



# River Valley Current

February 10, 2015 No. 402

"A man who works with his hands is a laborer; a man who works with his hands and his brain is a craftsman; but a man who works with his hands and his brain and his heart is an artist." - Louis Nizer

## School Calendar

### This Week

<b>Wednesday, Feb. 11</b> Winter Assembly	6:30 pm
<b>Thursday, Feb. 12</b> Grades – Ice Skating EC – in-school Valentine's celebration Board Meeting	6:30 pm
<b>Friday, Feb. 13</b> No School – Faculty In-Service Sharifa Oppenheimer Lecture	7:00 pm

### Looking Ahead

<b>Monday, Feb. 16- Friday, Feb. 20</b> No School – Winter Break	
<b>Tuesday, Feb. 24</b> Louise deForest Lecture at Morning Glory	6:30 pm
<b>Wednesday, Feb. 25</b> EC Parent Meeting at Morning Glory	6:30 pm
<b>Saturday, Feb. 28</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Workday	

### How to Contact Us

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

### The next Parent Council Meeting will be Wednesday, Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>

We will meet at Becker's in Quakertown at 6:30 pm.  
Contact pc@rivervalleyschool.org with any questions.

## Join us this Friday!

**Sharifa Oppenheimer**, bestselling author of "Heaven on Earth", will be at RVWS for an evening talk on '**Creating the Star of Your Own Family Culture**' on **February 13th at 7pm**. "We are fashioning our family's culture with each decision, so let us bring as much consciousness to this process as we can." We are offering Sharifa's lecture for \$10 per person or \$15 per couple.

### And the week after Winter Break...

We are excited to welcome back **Louise deForest!** We always enjoy having Louise visit our Early Childhood Program offering her years of experience and insight. Please join us for a free lecture at **Morning Glory Preschool in Doylestown, Tuesday, February 24 at 7 pm**. Louise's lecture is titled "**Simplifying Life for the Young Child.**" Louise will speak about the importance of allowing our children to move and grow at their own pace and how we adults can adapt ourselves to living a simpler life for the relatively short time our children are so young.

Please call us at 610-982-5606 to register for these wonderful educational experiences!

## Grade School Ice Skating Trip

This Thursday, the grade school will have their annual Ice Skating Party. This is a field trip for grade school students. We ask families who have early childhood children, to please send them to school as usual and not bring them on the ice skating trip.

There are many reasons for this. Most importantly, it is not safe for little children to be skating in between older, faster, more experienced skaters. Also, it is not fair to early childhood children who don't get to go, while some of their friends are off skating and they are not invited.

To avoid hurt feelings and hurt bodies and to give the younger ones something to look forward to when they are in the grade school, we ask that only grade school children come ice skating.

EC will be having an in-school Valentine's celebration that day so this is another reason that the little ones won't want to miss school.

## Before School Policy

The faculty has been focusing on our Before School Policy with an eye towards safety. In order to avoid having children unattended in the hallways before school we plan to implement this policy next Fall. For the next few weeks we will be giving it a trial run.

In the past, children walked to school and so arrived having exercised in the morning air. Since their bodies had been vigorously engaged, their minds were fresher and ready to work when the school day began. As this is not possible for our students, we offer all grade school students supervised before school care on the back playground at no additional charge.

Children may be dropped off at the cul-de-sac between 8:00-8:20. Cars may not park here for any length of time as the buses use this drop off area as well. Musical instruments will be placed inside the hallway by the teacher as protection against the weather. In cases of extreme weather, the teacher will hold before school care in the All Purpose Room.

As teachers are occupied with preparing for classes, all children inside the school building before 8:20 must be accompanied by an adult. Please stay with your child at all times. We encourage you to see them to the back playground for a healthy dose of fresh air and exercise before their school day begins.

## From Administration

### Parking Lot Safety

In order to make our parking lot as safe as possible we ask that you adhere to the follow guidelines:

- Please do not park along the curb in front of the school at any time. If you are dropping off in the morning, stop to let the children out and then keep moving, do not leave your car even for a minute. In the afternoon during pick-up, no stopping along the curb is allowed; buses and vans are having a hard time getting through.
- No parking is allowed (even on the grass) on the main driveway in the area of the stop signs, opposite the parking lot entrance where cars need to turn and buses need to get by.
- If you park along the driveway leading up to the school, please park on a diagonal and make sure your vehicle is fully off the macadam and that you and your children walk along the grass, not in the driveway.
- Parking across from the front door, and down toward the circle is for small cars only.

There is no parking allowed in the circle near the playground during the day because that area is used during recess.

If we all follow these guidelines, we will stop receiving complaints from bus and van drivers and everyone will be a lot safer. Thank you.

### AFTERNOON GARDEN

Afternoon Garden (1:00 – 3:15pm) for early childhood students is a busy place this year! Tuesdays and Thursdays have a few spaces open, but from now, through the end of March the rest of the week is full. If you would like to reserve a spot, please call, or contact Cindy Schretlen [cschretlen@rivervalley.school.org](mailto:cschretlen@rivervalley.school.org) by email to check availability.

### School Closings and Delays

Our Alert Now automated calling system usually works well, but sometimes there is a glitch. If you ever get a garbled message or no message at all, there are several other ways to find out whether school is closed or delayed.

We always send a follow up email and post the information on [wfmz.com](http://wfmz.com) and Channel 6 Action News as well as update the recorded message on the phone at school.

### New!

#### 3-day Early Childhood Class begins April 15, 2015

This 8-week program is designed especially for children 2 years, 9 months to 4 years who are ready to come to school independently.

8-10 children will enjoy a morning of interactive play, both indoors and out, as well as special activities such as simple crafts, painting, circle activities, singing and story time in the thoughtfully simple classroom environment. Large and small motor skills, oral and receptive language skills, social awareness, love for the natural world and the beginnings of self-care abilities are some of what is developed as the children play and work with one another under the respectful guidance of their teacher. Children are expected to be reliably toilet trained.

Class hours are from 8:30 am until 1:00 pm; children 3 and older can opt for a 3:15 pm dismissal time. This class is the perfect way to transition easily into a full school year program in September of 2015!

Please contact Cindy Schretlen with any questions, or to receive an application. Time is of the essence if you or someone you know would like to reserve a place in this terrific little class.

## From the Faculty

### WHAT ARE THE CHILDREN LEARNING?

First Grade: Math

Second Grade: Language Arts

Third Grade: Math/Hebrew Stories

Fourth Grade: Language Arts/Class Play

Fifth Grade: Geometry

Sixth Grade: Physics

Seventh Grade: Geometry

Eighth Grade: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Projects

## Circus Club is Back

The RVWS Circus Club is meeting again every Saturday, 10:30-12. All skill levels are welcome. Fee: by donation. Call Mr. Friedman (610-847-8749) with questions or to let him know you will be there.

## From the Leadership Council

### What LC is Working On

Input from community on the grade school movement curriculum

Teacher evaluations with TDC

Faculty hiring for next year with the faculty

Program development with EC

Remember, we have open hours every Friday from 3:30-4. Please stop by if you have any questions or concerns.

*You will find a summary of the Community Meeting on the Movement Curriculum in the back of the Current.*

## From the Board

### Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda February 12, 2015

Pre Meeting Room Set Up at 6PM Meeting Starts Promptly at 6:30

6:30 – Opening: Verse and Candle lighting – Will

6:35 – Capital Campaign Update – Louanne (10 minutes)

6:45 – LC Report – Annie (15 minutes)

Proposals, Decisions and Discussions

7:00 – By-Law Review – Will (20 minutes)

7:20 – FMLA Policy Discussion – (10 minutes)

– Please review draft FMLA policy before meeting

7:30 – Nominating Committee Mandate – Andy (5 minutes)

7:35 - Approve language for current voting procedure - Rich (5 min.)

7:40 - Break

Standing Committee Reports

7:50 – Administrative – Brian (10 minutes)

- Development Assistant Update

8:00 - Finance Report – Nick (15 minutes)

- Tuition discussion

8:15 – Faculty – Ken/Christina (10 minutes)

- Sports Update

- Early Childhood Update

Committee Reports

8:25 - IT Committee – Andy (5 minutes)

8:25 - Buildings & Grounds – Will (5 minutes)

8:30 – Safety – Will (5 minutes)

8:35 - Nominating Committee – Rich (5 minutes)

8:40 - Board Study (15 minutes)

- Steiner's Lecture to Prospective Parents

8:55 - Items from the Board President – Will (10 minutes)

- Ideas for Board Auction

Donation

- EITC update

Closing and Meeting Feedback

### The Auction is Coming Home - Save the Date- Saturday, May 30th

The Auction Committee is bringing the big event back to school and this year's Gala will be yet another fantastic night out! Coming Soon: the Parent Packet with all you need to know about the River Valley Auction Gala. Until then, stay warm.

## Class Fundraisers

### RVWS Seasonal Cookbook and Local Directory

As a fundraiser for their farm trip, the rising 3rd grade plans to publish a cookbook. In addition to recipes, it will also have seasonal games, crafts, and activities, as well as an area directory. Recipes have been submitted from faculty, alumnae and the rising 3rd grade, and we would love for every family to be represented to make this book truly inclusive of our whole, wonderful school. Please consider submitting your child's/family's favorite recipe. If your children would enjoy submitting an accompanying illustration, we hope to include those as well on their recipe page.

This book will also feature an area directory of recommended summer camps, museums, seasonal outdoor destinations, craft stores, health practitioners, etc. We hope that this will make our book a useful resource to families, especially those new to RVWS.

See attachment for more details, and please respond by Friday March 13th. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Jean Tuma or Tracy Fly. Thank you for your consideration!

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Class Fundraiser

8th Grade is so very grateful for all the support you've lent to our class trip -- from buying sweatshirts (contact Miss Hummel if you haven't purchased yours yet!) to eating heartily at Winter Fair. We thank you also for ordering samosas every week and for stocking up on them on the first Monday of each month. (If you haven't tried them yet, we urge you to do so--it's not too late to email Renell with a bulk order and have an easy meal at the ready!)

As we approach our fundraising goal, we are continuing our snack (and coffee!) sales in the lobby every Monday and Wednesday. Isn't it nice to know that you can send your child in with a couple of bucks to pick up a healthy snack to drop in their lunch box on their way into school? Our popular morning snack offerings currently include:

- Organic Popcorn with butter and salt \$1.50 (quart bag)
- Cheese Cubes \$1.50
- Organic non-GMO Corn Chips & Salsa \$1.75
- Homemade Beef Jerky \$2.00

In the afternoons we offer sweet breads, warm, ready-to-eat baby burritos, hot dogs kebabs (intriguing, no?), and other inspired, nutritious creations by Grandy.

## From the Community

### Do you or someone you know have an iPod you are not using anymore?

Lloyd & Lydia George of the 4th Grade are working on a charity/community service project. They are collecting gently used iPods of any year, any model (including Shuffles) to benefit Music and Memory. This is a program that distributes them to Alzheimer's/dementia facilities in order help patients remember music from their younger years. Studies have shown that listening to music helps with brain activity. We will also collect iTunes gift cards. You can learn more about this program at <http://www.musicandmemory.org>. Chargers appreciated, but not necessary. You can keep your earbuds as the organization will provide sturdy headphones.

There will be a collection basket to receive the iPods (which will be emptied at the end of each day). If you have any questions, please email Lisa George at [allothersnj@yahoo.com](mailto:allothersnj@yahoo.com).

### THREEPENNY OPERA to be performed at George School

2/20 and 2/21 at 8:00 pm

The Threepenny Opera proclaims itself "an opera for beggars," and it was in fact an attempt both to satirize traditional opera and operetta and to create a new kind of musical theater based on the theories of two young German artists, composer Kurt Weill and poet-playwright Bertholt Brecht.

You can count on a spirited and enjoyable evening! RVWS Alum, Trevor Schretlen (class of 2011) is working hard behind the scenes (lighting, sound & cue-ing) as the Student Technical Director for this performance.

### 2010 Honda Accord for Sale

2010 Honda Accord EX, 4 door, FWD, 5-speed manual, maroon exterior, beige interior, 53,000 miles. Asking \$11,500

Contact Matt Watson at 609-202-9128 or [watsonmj@hotmail.com](mailto:watsonmj@hotmail.com) if you're interested.

## **Pulp Vegetarian Café in Frenchtown**

Dear Friends!

My new cafe, Pulp Vegetarian Café and Juice Bar, has been open nearly a month and a wild month it's been! While we've seen many RVWS faces we of course would love to see more--come on down for some good healthy vegetarian food, gluten-free, dairy free baked goods, juices, green smoothies--it's all delicious! Also, I wanted to share a nice piece from the Hunterdon County Democrat/NJ.com: [http://www.nj.com/hunterdon-county-democrat/index.ssf/2015/01/pulp\\_frenchtowns\\_new\\_vegetarian\\_cafe\\_beckons\\_to\\_to.html](http://www.nj.com/hunterdon-county-democrat/index.ssf/2015/01/pulp_frenchtowns_new_vegetarian_cafe_beckons_to_to.html).

I miss RVWS but love being at PULP!  
Stephanie Smith

## **Yoga Loka**

### **Shyama Puja and TRE- a Healing Session**

#### **For Cancer survivors, caregivers and people currently undergoing treatment**

2/15 with Bonnie (not listed on the website- please email Bonnie directly for more information)

TRE has come to town!

TRE® (Tension, Stress & Trauma Release Exercise) is an innovative series of exercises that assist the body in releasing deep muscular patterns of stress, tension and trauma. Created by Dr. David Berceli, PhD, TRE® safely activates a natural reflex mechanism of shaking or vibrating that releases muscular tension and calms down the nervous system. When this muscular shaking/vibrating mechanism is activated in a safe and controlled environment, the body is able to return to a state of balance. After doing TRE®, many people report feelings of peace and well-being.

TRE® is based on the fundamental idea, backed by recent research, that stress, tension and trauma are both psychological and physical. The shaking of the muscles increases the resiliency of the body as it causes a deep relaxation that naturally reduces stress levels. It can release emotions ranging from mild upset to severe anxiety, whether caused by work stress, excessive worry, conflict in relationships, physical stresses or traumas from accidents. A built in benefit to the TRE process is the physiological states associated with a trauma are often able to be released without having to actually relive, remember, or talk about the actual traumatic event itself.

This is a self-regulating process- the tremors can be immediately stopped by simply straightening the legs or rolling onto their side if one becomes uncomfortable. Amariyothi will assist you in this process. When you are comfortable doing so, you can practice it at home on your own, without having to rely on a therapist to continue your healing process. However, working in a group is a very powerful experience, so come to as many sessions as you can! No previous experience in anything necessary!

**February Group sessions held at Yoga Loka in Frenchtown: Sunday 2/15, 5:00-6:00 pm &**

**Friday 2/27, 6:30-7:30 pm, \$15 per session. Space is limited**

Private sessions are also available by appointment with Bonnie

[www.Yoga-Therapy-can-heal.me](http://www.Yoga-Therapy-can-heal.me) 908-268-7430

### **Emotional Freedom and Healing through Meditation**

#### **With Parvathi Nanda Nath Saraswati**

2/28, This is a rare opportunity to study with Parvathi. Her public appearances are very rare.

Space is limited, register early!

Register on line at [www.Yoga-Loka.com](http://www.Yoga-Loka.com) or call 908-268-7430

## **Breema Bodywork**

Matthew Tousignant, M.A., CMT (father of Isaiah, Moon Room) is offering \$40 Introductory Breema Bodywork sessions for the month of February.

Breema bodywork catalyzes the body's self-healing processes, promoting a higher level of physical flexibility, increased vitality, mental clarity, and emotional balance. Breema uses rhythmic movements, dynamic stretches, tapping, and tension-releasing postures to dissolve stress, create structural realignment, eliminate chronic pain and restore a natural state of harmony and balance. Receiving Breema bodywork loosens identification with conditioned, self-limiting patterns and opens the possibility of having new thoughts, feelings, and movements. Support yourself to enter the aliveness of the present moment! Breema sessions take place on a padded floor with the practitioner and recipient comfortably dressed.

For more information contact Matthew: 267.864.8608 [matthewtousignant@hotmail.com](mailto:matthewtousignant@hotmail.com)  
[www.breema.com](http://www.breema.com)

## LifeWays Training Starting in Kimberton, PA

LifeWays North America is bringing its year-long training course for parents and early childhood professionals to the Mid-Atlantic states in 2015. LifeWays Early Childhood Training and Certification is based on the work of Rudolf Steiner. With its emphasis on "The Living Arts" the training is ideal for parents, childcare providers, and early childhood teachers and their assistants.

The training will be held at Kimberton Waldorf School in Pennsylvania starting March 28-April 3, 2015. The three other sessions will take place over the course of a year, supplemented by guided study with a mentor in between the sessions.

To learn more, visit [www.lifewaysnorthamerica.org](http://www.lifewaysnorthamerica.org) and click on the Pennsylvania listing or request an information packet from Chinyelu Kunz at 610-933-3635 X109 or [ChinyeluK@LifeWaysNorthAmerica.org](mailto:ChinyeluK@LifeWaysNorthAmerica.org).

## Help us support the youth of our community!

Bridgeton Athletic Association's Beef & Beer Benefit DJ, Dancing, Raffles, Silent Auctions, Fun & Fellowship for a great cause!

Saturday March 28th from 7-12pm, Bridgeton AA Banquet Hall, 1340 Bridgeton Hill Rd Upper Black Eddy, PA 18972

Adults 21 or older Only! Tickets: \$25 each/Door or \$40 couple. Call Ahead to Reserve Tickets & Tables. Please Contact: Kerri Scheetz @ [bridgetonaa@gmail.com](mailto:bridgetonaa@gmail.com) or 484.325.1816

## 2 Female Black Cats (litter mates) need a new home.

Litter trained, spayed, lovable and well loved, indoor/outdoor, excellent mousers (not de-clawed) , 1.5 yrs old. Would do just fine as barn cats. We are moving and cannot take them with us. Please call Amanda 267.733.8005 or email [amandablanc@gmail.com](mailto:amandablanc@gmail.com)

## A Granny as Nanny

Granny Aupair connects people worldwide. Granny Aupair is based on the au pair principle and emphasizes on cultural exchange. Since 2010 roundabout 500 Grannies have travelled to 40 countries

THIS IS HOW IT WORKS: Register free of charge; browse the profiles of our Grannies; become a member, contact Grannies and resolve any details. Our experienced and young at heart au pair Grannies have much to offer what a young au pair or a professional nanny do not bring along. They have often raised their own children, have time to play, craft, bake and are loving temporary Grannies.

Questions? Go to: [www.Granny-Aupair.com](http://www.Granny-Aupair.com) or contact: [Info@Granny-Aupair.com](mailto:Info@Granny-Aupair.com) or call: +49-40-23 51 77 54 (Germany)

## Tours to France

Travel with an experienced guide to France! Great itineraries, small groups, relaxed pace. Lorey Johnson has taught French for over 30 years in a Waldorf school and is running tours that will take you to Provence, Normandy and Brittany or the Perigord in 2015. Please look at the website for details and contact information: [www.franceinnesencetravel.com](http://www.franceinnesencetravel.com). Register by February 15<sup>th</sup>.

## Sunbridge Institute Waldorf Weekend

Friday, February 13 - Saturday, February 14

This Valentine's Day, take your date to a lively, experiential workshop exploring the basis and the basics of Waldorf Education! Open to all, but especially relevant for current, new, and prospective members of Waldorf communities, including parents, grandparents, teachers, staff, and board members, our Waldorf Weekends are designed to provide an in-depth and experiential survey of the foundations and fundamentals of Waldorf Education.

In addition to exploring the Waldorf curriculum from early childhood through high school, you'll learn about the anthroposophical underpinnings of the Waldorf impulse, discover Rudolf Steiner's insights in human development, try your hand at artistic activities such as music, movement, and drawing, and have plenty of time for questions and discussion. Come discover why Waldorf Weekend participants have described this workshop experience as "life-changing."

Schedule:

7 pm-9 pm, Friday, February 13, 9 am-6 pm, Saturday, February 14

Fee: \$175 with online registration (includes \$25 non-refundable registration fee)

Online registration closes 7pm, Thursday, February 12. Walk-ins are welcome; walk-in fee is \$190, payable at the door via cash, credit card, or check

Questions? Contact Ayla Dunn, Admissions & Summer Series Coordinator: [info@sunbridge.edu](mailto:info@sunbridge.edu) / 845-425-0055 x20

## **Get a HANDLE® on Learning Disabilities: Root Causes and Effective Treatment**

HANDLE Introductory Course Levels I&II  
March 6 6-9:30 pm & March 7-8, 9-5, 2015

A 12-hour workshop for Parents and Professionals

- Understand what behaviors can reveal about neurological irregularities using the HANDLE paradigm
- Recognize subtle signs of stress and learn how to use Gentle Enhancement® to prevent crises and foster resilience
- Learn activities that enhance focus, reduce stress, and support learning

For more information: [www.handlebythebay.com](http://www.handlebythebay.com)

To Register: <http://tinyurl.com/HANDLE-workshop>

Contact: Nancy Dill Miller, [nancy@parzivalacademy.org](mailto:nancy@parzivalacademy.org) 610-574-7626

Location: Kimberton Waldorf School, 410 W Seven Stars Rd, Kimberton

*About the Instructors:*

*Nancy Dill Miller is a HANDLE Screener and founder of Parzival Academy.*

*Dror Schneider is a HANDLE Practitioner and Instructor and mother of a young man with ASD.*

### **Summary of the Movement Curriculum Meeting**

On Tuesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, the faculty sponsored a Community Meeting to discuss the grade school movement curriculum. Twenty two people attended representing faculty, staff and parents from grades 2 through 8.

Brian welcomed everyone, saying that the group was there to engage in active listening, not decision making. Annie explained that faculty was there to listen and clarify and gave an overview of the events leading up to the meeting. She said that last year the faculty undertook a study of our movement curriculum. Every year the teachers look at our program from a pedagogical perspective and improve an aspect of the program through their shared perspective.

Goals were to:

- Look at how to align the movement classes with after-school and recess so children didn't get mixed messages.
- Begin to teach movement in blocks and look at how other Waldorf schools teach movement.
- Ensure that the curriculum in each grade is pedagogically (age) appropriate to pave the way for future growth and development.

The study took a year and the grade school faculty endorsed the changes. As a result, movement is now taught in age appropriate blocks, similar to what other Waldorf schools are teaching. There are new age parameters on after school sports because of pedagogical reasons; certain games were eliminated if they involved throwing balls at people instead of to people. The faculty asked Ken, who is trained in Spatial Dynamics, to head the program, just as many teachers at River Valley are asked to teach to their strengths.

In June it was announced that the new curriculum would start in the fall and that Ken would be teaching it. When school began, the changes were felt by the community in an unanticipated way. LC started hearing from parents and began to review the program in November. The lack of dodgeball and snowball throwing became lightning rods for discontent. LC realized that these changes changed the culture of our school and reflected that if they had recognized this from the beginning and introduced them in a different way, the situation may have been different. LC and the faculty are still in the midst of the review process. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to hear from parents and also to explain why some of the changes were made.

We then went around the circle and all of the parents had a chance to speak. Parents expressed frustration with the lack of communication about the changes. Many said they are hearing complaints from their children about dodgeball and other games that are no longer allowed to be played; changes in the rules of four square, baseball and soccer; the age limit in the afterschool program on Wednesdays; and the fact that children are no longer allowed to go into the sports equipment shed.

*(continued on next page)*

It was pointed out that games like dodgeball are allowed in other Waldorf Schools. Some parents said that they were upset with the changes at first, but after they spoke to Mr. Friedman and heard the reasons behind the new curriculum they were more comfortable with it. Several middle school parents said they are concerned that there are not enough challenging activities for the older children at recess and raised the question of whether the children are being exposed to the games they will find in high school. Many expressed support for the changes in the curriculum but felt the need for more freedom during recess and after school. Some felt their children are being over-protected and need to be allowed to take risks. In order to understand why the changes were made, parents felt the need for a more detailed explanation.

Ken Friedman then responded to many of the questions. He said that rules exist for four square rules, they aren't his rules and kids love to play the game by the rules. He explained that we painted a new four square court so it can be played on one court by the real rules and the other one by the rules the children made up themselves. Their way does not exhibit good sportsmanship because whoever is king gets to make up the rules and can make sure he or she never get out. In the real game children get out and the line to get back in moves quickly.

As for the shed, he explained that historically no children were allowed in the shed and slowly teachers during recess allowed children to get things. Equipment got broken and it took hours to clean up the mess. Now we have new expensive equipment and didn't want it to get ruined. Ken told the children anything they want they may have, but they may not go in the shed to get it. There are bows and arrows, javelins, some things have to be reserved for class. Anything a child requests is left in a bin outside of the shed.

Ken said there are plenty of games to play. Soccer without heading was a difficult transition, but the children are finding ways to compensate and have fun. Studies show that mini concussions happen every time a child hits his head with a ball and they add up over time. Ken said he is proud of the way children play soccer; visitors have commented that the kids look healthy and 4-8<sup>th</sup> graders play so well together.

In describing the curriculum, Ken explained that the transition from dodgeball to sports-oriented classes in the older grades started with basketball then softball, Ultimate Frisbee, and volleyball, all with skills taught during class. The children look and sound healthy and this is the way he judges whether or not the classes are successful. He said if the children don't like what Josh is bringing, we need to look at that, but they look like they are enjoying the classes. He also said that we appreciate all the things parents are saying and we are hearing them.

Lisa added that the teachers are guiding all the children toward their higher selves, away from their lower selves and they keep that in mind as they set the curriculum. Teaching what is good, what is free, teaching them to be their best selves, is what the teachers are guiding them towards. She reminded everyone this isn't just Ken's issue, it was endorsed by the grades faculty.

It was also explained that although throwing snowballs at each other is not allowed, tumbling down the hill, rough and tumble play on the playground is allowed and encouraged. Someone asked about the difference between children knocking into each other sledding down the hill and dodgeball. Ken explained that when children sled and knock into each other they look like they are having fun. In dodgeball, half of the class is out for most of the game, screaming "get him, get him," bringing out their lower qualities. After dodgeball they are full of aggression; when they play in the snow, they treat each other kindly.

Annie then described the timeframe going forward saying the faculty has gotten a clear picture, much has been illuminated. They will take it back, digest it on LC and with the faculty. If there are changes to be made they will be made as soon as possible. We have a curriculum that we have endorsed, which will stand. The only way we will make changes is with faculty endorsement. In the faculty circle we will look at this.

As for communication with parents, Robbie will write a summary of the meeting for the Current. LC has open hours on Fridays 3:30-4. Anyone with further concerns was asked to let an LC member know. A request was made for an explanation for parents to share with their children as to why these changes were made, as well as a review of the alignment process between the curriculum, recess and after school activities.

From: The Journal News, Rockland County, NY

## **Waldorf School to Host Community Forums**

By Mareesa Nicosia

CHESTNUT RIDGE – The Green Meadow Waldorf school will host a pair of community forums next month to promote open dialogue and understanding between the divided communities that make up the East Ramapo school district.

The event will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Feb. 11 at the Green Meadow campus. Two forums – one led by students that is for students in grades 9-12, and one for adults – will take place simultaneously in different areas of the Arts Building.

The private Green Meadow school lies within East Ramapo school district boundaries. Students and staff there have looked on with concern for years as their neighbors in the public schools endured the loss of many sports, music, art and other programs, Green Meadow's Director of Communications and Marketing Vicki Larson said.

"Our students see the injustice of resources not being evenly divided among all of the communities in East Ramapo," said Larson, who also chairs the school's Diversity Committee. "They're coming from the place of 'Every student deserves an education and we're lucky to have what we have and we feel like it's our responsibility to help support anybody who's not getting what they're entitled to.'"

Years of escalating conflict between the mostly black and Latino public school community and the largely white, Orthodox and Hasidic school board, whose children attend private religious schools, led to unprecedented state intervention in the district last year and calls for a new law that would install a school board watchdog.

Much of the fighting has stemmed from public school advocates' claims – which were supported by the state fiscal monitor's findings – that the school board favors the private schools when allocating shared resources, leading to glaring inequities in opportunities for East Ramapo public school students.

Organizers of the upcoming forum, which will be strictly facilitated, intend to avoid the political bickering that frequently dominates East Ramapo school board meetings and provide a safe space for honest, civil discussion between residents from all of the district's diverse communities.

"This is not a forum on the school board. This is not a forum on East Ramapo politics," Larson said. "Given the challenges we face, how can we come together for the benefit for all? And everybody we've talked to has agreed that the best way to do that is to start by seeing each other as human beings with a valid set of needs."

The event is being planned with the help of a committee that includes members of the NAACP, a representative of the Orthodox community, public school parents, activists and East Ramapo alumni.

Larson said the superintendent, Joel Klein, was expected to attend.

One of the evening's featured facilitators will be Randolph Carter of the Eastern Educational Resource Collaborative, a national organization that provides equity and diversity consulting services to schools. Carter frequently gives presentations at Green Meadow.

The student-led forum will include students from Green Meadow's secondary school and East Ramapo's two high schools. Yeshiva students from East Ramapo's ultra Orthodox community have also been invited but haven't yet confirmed their attendance, Larson said.

4th Grade Performance  
"How the Bees Came to Ireland"  
and "Thor, the Bride"



## Submission Form – Rising 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Fundraiser

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Kindly respond by Friday March 13th** via email ([tumas@rcn.com](mailto:tumas@rcn.com)) or return form to folder on table outside Mrs. Atkinson's classroom. If there are any questions, please get in touch with Tracy Fly or Jean Tuma.

**I. Please consider sharing a favorite seasonal recipe in any of the following categories:** breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, deserts, beverages (e.g. smoothies, teas). Feel free to include gluten-free, vegan, dairy-free, raw, quick and easy dishes, potluck favorites, etc.

\* Recipes in electronic format (e.g. word document, url/web address) would be greatly preferred, but if it's easier to bring a bookmarked cookbook or magazine to school, we can make a photocopy and return the publication to you. Please make sure your name is clearly marked.

\* If your child/children would be interested in creating an illustration to accompany their recipe, we will try to have it printed on their recipe page.

**II. Recommendations for area directory** (within 1 hour drive from the school, share as many as you can). Please include town/city. Add additional sheets if necessary.

Favorite activity for each season or general (e.g. parks, bike rentals, where to go tubing in summer, pumpkin picking or hiking in fall, berry farms, museums, local sites, etc): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Recommended summer camps: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Favorite arts/crafts/fabric/yarn store: \_\_\_\_\_

Farmers' markets (what makes your favorite stand out?): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Coffee/tea shops: \_\_\_\_\_

Healthy restaurants: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Health food stores (include town): \_\_\_\_\_

Instrument rentals: \_\_\_\_\_

Clothing stores (eg resale, specialty, etc): \_\_\_\_\_

Health providers (dentist, doctor, acupuncture, chiropractor, nutritionist, etc): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Online resources (clothes, gear, arts and crafts, etc): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

From Atlantic Magazine

## Joy: A Subject Schools Lack

By Susan Engel

When Jonathan Swift proposed, in 1729, that the people of Ireland eat their children, he insisted it would solve three problems at once: feed the hungry masses, reduce the population during a severe depression, and stimulate restaurant business. Even as a satire, it seems repulsive and shocking in America with its child-centered culture. But actually, the country is closer to his proposal than you might think.

If you spend much time with educators and policy makers (even if you just read editorials about education), you'll hear a lot of the following words: "standards," "results," "skills," "self-control," "accountability," and so on. I have visited some of the newer supposedly "effective" schools, where children chant slogans in order to learn self-control, are given a jelly bean when they do their worksheet, or must stand behind their desk when they can't sit still. When I go to these schools, all I can think of is Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*, in which Wackford Squeers, the headmaster of a school, says with great certainty, "Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them ..."

In the novel, Squeers is hell-bent on making sure that his students leave school with the knowledge they need to be "serviceable" in the adult world. It's not so different today. Everyone is worried about whether kids are "learning what they need" to get into college, finding good jobs, getting along in a big company, and learning new trades. The country's whole school system seems geared toward solving large-scale economic woes and producing future workers. It's most definitely not geared toward children. In fact, the prevailing view is that if teachers focus too much on students' pleasure they will somehow be encouraging wanton self-indulgence and dangerous hedonism.

A look at what goes on in most classrooms these days makes it abundantly clear that when people think about education, they are not thinking about what it feels like to be a child, or what makes childhood an important and valuable stage of life in its own right. This may explain why so many schools that I visit seem more like something out of a Dickens novel than anything else.

I'm a mother of three, a teacher, and a developmental psychologist. So I've watched a lot of children—talking, playing, arguing, eating, studying, and being, well, young. Here's what I've come to understand. The thing that sets children apart from adults is not their ignorance, nor their lack of skills. It's their enormous capacity for joy. Think of a 3-year-old lost in the pleasures of finding out what he can and cannot sink in the bathtub, a 5-year-old beside herself with the thrill of putting together strings of nonsensical words with her best friends, or an 11-year-old completely immersed in a riveting comic strip. A child's ability to become deeply absorbed in something, and derive intense pleasure from that absorption, is something adults spend the rest of their lives trying to return to.

A friend told me the following story. One day, when he went to get his 7-year-old son from soccer practice, his kid greeted him with a downcast face and a despondent voice. The coach had chastised him for not paying attention and not focusing on his soccer drills. The little boy walked out of the school with his head drooping downwards, shoulders slumped, dragging his way towards the car. He seemed wrapped in sadness. But just before he reached the car door, he suddenly stopped, crouching down to peer at something on the sidewalk. His face went down lower and lower, and then, with complete ebullience he called out, "Dad. C'mere. This is the most amazing bug I've ever seen. It has, like, a million legs. Look at this. It's awesome." He looked up at his father, his features brimming with energy and delight. "Can't we stay here for just a minute? I want to find out what he does with all those legs. This is the coolest ever."

The traditional view of such moments is that they constitute a charming, but irrelevant byproduct of youth—something to be pushed aside to make room for more important qualities, like perseverance, obligation, and practicality. Yet moments like this one are just the kind of intense absorption and pleasure adults spend the rest of their lives seeking.

(Continued on next page.)

In his masterpiece essay, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Sigmund Freud described childhood as a period of trying to balance primal urges to find pleasure and avoid pain with the growing need to be part of a group. Every piece of research since that essay has shown that Freud was right. Human lives are governed by the desire to experience joy. Becoming educated should not require giving up joy but rather lead to finding joy in new kinds of things: reading novels instead of playing with small figures, conducting experiments instead of sinking cups in the bathtub, and debating serious issues rather than stringing together nonsense words, for example. In some cases, schools should help children find new, more grown-up ways of doing the same things that are perennial sources of joy: making art, making friends, making decisions.

Article Continues Below

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Building on a child's ability to feel joy, rather than pushing it aside, wouldn't be that hard. It would just require a shift in the education world's mindset. Instead of trying to get children to buckle down, why not focus on getting them to take pleasure in meaningful, productive activity, like making things, working with others, exploring ideas, and solving problems? These focuses are not so different from the things to which they already gravitate and in which they delight.

Related Story

### **The Wisdom Deficit in Schools**

Before you brush this argument aside as sentimental fluff, or think of joy as an unaffordable luxury in a nation where there is dire poverty, low academic achievement, and high dropout rates, think again. The more dire the school circumstances, the more important pleasure is to achieving any educational success.

Many of the assignments and rules teachers come up with, often because they are pressured by their administrators, treat pleasure and joy as the enemies of competence and responsibility. The assumption is that children shouldn't chat in the classroom because it disrupts hard work; instead, they should learn to delay gratification so that they can pursue abstract goals, like going to college. They should keep their hands to themselves and tolerate boredom so that they become good at being bored later on.

Not only is this a dreary and awful way to treat children, it makes no sense educationally. Decades of research have shown that in order to acquire skills and real knowledge in school, kids need to want to learn. You can force a child to stay in his or her seat, fill out a worksheet, or practice division. But you can't force a person to think carefully, enjoy books, digest complex information, or develop a taste for learning. To make that happen, you have to help the child find pleasure in learning—to see school as a source of joy.

Adults tend to talk about learning as if it were medicine: unpleasant, but necessary and good for you. Why not instead think of learning as if it were food—something so valuable to humans that they have evolved to experience it as a pleasure? The more a person likes fresh, healthy food, the more likely that individual is to have a good diet. Why can't it be the same with learning? Let children learn because they love to—think only of a 2-year-old trying to talk to see how natural humans' thirst for knowledge is. Then, in school, help children build on their natural joy in learning.

Joy should not be trained out of children or left for after-school programs. The more difficult a child's life circumstances, the more important it is for that child to find joy in his or her classroom. "Pleasure" is not a dirty word. And it's not antithetical to the goals of K-12 public education. It is, in fact, the sine qua non.