



River Valley Current

December 8, 2015 No. 427

*"Please believe that one single positive dream is more important than a thousand negative realities."
Adeline Yen Mah*

School Calendar

This Week

Friday, December 11

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

Saturday, December 12

Winter Fair 11:00 am–4:00 pm

Looking Ahead

Tuesday, December 15

Holiday Music Concert 6:30 pm

Thursday, December 17

School Tour 9-11:00 am
Shepherd's Play 7:00 pm

Friday, December 18

Shepherd's Play 1:30 pm

Monday, December 21-Friday, January 1

No School – Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

How to Contact Us

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

Winter Fair is This Saturday!

December 12th 11am – 4 pm

Winter Fair is a beautiful festival celebrating the coming of King Winter. It is a time of magic and celebration, 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.

If you haven't already, please sign up in the lobby to volunteer. We are asking each parent to sign up for two shifts: a Set Up OR Clean Up shift, and a working shift for your class's assigned Winter Fair task. You may also contact your classroom coordinator for signup if you can't make it to the school. Thank you in advance for making Winter Fair a magical event!

Need a fresh cut tree for the holidays?

We will be using trees to decorate for King Winter and they will be available for sale. Twenty 6 ft. evergreens will be here so reserve yours today! Trees may be picked up after the festival is over. To reserve your tree please write a check for \$25 to RVWS (Winter Fair in the memo) and place in the folder on the office door. Include your name and phone number. Contact Clare Brunell with any questions. Clare.28@live.com or (908) 713-1030.



Holiday Candlelight Concert

Tuesday, December 16th 6:30 pm

Please join us for River Valley's annual holiday concert. Children in grades 4 through 8 will perform as the audience is bathed in candlelight, songs and good cheer.

Children who are performing need to be in their classrooms by 6 pm dressed in concert attire (See Parent Handbook p. 25 for details).

If your child is not performing, please plan to come with your family for an inspirational holiday celebration.

A Pierogi Family Order Form and a Pizza Form for the next session can be found at the end of this week's Current.

No Buses on Friday Afternoon

Because of our 1 pm early dismissal there will be no Palisades, Pennridge, or Quakertown buses picking up on Friday.

Come See the Shepherds Play at RVWS

Thursday, December 17th at 7 pm and
Friday, December 18th at 1:30 pm

Every year members of the faculty, staff, and parent body perform the Oberufer Shepherds Play as a gift for the children. The play dates back to the 16th century when it was performed on the island of Oberufer in the Danube River near the borders of Germany, Austria, and Hungary. Please plan to bring family and friends to experience this humorous, magical play.

From Administration

Boundary Issues

Our neighbors to the east of us along Bridgeton Hill Road have let us know that some RVWS children have been gathering board scraps from their property and using it to build things. Incidences have occurred both during school hours and after. In light of this, we are planning to weave a rope through the trees near the property line to make a clear boundary for the children. In the meantime, please be aware that the rock wall in the woods next to our front playground is fully on the neighbor's property. To help ensure no further trespassing, please keep your children in sight when playing after school.

Teachers will monitor the children during recess and make them aware of the boundary, but we need your help to make sure we are good neighbors even after class has been dismissed. Thank you.

Directory Updates

The telephone number for the Cheng family is incorrect in the alphabetical section of the directory. The number should read: 516-680-4707.

Kamran Ozair's email address is:
kamranozair@gmail.com

Please write these into your home directory. The changes have been made to the online directory.

REMINDER:

The most up-to-date School Directory is always as close as your computer or smart phone! Visit the Parent Resources section of the RVWS website. Parent Resources can be found under the Life at RVWS tab. If you need the password, please email info@rivervalleyschool.org or speak with Robbie or Cindy in the office.

Amazon.com and RVWS

Right now, RVWS is part of the Amazon Smile program – you can designate RVWS as your beneficiary of choice.

Tis the season for online holiday shopping...If you shop through Amazon you may designate River Valley Waldorf School to receive .5% from your purchase. There is no extra cost to you on your purchase. Simply place your Amazon orders through Amazon Smile, and designate RVWS as your chosen charity. The site will remember your preference, so you only need to do this once. In order to register for this program, please follow these instructions: Sign in to <http://smile.amazon.com> on your desktop or mobile browser.

From your desktop, go to Your Account from the navigation at the top of any page, and then select the option to Change your Charity.

From your mobile browser, select Change your Charity from the options at the bottom of the page. Type in River Valley Waldorf School and our name should appear for you to select.

We are also in the process of becoming an Amazon Associate – which will mean a much larger percentage of everyone's shopping will be paid to RVWS. That part is a bit more complicated and we are in the process of getting the proper links set up on our website and arranging the necessary routing. Stay tuned for this part!

From the Faculty

What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Language Arts/Vowels

Second Grade – Math

Third Grade – Arithmetic

Fourth Grade – Local History/Geography

Fifth Grade – North American Geography

Sixth Grade – Central & South American Geography

Seventh Grade – Central & South American Geography

Eighth Grade – History/American Colonization & Revolution

A New Opportunity

Every child works at his or her own pace in Handwork and sometimes a project does not get completed by the end of the year. Miss Till is offering after-school opportunities (free of charge) for help with current or past handwork projects. She will be offering these most Tuesdays 3:30 - 4:30. Please get in touch with her to let her know to expect your child. mtill@rivervalleyschool.org

From Parent Council

Parent Council Meeting

There will be no meeting for the month of December – See you in the New Year!

From the Leadership Council

What we are working on?

What are we working on?

Working with EC on next year's programs.

Working with TDC on teacher mentoring and evaluation.

The LC has open hours every Tuesday from 3:30-4 for anyone who would like to meet with us. If you have a question or a concern, please stop by. All are welcome.

Building & Grounds

School Work Days

Below is the calendar of the upcoming workdays. Please note that some changes have been made from the school calendar. Please RSVP to Mary K. Till (mtill@rivervalleyschool.org), to let us know if you will attend. This way we can plan what projects can be undertaken. Mary K. Till and Lynne Allbaugh - Building and Grounds

2015-2016 Work Days

TBD - 5th grade

January 23 - 4th grade

February 27 - 3rd grade

March 12 - 2nd grade

April 23 - 1st grade

May 14 - Early Childhood

From the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees would like to commend the members of the Interim Administration Team (IAT) for stepping up to support the school community as they re-shape the school's administrative duties. The IAT members consist of TreeAnne McEnery (Pedagogical Chair), Cindy Schretlen (Admissions), Will Carpenter (Chairman of the Board of Trustees), and Nick Thompson (Treasurer of the Board of Trustees). Since September, this team has pooled their talents to address the school's day-to-day needs and met regularly to develop ideas for a new, permanent administrative model.

Before proposing a new model in January 2016, the IAT would like to gather your input to help ensure any future changes address as many of our community's needs and concerns as possible. We ask that you, members of the parent community, take a moment to send your responses and thoughts directly to Board member (and RVWS parent) Jef Betz at jefbetz@gmail.com. Jef will collect and summarize the parent feedback; unless you indicate otherwise, Jef will keep confidential all the names of everyone who sends a response.

Please email your response to the questions below by December 16.

- Do you feel the parent community's needs have been adequately met by the administrative (i.e., non-faculty) staff during the first half of the school year?
- Is there anything specific you'd like to see improved in how the school administration supports the parent community?

A summary of all responses, in addition to input from the Faculty and Leadership Council, will be considered by the IAT as it finalizes a proposal to the Board early next year. We hope you will all take advantage of this opportunity to help shape the direction of River Valley Waldorf School. If you have any questions about this process, please feel free to contact Jef Betz at jefbetz@gmail.com.

From Development

EITC Update

During these difficult political times, without a state budget, the EITC program is in jeopardy. Governor Wolf can do what Governor Rendell did in 2003 by releasing the mandated OSTC/EITC tax credit letters. However, time is running out for companies to make a 2015 donation.

You can continue to make a difference. Please contact the Governor's office and ask Governor Wolf to act now, by directing DCED to release the approval letters. Help free the millions of dollars in corporate donations that otherwise will be lost to our children if the Governor does not act. RVWS will lose \$6,000 if these funds are not released. Please call the Governor at 717-787-2500 or email the Governor's office today.

Class Fundraisers

RVWS Hats

The first order of RVWS hats sold in a flash. 8th grade parents would be happy to order more, but there is a minimum required for the order. If you would like to buy a hat (or hats) please email Josh Holtz at: josh@cecassociates.biz and let him know. If he receives requests for 48 hats, the order will be placed. Please respond to Josh immediately if you are interested.

Planning your child's birthday party?

Let the energetic, fun-loving eighth graders help — and help them raise the funds they need for their class trip! We'll make your child's party one they won't soon forget! Now booking dates for October, November, and December— Limited dates available so email Renell Carpenter (renell@rcn.com) or Kira Willey (kira@kira.net) to reserve your party now!

From the Community

Purely Farm Back this Friday

Purely Farm's pork, turkey and eggs will once again be available for purchase at River Valley. Plan ahead so that you can stock up for winter break this Friday morning, December 11th after dropping off the kids! The farmers will be set up outside the front entrance between 8 and 9 am, so take a moment and check out what's on hand, ask questions and choose something to help nourish the family through these joyful weeks ahead. If planning your holiday meals, be sure to include pasture-raised meats, such as succulent shoulder roasts, nitrate-free hams or turkey. There is no need to commit to a whole turkey either, because a boneless, 4 pound, skin-on breast may be all you need. Thighs and drumsticks are also sold individually for the dark meat lover in your family.

Joanna and Marc Michini of Purely Farm, parents of Clover in the Sun Room, have a long history of providing the best meats in the area. Their farm critters thrive on life out on pasture and a diet supplemented by mineral rich, organic grains that are locally grown and GMO free. Joanna and Marc will be at RVWS monthly with your orders all ready to take home—saving you shopping time and providing you with quality and wholesome, naturally pasture-raised meats. Equally, if you'd rather organize a buying club in your own town, they will drop at a central location. If this appeals, please contact them at purelyfarm@gmail.com. Please email them also for advance information about availability. See attached price lists for current offerings from Purely Farm.

Knife Sharpening

I am McCaslin Miles, an RVWS student. I will sharpen all of your blades – hatchets, chef knives, pocket and hunting knives and many more. (The only knives I cannot sharpen are Asian style, 15-degree cooking knives; sorry). Prices are \$5 per knife, \$4 for four or more knives, \$3 per knife for repeat customers. Satisfaction guaranteed. Email me at: edgesharp2003@gmail.com

Coming up at Yoga Loka

Winter Solstice Celebration

Asana class and chanting, Tuesday Dec. 22nd at 6:30

New Year's Day Class

January 1st, 12:00-2:00 pm

Open House Celebration, January 2nd

Free classes and workshops all day at Yoga Loka

Celebrating the start of our 13th year in Frenchtown!

See the website for more details

www.Yoga-Loka.com

Ottsville Traditional Arts Center Events

DECEMBER

Wednesday, Dec. 9

Jam Workshop with Daniel Hawkins 6 - 8 pm - \$10 suggested donation

Join us this Friday, December 11th at 6 pm for

SECOND FRIDAY COMMUNITY OPEN MIC NIGHT

6-7pm Childrens' Performances, 7-8pm Guest Artist Yuri Gohen, 8-10pm Adult Performances

\$5 suggested donation. Bring snacks and beverages to share!

At the Ottsville Trad Arts Center, 250 Durham Rd in Ottsville, PA

(See flyer attached to this week's Current)

Friday, Dec. 18

The Elftones in Concert – Timing and pricing TBA!

Every Wednesday

Open Jam with Richard Finch

6:00-8:00 pm • \$5 suggested donation

More at ottsvilletradarts.weebly.com • 250 Durham Rd. Ottsville Pa.

From Huffpost Education

Teaching the Whole Child: Waldorf Schools and Exemplary Teacher Engagement

By Carol J. Carter

Waldorf schools take an unconventionally nurturing approach to learning, making them a unique approach to education. Initially, some viewed the schools as emphasizing play over learning, but now a growing number recognize that the Waldorf model supports educational and personal habits which often go overlooked and under-appreciated in traditional schooling.

Following from a philosophy that attends to the development of human behavior, Waldorf schools help students learn and grow through uniting mind and body. Fashioned by Rudolf Steiner in 1919, the Waldorf education is one that focuses on the individual student's strengths rather than catering to a large group and assuming that all students learn in the same way.

Teachers are the main source of strength in Waldorf schools. With a heavy focus on the importance of hands-on experience for their students, rather than standardized testing, Waldorf teachers help their students to explore curricula through diverse activities, with plenty of room to customize lesson plans. The fluidity of this approach provides extensive engagement that leads to lifelong connections with the material taught, the teachers involved and the bigger questions at the heart of each subject.

(Continued on next page)

According to the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA), Waldorf schools are highly attuned to the quest to establish each child's own level of academic excellence. The International Conference on Education of the United Nations Educational and Scientific Cultural Organization endorses the Waldorf method, saying it "places the development of the individual child in the focal point, convinced that the healthy individual is a prerequisite for a healthy society."

With this mindset, Waldorf schools and educators encourage their pupils to truly thrive in a healthy environment where their opinions and differences are respected rather than stifled or rejected. A distinction of Waldorf teachers is their passion for individuality and commitment to nurturing individual student's mind. This philosophy also deems the relationship between Waldorf teachers and their students very much akin to that between mentors and mentees, so that involvement extends beyond the classroom.

Jeff Moore, a past Waldorf educator at the Mountain Laurel Waldorf School in New Paltz, NY, stuck with his small class through the foundational year of first grade all the way until eighth grade graduation. "When somebody asked me what Waldorf education was like, part of me always wanted to respond, 'it's a lot like that salad of the same name: full of fruits, nuts and flakes,'" Moore jokes when asked about his experience. Since he taught the class all of the primary subjects (with the exception of foreign languages), he fostered a connection with his students that paved the way for lifelong mentorship and mutual respect. "One of the great strengths of Waldorf education is, I feel, its use of story to communicate the lesson," Moore says. He adds, "this is most evident in the earlier years of the pedagogy, when Grimm's Fairy Tales, Aesop's fables and a variety of legends and mythologies from around the world become a vehicle for presenting ideas and concepts in a living way."

Moore says his experience at Mountain Laurel is one that cannot be described briefly. The school was powerful for him and for his class due to the depths of creativity: "it requires a good deal of creative flexibility on the teacher's part, but the result is seen in the smiles and even the slack-jawed, sometimes awestruck faces of the children during the lesson. The material resonates on deep levels. I would need several pages to begin to do justice to my experience at the school."

The effect of such educators as Moore leaves a significant mark on the future education and life choices on students. Remy Baglieri, a Mountain Laurel graduate in 2008 and a former student of Moore's, has only positive and appreciative things to say about Moore and her Waldorf education.

Although the Waldorf approach to education has expanded to great lengths, especially in Europe, there are some who question the seemingly test-less teaching approach. Because Steiner's philosophy incorporates the most profound understanding of human development, it can be difficult for conventional thinkers to accept the ways in which Waldorf directs students away from the standardized testing train that consumes much of K-12 education.

However, according to the AWSNA, a staggering 94 percent of Waldorf graduates attend college, 89 percent expresses great satisfaction with career choices, and 90 percent place high value on the importance of tolerance of other viewpoints.

With bright, capable students and teachers wholly committed to both what occurs in the classroom and after, the Waldorf model flourishes. The immense quality of thinking and roundedness that comes from a Waldorf education is vital to today's society.

Pierogi Family Order Form

Thank you to the RVWS community for your generous support of Thursday Pierogi Day!

We are now also offering monthly "stock the freezer" options for enjoying the delicious taste of Maria's Homemade Pierogies at home. The pierogies will be delivered uncooked once a month on Wednesday at pick-up in aluminum containers. These containers can be refrigerated for three days or frozen for three months. We will provide detailed preparation instructions. The pierogies offered on Thursdays for lunch are potato and onion. You can order this variety or any of the flavors below at a discounted rate once a month.

Family order forms may be placed in the folder labeled "Pierogies" on the office door. Please return them by Friday, December 11th along with payment for checks made payable to RVWS, "8th grade pierogies" in the memo.

Delivery Date: Wednesday, December 16th, 3:00 PM

All profits are used to support the 8th Grade Class Trip at the end of the year.

Thank you for supporting our class!

Sincerely,

The students of the 8th Grade

Family Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Prices are per 10 pierogies :

Potato and Onion Number of orders _____ X \$10 Total \$ _____

Sauerkraut and Onion Number of orders _____ X \$10 Total \$ _____

Potato and Farmers Cheese Number of orders _____ X \$20 Total \$ _____

Mushroom and Onion Number of orders _____ X \$20 Total \$ _____

Sweet Potato and Carrot Number of orders _____ X \$20 Total \$ _____

Goat Cheese Garlic Parsley Number of orders _____ X \$30 Total \$ _____

Total Order Amount: \$ _____

Pizza Day – Round Two!!

Once again the 3rd graders will be offering pizza and organic lemonade on Fridays, starting January 8th until June 3rd.

We have heard your suggestions and are proud to announce the pizza now crunchier, saucier and just the right amount of cheese!

We are unable to offer a gluten free option at this time.

Please return payment to the front office by Thursday, December 17th with payment to RVWS.

This payment is for the second half of 18 weeks.

This is part of an annual fundraiser for our trip to Hawthorne Valley Farm in March 2016.

Thank you for your support! Sincerely, Mrs. Atkinson's 3rd Grade Class!

Child's Name: _____

Grade and Teachers name: _____

_____ 1 slice & lemonade: \$63.00

_____ 2 slices & lemonade: \$103.50

_____ 1 slice/no lemonade: \$40.50

_____ 2 slices/no lemonade: \$81.00

_____ Lemonade Only: \$22.50

Last day for Pizza will be Friday June 3rd

Questions please contact Kymm Phibbs at 267-337-0636

Pizza will be delivered to each classroom as ordered.

The children are distributing the pizza and lemonade and have had a great time being involved in this fundraiser.

Happy Holidays to you and yours!