

School Calendar

This Week

Friday, March 2

5th Grade Play – *The Iliad* 9:00 am & 6:30 pm

Looking Ahead

Monday-Friday, March 5-9

Third Grade Farm Trip to Hawthorne Valley

Monday, March 5

Social Inclusion Study Group 3:30-4:30 pm

Thursday, March 8

Middle School Reading Group 7:00-8:00 pm

Saturday, March 10

1st & 2nd Grade Workday

Monday, March 12

Parent Enrichment – Foundations of Numeracy & Literacy in Waldorf Education 6:30 pm

Wednesday, March 14

Parent Council Mtg. @ The Ship Inn 6:30-8:00 pm

Saturday, March 24

RVWS Gala Auction

How to Contact Us

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

Girl Scout Cookies for Sale

River Valley's own Girl Scout Troop 21322, will be selling cookies at drop off and both pick-ups outside of school on Thursday March 1. Cookies are \$4.00 a box. Please support the girls and buy a box or ten!

Upcoming Study Opportunities

The Social Inclusion Study Group will meet on Monday, March 5, 3:30-4:30 in the 6th grade classroom.

The Middle School Reading Group will meet on Thursday night, March 8th In Annie Porter's office.

In the back of the Current you will find **A Message from Torin Finser**, chair of the Education Department at Antioch University New England and Core Faculty member for Waldorf Education. Torin visited River Valley a few years ago. His message was written following the events that occurred recently in Florida.

AUCTION GALA CHECKLIST

Our 22nd Annual Auction Gala on Saturday, March 24 is now less than one month away!

The event will take place at ArtYard in Frenchtown, NJ and will include a live and silent auction. Our theme is The Genius of Play; music and play will be featured at this dynamic event and through our silent and live auctions. Our goal is to raise \$45,000 to provide vital support for our school through funding of key areas such as scholarships, arts, enrichment programs, and faculty development. Fantastic food will be prepared by Lovin' Oven and will include appetizers, buffet stations and dessert!

SO.....

Have you purchased your tickets?

Buy 3, Get 1 Free! <https://rvws.ejoinme.org/auction>

Do you have a great possible auction item to donate?

Please email auction@rivervalleyschool.org

Have you booked your baby sitter?

Are you ready to have a great time?

We look forward to celebrating with all of you!

Ron Ferguson- Trustee



Never Grow Up!

More photos of *Peter Pan, Jr.*, the middle school play can be found at the end of the week's Current.

From Administration

Education Savings Plan Update

An information sheet about changes in the Federal tax plan that affect the use of 529 Education Savings Plan funds is attached to this week's Current.

Mystery Picnic Tables

Just before break, two lovely picnic tables appeared by the front doors. We don't know who left them, whether they are intended as a donation for the Auction or for school-use. Please, if you are the builder or procurer, let us know so that we may see that they are put to the proper use! We would also like to express our thanks, and will certainly allow you to remain anonymous if that is your wish.

Chicken Pox Watch

There has been a case of chicken pox (Varicella) in the Acorn Room. Please keep an eye on your children, and please keep them home if they seem unwell – according to the MayoClinic.org, signs and symptoms, which may appear one to two days before the rash, include:

- Fever.
- Loss of appetite.
- Headache.
- Tiredness and a general feeling of being unwell (malaise)

AFTERNOON GARDEN UPDATE

We are able to offer an additional section of Afternoon Garden on Tuesdays, beginning this week. We are unable to add a section on Mondays at this time. Afternoon Garden is the program for River Valley's EC classes that extends the day from 1 pm until 3:15 pm. If you would like to add Tuesday to your child's Afternoon Garden schedule, please see Cindy, Robbie or Tiffany.

Cindy Schretlen
Director of Admissions & School Life

TUITION ASSISTANCE

If you intend to request tuition assistance for the 2018-19 school year, you can begin your Parent Financial Statement online now. You will need to submit a copy of your 2017 income tax returns (and 2016 if you did not previously) as well as have your PFS complete by 2/28/2018. Please plan accordingly! Late submissions will not be considered until after the first cohort of requests is processed. If you have questions or concerns about Tuition Assistance or the due date, please speak with Cindy Schretlen.

Box Tops Reminder

For those of you who are collecting Box Tops for Education for River Valley, please bring in the ones you have by the end of February. March is our next opportunity to submit them for a donation. Thank you.

Field Trip Driver Requirements

Anyone driving RVWS students who are not their own children on a field trip (including ice-skating) need to have a copy of their Driver's License and Proof of Insurance card on file in the office.

Once it's on file, we'll keep it for the remainder of the school year. The file is shredded at the end of the year, so new copies will need to be provided each school year.

WEBSITE DIRECTORY

As many of you know, there is a link to the School Directory on River Valley's website (Life at River Valley>Parent Resources). For some time now, that link has been inactive. We thought it would only be 'down' a short time, but it has become a longer time – so we'd like to let you know why it is not available.

When the new Alumni & Student Babysitter list was posted on the website, we placed it on the Parent Resources page, password protected, just as the Directory has been for several years. We found that it was still possible to bring up the Babysitter list up from very targeted Google searches so we immediately took it down. While we were unable to find the Directory with targeted searches, we were uncomfortable leaving it in the same place with the same potential vulnerability. RVWS' website is in the midst of some updates and part of that process includes better security for our Parent Resources items.

Until then, please contact Tiffany (trobenson@rivervalleysschool.org) if you would like a PDF of the Directory.

Parent Stage 2017 DVDs Available

Did you miss Parent Stage last year? Were you in Parent Stage last year? Did you enjoy Parent Stage last year? If your answer to one of these questions is yes, then you may want to buy a DVD of the show. The cost is \$20 for a DVD or \$25 for a Blu-ray. If you would like to purchase one, please let Robbie or Tiffany know.

VITA offers Free Tax Preparation Help

With the holidays just behind us, can tax season be far away? Thanks to the many dedicated volunteers in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA), BCOC is once again offering free assistance to low-income families in need of help to prepare their tax forms. All volunteers have been trained and certified by the IRS.

For many low-income families, the cost of having their taxes prepared creates an additional financial burden; or, they try and do them on their own and miss deductions they are entitled to receive. In the over 10 years since this BCOC program began, we have prepared over 10,000 tax forms. Money saved through refunds, credits, and preparation-fee savings, totaling over \$20 million, stayed in Bucks County's economy as most clients spend returns on essentials such as food, school supplies, and other household bills.

If you or someone you know can be helped by this program, go to:

<http://files.constantcontact.com/c704303c601/53b2fbef-1637-491d-a2f0-158e0436d837.pdf> to be linked to a flyer with locations, hours of operation, and other details. We also ask you to please post this information around the community where those in need might see it. Thanks for your help in spreading the word about this free service.

A sincere thank-you to the Bucks County Foundation, KeyBank Foundation, and the First National Bank & Trust Co. of Newtown, for their generous support of VITA.

From the Faculty

What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Language Arts

Second Grade – Drama

Third Grade – Farming

Fourth Grade – Drama

Fifth Grade – Class Play - The Iliad

Sixth Grade – European Geography

Seventh Grade – Physics

Eighth Grade – History

From the Garden

Dear Community

I am looking for a volunteer (or more) to assist me with the children for a few periods on Mondays and Fridays this spring season. No gardening experience necessary. If you are willing to help, please contact Melissa Goldstein mgoldstein@rivervalleyschool.org

Thank you!

From Parent Council

Mayfaire Committee Needs Members

Parent Council is looking for committee members for our annual spring festival; Mayfaire. Experienced past chairs will mentor the group. Festival committees are a wonderful way to meet other parents and make festival fun happen for the children. Please email pc@rivervalleyschool.org if you think you may be interested.

From the Community

Bells Are Ringing at Kimberton Waldorf School

The students of Kimberton Waldorf High School (among them RVWS alum Lauren Goodyear) are proud to present their spring musical, *Bells are Ringing!* It is a romantic comedy about a woman, bored with her life working for an answering service, who livens up her days by adopting a different persona for each of the calls she answers. She develops a crush on a client who only knows her by her voice. Meanwhile, her boss's boyfriend plots with gangsters to use the answering service for nefarious deeds.

This classic musical won two Tony Awards in 1957, and was nominated for two more during its revival in 2001. And now we are bringing it to Kimberton Waldorf's gym stage in March! We will present four performances, on Thursday, March 8 at 7:00 pm. Friday, March 9 at 7:30 pm; March 10 at 2 pm and 7:30 pm.

Tickets are available at the door for \$15 adult, \$12 senior, \$10 student. Please contact Tara Boroson at girllthurs@gmail.com with any questions.

Organic and Natural Food Delivery in PA & NJ!

We are happy to announce the official opening of the new organic, natural and artisan online delivery service Bodhi Market!

Bodhi Market is 100% owned and operated locally in Bucks County. They offer many organic fruit and vegetable box types along with locally sourced groceries and ethically raised meat and dairy. Bodhi Market donates a portion of its revenue to supporting local families in need as well as environmental protection. Interested in checking it out? They are offering River Valley Waldorf families \$15 off their order. USE COUPON CODE: RIVERVALLEY when you sign up. Check them out at www.BodhiBoxMarket.com.

Many of Bodhi Market's farmers and vendors are friends of the River Valley community. The founder, Matthew, is also the uncle of Isaiah in 2nd grade and Eva and Levi in the Moon Room.

PROVENCE FRENCH SUMMERSCHOOL 2018

For young students from around the world who want to improve their French and spend a lovely holiday with us here in Provence, in the South of France.

Our program lasts two weeks and is designed for students aged 15 to 18. Students stay with local French families, enjoy French lessons in our Steiner-Waldorf school every morning, and spend afternoons together in creative workshops and cultural outings.

More details (including a downloadable registration form) are to be found at:
<http://www.ecole-steiner-avignon.org/summerschool/lycee-dete/>

Camp Glen Brook

Do you know a 3rd – 10th grader looking for a Waldorf-inspired summer camp? At Camp Glen Brook we offer special sessions for first time campers in grades 3 & 4.

What set's us apart? We are a small camp with a family feel and wholesome farm-to-table food.

Outdoor Leadership Program for 9th & 10th graders. Camp Glen Brook is owned and operated by the Waldorf School of Garden City, NY.

www.glenbrook.org

Lenape Chamber Ensemble Concert in the Round

For children ages 4-12, featuring music by Haydn, Poulenc & Schubert. Refreshments and Instruments demonstrations.

Saturday, March 3, 10-11 am at Delaware Valley University Life Sciences Auditorium, 700 Butler Avenue at State Street and Rt. 611, Doylestown, PA 18901. Children: \$2, Adults Free.

Lenape Chamber Ensemble

Friday, March 2, 8:15 pm, Upper Tincum Lutheran Church, 188 Upper Tincum Church Rd., UBE

Sunday, March 4, 3 pm, Delaware Valley University Life Sciences Auditorium (See above for address.) Music by Haydn, Poulenc & Schubert.

Adults \$18, Students and seniors \$15, Children \$5 Questions: 610-294-9361 or www.lenapechamberensemble.org

Threshold Equestrian

Jen Diedrich, mom of Addison (6th grade) and lifelong equestrian, has open sessions for private riding lessons. Ages 5+, beginner, intermediate and advanced. After school pick up and weekend times available.

Quiet and private facility with both indoor and outdoor arenas, three quarter mile track and groomed trails plus well schooled ponies and horses. Lessons, camps and local horse shows all with an emphasis on safety and fun. All aspects covered, horsemanship, grooming, tacking and everyday care. Call Jen anytime for more information. (215)603-9999

New Hope Family Looking for a Mother's Helper

Anne Stanmyer, a former Waldorf teacher, is looking for a mother's helper for her daughter's two (soon to be three) children who live in New Hope. If you or anyone you know is interested, please email Anne at: amstanmyer@gmail.com.

TRE retreat with Bonnie Pariser

*Held at Highlight By The Lake Retreat Center
1586 Elephant Road, Perkasie PA*

TRE is a self-regulation technique that helps the body to release stress, tension and trauma in a gentle way.

Developed by Dr. David Berceci, TRE is used around the world by all populations with great success. During this retreat you will learn how to practice TRE safely and effectively at home. We will have a lot of time to practice tremoring as a group and with partners. Taking advantage of the quieting of the mind that TRE can bring about, we will also engage in meditation practices. Bonnie will demonstrate some benefits of interventions while tremoring and show you some you can do for yourself at home. We will also learn some of the science behind the tremors and their benefits. This will be a great opportunity to learn more about TRE and how you can tailor the practice to meet your needs. It will be fun and chances are you will feel pretty great and quite inspired at the end of the weekend.

Commuter fee: \$275 if registered by 3/1 \$350 after Lunch is included for all participants. Scholarships are available to attend. Email Bonnie@yoga-loka.com or visit the website at www.Yoga-loka.com to register.

From the Artyard

ArtYard Presents: Feral Foster & Ali Dineen

Please join us this Saturday, March 3rd, for a night of roots music brought to you by the talented Feral Foster & Ali Dineen. The concert will feature solo and duet performances by both musicians.

Feral Foster has been gigging in New York, across the country and in Europe for the past 10 years, capturing the imagination and attention of listeners with his impassioned singing and powerful songwriting. Foster draws from the deep wellspring of early blues, country, and jazz to tell contemporary, human stories, making for music that feels well-worn and strikingly fresh at the same time.

Ali Dineen is a singer, multi-instrumentalist and visual artist based in New York City. She performs original music as well as songs from U.S. folk traditions, incorporating historical and sociopolitical commentary into her shows. She believes in the power of narrative to connect people to their histories, themselves and one another. Ali's music is personal and political and explores the intersection between individual experience and the arch of larger histories. She has given her musical talents to various projects including the Bread and Puppet Theater. She performs regularly in New York City.

Call for Objects

ArtYard is building a temporary library of objects found in, under, near or around the Delaware River to be shown as part of our upcoming exhibition: *The Memory Palace: Frenchtown at 150*.

No object is too small or abnormal! Bring us your river glass, old coins, porcelain bits, canoe paddles, weathered ropes or whatever other treasures you may have found. Once the exhibition concludes, your objects will be returned!

The exhibition will be on view April 28th through July 28th. Please bring your artifacts to ArtYard by April 8th in order for them to be included in the exhibition. Please visit ArtYard, Wednesday through Sunday, 11:00 - 5:00 PM, to drop off your artifacts. For any questions, please email us at contact@artyard.org or call 908-996-5018

From the Washington Post

Why Adults Have to Stop Trying so Darn Hard to Control How Children Play

By Angela Hanscom

"Cut it out!" a little girl screams at the top of her lungs.

"Yeah!" Another girl yells. "Back away!"

I look over in the far corner of the woods to see a small group of girls holding hands and forming what looks to be a wall in front of a teepee they just created. A little boy stands in front of them with a face that is beet red. He is shaking from head to toe.

"I will NOT!" he yells back. "You have to let me play! That is the rules!" He gets dangerously close to them.

The adults observing the children look over at me with worried looks. I instruct them to observe but stay close and hidden among the trees. Secretly, I'm wondering if we should intervene now, but something tells me to wait. The little boy reaches up and tears down a piece of their tepee. "Stop it!" one of the girls yells. They don't back down. A few more girls come and form a wall with them. The little boy suddenly reaches into their tepee and grabs the "jewels" they have hidden in there and takes off running.

The girls let go of each other's hands and start chasing after him. They run around and around the trees in hot pursuit of the little boy. He finally comes to a stop and turns to face them. He holds out his hand and says, "FINE! Have them!" He returns the stolen jewels, stomps off, and finally sits down in front of an old oak tree – sulking. The girls resume playing "house" in their tepee.

(Continued on next page.)

Not even two minutes pass before one of the girls from the tepee group walks over to where the boy is sitting. She does something that surprises every adult watching. She sits down beside him. She looks him in the eye and starts talking in a quiet voice. He begins to raise his voice again. She patiently puts her hand up and waits for him to stop shouting. He becomes silent. A few minutes later, they get up. She reaches for his hand and leads him over to the group of girls at the tepee. He says something to them and they invite him to play.

What if the adults watching had intervened right away? What if we had jumped in as soon as there was a sign of conflict? We could have said, "Be nice girls. Let him play." Or told the boy to stop yelling, explaining to him that this isn't the best way to be included. But what would that have accomplished?

In minutes these children learned important life lessons – social emotional skills that are excruciatingly hard to try and teach children. Through this real life experience, they learned how to stand up for themselves, how to work through anger and frustration, and most importantly – they learned empathy.

You can't role-play empathy! Or lecture children to death on how important it is to include other children. Children need to learn these things through practice. LOTS of it! This is best done through daily play experiences with other children – especially outdoors, where children can roam, explore, and play away from the adult world.

Most children today are spending a majority of their time indoors and under the direct supervision of adults. We are dictating how children spend every waking hour both in school and outside of school. Even their play opportunities are often regulated and controlled by well-meaning adults. Hour-long recess sessions have been reduced to 20-minute rule-infested movement opportunities.

Children are told what they can and can't play, with many of the traditional games like tag and kickball becoming something of the past. Play dates are organized by adults to keep children entertained, safe, and happy. And what was once a tradition for the kids in the neighborhood to independently walk down to the local water source to play a game of pond hockey, has become an all-consuming hockey travel team where children are ranked and judged based on skill.

In the meantime, teachers are reporting that more and more children are having trouble regulating their emotions in school, struggling with a sense of entitlement, and constantly seeking out adult reassurance with just about any difficulty they encounter. "They constantly tattle on each other," a teacher reports. Another states, "It is a rare child that does not seek constant guidance from an adult these days."

Yet, ironically, we continue to seek out information and sign our children up for organized programs that claim to make our children smarter, nicer, more confident, and more socially adept.

The truth is that no adult-led program is perfect and most will not give children these skills. Children need to experience and learn firsthand how to socially interact with others; how to become confident and capable when encountering new situations; and how to develop strong character traits such as generosity and kindness. Similar to learning new motor skills, the more practice children have in child-led play experiences, the more comfortable they will be in varying social situations.

If children truly got hours of free play with friends every day both during school and outside of school, they would learn the essential skills of negotiation, trading, conflict-resolution, empathy, kindness, sharing, compassion, and so much more. All we need to do is stop trying so darn hard to control every outcome of every interaction between children. It is time we step back and let the children play – for this is how they'll learn to cope in the real world.

This post is the latest in Angela Hanscom's exploration of the effects on young children of limited movement. Her book, "Balanced and Barefoot: How Unrestricted Outdoor Play Makes for Strong, Confident, and Capable Children," will be published in April 2016.

A Message from Torin Finser

February 15, 2018

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

As I read of the tragic shooting in Florida, the 18th in a U.S school this new year, I am once again feeling an all too frequent mix of reactions: shock, grief, frustration, compassion.....Most of all I am overwhelmed with our seeming powerlessness and inability as a society to really do anything to stop these senseless acts of violence. It weighs as a heavy blanket over my day, making it harder to focus and find joy in daily tasks.

We are living in a kind of oppression, not the "enemy occupation" of classical warfare, but a new kind of subjugation in which the soul is attacked in random ways and we feel powerless to do anything. For it is not just the school shootings that weigh on the collective psyche: so many shocking instances of sexual harassment, the loss of a sense for "truth" in politics, "fake news," racism, regression in environmental advocacy.....the list goes on and on. It all amounts to ever higher levels of stress and morbidity, even for those not directly affected by specific actions. It all weighs on our collective conscience.

As a professor at Antioch University who has dedicated a lifetime to educating future teachers and trying to support all our schools, I am dumbfounded at the singular disconnect between the daily tragic events portrayed in the news and what is happening or not happening in our school. Few seem to connect the dots between the quality of education our children receive and their preparation to meet an increasingly violent world.

For years, the mantra has been: apply pressure on teachers to adopt new standards, absorb new mandates, and test, test, test. What has this accomplished? Have test scores jumped? Are our school-age children happier, actually learning more, better prepared for the real jobs that await them? If for many the answer is No, then we need to do a fundamental reexamination of what we are doing in our schools and for our schools.

I spent a year interviewing teachers and parents, researching literature, and writing a short book published recently with the title: Education for Nonviolence, the Waldorf Way. Based on that work, I can identify a few immediate needs: more time for children to play in nature, less abstract intellectual work, project-based learning, arts that develop emotional intelligence, cooperative games that build social skills, mental health programs and counseling for children before symptoms are overt, and above all, age-appropriate curriculum.

The Common Core and other "reforms" in past years often have good intentions and good content, but are woefully devoid of any real understanding of age appropriateness. Any experienced teacher knows it is vastly different teaching a second grader than a student in 7th.....yet rarely are teachers given the freedom to teach to the real needs of the children in their care. Instead, they live in servitude to the "Big Brother" of publishing houses, tech gadgets and "new" programming designed by politicians and theorists.

Above all, we need to work on community, within our schools and surrounding them. When a teacher is allowed to "loop" with a class and follow through on projects, learning needs and social challenges within a group, children have room to grow in a safe environment. When parents serve as volunteers, supporting non-profits (and schools) in the community, we demonstrate positive role models that our children so desperately need. Rites of passage need to be honored in new ways; teachers need our support, and we need to stop "telling" schools what to do and instead, start listening to the needs of our children.

Together, we can still turn the tide and work towards a world that will one day be worthy of our children.

Torin M Finser, PhD

Father of six children and now a proud grandparent, living in Keene, NH

Peter Pan Jr.

