

School Calendar

This Week

Thursday, Dec 11	
School Tour	9:00 am
Friday, Dec 12	
Early Dismissal-Winter Fair set-up	1:00 pm
Saturday, Dec 13	
Winter Fair	11:00 am-4:00 pm

Looking Ahead

Sunday, Dec 14	
5 th grade Workday	
Tuesday, Dec 16	
Holiday Candlelight Concert	6:30 pm
Thursday, Dec 18	
Shepherds Play	7:00 pm
Friday, Dec 19	
Shepherds Play	1:30 pm
Monday, Dec 22-Friday, Jan 2	
School Closed – Holiday Break	

How to Contact Us

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

Winter Fair is This Saturday!

December 13th 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.

Secret Garden is one of the most magical places at the festival and one the children look forward to with anticipation. Please remember we need 20 Secret Garden items from each family to help further this feeling of awe and wonder.

These items can be small and preferably homemade. Please drop off your treasures in the collection box in the lobby.

See inside for more Winter Fair News.

Please contact your classroom coordinator or the Winter Fair committee, Rebecca Brown, Clare Brunell, Kymm Phibbs or pc@rivervalleyschool.org with any questions you may have.

Need a present for that Tie-dye enthusiast?

The 3rd grade will be selling tie dye t-shirts, onesies, bags and sunhats in the lobby Tuesday 12/16 and Thursday 12/18 at pick up.

No Samosas this Friday, Please be sure to pack a lunch. Samosas will resume next week (12/19).

(Samosa forms & Pizza forms are attached to the Current.)

Holiday Candlelight Concert

Tuesday, December 16th 6:30 pm



Please join us for River Valley's first ever 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.

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

(See inside in From the Faculty for details about Concert Attire.)

Come See the Shepherds Play at RVWS

Thursday, December 18th at 7 pm and Friday, December 17th 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. There will be more information about the play in next week's Current. Please plan to bring family and friends to experience this humorous, magical play.

Winter Fair Raffle!

Have you seen the beautiful, hand made, one-of-a-kind raffle prize? It would make a stunning addition to your nature table/holiday decor, or make an exquisite gift. Tickets are available for purchase now! Save some time waiting in line at Winter Fair and buy your raffle tickets this week.

There are two ways to participate in pre sale: tickets were sent home with children recently; self serve purchase tickets are to be found in the front office door pocket. Each ticket costs \$5.00, or 5 tickets sold for \$20. Please write your name and phone number on the back of each ticket and mail or bring it into school before Dec 13th with the appropriate payment. Please make checks payable to "RVWS" with "WF raffle" noted on the bottom. You may drop off tickets/payment in the "WF Raffle" folder in front office door pocket. If you have any questions, contact Jean Tuma. Thank you for your support!



From Administration

ENROLLMENT

There are two great opportunities to get to know RVWS next week! The first is our monthly School Tour Morning on Thursday, December 11th at 9 am. This event is for adults only and provides a fantastic overview of Waldorf education and a glimpse of our programs by visiting classrooms from the youngest to the oldest. Invite your friends and family – admissions season is in full swing!

The second is the ever wonder-full Winter Fair. What a showcase for so much of what makes RVWS an incredible school and such a great community in which to raise children! In addition to all the delicious food, engaging musical entertainment and delightful children's activities, there is a 'model grade-school classroom' continually staffed by teachers and admin staff, and a 'quiet room' set up in one of the early childhood classrooms for families with children who need a little break from the excitement.

All of our RVWS families are our very best recruiters! Invite your friends and family to see RVWS for themselves. If you have any questions, (or to register for the School Tour Morning) please speak to Cindy, Brian or Hilary. Thanks!

From Outreach

Do you have ideas of where you want to see River Valley in the community? Please feel free to contact Hilary at hmurphy@rivercvalleyschool.org to share your ideas and to get information regarding our outreach events. Thank you!

CH-CH-CH-CHANGES...

Please join the administrative staff in giving a heartfelt "thank-you" to Tiffany Robinson for holding the Marketing Support position (which of course, is so much more than just marketing) these past several months. Tiffany will continue to be an integral part of the team at RVWS in her longtime volunteer roles which include taking photographs and the coordination & layout of the yearbook, for which we are all so grateful!

Please also join the administrative staff in a warm "welcome back" to alumni parent Renee Goodyear who will be stepping into the Marketing Support position once again!

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Our friends at the Pasadena Waldorf School have made an exceptional video called 'A Perfect Circle' that beautifully and concisely illustrates the interconnectedness of the Waldorf curriculum. Please take a moment to view (it is less than 4 minutes in length) and share it with any friends or family who may be interested – or to whom you may have been trying to find the right words to illustrate your child's experience... If that one does not speak to you, there are several others posted in our video library that may!

<http://vimeo.com/91553016>

Opening for Development Coordinator (Part-time)

Jill McMullen will be leaving her post as Development Coordinator as soon as the position is filled. If you are interested in applying, please speak to Brian Wolff.

River Valley Waldorf School is accepting applications to fill a part-time Development Coordinator position to start immediately. Responsibilities include leading and managing all fundraising activities, including the annual appeal and the yearly auction event. This person will work closely with the Board and Administrator to develop both short and long term organizational fundraising strategies for the school. This person will coordinate all efforts of the Development Committee and report to the Board on a monthly basis. The Development Coordinator manages the tracking of all contributions, sending of thank you letters and creating a simple annual report. This position will be approximately 10 hours per week.

Qualifications:

- A good understanding of the benefits of Waldorf education
- Bachelor's degree and three years' experience in annual fundraising and some experience in raising major gifts or high-end annual appeal gifts
- Solid communication skills, including writing, editing and proofreading
- Ability to manage multiple projects, priorities and deadlines
- Ability to work collaboratively and creatively with parent volunteers
- Proficiency with eTapestry or other fundraising software is desirable

Interested applicants should submit cover letter, resume and three references to: bwolff@rivervalleysschool.org

From the Leadership Council

The following policy has been endorsed by the Faculty and will appear in the next edition of the Parent Handbook. It is already in effect, so please read it carefully in preparation for Winter Fair. Thank you.

Electronic Device Policy

The foundation of Waldorf Education relies on the richness of direct experience through the interactions with others and the natural environment. The use of electronic devices; including but not limited to cell phones, iPods, electronic gaming devices, tablets, etc., serves as a distraction from these direct and natural experiences and can isolate the user from his or her natural surroundings. River Valley Waldorf School does recognize the popularity of these devices and accepts that they are used off school grounds, especially cellular phones for communication purposes with parents. We believe they do not belong in the school environment.

While children are at school, parents/guardians may directly contact the school office in order to communicate with their children. Children will also be required to use the proper channels of communication through the office administration to contact parents/guardians.

From the time children arrive at school until they leave the campus, use of any electronic device is prohibited unless required for educational purposes and approved by the teacher. If a child uses a device at school, said device will be confiscated by his or her teacher and returned at the end of the day. In addition, this policy pertains to all school related activities, whether on or off school campus, including transportation to and from school on RVWS vans and on class trips. It is also our expectation that children riding the public school buses will refrain from using any electronic devices as they travel to and from school.

The only exception to this rule is in the case of a real health or safety emergency, such as a call to 911, when immediate communication is of paramount importance.

As always, we are the models for our children's behavior. We request that all adults be aware of personal cell phone use and minimize it in the hallways and on playgrounds, especially during pick-up and drop-off times.

Please note: At our Doylestown satellite location, the teacher will keep a cell phone with her at all times for safety and communication with parents. Parents/guardians may contact the teacher directly by phone.

Report from our Community Meeting on Teachers Looping in the Grades

On Tuesday, November 18th a group of parents and teachers gathered in the All-Purpose Room for a meeting hosted by the Leadership Council and the Teacher Development Committee to discuss the subject of teachers "looping" through the grades.

Annie Porter opened the discussion by explaining that the faculty has been looking at this question for several years and at the recent AWSNA (Association of Waldorf Schools of North America) meeting held at River Valley, this was a topic of conversation among representatives of Waldorf Schools in our region. Traditionally in Waldorf schools, teachers in the grades have taken classes from first grade through to eighth grade. More and more it has become common for schools to find that some teachers have an affinity for teaching younger children or older children and they have been creating shorter loops to allow teachers to teach to their strengths.

We went around our circle of parents and teachers to get a feel for what lives in our community. Opinions ranged from some who like the idea of the 1-8 continuity to many who are open to other models. As it stands now, teachers are evaluated in 5th grade to determine whether they should continue with their class through 8th grade. Questions were raised about the 5th grade evaluation and how it is possible to predict a teacher's success not only academically, but also socially as children move into adolescence. However, many expressed support for the 1-5, 6-8 model that we currently have. Some raised questions about the transition, if teachers change, and when and how this is shared with the children and the parents. Some expressed support for teachers teaching to their strengths for the benefit of the children. Adherence to the Waldorf curriculum was felt by some to be more important than how long a teacher stays with a class. Overall, parents were grateful for the opportunity to participate in the discussion and appreciated the efforts made by the school to be inclusive.

At the end of the evening, Annie expressed thanks to all who attended and said that the purpose of the meeting was to gather information, not to make decisions. She said that the faculty and administration will be working on the issues addressed in the meeting and will share their ideas with the parent body as the discussion continues.

LC has received additional input by email from those who could not attend the meeting. We encourage others to send their thoughts to LC or attend one of our open meetings on Fridays from 3:30-4 pm.

What are we working on?

- An assessment of our new Movement and Games Program
- Follow up to the community grade school looping conversation
- Working with TDC on re-examining our evaluation process

From the Faculty

WHAT ARE THE CHILDREN LEARNING?

First Grade: Math

Second Grade: Math

Third Grade: Language Arts/Hebrew Stories

Fourth Grade: Math/Fractions/Norse Mythology

Fifth Grade: North American History and Geography

Sixth Grade: Geometry

Seventh Grade: World Geography/Africa

Eighth Grade: History

Concert Attire

For both the Holiday Concert and the Grandparent's Assembly, in keeping with traditional concert attire, the dress is as follows:

Girls: White Blouse, black skirt no shorter than two inches above the knee, or black dress pants, black tights or socks, black dress shoes with maximum 1 inch heel.

Boys: White button down shirt tucked in to black dress pants, black socks, black dress shoes.

Schuhplattler Performances

The River Valley Schuhplattler Troupe will finish out 2014 by performing at Winter Fair on December 13. Any 3rd, 4th and 5th graders who know the dance are welcome to join us for the performance. Participants are required to rehearse on Thursday afternoon, Dec. 11. Please contact Peter Ray (peter.ray@comcast.net, or 215-794-5816).

From the Board

Board Corner

Do you know someone who would make a great Board member? The Board of Trustees is beginning the search for new board members for next school year. Also, there will be one vacancy sometime in the new year, which, according to our by-laws, we will fill by appointment. Please contact Rich Kroth (rich@kroths.com) if you are interested or would like to talk more about the opportunity.

Strategic Planning Committee

Did you sign up to join the Strategic Planning Committee at Back to School Night? Please email Molly Watson (mwatson416@gmail.com) if you did- I want to make sure I didn't miss anyone! Thanks and looking forward to working with you!

From Parent Council

Winter Fair Announcements

Secret Garden will be needing extra help as the parent pool from this class is so small. If you can help please let Stephanie Smith of the 5th Grade know or see the sign up board in the lobby. slrsmith@mac.com Thank you!!

King Winter would like to borrow your wooden sleds. Please label. Also we could use a few more bales of straw. Please let me know if you can drop them off - Lynn 267-784-2152

Alumni News

Congratulations

Congratulations to Julia Smith (Class of 2014) and Trevor Schretlen (Class of 2011) who were among the former River Valley students named to the Honor Roll and Head of School list for the Fall semester at George School. These awards commend students for their "hard work, constructive attitude, regular attendance and punctual and thorough homework" as well as academic achievement.

What a wonderful way to begin high school, we are proud of you, Julia. And what an accomplishment, Trevor in your senior year. Kudos to you both!

Class Fundraisers

Samosa Orders for the Rest of the Year

Please use the form attached to the Current to sign-up for 13 Fridays in the 2nd semester (Jan 23, 30, Feb 6, 27, Mar 6, 13, Apr 17, 24, May 1, 15, 22, 29, Jun 5). Orders are due by Friday Jan 16. 8th Grade thanks you for your support!!!

8th Grade Sweatshirt Sales Continue!

You can still get a RVWS Sweatshirt and support the 8th grade. We have many children's sizes still available in all three colors – Navy, Pink, or Gray. Adult sizes and zipper front sweatshirts are also available to order. Please complete the order form attached to the Current and leave it with your payment in the folder on the office door. All orders received by Monday, December 8th are guaranteed for delivery before the holiday break. Parents – if you want your sweatshirt for a Christmas surprise, please write a note on the order form and you will be contacted for pick up instead of it going home with your child. Questions? Email or Call Pat Warner-Proctor. Thank you from the 8th grade!

From the Community

Yoga Loka

Holiday cards available for sale at Yoga Loka. Support the Early Learners Development Program in Thane City, India. This program brings supplemental educational programs to rural villages that previously did not support education, particularly for girls. Each card is \$2 and was designed by an Indian artist for this benefit of the program. Support education while spreading holiday cheer!

Email me for a picture of the card at Bonnie@yoga-loka.com or come to the studio and check them out in person. The boutique is stocked with imported items for India, statues, wall hangings and scarves. Gift certificates are for sale on line now for holiday giving.

Save the date: Open House, January 3rd, 2015 - Free classes and workshops all day.

www.Yoga-Loka.com

The Giving Bowl

Thurs, Dec. 11th, 5:00 – 7:00 PM

Palisades High School Cafeteria
Enjoy a Bottomless Bowl of Soup & Endless Salad, Bread, and Beverage. PLUS As our gift to you, select a handmade ceramic bowl created by Palisades' students and community members.

Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door. \$5 for children 10 years and younger – Meal Only. Limited Seating.

Please help us put an end to hunger. Proceeds will benefit local food pantries and those in need who live within the Palisades School District. Join us for this ART to HEART project!

Questions or to make reservations for a particular time? Please call (610) 847-5131, x2431 – Ms. Leslie Patience

"ANNOUNCING SPECTRUM"

Support Group for individuals caring for those with Autism/Asperger's.

Please join us on Tuesday, Dec 9th at 1:00 p.m. Stefani Palumbo-Smith BHRS Coordinator/Licensed Behavior Specialist Autism Services from Maternal Child Consortium (MCC) in Bensalem will answer your behavior related questions during our meeting.

Doylestown United Methodist Church, 320 East Swamp Road, Doylestown, PA spectrumdumc@gmail.com

Grand Opening

Maria's Home Made Pierogies and Emporium
17 Bridge Street Milford NJ 08848 (former home of Healthy Habit)

Friday, December 12th, 4-10 pm during the Christmas in Milford celebration which includes the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Clause in a horse-drawn sleigh as well as activities for children.

Daria Kolodij will have samples of her delicious pierogies, desserts and sangria. Vendors include: Smart Snacks with gluten free cookies and biscotti, Peacock General Store with a variety of cheese balls, Vickie Smith's greeting cards and Montana Mountain vegan soaps.

The emporium is open Wednesday through Sunday from 11:30 am to 8 pm. It is a co-op and new vendors of all kinds are welcome. Contact Daria Kolodij at: onlyonegiftsource@yahoo.com

Babysitter Needed

Former Waldorf family seeks a good old fashioned babysitter to watch our girls, ages 6 & 10, one weekend evening a month and one after school day a week. We live in Ottsville. Please give a call! (215) 768-4913.

Flowering Child Woolies

To celebrate the Holiday Season, FloweringChild.com is sponsoring our school. From December 1, 2014, through January 1, 2015, FloweringChild will donate 10% of all revenue generated by our community to the school.

FloweringChild.com is an online store for very soft wool and silk undergarments for children. The products assist with the maintenance of body temperature and minimization of skin irritation. This is especially useful in the winter months. The undergarments are organic, fair-trade produced, and machine washable.

The mission of FloweringChild.com is to help parents raise healthy children. At FloweringChild.com, Ester Delhoofen, a medical doctor licensed in the Netherlands with extensive complementary training in anthroposophical medicine, provides free advice on health-related parenting issues. She seeks to find and relate time-tested parenting strategies to help make parenting a joy.

New from Ottsville Traditional Arts

Friday, December 19th to Sunday, December 20th

Ringin' Rocks Weekend! AT OTAC & THE BIRDHOUSE featuring Lissa Schneckenburger, Bethany Waickmen, Glen Loper, Bronwyn Bird, Daniel Hawkins and Bill Quern!

It's the middle of Hannukah, the weekend of the Winter Solstice, and the weekend before Christmas, but it's also a BIG week for OTAC and the Birdhouse Center for the Arts! Bring the whole family and join us for a full program of music, dance, and learning. A ticket to Saturday gets you invited to ALL the events, including Friday and Sunday! \$75 adults, \$60 kids (5-18)

Friday, December 19th AT THE OTTSVILLE TRADITIONAL ARTS CENTER

7:30pm: Waickman, Loper & Schneckenburger in Concert!

\$12 adults, \$10 kids (5-18), free under 5

Don't miss hearing this superb band of three top New England Musicians in an intimate setting!

Saturday, December 20th

9:30am - 5pm: Daylong workshop with Bronwyn Bird and Daniel Hawkins

Come learn tunes from Sweden and Newfoundland, enjoy lunch from the Blue Moose and then join us at 3pm for a FREE CONCERT by participants and instructors! Then at 8pm, go dance to Waickman, Loper & Schneckenburger with Donna Hunt at the Glenside Contra's Winter Cotillion!

\$75 adults, \$60 kids (5-18)

Sunday, December 21st

At the BIRDHOUSE CENTER FOR THE ARTS in LAMBERTVILLE, NJ:

4 - 6pm: Free Morris Dance and Workshop with Bill Quern, Kingsessing Morris, and special guests!

7pm: Solstice Sing \$5.00

For more information and to register online go to Ottsvilletrarts.weebly.com

Sharifa Oppenheimer is coming to Waldorf School of Princeton

Seeking Simplicity: Parenting with Rhythm & Balance

An Evening with Sharifa Oppenheimer

Friday, December 12, 7 p.m.

Hagens Hall, Waldorf School of Princeton. Free and open to the public. RSVPs appreciated: events@princetonwaldorf.org

The holiday season may bring joy and togetherness ... but also disruption and stress. Irregular schedules, extra events, and an abundance of treats and treasures introduce additional challenges into our parenting journey. Come learn how to navigate these rough waters with grace and ease, and craft a family culture that celebrates what this time of year has to offer, while preserving healthy childhoods and sane adulthoods!

Sharifa Oppenheimer is the author of the best-selling book Heaven on Earth: A Handbook for Parents of Young Children. She also worked collaboratively to create What Is a Waldorf Kindergarten, and was the founding teacher of the Charlottesville Waldorf School in Virginia, where she taught kindergarten for twenty-one years and served as day care director of the early childhood program. She has helped develop new teachers through mentoring and offering practicum and internship opportunities to the teacher-training students at Sunbridge Institute, and offers lectures and workshops to school and parent groups, encouraging each one to discover their own healthy, heartfelt Family Culture. Sharifa is the mother of three grown sons, who were all educated in the Waldorf tradition.

Art in the Library

Drawing the Portrait in Charcoal

with George Thompson, Tuesday, December 16 6:00pm – 9:00pm

All levels welcome Open to ages 16 - adult

This three-hour workshop is an introduction to one of most challenging and exciting subjects in art--the human head. We will break down the fundamentals and simplify the anatomy. Step-by-step, we will draw the eye, nose, ears, and mouth and discover the proportions of the face and how to get a likeness from a live model. (Please bring your own supplies. Let us know if you don't have your own so that supplies and materials can be provided.)

George Thompson is a nationally recognized, award-winning artist specializing in figure/portrait, landscape, and still life. Thompson has a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Pratt Institute, and has studied figure drawing and painting at The Art Students League, and The Brooklyn Museum. www.georgethompsongallery.com

The workshops will be held in the Community Room at Riegelsville Borough Hall, 615 Easton Road. To sign up or for more information, please contact the Riegelsville Library 610-749-2357 or 610-749-2158. RiegelsvilleLibrary.info

Toys That Spark a Child's Imagination

By Tracy Cutchlow

The stick lying on the sidewalk was, at first, a stick -- just a twig blown down from its tree in last night's windstorm. Then a toddler picked it up. She pointed it to the ground and it became a walking stick. She poked it into the side of the car seat my husband was carrying on our short walk, and the stick became some sort of tool. "I fixed my car seat!" our toddler announced.

She galloped down the sidewalk in the bouncing way she runs, scraping the stick rhythmically along the concrete. Now the stick was making music. Waiting at the intersection, she took both ends of the stick, saw how it arched between her hands, and held it above her head. "It's a rainbow!" she said. "It's a rainbow! It's a rainbow!"

Then she was done. "Carry it," she commanded me, in the royal tone of toddlers everywhere.

Watching her gallop down the sidewalk, twirling the twig, was such a joyful reminder that tots don't need fancy toys. "The best toys don't beep, talk, dance, or flash to hold a child's attention," I write in *Zero to Five: 70 Essential Parenting Tips Based on Science*. "They require imagination to come alive."

What's so important about using imagination in this way? It is what makes us uniquely human. As John Medina explains in the bestselling neuroscience book *Brain Rules*: "Our brains can behold a symbolic object as real by itself and yet, simultaneously, also representing something else. We are so good at dual representation, we combine symbols to derive layers of meaning. It gives us the capacity for language, and for writing down that language. It gives us the capacity to reason mathematically. It gives us the capacity for art. Combinations of circles and squares become geometry and Cubist paintings. Combinations of dots and squiggles become music and poetry. There is an unbroken intellectual line between symbolic reasoning and the ability to create culture. And no other creature is capable of doing it."

Imaginative play develops the symbolic and abstract thought that underpins a culture. OK, I want that. How do we create the conditions for our children to use their imaginations?

It's easy to see their imaginations take over outside. We may smile when our child twirls a twig and wistfully think, "Nope, kids don't need much." And then we may come home to a playroom dotted with bright red and yellow plastic talking toys. (Even if we thought we'd buy only wooden puzzles and blocks, somehow these things sneak into our homes.)

What does a playroom devoted to imagination look like? I'm getting an idea from attending a parent-child preschool class at a Waldorf school once a week. The simple toys include wooden trains and blocks without detail; pine cones and branches; a barn of felted animals; and soft, handmade dolls with yarn for hair and minimal features. They're the kinds of toys that require imagination to come alive.

Crafts include watercolors or yarn for hand-knitting. There are tools for work: pint-sized brooms, a low dish-washing station with little aprons. There's no color that's not found in nature, no plastic in sight, no screens of any kind.

Story time is a fairy tale told using felted puppets, silk cloths, and elements of nature like leaves and chestnuts. When it's time for a snack, the children are entranced by the ritual of lighting a candle and singing a song to the fire fairies. I'm struck by how magical and childlike it all seems. And how purposefully so.

We can't always play outside in nature. But we can take a second look at the space we create for our children inside.

Tracy Cutchlow is the author of "the coolest--and easiest--book for new parents," says *Parents* magazine. *Zero to Five: 70 Essential Parenting Tips Based on Science*. www.zerotofive.net

From huffingtonpost.com

The Last Generation of Kids That Played Outside

A scary thought hit me while eating breakfast the other day: We're slowly killing the future of innovation. Let me explain. Consider the iPad -- The iPad was invented and built by grownups who had to play outside when they were kids. Fast forward to this current generation where the majority of kids sit inside staring at... an iPad. It sounds funny, but the iPad may actually cause future "iPads" from being dreamed, invented and built.

From the moment we all held an iPad, we knew it was a remarkable piece of technology and art. To build it, a team of brilliant people had to solve crucial problems, invent countless components and continually choose to not give up.

I remember a story one Apple executive told of his team receiving all the parts for the new iPad and then having to figure out how to fit them all into the smallest shell possible. It had to be thin, light and beautiful. How did they do it? Not only that, but how did they think to create something like an iPad in the first place?

Then I remembered growing up in the small town of West Linn, Oregon. Many days were spent running around in the backyard, hooking up hoses, sprinklers and water-switches to create cool water shows. I remembered building forts with tarps and wood. I even remembered creating little ant houses with small twigs for walls, ramps and furniture.

I thought back to racing out to my garden the morning after planting beans or peas to see if they had magically sprouted overnight, or making whistles by blowing on thick blades of grass. I remembered grabbing some pieces of scrap wood, a hammer and nails to try to make a birdhouse.

I recalled discovering a tiny maple tree leaf sticking out of the ground -- and noticing it was connected to the dirt. I remembered digging it up and replanting it in a proper place in the backyard. I watered and nurtured it until I moved out, watching it grow from a single leaf into a beautiful, full grown, 30 foot tree that provided shade for our house.

Then, in the winter months when it was too cold to be outside, the thousands of hours creating whole worlds, governments and economies out of Legos and Monopoly money. I didn't like sets -- I just wanted a bucket of Legos to build whatever my little head could dream up.

If you're over the age of 20 or 30, I'm sure you have similar stories of adventures in the woods -- of having to solve problems and think outside the box. You probably recall creating your own fun with seemingly boring items. You weren't dependent on someone else's creativity and ingenuity. You knew how to dream. You didn't need someone to entertain you or design things for you to have fun with. You could create a game with pinecones and sticks.

(continued on next page)

When this past generation of Apple creators sat down to dream up the next product, I believe they subconsciously drew back on their own "backyard" roots. They knew how to solve problems because they had solved them before. They knew how to dream up new possibilities because they had been doing that since they were a kid.

This brings me to the startling truth: If we allow the current generation to be satisfied thinking within a 9.7-inch box, we'll rob them of the curiosity and creativity that it took to build that very device they're holding. If we don't remove easy entertainment from our children, they'll never learn to create their own.

I don't know what the answer is for your family and your children -- but we must be drastic. It's time to stop saying, "But it's just easier to plop them down with the iPad." Or, "They'll throw a fit if they don't get to play with my iPhone."

Even Steve Jobs, the visionary behind the iPad, didn't let his kids use the iPad. He pushed them to play outside, read books and be fascinated with good conversation.

It's time to look inward. Are we losing the sense of wonder that we used to possess? Are our children simply following in our footsteps? Are we grownups forgetting the adventures we had? Are we lazily reading Twitter instead of showing our kids the endless possibilities of curiosity and dreams? We have the potential to create a new generation of kids who can imagine and explore -- who can think outside the box and create exciting things.

If we don't, those little maple leafs will go unplanted and eventually die. The ants won't have a fort to play in. The beans and peas won't have a friend to look after them everyday -- and, more importantly, the future "iPads" (or whatever is next) won't be created.

Let's raise a generation of kids that build bird houses and sprinkler shows. A generation that plants bean seeds, maple leafs or whatever else their minds can dream up.

Their future depends on it.

