3:30-5:30 | <b>Sports and Running Games (G5 &amp; up)</b> | <b><u>\$270.00</u></b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Wed.   | 3:30-5:30 | <b>Games, Drama, Challenges</b>               | <b><u>\$270.00</u></b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Thurs. | 3:30-5:30 | <b>Cooking and Crafts</b>                     | <b><u>\$250.00</u></b> |

**NOTE: Materials fees are included in the prices.**

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

***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.***