

School Calendar

This Week

Thursday, November 8

Divali – in-school celebration

Friday, November 9

EC Lantern Walk 4:30 – 5:30pm

Looking Ahead

Tuesday, November 13

Garden Gate Open House 9:00-11:00 am

Thursday, November 15

Board Meeting 6:30 pm

Friday, November 16

1st & 2nd Grade Lantern Walk 4:30 – 5:30pm

Monday & Tuesday, November 19 & 20

No School – Parent/Teacher Conferences

Wednesday-Friday, November 21-23

No-School – Thanksgiving Break

Friday, November 30

Spiral of Light – In-school festival

Tuesday, December 4

Grades 1, 2, 3 Parent Evening 6:30-8:30 pm

Friday, December 7

Early Dismissal – Winter Fair Set-up 1:00 pm

Saturday, December 8

River Valley Open House 9:45-11:00 am
Winter Fair 11:00 am-3:00 pm

How to Contact Us

info@rivervalleyschool.org

lc@rivervalleyschool.org

bot@rivervalleyschool.org

pc@rivervalleyschool.org

Learning Virtue, Living Virtue

We begin November with another message from columnist Paul Ritchie. This month's virtue is Gratitude, and what could be more appropriate.

See inside for his moving reflections.

Parent Choir

Join the awesome RVWS Parent Choir, building community one song at a time. Rehearsals are on Sundays starting October 28 at 3 pm at school. No singing experience necessary. Perform at Winter Fair, Mayfaire and Parent Stage!

There's a lot of Buzz in the Hallways of River Valley



A school-wide collaborative project to raise awareness of diversity, equality, and inclusion in our community is now on display.

Students participated in an activity together to understand that although racial color-blindness may be a way to cope with discomfort around issues of diversity, it comes at the cost of denying someone their identity and obstructs empathy for racism that still exists. The honey bee theme of this project reflects AWSNA's Waldorf100 celebration and their efforts to promote honeybee conservation. Please visit our hallways to see first hand the inspiring results of this important initiative.

At the end of this week's Current you will find more photographs of the artwork and an article that reflects the nature of the conversations had during this collaborative work.

Turkey Raffle to Benefit the 3rd Grade Farm Trip

Be sure to stop by the lobby at pick-up time this Wednesday, November 7th, for your chance to win a free Thanksgiving Turkey!

The 3rd grade class is selling raffle tickets for a fresh 20 some pound Purely Turkey. The winning ticket will be drawn this Friday, November 9th. What could be better than visiting Purely Farm in Ottsville on the

Tuesday before Thanksgiving to pick up a magnificent, perfectly plump, super fresh and local, FREE turkey to feed your family.

Did we mention these birds are pasture-raised, non-GMO and organically fed? Raffle tickets will be sold for \$5/ticket and all proceeds will go to the 3rd grade trip fund.

If you won't be at school on Wednesday, you may email Ivy at Karunagoddess@gmail.com to make other arrangements.

Winter Fair Artisan Market - Calling all ARTISTS!

Parents and the River Valley community are gearing up for another Artisan Market! If you have some handmade items and would like to join us as part of the Winter Fair Artisan Market, please email Ivy at Karunagoddess@gmail.com

Winter Fair is Around the Corner

Here at the school every room is transformed by the spirit of holiday magic into a place of childhood wonder. This year the festival will be held on December 8 from 11-3.

What's the role of RVWS parents in the Winter Fair?

Participation! Collaboration! Fun! Parents are the engine of this event and we all participate heartily in class and community activities. With assistance from administration and faculty, parents organize and host the Winter Fair as a community-collaborative event for all to experience and enjoy.

Winter Fair is an opportunity for parents to shine by sharing their time, talents and special skills, have fun together, feel purpose and belonging and experience the pulse of the school's heart and soul.

The children witness our example of joyful, collaborative creation and have seeds planted for the desire to work in this way themselves. They learn through observation their own sense of what is possible in a community.

How do parents participate?

- Families are asked to participate in four important ways:
- Volunteer to run an activity shift, set up, decorate or clean up shift!
- Bake a treat!
- Donate homemade Secret Garden Gifts
- Promote Winter Fair in these ways
- Hang posters – physically place posters and postcards in unique locations.
- Online promo – forward invitations and flyers to personal networks, blogs, online lists, groups, friends and family.
- Put out one or more lawn signs in your yard or community.
- Six degrees of separation / word of mouth – invite everyone you know and everyone they know.

Class activity sign ups are organized by class reps in conjunction with the Winter Fair Coordinator, Jamie Iapalucci and Co-Chair, Rebecca Di Candia. Your classroom coordinator will communicate the requirements and timing of this work in the weeks to come via email! PC welcomes any questions or feedback. Please see Liz or Lorrissa or email PC@rivervalley.school.org. Thank you!

From Administration

Special Offer from Primary.com

PRIMARY SCHOOL SPIRIT WEEK SALE is here - the easiest, best fundraiser ever! It's simple: you shop, our school earns money! (Told you it was easy.) Stock up and save 25% off premium basics for kids without logos, slogans or sequins at Primary while earning 10% back for our school! Shop November 7th through November 14th and use our unique URL:

www.primary.com/school/rivervalleywith promo code: RIVERVALLEYWEEK. (Oh, and tell everyone and their grandma! Everyone who shops this link will help earn \$\$\$ for our school!)

Substitute Cleaner Needed

We are looking for a substitute evening cleaner to pitch in every once in a while if one of our regular cleaning team is out. The cleaning shift is typically from 5:30 pm-8:30 pm, but the times can be flexible. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Pat Janssen at (610) 982-5606 or by email at pjanssen@rivervalley.school.org.

Lehigh Valley Charter Arts High School Open House Dates

Tuesday 11/6 and Tuesday 11/20, 5:30 pm

GARDEN VOLUNTEER UPDATE from Melissa

No garden time this week Thursday, November 8th

I will be inside watching the fifth grade dance and sing in celebration of Diwali. We will have our final garden gathering on November 15th right after drop off. We could use all the willing hands possible to finish up our good work! The planting rows are all tucked in for Winter, thanks to the help of Justin and Toby! You guys are The Best!



Weather Related School Closings and Delays

Ready or not, here it comes! The possibility of snowy and icy road conditions will be here before we know it. Here is what you need to know about how RVWS manages weather-related early dismissals, school closures and delayed openings:

99% of the time, we follow the lead set by the Palisades School District as that is where our school is physically located. However, since our 'sending district' is so broad, conditions can vary greatly from one end to the other. If roads in your area are unsafe and you need to call a personal delay due to road conditions when the school has not – please do.

Public school buses will always follow the decision of their district – if your child receives transportation, be sure to sign up for your district alerts or check the media sources for your district's information.

EARLY CLOSURE –

Phone calls, texts and emails will be sent out with our automated systems. This usually means a 1pm dismissal time although the time can vary if Palisades calls for a different time due to a quickly developing weather system. They give us as much notice as possible, which we immediately pass along to you all. When there are weather closures, all students must either be picked up or go home on the public school buses. RVWS staff will stay with students for one hour beyond the school closure time, but when weather conditions call for a closure, we all need to get home and off the roads as soon as possible. RVWS is not equipped to function as a shelter. If you know that picking up your child may be difficult, please make arrangements ahead of time with friends or family who can host your child until you are able to pick them up.

FULL-DAY CLOSURE –

Phone calls, texts and emails will be sent out with our automated systems; a new message is made on the school's voicemail system. Sometimes the decision is made the evening before, other times in the very early morning hours. Communication is often initiated by 6:30am and almost always before 7am.

DELAYED OPENING –

Phone calls, texts and emails will be sent out with our automated systems; a new message is made on the school's voicemail system. Sometimes the decision is made the evening before, other times not until early that morning. The communication is often initiated before 6:30am, almost always before 7am. If there is a possibility of changing from delay to full closure, that will be communicated in the messaging about the delay. Delay options: 2-hour and 3-hour. Early childhood and grade school classes will be in session following an abbreviated schedule. Please have your children bring all work and instruments unless otherwise instructed by their class teacher.

There are 4 emergency closures built into the 2018-19 calendar. If we go above that number, additional days will be added by announcement. If we do not lose much class time due to delays and closures, we may add a report-writing in-service day for the faculty (school would be closed) in the late spring. Feel free to reach out to Cindy, or to your class teacher with any questions.

Thank You

Thank you from Maestra Vargas to the River Valley community for all of your support for our traditional Dia de Muertos celebration. Special thanks to Erica Chick, Becca DiCandia and Jamie Iapalucci for baking the bread. It was a hit and the children loved it! To everyone who brought in flowers - they scented the room and gave the special touch that makes the altar unique in this celebration!! Thank you, Tiffany, for all of the photographs you took to capture the experience. The children were very motivated and embraced the celebration with joy, respect and reverence. In this I know that the teachers and parents were also involved so I want to say thank to all of them too.

A hearty thank you to Liz and Ali Davachi for generously donating their auction item, A Moonshine and Millet Party, for the benefit of our school. It was great fun and gave a boost to the Annual Appeal; we are all very grateful.

(Continued on next page)

More Thank Yous

There are many people Liz would like to thank for making the evening such a success: Tina Venini, for organizing and procuring the beer donation and for set up and clean up & decorations. I couldn't have done it without her and her boundless positive energy; Moonshine & Millet, so proud to have them in our class and so blessed by their talent. They are so much fun and bring so much joy. Thank you for another wonderful evening of entertainment; RVWS for allowing us to have this event at the school; Richard Kroth, for always quietly working behind the scenes providing and setting up all the sound equipment to make these events so incredible; Hilary Murphy, for her pure adoration of the band - her spirit is contagious; Lorrissa Lock, for always being my right hand and getting the word out. I don't think anyone can say no to that smile; Kristian Summerer, for his amazing talent and his ability to make every sign beautiful; 8th grade parents for showing up in full force to help make the night a success; Cat Miles, for the wine donation - it was delicious; Harrow Beverage of Ottsville for the beer; Rosie's Empanada's in Milford for the delicious food and the Komboucha Bar for the Growlers in 4 different flavors and Jane Stuart, for her dedication to the Annual Appeal. She worked the entire evening with a smile. She is doing an amazing job for the RVWS community.

The overall intention of the night was to give back to the part of the community that always seems to show up and give of themselves. Every part of the evening was filled with smiles and it was everything we (The Davachi's) had hoped it would be. So thank you everyone.

From The Faculty

What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – The Wonder of Numbers
Second Grade – Language Arts
Third Grade – Language Arts
Fourth Grade – Local Geography

Fifth Grade – North American Geography
Sixth Grade – Geology
Seventh Grade – Physics
Eighth Grade – Algebra

From Development

Annual Appeal Update

Thank you to ALL those who helped make Friday's Moonshine & Millet concert such a wonderful evening complete with amazing music, delicious foods, and lots of love and laughter! A total of \$1885 was raised for the Annual Appeal. A heartfelt thank you to The Davachi Family for donating this concert, organizing the event, cooking, decorating, advertising, cleaning-up...your generosity is very much appreciated!

From the Community

Purely Farm's Thanksgiving Turkey

Purely Farm is officially ready to talk turkey and begin taking reservations for their famed Thanksgiving Turkeys. These wonderful birds are raised by the Michini Family themselves and offer legendary flavor and an exciting alternative to the antibiotic pumped, factory farmed conventional turkeys that are sadly pushed onto so many Americans' tables. Purely Turkey is organically fed, pasture-raised, super local and amazingly fresh. How fresh you ask??? Any fresher you'd take home the gobbler! No need to freeze these birds, they will be processed Monday and available for pick-up the very next day, Tuesday, November 20th, at their farm in Ottsville or 3 other convenient locations. It really can't get much fresher than that. Get your order in while supplies last! An order form is attached to this week's Current.

Getting to Know You:

An Afternoon of Syrian Food, Culture and Fun.

Celebrating two Syrian families who have settled in Bucks County. Saturday, December 1st, 4:30-6:30
Congregation Kol Emet, 1360 Oxford Valley Road, Morrisville, PA

Order tickets online:

<https://celebratesyrianfamilies.eventbrite.com>

Sponsored by Bucks County Interfaith Coalition for Refugee Resettlement For further information, contact BCICRR@gmail.com or phone 978-621-7297

Give Kids Sight Day-Free Eye Care and Eyeglasses

Saturday, Nov. 17, 2018 8:30am – 1:00pm, walk-ins only
Jefferson Alumni Hall, 10th & Locust Philadelphia, PA 19107

Becoming American: A Documentary Film Discussion Series

Part Two: Promise & Prejudice

Pearl S. Buck International is excited to offer the second installation of the Becoming American series (a nationally recognized program) on November 11th from 3:00 – 5:00 PM at the Cultural Center, 520 Dublin Road, Perkasie, PA. The series is designed to engage audiences through viewing and discussing documentary films that represent diverse immigration experiences. Each discussion will be moderated by distinguished professors from Delaware Valley University. Programs will be held on the second Sunday of each month through April.

This month's film, *Welcome to Shelbyville*, explores how a primarily white Christian town in Tennessee reacts to a group of Somali Muslims who come to work in a local chicken factory. You will learn about the obstacles each group had to overcome and will discuss with others how this theme is relevant today. Dr. Craig Stutman and Dr. David Snyder, from Delaware Valley University will facilitate the discussion.

Admission is complimentary but seating is limited, so register today at www.pearlsbuck.org/immigration2. For recommended pre-session reading, go to www.pearlsbuck.org/becomingamerican/.



Deck the halls with holiday carolers! Fa la la la la...

Having a Christmas or holiday party, or know someone who is? Spread the holiday spirit with THE COUNTRY CAROLERS, accapella vocal trio, available now for bookings in your area! Allow these three lovely ladies, Eve Sheldon, Kira Willey and Gina Ricci to spread some holiday cheer and fill your event, restaurant, store or meeting with the harmonious musical sounds of the season. Contact Gina at ginaricci@live.com for bookings and more info!

Photo Sessions with Hilary

Last chance for family photos! Hilary is offering half hour family photography sessions on November 3 and November 10. Contact her for details and times. Discounted rate for RVWS families! Guaranteed 10 high resolution images delivered within two weeks of your session via secure online gallery. Please email Hilary at hilarymurphyphotography@gmail.com for booking! To learn more about Hilary and her photography services visit her website at www.hilarymurphyphotography.com

Community Kundalini Yoga & Meditation Festival

Saturday, November 24, Point Pleasant, PA. Please email felicia@thenobleteacher.com for more information.

Riegelsville Public Library Fall Used Book Sale

Riegelsville Borough Community Room
615 Easton Road, Riegelsville, PA
Early Bird Sale – Friday, Nov. 16th 7:00pm – 9:00pm, \$5 donation at the door. Book Sale – Saturdays Nov. 17th and Nov. 24th 9:00am – 4:00pm. \$5 Bag Sale Nov. 17th 3:00pm – 4:00pm Nov. 24th 2:00pm – 4:00pm
Questions? Call the Library at 610.749.2357

Cello Needed

We are looking for a 3/4 size cello for our 6th Grader. If you have a used one you would like to sell, please contact Molly at 484 523 8566. Thank you!

Don't Discard your Pumpkins or Gourds

The Murphy Farm will take any unwanted pumpkins, jack-o-lanterns or gourds off your hands. Their pigs and goats love them! Find Hilary at pick up or drop off or contact her at 908-674-0455 or hilarymurphyphotography@gmail.com to arrange pick up at the school.

KuneKune Pigs For Sale

Anna Murphy, 2nd grader has raised her first litter of KuneKune pigs and now has 8 week old piglets ready to go their new homes. KuneKune pigs are a dual purpose slow-growing grazing breed. They make wonderful pets, are extremely intelligent, friendly, child safe and easy keepers. Perfect for your homestead or farm! They are very social animals and need companionship, either by other animals or from their own kind. Being offered in pairs for \$400. Individuals for \$250. These are purebred KuneKune's, unregistered. Three piglets available immediately. For more information, contact Anna (through Hilary) at hilarymurphyphotography@gmail.com or 908-674-0455.

**Come join the fun at OTAC this Fall at Ottsville Traditional Arts Center
250 Durham Road Ottsville**

OPEN MIC NIGHTS

Warm, fuzzy and friendly space to step out, reach up and share what you've got or what you're working on! Open Mic sign up list plus a featured performer/musician set. Coffee House will feature 2 or more performer/musician sets plus Open Mic sign up. Sea Shanties and sing along with Grace! ***Early sign up for kids!!! OTAC is a Great Space and has the most appreciative audience

November Saturday 11/10 THE EMPTY BOWLS SUPPER 5:00 - 8:00 Open Mic/Coffee House 6:00 - 9:00

The Empty Bowls Project is an international, grassroots, crafts-based effort to fight hunger. As guests arrive they will choose one of several handmade bowls donated by local artists and art students. Volunteers will serve soups donated by local restaurants. At the end of their meal guests may take home their chosen bowl as a thank you and a reminder of hunger in our community. Proceeds from our first supper we will be donated to The Lord's Pantry in Ottsville, PA. For more information or to volunteer/donate, contact paula@focazio.com.

Artist Bowls, first come first serve! Minimum donation is \$15.

RSVP Facebook.com/ubebowls <http://tinyurl.com/ubemptybowls>

December Saturday 12/15 Open Mic/Sing Along/Coffee House for the Holidays 6:00 - 9:00

Bring a little something for the Food Pantry

OTAC Wednesday Jam and Songs 6:00-8:00 and Open Mic Nights - \$5 per person

For updates & further details check out ottsvilletradarts.weebly.com Facebook page

Questions, interest in a fundraiser, event, performance, workshop, etc. contact Grace Morgan gracefulm@aol.com

Ottsville Traditional Arts Center is a multi generational and varied community that provides service through what we all have to share.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE UPPER BUCKS EMPTY BOWLS SUPPER

November 10th, 5-8pm, Ottsville Traditional Arts, Durham Road, Ottsville PA

The Empty Bowls Project is an international, grassroots, crafts-based effort to fight hunger. As guests arrive they will choose one of several handmade bowls donated by local artists and art students. Volunteers will serve soups donated by local restaurants. At the end of their meal guests may take home their chosen bowl as a thank you and a reminder of hunger in our community. Proceeds from our first supper we will be donated to The Lord's Pantry in Ottsville, PA. For more information or to volunteer/donate, contact paula@focazio.com.

RSVP Facebook.com/ubebowls. Minimum donation is \$15

Artyard

The Unlikely Whole – September 15-December 30 – Curated by Lucinda Warchol

ArtYard is pleased to present The Unlikely Whole, an exhibition featuring the works of Mariel Capanna, Amie Cuntat, Osamu Kobayashi, Amy Pleasant, Kenny Rivero, and Rudy Shepherd. The selected works explore the landscape, the body, memory, and identity as sites of disassembly and reconstruction. Through methods of fragmentation, translation, and repetition, these artists both challenge and reimagine our conception of the whole.

Upcoming Events:

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 7:30 PM

In My Corner, an original play by film director Jeremiah Chechik that tells a universal story in a unique way.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17

**SONGWRITING SESSIONS 12:00 -3:00 PM,
PERFORMANCE 7:00 PM**

Accomplished and nationally recognized recording artists Kira Willey, Eve Sheldon and Noah Jarrett will hold a Songwriter's Rodeo.

NOVEMBER 29 – DECEMBER 2, 2018

PoetryYard's Intensive Residential Workshop with Gabrielle Calvocoressi offers students of poetry a rare opportunity to work closely with a nationally known poet in a workshop-style format that includes only five participants.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 7:30 PM

Screening of *Amarcord*, a carnivalesque portrait of provincial Italy during the fascist period, the most personal film by Federico Fellini.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 7:00 PM

Come to ArtYard to learn how to make your own crankie device from cardboard, wood, or reclaimed junk with Mike Tyksinski and Eric Fiorito.

To learn more about these events, please visit our website www.artyard.org
ArtYard, 62A Trenton Avenue, Frenchtown, NJ 08825

Learning Virtue, Living Virtue

November - Gratitude by Paul Ritchie

Cicero declared that "Gratitude is not only the greatest of the virtues but the parent of all the others."

And a cause for celebration. There is a lengthy history of holidays – in nations, states and communities – celebrating their own keen sense of gratitude. Plymouth Rock was such a link in this special chain. Whether the celebration was for a revered individual or individuals, friendship, success in commerce, a bountiful harvest, extraordinary advances in science and technology or simply surviving a harsh climate, the community came together.

The OED defines *gratuitous* as "fully bestowed or obtained; granted without claim or merit; provided without payment or return; costing nothing to the recipient; free."

Over the years, the definition has changed somewhat. What used to be freely given – literally freely – now is most often a commercial transaction. What was once a powerful community impulse expressed through community observance has narrowed. Acknowledgement of the importance of *others* to expand our vision is held up in a chokepoint.

How did this happen?

Gratitude, defined as "the quality or condition of being grateful" is now often mistaken with indebtedness.

There is no single causality that points the way to a lack of gratitude, but if we are not yet there, we are getting frightfully close. The Public Religion Research Institute reported in November, 2015, "Americans were more anxious, less optimistic and more distrustful than ever. Subsequent political events made evident a surge of rage, revealing a toxic anger, fear, division and intolerance in the American electorate."

Have we divided our lives into personal thanks and public rage? Can gratitude ever really be private? Shouldn't it have meaningful impact on the families, communities and the society in which we live? What might it mean to live together as a thankful society?

It will begin when we respectfully and humbly recognize who we are. Gratitude is ultimately about connection – connection within ourselves and with others. Gratitude can be realized when it is a commitment, a concerted choice and a solemn vow that underpins a daily practice.

Historian Diana Butler Bass wrote, "As human beings, we have an intuitive awareness that we depend on others to survive. We are safer and happier when we care for each other in community, when we do things for each other. If we recognize mutuality, we experience gratitude as central to civic life."

An exceptional leading voice was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who taught and wrote about the importance of transformational gratitude while imprisoned for resisting Hitler. He spoke to the sense of humility and dependence on the gifts of others, "In normal life one is not at all aware that we always receive infinitely more than we give, and that gratitude is what enriches life. One easily overestimates the importance of one's own acts and deeds, compared with what we become only through other people."

Contrast Bonhoeffer's profession of gratitude with a seemingly unending, well-practiced repetition of "thank you, thank you."

Or duty-based gratitude, if whenever someone gives you a gift, you are in debt to return the favor. Its emotional emptiness results in heartless loyalty.

Clearly, we must find a new focus in order to see gratitude more clearly. A universe of healing and compassion awaits us. This is transformational. Instead of a zero-sum beneficiary and benefactor perspective, **the universe is a gift for all and life is the first gift.**

(Continued on next page.)

Gifts beget gratitude. We express our appreciation by passing gifts on to others. When we share gifts, we participate in a dynamic, organic and complex environment. Benedictine monk David Steindl-Rast stated, "Everything is a gift. The degree to which we are awake to this truth is a measure of our gratefulness, and gratefulness is a measure of our aliveness."

"Every hour is grace," said Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. And we can share the gift of grace anytime, enabled by empathy.

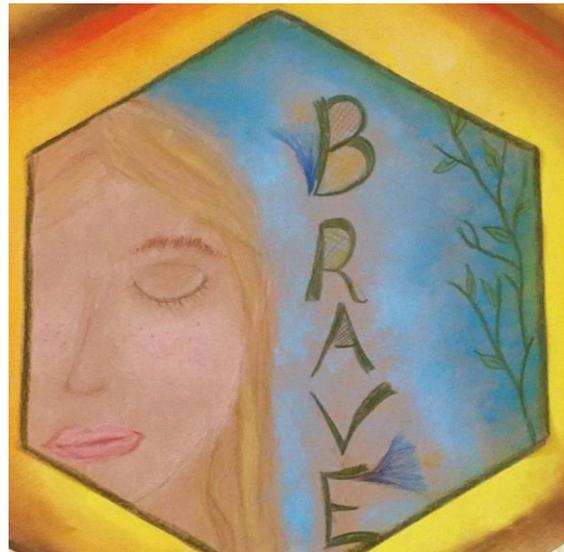
Thomas Jefferson recognized a natural imitative response evoked. "When any. . .act of charity or of gratitude, for instance, is presented to our sight or imagination, we are deeply impressed with its beauty and feel a strong desire in ourselves of doing charitable and grateful acts also."

We can do little better than to follow Maya Angelou's guidance, "If you must look back, do so forgivingly. If you must look forward, do so prayerfully. However, the wisest thing you can do is to be present in the present. . .gratefully."

As the mystical poet Rumi said, "Gratitude is the wine of the soul."

Drink deeply and well.

Buzz in the Hallways of River Valley



From: Today.com

Race and Parenting: Why Raising 'Colorblind' Kids is Actually a Terrible Idea

By Terri Peters

Author and speaker Doyin Richards — a black dad raising two daughters — says he often sees well-meaning parents refer to themselves as "colorblind" parents, who teach their children there is "only one race — the human race."

Richards is quick to set those parents straight.

"I'm not going to mince words — raising your kids to be colorblind is just straight dumb," Richards told TODAY Parents. "And, not only is it dumb — it's dangerous. By doing the whole, 'We're the same,' thing, you're dismissing what a black kid or any person of color deals with."

Richards, who wrote a children's book titled, "What's the Difference? Being Different is Amazing," says kids cannot grow or learn as people if they believe that everyone is the same. And, especially in the wake of the 2017 white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, the California dad says the responsibility to educate kids about differences falls on today's parents, even when they are unsure of what to say.

"Teach kids to be conscious of race," said Richards. "Teach them to be like, 'This black kid or this Mexican kid has had a different life experience than I have as a white kid, and that's what makes it great. I see their differences and I embrace those differences and want to learn to be a better and more productive citizen going forward.'"

Eirene Heidelberger is the founder of GITMom, a parenting coaching and advice service, and says while parents may feel nervous about discussing race with their kids, it's a necessity.

"No one wants to talk about it because they are completely uncomfortable with it and don't know what to say," said Heidelberger. "Parents stay silent because they don't feel comfortable, but it is up to parents to get educated and find the right words to teach about color, culture and religion."

Lori Riddick, a managing partner at Raising Race Conscious Children, an organization that provides practical tools to start conversations with kids about race, agrees, saying an honest, ongoing dialogue between parents and kids about race is essential.

"Research tells us that when we're silent about race, kids pick up their own definitions," said Riddick, who lives in New York and has two children of her own. "When we don't talk to our kids about race, we maintain a culture of white supremacy, where white is what's normal and we notice race only in terms of negative attributes."

So how can parents steer their children away from "colorblindness" and begin to have open conversations with their kids about race — and racism?

Heidelberger says, depending on a child's age, there are simple steps parents can take to begin the conversation.

AGES 0-5

"Here, it's really as simple as saying, 'Our family does not tolerate racism,'" said Heidelberger.

The Illinois mom-of-three recommends parents of young children take a proactive angle, refusing to be afraid or silent about race and pointing out different skin colors on television or in books. Parents can also point out different cultural outfits, starting a discussion about what life may be like in other countries or cultures. And, Heidelberger recommends pointing out different skin tones in books during story time, and speaking openly about friends and their different races.

"It's about pointing out to this little toddler, 'This is why our world is so special,'" said Heidelberger. "And the general idea is that we are all equal, and we all deserve to be treated with respect."

AGES 6-11

During the elementary years, Heidelberg says it's OK to talk about more serious topics, making them easier for kids to understand by comparing racism to things kids easily understand, such as a game of baseball where a team captain is picking players based only on skin colors or cultural clothing he does or does not like.

Eirene Heidelberg with her husband and three sons, ages 13, 9, and 5. Eirene Heidelberg with her husband and three sons, ages 13, 9, and 5. Eirene Heidelberg

"I highly suggest that, at this age, parents introduce to their kids the idea that some people get treated unfairly because of their skin color, culture or religion," said Heidelberg. "Parents also need to teach their child that racism is neither nice or fair, and they need to say how important it is to be inclusive of all people, no matter how different they may be."

TEENS

Heidelberg says that because of social media, teens these days get exposed to more than their parents were at the same age. They may hear, and even use, derogatory words they don't fully understand.

"As a mom, I immediately address comments like, 'You're so gay,' or 'That's gay,' for example, by saying, 'That is a bigoted remark and it's not accurate and it's hurtful. Please don't say that.'"

Heidelberg says parents should remember that kids — even teenagers — can only take in a certain amount of information at a time. Get to the point, she advises, and put the teen in the hot seat.

"All you have to say is that their words are not acceptable," said Heidelberg. "Then, ask them where they heard it or what they think it means. It's OK to let them squirm a little."

Since teens often judge others by their appearance or physical characteristics, Heidelberg says it's important to teach them when certain words are disrespectful and when they are OK.

"We need to teach teens it's OK for them to use correct names — like African American or Asian — when they are talking about others respectfully," said Heidelberg. "We are the adults, and if we're going to change this next group of children, it's up to us to find our words, have confidence, and have difficult conversations."

From the New York Times

A Dark Consensus About Screens and Kids Begins to Emerge in Silicon Valley

By Nellie Bowles

SAN FRANCISCO — The people who are closest to a thing are often the most wary of it. Technologists know how phones really work, and many have decided they don't want their own children anywhere near them.

A wariness that has been slowly brewing is turning into a regionwide consensus: The benefits of screens as a learning tool are overblown, and the risks for addiction and stunting development seem high. The debate in Silicon Valley now is about how much exposure to phones is O.K.

"Doing no screen time is almost easier than doing a little," said Kristin Stecher, a former social computing researcher married to a Facebook engineer. "If my kids do get it at all, they just want it more."

Ms. Stecher, 37, and her husband, Rushabh Doshi, researched screen time and came to a simple conclusion: they wanted almost none of it in their house. Their daughters, ages 5 and 3, have no screen time "budget," no regular hours they are allowed to be on screens. The only time a screen can be used is during the travel portion of a long car ride (the four-hour drive to Tahoe counts) or during a plane trip.

Recently she has softened this approach. Every Friday evening the family watches one movie. There is a looming issue Ms. Stecher sees in the future: Her husband, who is 39, loves video games and thinks they can be educational and entertaining. She does not. "We'll cross that when we come to it," said Ms. Stecher, who is due soon with a boy.

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Some of the people who built video programs are now horrified by how many places a child can now watch a video. Asked about limiting screen time for children, Hunter Walk, a venture capitalist who for years directed product for YouTube at Google, sent a photo of a potty training toilet with an iPad attached and wrote: "Hashtag 'products we didn't buy.'"

Athena Chavarria, who worked as an executive assistant at Facebook and is now at Mark Zuckerberg's philanthropic arm, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, said: "I am convinced the devil lives in our phones and is wreaking havoc on our children."

Ms. Chavarria did not let her children have cellphones until high school, and even now bans phone use in the car and severely limits it at home. She said she lives by the mantra that the last child in the class to get a phone wins. Her daughter did not get a phone until she started ninth grade. "Other parents are like, 'Aren't you worried you don't know where your kids are when you can't find them?'" Ms. Chavarria said. "And I'm like, 'No, I do not need to know where my kids are every second of the day.'"

For longtime tech leaders, watching how the tools they built affect their children has felt like a reckoning on their life and work. Among those is Chris Anderson, the former editor of Wired and now the chief executive of a robotics and drone company. He is also the founder of GeekDad.com.

"On the scale between candy and crack cocaine, it's closer to crack cocaine," Mr. Anderson said of screens.

Technologists building these products and writers observing the tech revolution were naïve, he said. "We thought we could control it," Mr. Anderson said. "And this is beyond our power to control. This is going straight to the pleasure centers of the developing brain. This is beyond our capacity as regular parents to understand."

He has five children and 12 tech rules. They include: no phones until the summer before high school, no screens in bedrooms, network-level content blocking, no social media until age 13, no iPads at all and screen time schedules enforced by Google Wifi that he controls from his phone. Bad behavior? The child goes offline for 24 hours. "I didn't know what we were doing to their brains until I started to observe the symptoms and the consequences," Mr. Anderson said.

"This is scar tissue talking. We've made every mistake in the book, and I think we got it wrong with some of my kids," Mr. Anderson said. "We glimpsed into the chasm of addiction, and there were some lost years, which we feel bad about." His children attended private elementary school, where he saw the administration introduce iPads and smart whiteboards, only to "descend into chaos and then pull back from it all."

This idea that Silicon Valley parents are wary about tech is not new. The godfathers of tech expressed these concerns years ago, and concern has been loudest from the top. Tim Cook, the C.E.O. of Apple, said earlier this year that he would not let his nephew join social networks. Bill Gates banned cellphones until his children were teenagers, and Melinda Gates wrote that she wished they had waited even longer. Steve Jobs would not let his young children near iPads.

But in the last year, a fleet of high-profile Silicon Valley defectors have been sounding alarms in increasingly dire terms about what these gadgets do to the human brain. Suddenly rank-and-file Silicon Valley workers are obsessed. No-tech homes are cropping up across the region. Nannies are being asked to sign no-phone contracts.

Those who have exposed their children to screens try to talk them out of addiction by explaining how the tech works. John Lilly, a Silicon Valley-based venture capitalist with Greylock Partners and the former C.E.O. of Mozilla, said he tries to help his 13-year-old son understand that he is being manipulated by those who built the technology. "I try to tell him somebody wrote code to make you feel this way — I'm trying to help him understand how things are made, the values that are going into things and what people are doing to create that feeling," Mr. Lilly said. "And he's like, 'I just want to spend my 20 bucks to get my Fortnite skins.'"

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And there are those in tech who disagree that screens are dangerous. Jason Toff, 32, who ran the video platform Vine and now works for Google, lets his 3-year-old play on an iPad, which he believes is no better or worse than a book. This opinion is unpopular enough with his fellow tech workers that he feels there is now "a stigma."

"One reaction I got just yesterday was, 'Doesn't it worry you that all the major tech execs are limiting screen time?'" Mr. Toff said. "And I was like, 'Maybe it should, but I guess I've always been skeptical of norms.' People are just scared of the unknown."

"It's contrarian," Mr. Toff said. "But I feel like I'm speaking for a lot of parents that are afraid of speaking out loud for fear of judgment." He said he thinks back to his own childhood growing up watching a lot of TV. "I think I turned out O.K.," Mr. Toff said.

Other Silicon Valley parents say there are ways to make some limited screen time slightly less toxic. Renee DiResta, a security researcher on the board of the Center for Humane Tech, won't allow passive screen time, but will allow short amounts of time on challenging games. She wants her 2- and 4-year-old children to learn how to code young, so she embraces their awareness of gadgets. But she distinguishes between these types of screen use. Playing a building game is allowed, but watching a YouTube video is not, unless it is as a family.

And Frank Barbieri, a San Francisco-based executive at the start-up PebblePost that tracks online activity to send direct mail advertising, tries to limit his 5-year-old daughter's screen time to Italian language content. "We have friends who are screen abolitionists, and we have friends who are screen liberalists," Mr. Barbieri said.

He had read studies on how learning a second language at a young age is good for the developing mind, so his daughter watches Italian-language movies and TV shows.

"For us, honestly, me and my wife were like, 'Where would we like to visit?'" Mr. Barbieri said.