



# River Valley Current

October 18, 2016 No. 456

"Fall has always been my favorite season. That time when everything bursts with its last beauty, as if nature had been saving up all year for the grand finale."  
~ Lauren Destefano

## School Calendar

### This Week

#### Wednesday, October 19

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Class Play 9:00 am

#### Thursday, October 20

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Class Play 9:00 am  
Diversity Committee Mtg. 6:15 pm  
Board Meeting 6:30 pm

#### Friday, October 21

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Field Trip to Solebury Orchards

#### Saturday, October 22

6<sup>th</sup> Grade Workday  
BoT Halloween Costume Ball 7:00 pm

### Looking Ahead

#### Thursday, October 27

Fall Assembly 6:30 pm

#### Friday, October 28

No School – Faculty In-Service

#### Monday, October 31

In-School Ancestors' Day/Harvest Celebration

#### Saturday, November 5

5<sup>th</sup> grade Workday

#### Wednesday, November 9

Parent Council Meeting 2:00 pm

#### Friday, November 11

Lantern Walk – EC, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> grades

#### Saturday, November 12

Holiday Bazaar

### How to Contact Us

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

### November Lunch Menu

The lunch menu for November is attached to this week's Current.

Orders are due by Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>

### Diversity Committee Meeting

Anyone interested in what's going on with the Diversity Committee please join us this Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 6:15 pm at school. All welcome!



### Board of Trustees

## 80s Halloween Costume Ball

**THIS SATURDAY NIGHT 7.00pm at RVWS!**

Come Grave-Dance the Night Away  
With All of Your Favorite Fiends!

Costume and Dance Prizes! Food, Drink & DJ Andrew McIntosh!  
Join Us for a Devil of a Good Time!

\$30/person \$50/couple/Faculty Free!

For tickets, please visit

<https://rvws.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/2016RiverValleyWaldorfSchoolAuctionGala/JointheFun/tabid/809084/Default.aspx>

### Festive Attire Clothing Swap - October 14-18

Please bring your child's outgrown or unwanted festive attire/concert attire to the All Purpose Room Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup> through Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>. While you are there, please check out what others have brought and take something (or some things) home. While finding a new family for items within our community would be lovely, all leftovers will be collected by Big Brothers Big Sisters.

**Our Fall Assembly is coming up on Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>.** Children are asked to wear Festive Attire, described in the Parent Handbook as clothes that are "nicer than their everyday school clothes." This means no jeans or cargo pants, clean clothes with no pictures, text or glitter, skirts or dresses no shorter than 4" above the knee, button down shirts for the boys, no torn clothing and no sneakers. The clothing swap will be a great place to find your festive attire for the coming year.

### RVWS Ski Club

The Ski (and Snowboard) Club is an inexpensive way to enjoy 6 weekend-night visits to the mountain (Fri, Sat or Sun 4pm to 10pm). Children any age can sign up but they must be at least 8 years old to participate in the group lessons. Parents are responsible for their children's transportation to and from the mountain and supervision while at the mountain. All are welcome to join Ski Club. Invite your friends. They don't need to go to River Valley to be a part of our group. There are no paper forms this year. **To sign up for Ski Club use the link below.** You will need to copy and paste the link into your browser. The web site will walk you through the process. It is really simple! **Link:** <http://bit.ly/2dE4iM7>

For 6 visits: Lift ticket only \$145 - Lift ticket and Rental \$200 - Lift ticket and Lesson \$200 - Lift ticket, Rental and Lesson \$240

**You will need to be signed up by October 24<sup>th</sup>.** Questions? Please contact Christine Aherne, [cmaherne@epix.net](mailto:cmaherne@epix.net), 267-614-5021

## Save the Date! Winter Fair!! Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 11-4

Winter Fair is a beautiful festival celebrating the coming of King Winter. It is a time of magic and celebration for children of all ages - a time to get together with friends and loved ones before the deep freeze and great snows of King Winter set in and we turn towards the coziness and warmth of our hearth and homes.

The success of the festival depends on the creativity and cooperation of River Valley's parent body. Each class hosts an activity and works to make the magic of Winter Fair happen for our children. Your Festival Coordinator will shortly let you know your activity so that you may begin preparations.

Secret Garden is one of the most magical places at the festival and one the children look forward to with anticipation. Many count on this beautifully prepared activity for the gifts they present their loved ones. Each family at RVWS is asked to make 20 Secret Garden items to aid this feeling of awe and wonder. These items can be small and homemade. A list of potential items can be found in the Parent Handbook. Also Mary K Till, our handwork teacher, usually has craft workshops for parents to come and make some treasures for Secret Garden (dates and times will be found in the Current).

In addition, parents will be asked to bake one batch of gingerbread cookies for our Gingerbread Tea House, which greets our children with warm tea and a sweet snack after visiting King Winter. Recipe and instructions will be forthcoming.

Please contact this year's Winter Fair committee with any questions you may have.  
Brenda Schaufele, Stephanie Smith, Paul Smith and Ron Ferguson.

## From Administration

### Sunbridge College Fall Open Days

If you are thinking about becoming a Waldorf teacher, there are two opportunities to visit Sunbridge College in Chestnut Ridge, NY and learn more about their programs.

Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup> – Waldorf Elementary School Teacher Training

Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup> – Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Training

Visit [www.sunbridge.edu](http://www.sunbridge.edu) for more information

### Waldorf School in Haiti Needs Help

Did you know there is a Waldorf school in Haiti? Well, there is and it was hit hard by the recent hurricane. The biodynamic garden that feeds the children was washed away and the roof blew off of their school building causing all of their school supplies to be destroyed. To see pictures of the school in better times and learn about what you can do to help, go to this link:

<http://us1.campaign-archive2.com/?u=a0ce04e5a70babb8ef1330163&id=de55d03075&e=a3fe0cb38e>

### Waldorf School of Princeton Welcomes Kim John Payne

#### Loving Limits in a Digital Age: Not Anti-Screen but Pro-Connection to Nature and People

Monday, November 28, 7 p.m.

Waldorf School of Princeton is delighted to host Kim John Payne, author of *Simplicity Parenting* and *The Soul of Discipline*, for a public lecture that resonates this season and all year round!

"Loving Limits in a Digital Age: Not Anti-Screen but Pro-Connection to Nature and People" offers parents resources for navigating some of the greatest challenges facing our society today: How to maintain loving limits, warm, firm and calm discipline and strong family connections in a world where increasingly "screens are supreme." How to build focus, grit and good judgment so that our kids do not become overwhelmed with media-driven images but can shape their own self-esteem, hopes and dreams. How to encourage respect when negative images of adults pervade pop culture. Fitting in with friends ("Won't my kids be disadvantaged if I limit screen media?"). Aloneness vs. Loneliness: Helping kids know the difference. The alluring world of no boundaries that screen use develops and how this makes discipline difficult.

A consultant and trainer to over 110 U.S. independent and public schools, Kim John Payne, M.ED, has been a school counselor, adult educator, researcher, education and a private family counselor for thirty years.

Tickets are \$10 online / \$15 at the door; sales begin Tuesday, October 11, through Eventbrite.

Waldorf School of Princeton, 1062 Cherry Hill Road, Princeton, NJ

## High School Open Houses

Beginning in October many high schools in our area and beyond are holding Open Houses. Here is a list for parents and students who are interested.

**Bucks Learning Cooperative** - Open House: Wednesday, October 19th, 7:00-8:30pm, Langhorne, PA Hear from teen members, parents and staff mentor/teachers what it is like to be part of a self-directed learning cooperative. Tour our center. [info@BucksLearningCooperative.org](mailto:info@BucksLearningCooperative.org) 215-512-0707

**Abington Friends School** - Open House: Saturday, October 22, beginning at 12:30

**Kimberton Waldorf School** Open House: October 23, at 1 pm.

**George School** Open House: Sunday, October 23, 2016

Registration and refreshments 1:30 p.m. The program will begin promptly at 2:00 p.m.

Registration is required. Please allow time to register at the George School Meetinghouse; registration will open at 1:30 p.m. You may also register for the event through the website at <http://www.georgeschool.org/admission/meet-us-in-person/admission-events/> Parking is available at the Fitness and Athletics Center on Farm Drive, across from the Meetinghouse. If you have any questions, please call us at 215.579.6547.

**Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Arts** Open House: Tuesdays, Oct. 25, Nov. 15, and Jan. 5 at 5:45 pm. The program begins promptly at 6:30 pm.

### Lotus School of the Liberal Arts Open House

Wednesday, October 26, 2-6pm

85 Sherman Rd, Ottsville, PA 18077 484 312 0011 [www.lotusliberalarts.org](http://www.lotusliberalarts.org)

**Mercersburg Academy** Admission Office cordially invites you to attend one of our Open House events on Monday, October 10 or Monday, December 12 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Moravian Academy** Open House: Saturday, October, 22, 9-12 pm at the Athletic and Wellness Center on the Merlse-Smith Campus.

**Bethlehem Catholic High School** Open house Sunday, Nov. 6. email [jpetruzelli@becahi.org](mailto:jpetruzelli@becahi.org)

**Bucks Learning Cooperative - Open House NEW DATE:** Monday, November 7th, 7:00-8:30pm, Langhorne, PA Hear from teen members, parents and staff mentor/teachers what it is like to be part of a self-directed learning cooperative. Tour our center. [info@BucksLearningCooperative.org](mailto:info@BucksLearningCooperative.org) 215-512-0707

## From the Faculty

### What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Arithmetic

Second Grade – Class Play/Math

Third Grade – Farming

Fourth Grade – Fractions

Fifth Grade – Ancient India & Persia

Sixth Grade – European Geography

Seventh Grade – Physics

Eighth Grade – Geometry

## From Leadership Council

### Leadership Council Open Visit Time

Leadership Council would like to announce Open Visit time at 3:30 – 4:00 every Tuesday. If there is a concern, conversation or suggestion that you would like to bring to the LC, this time is available each week. LC prefers that you make your intention to visit known beforehand, but it is not necessary.

Who is the LC? Annie Porter, Christina Hummel, Kathy Bernhardt and Cindy Schretlen. The LC works in the classroom/pedagogical side of RVWS governance.

## From the Pedagogical Chair

### **The Pedagogical Chair and the Connection to the Parent Body**

*The Pedagogical Chair functions in our school as a part of Pedagogical Support, along with our outside school mentors, and our Teacher Development Committee. In addition, the Pedagogical Chair functions as a bridge to the parent body, attending Parent Council Meetings, answering parent questions, and overseeing communication around pedagogical issues.*

RVWS would like to bring more awareness, strength and positivity to our "community pillar", which, in our community meeting/open BOT meeting last spring, appeared to be the realm in our school which was in need of more intentional development and focus. The faculty is working on ways to support this (for example, with a parent workshop series), and the awareness of "warming" our community is growing throughout the school.

Our communication protocol states that every community member should try to take their issue to the source, if at all possible. Questions around curriculum, or children in the classroom, for example, should always go directly to the teacher. However, if this step is taken and the issue feels unresolved or if the issue persists, the community currently has a new next step: the Pedagogical Chair. Conversations with the Pedagogical Chair are confidential and are not shared with another body in the school, unless it is determined by the Ped Chair that the issue may have legal ramifications that must be shared. In this case, the person bringing the issue will be notified immediately.

The Pedagogical Chair offers a similar function for parents as the proposed Listening Council initiative. Because of this, the school determined to allow the Pedagogical Chair bridge to develop, before considering whether or not the Listening Council is still necessary. **Our shared goal is to offer a comfortable place for parents to voice concerns, and to bring issues to speedy resolution.** Another shared goal is that parents are clear about whom to go to with an issue. It is our strong desire as a school to make this as transparent as possible. If your question is administrative, go to Cindy Schretlen. If your question is pedagogical (having to do with your child or the classroom), take it first to the class teacher, then to the Pedagogical Chair. The Pedagogical Chair is committed to helping each issue find resolution. If the issue concerns the Ped Chair, this is brought to the Ped Chair Review Committee.

I am available to schedule time to meet with parents, to answer questions and to assist in finding resolutions to issues that touch your children, or affect you as parents. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [aporter@rivalvalleyschool.org](mailto:aporter@rivalvalleyschool.org). I have time in my schedule to meet during the day, or before or after school.

Annie Porter

## From the Parent Council

### **Parent Council Meeting Minutes**

Attached to this week's Current are the minutes from the last Parent Council Meeting. All parents are members of Parent Council and are welcome to attend meetings. Dates of upcoming meetings are posted in the Current as soon as they are set. The next meeting is on Wednesday, November 9<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm. Please come if you can.

### **Please join our new initiative! The RVWS Welcoming Committee**

PC is seeking members for this committee to meet and brainstorm ideas for fun, creative and effective ways to welcome new members into the RVWS community. Do you have a great idea for how our community can connect? Then please email [pc@rivalvalleyschool.org](mailto:pc@rivalvalleyschool.org) and let me know about your idea or whether you would be willing to meet up and brainstorm with us. Your help and experience would be very much appreciated by PC and the school!

## From the Community

### Self-Directed Education Seminar

Info Session: Do you know a teen who is bored or frustrated with school? Are you looking for a welcoming community? Find out about self-directed learning, an alternative to traditional school. November 3rd, 7:00-8:00pm, Flemington, NJ

Presentation: Speaker Will Richardson, best selling educational author and former teacher, will give a talk on why self-directed education is critical for young people and why it is needed now more than ever. November 9th, 7:30-8:30pm, Lawrenceville, NJ

Hosted by Princeton, Bucks & Raritan Learning Cooperatives - Personalized Learning Communities for Teens. [www.LearningCooperatives.org](http://www.LearningCooperatives.org) All events are free and open to the public. Teens welcome.

Contact MaryBeth Healy 908-672-3455

### Pipersville Free Library Book Sale

November 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> 2016

Sale held at Christ Lutheran Church, 353 E Dark Hollow Road, Pipersville, PA

Thursday, Nov 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7-9pm (Pre-sale event, \$10 at the door, live music & snacks), Friday, Nov 4<sup>th</sup>, 10am-7pm  
Saturday, Nov 5<sup>th</sup>, 9am- 3pm

For more info, call 215-766-7880. *Accepting donations at library thru 10/30. No encyclopedias, textbooks or magazines please.*

### Benefit Concert with Kira Willey and Friends

Join Kira Willey and her band for a benefit children's concert for Donegan and Freemansburg Elementary Schools, with a special guest appearance by kids' music superstar Laurie Berkner! River Valley students Maia Jarrett, Callie Miles, Sawyer Wesp and Tristan Willey will be performing, as well as RV alum Sophia Carpenter on fiddle! Other performing groups will include children's choruses and Irish dancers. The full-band event will be highly interactive with lots of singing, dancing, and fun, musical Yoga Breaks. Food and beverages will be available for purchase. All proceeds benefit the academic and enrichment opportunities for these two elementary schools in low-income communities on Bethlehem, PA's South Side.

Saturday, October 22: Lobby Show 2 PM, Concert 3 PM  
Zoellner Arts Center at Lehigh University  
420 E. Packer Ave, Bethlehem, PA  
Tickets: \$18 adult/\$12 child, 5-Pack Tickets \$50  
[zoellnerartscenter.org](http://zoellnerartscenter.org) or 610-758-2787

### AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP

I asked an unanswerable question. "What would it be like to be one of the 65 million people, many of whom are children, who lost their homes or were forced to leave their homes to flee from war, violence, or persecution?" After years of 'turning off the bad news' I began to investigate the global refugee situation. To see such a degree of suffering, brutality and struggle to simply live, daily, was unbearable, for me. It motivated me to give what I could to some of the organizations trying to help and to keep a space in my awareness and heart open to the experiences of others. I wanted to share that opportunity with our community.

Two organizations that are helping:

#### Doctors Without Borders (MSF)

<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/>

#### Save the Children

[http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpl4E/b.6115947/k.B143/Official\\_USA\\_Site.htm](http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpl4E/b.6115947/k.B143/Official_USA_Site.htm)

No amount is too small. Very small amounts can add up and go quite a long way. If you would like to give but do not want to do the 'official business' feel free to pass funds to me and I will send it directly to MSF, or if you prefer, Save the Children. Thank you for reading, Tara Bowers (Alice's mom, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade)

### Yellowberry Holiday Bazaar Booth

Peyton Kovach, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, will be selling Yellowberry at the Holiday Bazaar. Check out this company - their mission is to empower girls and young women, inspire them to be comfortable with their own bodies, and to celebrate youth.

<https://www.yellowberrycompany.com/>

### Family Meditation with Felicia Ruth

Learn to Move from Anger to Devotion  
Sunday October 22, 3-4PM. Ages 8 and up  
7360 Tohickon Hill Rd, Pipersville PA

For more information and to reserve space, please contact [felicia@lighteducator.com](mailto:felicia@lighteducator.com)

### VAXXED Screening in Easton, PA

The movie, VAXXED, will be shown in Easton on Monday, October 24, 2016 at 7:30 pm. Go on the website: <http://gathr.us/screening/17840> to reserve tickets. If they do not get enough reservations, the movie will not be shown. You can also order the movie on Amazon or the website: [vaxxedthemovie.com](http://vaxxedthemovie.com).

## **Lotus School Open House – Wednesday, October 26**

We opened the Lotus School of the Liberal Arts with a very specific mission in mind: A high school that provides a comprehensive liberal arts education and supports each student with individualized instruction, cooperative learning, and emotional support. It is a community rooted in the practices of mindfulness and zen as expressed through academic study, meditation, martial arts, yoga, healthy living, and kindness.

We have done this before, in the recently closed Tinicum Art and Science High School. Our staff brings two decades of experience in mindfulness-based education, as well as a host of other practices that have proven to be very effective in bringing together dynamic cognitive skills and emotional grounding.

As a therapist, teacher, and parent myself, I understand how important a range of high school options is for teenagers. Many kids have complex profiles of strengths and challenges. At Lotus, we believe that we fill a crucial niche in the spectrum of schools our region offers.

I genuinely hope that our school can become a significant resource for you, whether you recommend us to friends, clients, or are interested in Lotus for your own children. We are holding an open house for prospective students and their families on Wed, October 26 from 2 until 6 pm. We will provide an overview of our program, an introduction to our staff, and some delicious food. Please see the attached document for more information about how we might meet the needs of our kids.

Warmly,  
Peter Ryan, M. Sc.,  
Principal

## **Healing Opportunities with Sahara White-Wolf**

Saharra White-Wolf is offering private healing sessions Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings after drop off until 1 pm in Milford, NJ. A Discount of \$50 is available for the River Valley Community until the end of this year. Call Sahara 973 902 5737 if interested: Private healing sessions can include (besides Reiki): past life regression work, journey work, soul retrieval work or Chakra balancing with Andara crystals. Remote healing sessions are available for children as well.

Saharra would also love to start a bi-monthly shamanic drum journey circle for parents on Fridays from 8:30 to 10:30 am in Milford, NJ Please contact Sahara if you want to join or find out more:  
[saharrawhitewolf@gmail.com](mailto:saharrawhitewolf@gmail.com). Thank you

## **Yoga Loka**

*Introduction to Yoga Level 2 with Deb*  
Mondays 7pm-8:15pm. Begins Monday 10/17-11/14  
Learn as much as you can in this workshop format.

*Family Yoga 4 week session with Alli*  
Fridays 11:15am-12:15pm. Begins 10/14  
When we practice with our family we get to share our super powers with the people we love.

*Sound Meditation with John Muraco*  
Saturdays 6:30pm-7:45pm. Begins 10/22/2016  
A guided breathing practice will be followed by the sounds of crystal singing bowls.

*TRE and Meditation*  
Sunday 11:45-12:45, 10/16/2016 and 10/30/2016.  
Wednesday 11:00am-12:00pm 10/19/2016  
Tension and Trauma Releasing Exercises de-stresses your body and quiets your mind.

For more information please visit [www.Yoga-Loka.com](http://www.Yoga-Loka.com)

## **Eagle Scout, Ethan Liebross, is Renovating the Frenchtown Park Bathroom**

My name is Ethan Liebross. Over the past couple of months, I have been working diligently on my Eagle Scout project, which is to renovate the Frenchtown Park bathroom. I have been working with mayor Brad Myhre, as well as Mike Reino, head of the parks department, to make this happen. The projected start date for the renovation is November of 2016. Currently, the bathroom has rotted stalls, outdated appliances, and, overall, is in very bad shape. Many families who use the park are in need of an acceptable bathroom.

The plan is to create two unisex bathrooms, one of them being ADA compliant. With the help of Bill Carr (electrician), Alfie Grillo (plumber), Anthony DeSapio (contractor), and Martin DeSapio (architect), new plastic partitions, two new toilets, two new sinks, a baby changing station, and all new bathroom appliances will be installed. The total estimated cost for the project is \$5000. The municipality will be covering half the costs, but I will still need \$2500 in donations from our community. I'm trying to enlist the support of Frenchtown Park users as well as Frenchtown's businesses. I've gone around town and I am very grateful to have gotten offers of support from Frenchtown Hardware, the Book Garden, the Cycle Corner, Dalla Terra, What's Brewin' At Maria's, and Olive With A Twist. Any amount that you are able to provide will help and will be very much appreciated. If you have any questions about the project, please feel free to ask. Thank you in advance for your support, Ethan Liebross,

Please make checks payable to Boy Scout Troop 251 and mail them to the following address:  
Boy Scout Troop 251 c/o Ethan Liebross 1170 County Rd. 519, Frenchtown, NJ 08825 – thanks for your support!

## Move-Making!

### An Introduction to the world of creative theater for 8-12 year olds

Join Muck and Gold and discover how our clever, funny, thinking body leads us to new worlds of creativity as we explore the elements of dance and theater improvisation to create our own mini works of art.

10 Tuesdays, October 11th - December 13th, 4:30-6pm, Stockton, NJ at Paperboat and Bird studio  
For details and registration, visit [muckandgold.com](http://muckandgold.com)

## German Club in Milford

Dear River Valley Families,

Thanks to help from Lizette Tynan and Tracy Fly, German Club will start up again this Thursday afternoon, 3:45-4:45, at the Milford Presbyterian Church, just a few minutes' drive from River Valley. We will be starting this Thursday, October 13th. As always, we will have songs, stories, conversation, games, Schuhplattler dancing and a light snack that will make learning about German culture and language a delightful experience.

The cost is \$16-\$19 per class depending on the number of students, and this year I am asking families to pay in advance for a 10 week round to minimize administrative work. Thursday's German Club will be geared for 3rd-6th graders. I also have a class for 7-8 year olds in Buckingham on Thursdays, 1:45-2:45, and other classes can be arranged for older students or families who want to brush up on their German conversation, perhaps to prepare for a trip to Europe. The minimum class size is 3 if in Buckingham and 6 or more if it requires me to travel.

If you are interested in German Club/lessons/tutoring for your child, please contact Tracy Fly ([tlkf@me.com](mailto:tlkf@me.com)) or Lizette Tynan ([toothangelfairy@yahoo.com](mailto:toothangelfairy@yahoo.com)), or you may contact me directly. Feel free to call me anytime if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Peter Ray 215-794-5816

## Myeong Shim Gum Do 明心劍道

Zen sword - meditation - mind training - clear mind, clear action

Shim Gum Do is an original Zen Art that integrates the practice and principles of Zen Buddhist meditation with the "action meditation" of martial art practice. The sword practice of Shim Gum Do comprises 330 forms, choreographed sequences of blocking and attacking movements. Each form is unique and generates a specific energy and a beautiful, athletic physical expression. The practice of Shim Gum Do emphasizes attaining a clear mind, clear thinking, and clear action.

Classes: Tuesday 4:30-6 pm 85 Sherman Rd, Ottsville, PA 610-297-1175 and Sunday 4:30-6 Dig! Yoga Lambertville, NJ  
Very affordable! Fees vary slightly with location

Peter J. Ryan, Sabom Nim, M.Sc. is a certified instructor in this remarkable martial art who has deep experience with all ages and all types of learners. Group and individual instruction. 12 years study with Great Zen Master Chang Sik Kim. Each class will consist of individual and group instruction in Zen Sword and meditation, as well as guidance for creating a strong spiritual practice at home and at work.

Peter is a third degree black belt in Zen Sword and one of three certified American teachers of the martial art Shim Gum Do. This remarkable practice is the fruit of the Great Zen Master Chang Sik Kim's enlightenment more than fifty years ago, an extensive and fully integrated program of sword forms as well as moving and sitting meditation techniques that bring the student to "clear mind and clear action." Shim Gum Do helps bring body, mind, and spirit together in unique and surprising ways. Peter is a psychotherapist and an experienced and well-regarded teacher, who studies closely with the master. In 1998, he co-founded Tinicum Art and Science, the very first high school in the United States based upon the practice of mindfulness, and has served as principal and lead teacher there for many years. TAS closed this past June, and Peter launched a more ambitious successor, The Lotus School of Liberal Arts, which opened in September.

## Help Wanted

"Dirty Girl Gardening, based in Pipersville, PA & working all throughout Bucks County & beyond, is looking for full or part-time Gardening help (for the remainder of the Fall season & hopefully into next Spring)!

Must love the outdoors, enjoy hard (satisfying) work, & possess the stamina, strength & physique to work long, full days. Ideally, looking for someone with prior horticultural or landscaping experience or education, but willing to train the right candidate.

Contact Leslie Guli for more information: 267-372-4884 or email: [lulucat1474@gmail.com](mailto:lulucat1474@gmail.com)

From The Guardian via Waldorftoday.com

## Could Steiner Schools have a Point on Children, Tablets and Tech?

Studies have yet to show much benefit from technology in schools, leading some to wonder whether the offline life is better for children

By Sarfraz Manzoor, theguardian.com

It's late morning and the children in Maria Woolley's class at the Iona school in Nottingham are busy kneading dough. The dough is made from flour they saw ground at the local windmill using grains harvested from a nearby farm they had visited. During the morning lesson the children have sung songs, recited poetry and done rhythmic clapping and stomping.

There is no uniform here, and no headteacher – the school is run by staff and friends – and, unlike the vast majority of primary schools these days, here the students don't work on tablets or computers. At the front of the class is an old-fashioned blackboard.

The methods at the school, which are based on the controversial teachings of Austrian 19th century philosopher Rudolf Steiner, may be different from those employed in mainstream state schools, but the Iona was recently declared outstanding by the School Inspection Service – the independent equivalent of Ofsted. The report noted that “pupils do not use computers or the internet when in school but staff have ensured that they have learned about internet safety”. It went on: “Teaching is inspirational and highly effective ... teachers are very well trained and highly skilled.”

Any school would be grateful to be described in such glowing terms but the staff here are particularly proud that they achieved their outstanding status without technology. In addition to the ban on computers in school, parents are discouraged from letting their children watch television, play computer games or use smartphones at home.

The Iona school was set up in 1985 by Richard Moore, who had worked for 10 years as a state primary teacher. “Mainstream education was becoming prescriptive even then,” he says, “so what appealed to me about Steiner was that it stressed that the work of children was play.” Today the school – one of 33 schools that follow the Steiner curriculum – has 87 children aged between three and 12 and costs £5,402 a year.

Under the government's free schools and academies program, four Steiner schools are now state funded. The schools, based on the spiritual movement of “anthroposophy”, are controversial because Steiner's views on, for example, race have been discredited. But even some who question the philosophy or ideology may wonder whether these schools have a point about resisting the blanket use of technology.

“Rudolph Steiner and many other childhood thinkers through the 19th and 20th centuries emphasized the importance of understanding how young children naturally learn to learn, and of providing educational experiences which build on their natural interests and curiosity,” explains David Whitebread, director of the Centre for Research on Play in Education, Development and Learning at Cambridge University. “Early childhood and primary education in the UK has moved a long way from this to a top-down, state-imposed curriculum model.”

Critics suggest that in not allowing children to use screens as part of its ideology Steiner schools are putting them at a disadvantage. “The needs of our young people are that when they leave school, they become part of a world that is highly likely to include technology,” says Mark Chambers, the chief executive of NAACE, a professional association for those concerned with advancing education using technology. “We should be doing all we can to help them be prepared for that world, just as we would for the physical world that is around them.”

David Andrews, who was a primary teacher in Hull for 10 years, now runs a website on how to use technology to support learning in the classroom. “In some schools, technology is used poorly and it can have a damaging impact on education,” he says. But when used creatively, “technology can engage the children because of their experience of what they are doing at home, where they may be watching television or gaming”.

Research into the effects of technology on learning has yet to demonstrate much in the way of positive results, though. A recent study published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that students barred from using laptops or digital devices in lectures and seminars did better in exams than those allowed to use computers and access the internet.

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And research last year from the London School of Economics found schools that banned pupils from carrying mobile phones showed a sustained improvement in exam results, with the biggest advances coming from struggling students.

A Cambridge University study found that spending an extra hour a day of TV, internet or gaming time in year 10 saw a fall in GCSE results equivalent to two grades overall. Its co-author, Esther van Sluijs, says reducing screen time could have important benefits and adds that "limiting the amount of time spent in front of screens and introducing children to a variety of activities is likely to have the most beneficial long-term impacts on a child's health".

Andreas Schleicher, head of education at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), said recently: "The reality is that technology is doing more harm than good in our schools today." A report by the OECD in 2015 found that countries that had invested heavily in technology had shown no signs of improvement in reading, math or science.

Despite the evidence from such studies there is still, according to Moore, "an anxiety that children aren't going to be ready to fit into the economy because they don't do computers at the age of four – whereas if you give them a healthy education and childhood, they can catch up very easily".

Steiner schools attract parents and teachers who tend to share similar thoughts on screen time and who try to ensure their students are better able to resist the lure of technology. Sean Cummins, who has had three children at the Iona school, says for him the appeal of a Steiner education was that it showed you "could structure a child's education in a way different from just preparing them for an employer's requirements when they were 18".

Asma Al-Deraa has a seven-year-old son at the Iona school and a 10-year-old daughter in mainstream state education. "My daughter is being taught inside the box with lots of testing," she says. "But with my son – he is more creative and trying to dig for the things that are beyond." When her daughter returns from school she will reach for the iPad, but her son "is not asking for that or the PlayStation – he just wants to draw and play".

Even some who support the use of computers in the classroom share the concern about the negative impact of technology. "The role of technology at home is potentially damaging children's communication skills with their parents who are using it as an electronic babysitter," says Andrews. "More and more children are coming into primary school with their spoken language as an issue so we are using technology in the classroom to record their language as a way of getting them talking to their parents."

However, teacher José Picardo argues that the aversion to technology in Steiner schools is rooted in a "pseudo-intellectualism which believes the things we are familiar with are better than the things our children are familiar with". Picardo teaches at Surbiton High School in Surrey, where every pupil from the age of seven or eight is given a tablet. "I think my children are going to end up being better prepared for the world in which they live," he says, because his school does not subscribe to the idea that "playing with something physical is better and therefore children shouldn't be allowed technology".

In Kirsty Thompson's classroom at the Iona school, the children don't even have any ready-made toys in the room. They have to use their imagination to make what they want. Here boys and girls are playing together, rather than self-segregating, to make towers from wooden blocks and to play dressing up with cotton and woolen sheets.

Thompson, who joined the Iona last September, says for her the school offers a daily affirmation of why she wanted to be a teacher. "In the state schools I worked in, the focus was primarily on number crunching," she says. "I was sat in meetings and it was all about statistics. Here we talk about the children as people."