



River Valley Current

November 8, 2016 No. 459

*"I am only one, / But still I am one. / I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something; / And because I cannot do everything,
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do." --Edward Everett Hale*

School Calendar

This Week

- Wednesday, November 9**
Parent Council Meeting 2:00 pm
- Thursday, November 10**
Bridging the Gap Cyber Safety Meeting 6:30 pm
- Friday, November 11**
Lantern Walk – EC, 1st & 2nd grades 4:45 pm
- Saturday, November 12**
Holiday Bazaar 10:00 am-5:00 pm

Looking Ahead

- Tuesday, November 15**
8th grade to the Franklin Institute
- Thursday, November 17**
EC Parent Enrichment Evening Board Meeting 6:30 pm
- Monday & Tuesday, November 21 & 22**
No School – Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Wednesday-Friday, November 23-25**
No School – Thanksgiving Break
- Friday, December 2**
Spiral of Light – in-school celebration
- Wednesday, December 7**
School Tour 9:00-11:00 am
- Friday, December 9**
Early Dismissal – Winter Fair set-up 1:00 pm
- Saturday, December 10**
Winter Fair

How to Contact Us

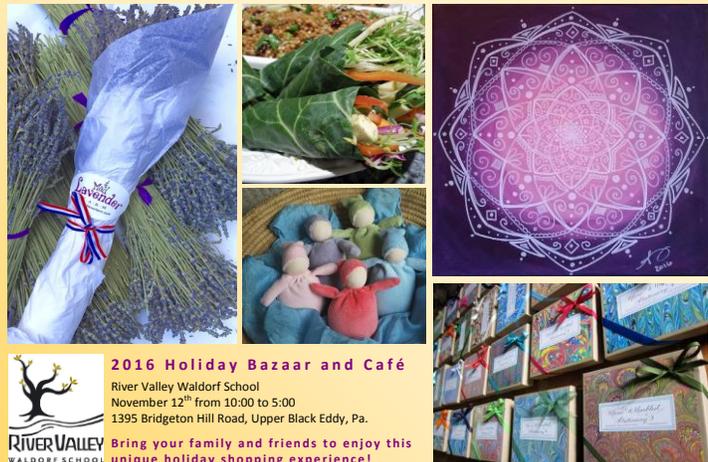
info@rivervalleyschool.org
 lc@rivervalleyschool.org
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RVWS Holiday Bazaar and Cafe

This Saturday, November 12th 10am-5pm

Join us for our annual tradition- River Valley Waldorf School's Holiday Bazaar and Cafe! Artisan handcrafts, festive music, and delicious food by NellieRae's!

Vendors include: Nancy Albin * Catherine Lent Designs * The Jersey Broomsquire * World Upcycle * Lucy and Judith Meskill * Andrea Nicole * Cornelia Pierce * Marie's Soap Company * Mason J.A.R. Apparel * Jennifer Kovach * Erin Lutz * Tavish Becker * Theresa Mustafa * Mad Lavender Farm * Cloud Nine Organics * Maya Adams-Smith * Fly Family * Clare Wargaski-Brunell * Zohra Mekki * Reimaginary Friends * Hilltop Herbals * Sharon Thompson * Mertel the Turtle Fabric Arts*Saharra White-Wolff*Judy Moser* Sharon Thompson*and more!



2016 Holiday Bazaar and Café
 River Valley Waldorf School
 November 12th from 10:00 to 5:00
 1395 Bridgeton Hill Road, Upper Black Eddy, Pa.
 Bring your family and friends to enjoy this unique holiday shopping experience!

Bridging the Gap: Supporting Our Children to be iSmart

The middle school faculty is inviting all RVWS parents to their gathering on
Thursday, November 10th at 6:30pm

An educator from NOVA (Network of Victim Assistance, Doylestown) will give a presentation on Bridging the Gap: Supporting Our Children to be iSmart. This is a crucial parent evening which will provide us with current information on the electronic footprint, cyber-bullying, online predators, sexting. We will also have time for discussion/Q/A.

If you own a computer, tablet or smartphone and most especially if your children are beginning to use these items, this evening is an important opportunity to educate yourself, and to raise our collective awareness as a parent body engaged in advocating for our children. This presentation is for all parents in our community. A corresponding workshop will be presented during the school day to the middle school students later in the year.

RSVP is appreciated, but not necessary.

Parent Council Meeting this Wed. Nov. 9th at 2:00 at Homestead.

Subjects of discussion: Winter Fair, Parent/Teacher Conference food, parent education and silent angels to name a few.

Martinmas Coat Drive

As part of River Valley's celebration of the legend of Saint Martin we will once again be sponsoring our Annual Martinmas Coat Drive. Please consider donating your gently used coats and jackets. Our music teacher Carol Diven is organizing the drive through the not-for-profit organization, One Warm Coat. The coats received will benefit Community Services for Children in Quakertown (<http://www.cscinc.org>).

New or gently used women's, men's and children's –
especially sizes 0-5T - coats are all welcome and needed!

A drop box will be located in the school lobby from November 1-November 18 to receive your generous donations!

Thank you Carol for once again organizing this wonderful way for RVWS to support to our greater community!

Winter Fair!!

Saturday, December 10th, 11-4

Winter Fair is not far off and a box has appeared in the lobby to collect Secret Garden items.

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.

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

Sibling Love Fund for Hannah & Ish 10K Walk & Benefit

Sunday, November 27, 2016, 10 a.m. (stay tuned for Frenchtown-area starting point)

Join the Real Girls: Walk with us! Run with us! Work a Cheer Station! Help with registration!

Register your intention to walk OR help OR both: <https://goo.gl/forms/VLTDIH1FVnZUBEf2>

Info, pledge forms & more: catherinelent@embarqmail.com. Donate online...and comment what walker gets credit for your gift! <http://tinyurl.com/z9l3esu>. A flyer for the event is attached to this week's Current.

The background: Hannah was 14 and Ish was 4 in August when their mom Amanda passed at age 35. Hannah moved to Philly... Ishmael went to Michigan. The Real Girls want to help them to stay connected by creating a fund dedicated to nourishing their relationship: airfare, trips, packages...

We are using hashtags to create albums of images...if you post pics of yourself (with or without Amanda, Hannah, Ishmael, or any combo) with intention to walk or volunteer or help, use them! #HuggingHannah #RememberingAmanda #Squishinglyshy. The Real Girls are an all-volunteer, award-winning, unaffiliated group that meets periodically in Frenchtown NJ for the nourishment & betterment of 12-18-year-old girls.

DID YOU KNOW??

River Valley offers a lovely parent/child class especially for infants? Cricket on the Hearth is geared especially for newborns to pre-walkers together with their parent or caregiver. A short session is beginning December 9th and finishes the end of January. Class will meet 6 times (due to holiday break), so it's the perfect opportunity to see what it's like!

Cricket on the Hearth meets Fridays from 9 until 10:30am in the Sun Room and is led by Early Childhood Teacher, Molly MacDonald. This class would be a lovely shower, or new baby gift! See Molly, or Cindy Schretlen with any questions. A registration form is attached to this week's CURRENT.

Condolences

Heartfelt condolences go to Colin Schaufele (grade 7), Nick Thompson and Brenda Schaufele on the loss of Colin's grandfather, Nick's father. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

Fundraising Update for Waldorf School in Haiti hit by Hurricane Matthew

Thank you for your overwhelming response to the call to help rebuild L'ecole du Village (The Village School), which was directly in Matthew's path and suffered catastrophic damage. The Village School fundraising campaign has raised over \$12,500 in just over one week! The first funds have already been wired to the school and rebuilding will commence soon.

If you want to help, or know someone who does, just go to this link to visit The Village School's page on gofundme: <https://www.gofundme.com/roof-for-lecole-du-village-haiti-2ugjebus>

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 10th – Waldorf Elementary School Teacher Training

Thursday, November 17th – Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Training

Visit www.sunbridge.edu for more information.

Thank you

Thank you to the following families that came to last Saturday's 5th grade work day: the Tynan, Arnold, Stave, Brunell, Miles, Smith, Jarrett, Wesp, MacDonald/McMullen and Willard families. We completed some major repairs to the tree house to the delight of many children and teachers. We reinforced the fence around the front playground, hung shelves and removed some problematic cobwebs.

Waldorf School of Princeton Welcomes Kim John Payne

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

On 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

After-school Capoeira at River Valley for Grade 5-8

Starting next month River Valley Waldorf School will be hosting a new after school program, Capoeira, taught by renowned Contra-Mestra Gata Brava (Leigh Robertson) from New Hope's Morro Verde. The artform of Capoeira combines elements of dance, acrobatics and music, all within the context of Brazilian culture. It traces its origins back to the 1600's when West African slaves in Brazil developed it as a mean of resisting oppression. I encourage you to visit Gata's website <http://www.newhopecapoeira.com/> and get acquainted with Gata's background and Capoeira in general.

Classes will be offered every Monday from 3:30 to 4:30 pm for students in 5th grade and up and will begin as soon as we have 12 students enrolled. The cost will be \$15 per class. We will begin with a 4-week trial period. Registration forms are available on the wall next to the office. If you have any questions, please contact Euclides at: esantiago@rivervalley.school.org

High School Open Houses

Many high schools in our area and beyond are holding Open Houses this fall. Here is a list for parents and students who are interested.

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

Mercersburg Academy Admission Office cordially invites you to attend our Open House event on Monday, December 12 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

From the Faculty

What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Language Arts

Second Grade – Math

Third Grade – Math

Fourth Grade – Local Geography

Fifth Grade – Botany

Sixth Grade – Geometry

Seventh Grade – Creative Writing

Eighth Grade – Meteorology

From Parent Council

Silent Angels

The Parent Council calls all angels to restore one of the most meaningful River Valley Waldorf School traditions that has gone by the wayside in recent years. Consider joining this committee of angels. As a part of this committee, you will be assigned, anonymously to a faculty member. Your responsibility is to honor and nourish this faculty member on a monthly basis in some small way. Past angels have left a juice, a candle, a dinner etc with the faculty member's name and a tag "love, your silent angel." River Valley Waldorf School parents love our faculty and know that the role of a teacher is immense and greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in becoming a Silent Angel, please email pc@rivervalley.school.org

This will be coordinated anonymously and on a first come, first serve basis! Once the faculty angels have been assigned, extra angels may be called upon for other angelic giving as needed.

We will be in touch soon as we hear from you!

Love and Gratitude, Anonymous Silent Angel Coordinators of PC

From the Community

The Nutcracker

Come see an amazing performance and help raise money for our school!

Eden, Daphne and Coco Stuart will be dancing in Budzynski Ballet Company's full production of The Nutcracker at Central Bucks High School South, December 10th and 11th at 12PM or 4PM. Buy tickets at budzynskiballet.org and enter "River Valley Waldorf School" in the the comments section and \$5 will be donated back to the school for each ticket. And...Tony Stuart is in it too!

Lenape Chamber Ensemble Concert in the Round

For children ages 4-12, featuring music by Bach and Handel.

Sat., Nov. 12th, 10-11 am at Delaware Valley University Life Sciences Auditorium, 700 Butler Avenue at State Street and Rt. 611, Doylestown, PA 18901. Children: \$2, Adults Free.

Lenape Chamber Ensemble Baroque Fest

Fri., Nov. 11, 8:15 pm, Upper Tincum Lutheran Church, 188 Upper Tincum Church Road, Upper Black Eddy, PA
Sun., Nov. 13, 3 pm, Delaware Valley University Life Sciences Auditorium (See above for address.)
Adults \$18, Students and Seniors \$15, Children \$5

For information: 610-294-9361 or www.lenapechamberensemble.org

At Yoga Loka

Yin Yoga Workshop with Sally Miller

Sunday 11/13, 3:00pm - 5:00pm

Awaken a new level of flexibility with this 2-hour journey through your inner-most self. Yin Yoga uses long-held, passive yoga postures to atune and clear the body. Workshop also includes meditation and time for Q&A.

Restore and Renew

Restorative Yoga is the practice of using props to support the body through various Yoga poses. Props ease the tension of these asanas, allowing the body to enter a state of comfort and calmness, and bringing peace to your mind. Join Deb Klein at our Frenchtown studio on Friday November 11th at 6:30PM to 8:30PM. Please register by November 8th. Price is \$20.

Thanksgiving Day Fund Raiser

November 24th, 9-11 am. Suggested donation \$20

Join Bonnie Pariser and Warren Cooper for the annual Yoga Loka Thanksgiving day class.

Each year Bonnie leads participants in asana while Warren reads poetry geared towards gratitude and abundance. All proceeds are donated to the Frenchtown Food Pantry. Early donations can be sent to Yoga Loka or The Frenchtown Presbyterian Church. Registration is essential and space is limited.

For more information or to register go to: www.Yoga-Loka.com

Riegelsville Library Upcoming Events

Story Times are weekly on Tuesday @ 10:30 AM and Thursday @ 1:30 PM.

Get into the holiday spirit at the Riegelsville Library!

Make and decorate a mini-gingerbread house or mini-tree!

Saturday, December 10, 11am – 1pm

All materials provided by the library.

Riegelsville Public Library, 615 Easton Road, Riegelsville, PA

Puppet Shows at the Riegelsville Library A Celebration of Being Thankful

November 15th & 17th

Winter Wonderland

December 27th

Puppet shows will be held instead of story time on these dates. Shows will be held at 10:30am on Tuesday and 1:30pm on Thursday. No registration required, free to attend.

Eyes of the Wild and Wallaby Tales Traveling Zoo

Tuesday, December 29th at 11am

Riegelsville Borough Community Room

Join us for a free program to learn about Chinchillas, Arctic Fox and more during this exciting and educational show featuring LIVE wildlife!

For more than a decade, Eyes of the Wild has operated as a wildlife rescue and educational facility. ***Live animals will be present. If you are allergic to animal fur or hair, please take appropriate precautions. Absolutely no food or drink may be present during the program.*

For info call: 610-749-2357 www.riegelsvillelibrary.com

Home for Rent?

The Lederers (Kristyn, Zane, Annika & Ridge) are searching for a new home. If you or someone you know has a 3+ bedroom rental available before November 30, please contact Kristyn @ 267-471-2751. We have two indoor cats we would love to bring with us, if possible. We would definitely prefer to be near Quakertown but will consider other areas as well. Thank you!

Purely Farm's Thanksgiving Turkey

Purely Farm is 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, and amazingly fresh. All turkeys will be processed less than a week before Thanksgiving and available for pick up at 4 convenient locations as well as on their farm in Ottsville. Get your order in while supplies last!

In addition to whole turkeys Purely Farm will also offer a variety of turkey cuts that can either add a little extra meat to your meal or help feed a smaller gathering. As always Purely Farm will also have a full spread of their yummy pasture-raised meats, turkey bone broth and pork and lamb sausages available when you purchase your turkey. One stop shopping of pasture-raised meats at it's best, let Purely Farm help make this Thanksgiving Feast a truly memorable meal!

To order call: 215-317-0889 or email purelyfarm@gmail.com

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 All events are free and open to the public. Teens welcome.

Contact MaryBeth Healy 908-672-3455

HELPING HANDS FOR HIRE

Do you need a hand with something?

I enjoy the following:

Cleaning ("green"); sorting and organizing (even the messes!); Care-taking: land, home, people, animals; companionship; nourishing cooking/meal preparation; shopping; gardening and yard work (hand-based); personal assistant/helper; event preparation; and, I'm up for trying something not on this list too.

Available on an as-needed basis many weekdays 9:30-2:30. Sliding scale (pay what you can) or baseline hourly rate. Email bowersbetara@gmail.com Phone/Text: 908-674-2772 (Tara Bowers, mother of Alice, grade 3)

Yellowberry Holiday Bazaar Booth

Peyton Kovach, 6th 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/>

From NPR

5 Reasons Schools Should Measure Chronic Absence

By Elissa Nadworny

How do you judge how good a school is? Test scores? Culture? Attendance?

In the new federal education law, states are asked to use five measures of student success. The first four are dictated by the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA. Three are related to academics — like annual tests and graduation rates. The fourth measures proficiency of English language learners.

The fifth is the wild card — aimed at measuring "student success or school quality" — and the law leaves it to states to decide. There are many ideas out there for what schools could choose — including suspension rates and school climate surveys.

A new report from the Hamilton Project at the Brookings Institution suggests that the best choice states could make, if they really want to make a difference, is to require schools to use chronic absence.

We've reported extensively on chronic absence, a relatively new metric for schools that looks beyond the average attendance rate. Instead, they track how many days each student misses — and how many students are missing 10 percent or more of the school year.

That's roughly two days a month. And the latest national numbers suggest that more than 6 million students are "chronically absent."

"It's a meaningful measure, and improving it would be productive for the students," says Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, an economist at Northwestern University and one of the authors of the report.

Research shows that chronically absent students are way more likely to fall behind and, eventually, drop out. And there's a strong connection between missing class in elementary school and low scores on third-grade state tests.

States must decide soon what information they'll send to the feds.

In urging them to pick chronic absenteeism, the Brookings report lays out five big arguments:

- 1) It's measurable. Other metrics, like surveys on school climate, are self-reported, making them easier to manipulate. "Within reason, I think we can all agree what it means to be absent from school," says Whitmore Schanzenbach. "So it's easy to measure, it's already collected by most schools, so it's not going to cost much more time or money."
- 2) With so many students missing so many days of school — in every state — there's lots of room for improvement.
- 3) Reducing chronic absence improves student achievement. "More kids in the seats means they're learning what's being taught," says Whitmore Schanzenbach. "High absenteeism rates have spillover effects in the classroom," she adds. "If classmates are absent, and the teacher has to go back and review in order to catch those kids up, there's spillover on everyone."
- 3) Rates of chronic absence differ greatly, so any state should be able to see which of its schools are doing well and which ones need improvement. (The federal law also says there has to be a distribution across schools — so this checks that box.)
- 5) There's strong evidence that schools can control and reduce chronic absence. Specific interventions, like mentorship programs and improved family engagement, can work. We've reported about the school district in Grand Rapids, Mich., that lowered its numbers by using data strategically and working with community partners.

From the New York Times

The Health Benefits of Knitting

By JANE E. BRODY

About 15 years ago, I was invited to join a knitting group. My reluctant response — “When would I do that?” — was rejoined with “Monday afternoons at 4,” at a friend’s home not three minutes’ walk from my own. I agreed to give it a try.

My mother had taught me to knit at 15, and I knitted in class throughout college and for a few years thereafter. Then decades passed without my touching a knitting needle. But within two Mondays in the group, I was hooked, not only on knitting but also on crocheting, and I was on my way to becoming a highly productive crafter.

I’ve made countless afghans, baby blankets, sweaters, vests, shawls, scarves, hats, mittens, caps for newborns and two bedspreads. I take a yarn project with me everywhere, especially when I have to sit still and listen. As I’d discovered in college, when my hands are busy, my mind stays focused on the here and now.

It seems, too, that I’m part of a national resurgence of interest in needle and other handicrafts, and not just among old grannies like me. The Craft Yarn Council reports that a third of women ages 25 to 35 now knit or crochet. Even men and schoolchildren are swelling the ranks, among them my friend’s three grandsons, ages 6, 7 and 9.

Last April, the council created a “Stitch Away Stress” campaign in honor of National Stress Awareness Month. Dr. Herbert Benson, a pioneer in mind/body medicine and author of “The Relaxation Response,” says that the repetitive action of needlework can induce a relaxed state like that associated with meditation and yoga. Once you get beyond the initial learning curve, knitting and crocheting can lower heart rate and blood pressure and reduce harmful blood levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

But unlike meditation, craft activities result in tangible and often useful products that can enhance self-esteem. I keep photos of my singular accomplishments on my cellphone to boost my spirits when needed.

Since the 1990s, the council has surveyed hundreds of thousands of knitters and crocheters, who routinely list stress relief and creative fulfillment as the activities’ main benefits. Among them is the father of a prematurely born daughter who reported that during the baby’s five weeks in the neonatal intensive care unit, “learning how to knit preemie hats gave me a sense of purpose during a time that I felt very helpless. It’s a hobby that I’ve stuck with, and it continues to help me cope with stress at work, provide a sense of order in hectic days, and allows my brain time to solve problems.”

A recent email from the yarn company Red Heart titled “Health Benefits of Crocheting and Knitting” prompted me to explore what else might be known about the health value of activities like knitting. My research revealed that the rewards go well beyond replacing stress and anxiety with the satisfaction of creation.

For example, Karen Zila Hayes, a life coach in Toronto, conducts knitting therapy programs, including Knit to Quit to help smokers give up the habit, and Knit to Heal for people coping with health crises, like a cancer diagnosis or serious illness of a family member. Schools and prisons with craft programs report that they have a calming effect and enhance social skills. And having to follow instructions on complex craft projects can improve children’s math skills.

Some people find that craftwork helps them control their weight. Just as it is challenging to smoke while knitting, when hands are holding needles and hooks, there’s less snacking and mindless eating out of boredom.

I’ve found that my handiwork with yarn has helped my arthritic fingers remain more dexterous as I age. A woman encouraged to try knitting and crocheting after developing an autoimmune disease that caused a lot of hand pain reported on the Craft Yarn Council site that her hands are now less stiff and painful.

(Continued on the next page.)

A 2009 University of British Columbia study of 38 women with the eating disorder anorexia nervosa who were taught to knit found that learning the craft led to significant improvements. Seventy-four percent of the women said the activity lessened their fears and kept them from ruminating about their problem.

Betsan Corkhill, a wellness coach in Bath, England, and author of the book "Knit for Health & Wellness," established a website, [Stitchlinks](#), to explore the value of what she calls therapeutic knitting. Among her respondents, 54 percent of those who were clinically depressed said that knitting made them feel happy or very happy. In a study of 60 self-selected people with chronic pain, Ms. Corkhill and colleagues reported that knitting enabled them to redirect their focus, reducing their awareness of pain. She suggested that the brain can process just so much at once, and that activities like knitting and crocheting make it harder for the brain to register pain signals. More of [Stitchlinks](#) findings are available at their website.

Perhaps most exciting is research that suggests that crafts like knitting and crocheting may help to stave off a decline in brain function with age. In a 2011 study, researchers led by Dr. Yonas E. Geda, a psychiatrist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., interviewed a random sample of 1,321 people ages 70 to 89, most of whom were cognitively normal, about the cognitive activities they engaged in late in life. The study, published in the *Journal of Neuropsychiatry & Clinical Neurosciences*, found that those who engaged in crafts like knitting and crocheting had a diminished chance of developing mild cognitive impairment and memory loss.

Although it is possible that only people who are cognitively healthy would pursue such activities, those who read newspapers or magazines or played music did not show similar benefits. The researchers speculate that craft activities promote the development of neural pathways in the brain that help to maintain cognitive health.

In support of that suggestion, a 2014 study by Denise C. Park of the University of Texas at Dallas and colleagues demonstrated that learning to quilt or do digital photography enhanced memory function in older adults. Those who engaged in activities that were not intellectually challenging, either in a social group or alone, did not show such improvements.

Given that sustained social contacts have been shown to support health and longevity, those wishing to maximize the health value of crafts might consider joining a group of like-minded folks. I for one try not to miss a single weekly meeting of my knitting group.