

School Calendar

This Week

Thursday, March 22

5th Grade Parent Evening

Friday, March 23

5th Grade Play

6:30 pm

Saturday, March 24

RVWS Gala Auction

Looking Ahead

Wednesday, March 28

4th Grade to Museum of Indian Culture in Allentown

Thursday & Friday, March 29 & 30

No School – Parent-Teacher Conferences

Saturday, April 7

RVWS Open House

10:00 am

Wednesday, April 10

Parent Council Meeting – Homestead

2:00-3:00 pm

How to Contact Us

info@rivervalleyschool.org

lc@rivervalleyschool.org

bot@rivervalleyschool.org

pc@rivervalleyschool.org

**April Lunch Menu
is attached to this week's Current.**

Reminder

There will be no After-school Programs this week because Josh Laker is away. These dates were not listed on the registration form so this should not come as a surprise. He will return next week and the program will be back up and running.

Mayfaire is on!! Saturday May 5th

We have a Mayfaire committee of Lynn Lis, Nina Russell and Erica Nichols with support from Kymm Phibbs and Clare Brunell.

Please welcome our new committee members and offer your support in making Mayfaire a fun and successful event.

Festival coordinators should watch in the coming week for emails describing their activity assignment. Many thanks go to Lynn and Nina for volunteering.

22nd Annual Auction Gala

5.30 pm Saturday, March 24 at ArtYard, Frenchtown, NJ

Dear Friends,

We hope to see all of you at Saturday night's Auction Gala at ArtYard and the Lovin' Oven. We will have great food, great music, great auction items and great camaraderie, all for a great cause. Please come out to support your school and celebrate with friends, staff and faculty.

Gala Tickets

Have you reserved your tickets? \$70 per guest or \$210 for a party of four; Tickets will be \$90 on the night of the event, so please get your discounted tickets today at <https://rvws.ejoinme.org/auction>

Online and Mobile Bidding

Like last year, this year's event will use mobile bidding for Auction night giving.

Please see the attachment to this week's Current for easy to follow instructions on getting and using the Auction night app.

Some Great Auction Items

Handmade Table Linen Set by the Early Childhood students

One week stay in a beautiful private Costa Rican villa

30"x40" 1-3 Grade collaborative art piece, A Million Nightingales

Tea Party for 20 at Mad Lavender Farm

Uncle Tom's Cabin with Ron Ferguson

The Scholarship Fund

Liz Davachi Makes YOUR Winter Fair Secret Garden Items!!! YES!!!

Private concert with Moonshine and Millet

Women's Camping Weekend with Annie Porter and Kristyn Lederer

36"x48" 4-5 Grade collaborative art piece, Heart in Hand

Sunset Cocktail Sail with Jane and Tony Stuart

Funded Curriculum Item: The Playground

History of Punk and Hip-Hop with Andrew McIntosh

5'x6' Middle School collaborative art piece, Wings

RVWS Pop-Up Choir and DJ at YOUR Party

JR Nichols Group Personal Defense Class

Gift Certificates for Dining, Wellness, Sports and more!



From Administration

Simplicity Parenting in Family Life: A FREE, 3-Part, Online Workshop with Kim John Payne and Davina Muse

Begins Today - Tuesday, March 20th

Go here to register for the free series: <https://www.simplicitycommunity.com/flc-optin/>

Topics Covered:

"Soul Fever" - The Foundation of Change, The Four Paths to Simplifying Family Life, The Power of Family Rhythms, How to Bring Others Along and much more ...

Plus, a chance to win a free tuition to the upcoming Family Life Coach Training (\$980 value).

Register now to claim your free place: www.simplicitycommunity.com

Chicken Pox Watch

There is a confirmed case of chicken pox (Varicella) in Early Childhood. Please keep an eye on your children, and 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)

According to the Buck County Health Department, 3-5 active cases is considered an outbreak. If we reach that threshold, all non-vaccinated students will be excluded from school! If you have questions, please see Cindy or Reeve in the office.

Animals at School

We are happy to have visits from friendly pets but there are a few guidelines we ask pet owners to follow: Animals need to be on a leash or in a carrier at all times; please keep an eye on them and be sure to clean up after them.

Thank You

Building and Grounds would like to thank those who participated in last week's 1st and 2nd grade work day. We were able to hang a wall cabinet in the Learning Support room, fix all the 1st grade cubbie hooks, hang a key cabinet for Reeve and Cindy, replace about a dozen outlets, and put a major dent in removing mud from the walls, doors, heater covers, benches, etc. Participating 1st grade families were: Lederer, Adams-Smith, Bott, Allbaugh/Castelblanco, Meshkov, McKay, Stuart. Participating families from 2nd grade were: Barnes, Candelo, Dwulet-Brady. Thanks guys! We couldn't do it without you!

From the Faculty

What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Arithmetic

Second Grade – Math

Third Grade – Old Testament

Fourth Grade – Local Geography

Fifth Grade – Ancient Egypt

Sixth Grade – Physics

Seventh Grade – Wish, Wonder & Surprise

Eighth Grade – History

From the Diversity Committee

The Diversity Committee would like to share that the Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing will host a training on Saturday 3/24 from 9 am to 3:30 pm that may be of interest to our parent community.

It's called "**What White People Can Do About Racism: Raising Anti-Racist White Children**".

For more information please see the flier at: <http://www.euroamerican.org/Events/WWPCDAR%20-%20202018-03-24%20-%2020215%20-%20Titusville,%20NJ.pdf>

From the Community

Pop-Up Choir – Sing Out for Artyard

62A Trenton Ave, Frenchtown, NJ
Friday April 6th 6:00-9:00pm
DJ ARM 18 at 6:00. Choir Directed by Kira Willey at 7:00
Anyone 12 and over is invited to show up, learn a song and perform it as part of the choir.
Limited menu is available from Lovin Oven!
Contributions collected will directly support ArtYard's programming.
More info at pop-upchoir.com

Kissimmee River Pottery Summer Camp

July 30th-August 3rd - Glaze Day: August 20th - 10am-1pm - Ages 9-15

The summer pottery camp is designed to give the students the opportunity to learn the basics of making pottery on a potter's wheel and basic handbuilding methods. The students will spend four classes working at the potters wheel and one class using handbuilding techniques. The students will return two weeks later for one day to glaze their pots. The pots will be glaze fired and available for pickup three weeks after glaze day.

www.riverpots.com. 50 Mine Street, Flemington NJ 908-237-0671

Journey's End Farm Camp

Where: Sterling, Pennsylvania, on the edge of the Poconos

Who: 34 campers per session, ages 7 through 12

What: Journey's End Farm is a year-round 210-acre family farm that has welcomed campers to sleep-away camp for three generations, since 1939. Daily farm chores include the care of cows, calves, hens, chicks, rabbits, goats, and alpacas. We grow much of the food we consume at camp and encourage children to enjoy eating the vegetables they help tend. Campers build projects in woodshop and ceramics; explore the natural world; create games, make music, and go on hikes with the staff; and play in the fields, woods, and creeks. Drawing from Quaker values, Journey's End emphasizes inclusion, simplicity, respect, and cooperation. A counselor to camper ratio of 1:3 provides attention and support for each camper, and our small sessions foster a strong sense of community.

When: Four 2-week sessions from June -- August

Cost: Please check website for dates and rates. Early bird discounts and financial aid available. Referral incentive through March 31.

Go to: www.journeysendfarm.org

TRE retreat with Bonnie Pariser

April 7-8 - 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 Berzeli, 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 trembling 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 trembling 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.

Looking for a gardener?

Garden Goddess organic gardening services offers cleanup, maintenance and design. Specializing in vegetable and medicinal herb gardens, compost consultations, and whole systems design. Contact Sara for more information: sarajoyfishkin@gmail.com 908.323.9691

Living Opportunity

Interested in living more communally and sustainably? Have land and want to see it used productively? Want another family on your property to share in community and in the creation of an earth-centered infrastructure? Contact Sara (mother of Isaiah in second grade and Levi and Eva in the Moon Room) to begin a conversation. sarajoyfishkin@gmail.com 908.323.9691

From the Artyard

FilmYard

Memories of Underdevelopment, Friday, March 23, 7:30 PM - A writer wanders the streets of Havana after the Invasion of Pigs Bay. Directed by Tomas Gutierrez Alea

For tickets or for more information on our upcoming screenings, please visit our website, www.artyard.org .

Mudlarking at Artyard

Sunday, March 25 1-3 pm and Sunday, April 8 1-3 pm – Weather Permitting

In preparation for our upcoming exhibition, *The Memory Palace: Frenchtown at 150ish*, we would like to invite the community to participate in two days of mudlarking in March and April. The term mudlarking draws from the British tradition of scavenging for treasures in the River Thames. Dedicated mudlarkers venture into the mud and water in search of old pipes, broken pottery bits, long-lost coins, belt buckles and the like. What possible treasures lie hidden along the banks of the River Delaware? Join us and find out! We will be meeting at ArtYard on both days and head to the river as a group via the towpath.

Objects found during these expeditions will be on display in the *Unearthed* section of our spring exhibition, a publicly sourced library of objects found in, near or around the Delaware River. If you are unable to attend the community mudlark but have treasures you have found on your own time that you would like to lend to ArtYard, please bring your objects to the ArtYard gallery Wednesday-Sunday, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM. To RSVP go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/o/artyard> and type in Artyard.

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.

2018 Sustainable Living Expo

Friday, April 13th, 5-10 pm

Presentations, films, workshops, vendors, great food from the Taza Truck and more.

Hosted by the Key Club, Palisades High School, 35 Church Hill Road, Kintnersville, PA 18930

Find out more at peace-youth.org

If anyone has a sustainable business or educational topic they'd like to promote, or think of a business that might be interested, contact Tina Venini through the website: peace-youth.org. This event will reach thousands of families in Bucks/Northampton Counties and NJ.

From: waldorfeducation.org

Education's Role in Curbing Teen Anxiety

The reports are out and they're conclusive. Teen anxiety and depression are at an all-time high. There is something amiss in our children's worlds and perhaps our adult ones as well. As psychologists look to explain the trends and help people cope, educators should look within our school walls and ask: Does modern education contribute to this problem? And, if so, how can we change school culture and methodology to help our children gain a sense of well-being?

(Continued on next page.)

THE RESEARCH

The National Institute of Mental Health reports that, in 2016, 31.9% of adolescents had an anxiety disorder and 12.8% of them were depressed. That's nearly a third of all teenagers being classified as not being occasionally anxious, but as having an anxiety disorder.

In 2016, the journal *Pediatrics* released a study of national trends in depression among adolescents and young adults that supported these numbers and marked the upward trend. The number of teens who reported depression in 2014 was up 37% from 2005.

And these studies show these are not just "at-risk" children, but kids from all demographics — suburban, rural, urban, rich, poor, college-bound, and not.

But what about college kids? Do these teens pull themselves together as they age? Unfortunately not. The American College Health Association found that 61.9% reported feeling "overwhelming anxiety" during their school year and 39.1% felt "too depressed to function." Of those, 19.7% with anxiety sought professional treatment and 15.6% got treatment for depression.

Sadly, the effects of these numbers extend beyond paper surveys. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that the number of children and adolescents admitted to hospitals for suicide or self-harm has "more than doubled in the last decade."

THE CAUSES

What has changed in the last decade that would make such a marked difference in the mental health of our young people? Dr. Jean Twenge, author of *iGen*, thinks the answer is pretty clear. She has been doing research about anxiety and depression for 25 years with a particular interest in generational differences. When 2011 – 2012 hit, she saw a trend that was marked and significant. It was the year when those having iPhones went over the 50% mark. It was also the year that clinical levels of anxiety and depression jumped and continued to climb.

While Dr. Twenge is a proponent of screen limits, she also notes that the Smartphone itself is less the issue than the larger culture of adolescence and how teens interact with one another via social media. And, she notes, it's not all bad. After all, these same teens, on their couches and engaging one another via text, are less likely to engage in risky behavior — smoke, drink, and have multiple sex partners — than their peers from decades before.

If this issue is, as Dr. Twenge says, largely cultural, we should ask what else about our culture has shifted in the last decade, as we all have become more connected and more vulnerable to changes brought on by technology.

Adults also are susceptible to our always-on, hyper-connected media culture. We know about every act of terrorism, the moment it happens, as alerts pop up on our phones. We spend our free time in very different ways than generations before us. And our economic and job landscape shifts greatly from year to year. How does this then influence the way we teach our kids in school and parent them at home?

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

According to the 2016 *Time* Magazine report -- *Teen Depression and Anxiety: Why the Kids Are Not Alright* -- school pressures also play a key role in the increasing anxiety, depression, and the stress modern adolescents face. Parents and teachers place pressure on students to do well in class, and on standardized tests, to help ensure their college and career success. This goes along with often overscheduled extracurriculars, also deemed essential to be accepted and do well in the competitive adult world.

"The competitiveness, the lack of clarity about where things are going [economically] have all created a sense of real stress," says Victor Schwartz of the Jed Foundation, a nonprofit that works with colleges and universities on mental-health programs and services." The article goes on to say that: "The strain on school counselors has increased since No Child Left Behind standardized testing protocols were implemented in the past decade."

There are other stressors at school as well, like that of appearance, social media involvement, peer groups, and bullying. School anxiety often presents itself as school refusal, a problem that affects between 2-5% of kids.

(Continued on the next page.)

In the New York Times article, *Why are more American Teenagers than ever Suffering from Severe Anxiety*, Lynn Lyons, a psychotherapist and author, believes schools can make changes to help students reduce their anxiety: things like later start times, reduction of homework, normalizing failure, and relevant learning. She believes these measures will help build the resilience students need for school and beyond.

Perhaps there are even simpler ways to reduce the culture of anxiety within schools. What if schools focused on activities proven to enhance well-being? This is certainly an approach that Waldorf educators have pursued as their mission to focus on a child's "heart" as well as "head" explicitly implies. Activities like exercise, mindfulness, good nutrition, and time outside are a part of the Waldorf curriculum for a reason. That reason is not to ease anxiety, but to establish a sense of well-being through connection with learning, self, peers, and the greater community.

Exercise

When it comes to movement, Waldorf educators understand the importance of using our bodies to connect with ourselves, the world around us, and the academic material at hand. Considering that studies have shown that as little as a 10 minute walk can relieve anxiety and depression, it won't take much to help students lift their spirits. Keeping gym class, recess, and sports in the daily curriculum should be enough to help our students' well-being.

Mindfulness

Researchers from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD found 47 studies showing that mindful meditation can help ease psychological stresses like anxiety, depression, and pain. What does mindfulness look like in a Waldorf classroom? It looks like attention brought to a task, such as sitting and drawing a tree for 30 minutes. Or a morning stretch with breathing to begin the day. Beauty and ritual also speak to mindfulness — an opening verse with a candle, traditional festivals and ceremonies, or even journaling can all bring mindfulness to students.

Nutrition

The Harvard Health Blog recommends several nutritional strategies to ease anxiety. For example, a diet rich in whole grains, vegetables, and fruit will metabolize more slowly to "maintain a more even blood sugar level, which creates a calmer feeling." Also food higher in magnesium, zinc and Omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to reduce anxiety.

While it is difficult to require students to maintain balanced diets, it is not difficult to create a culture of respect for wholesome, fresh food. Starting with preschool snack time, fresh vegetables and fruits and whole grains are offered to Waldorf students. Students can connect with better food through gardening programs and through direct lessons in curriculum about the importance of food for mental and physical health.

The Outdoors

Study upon study has shown that time in nature reduces stress, depression, and anxiety. One study even found that people who move to greener areas, even in urban settings, receive sustained mental health benefits. Time outdoors is essential to our children, and schools should consider making time during the school day to offer students green spaces for mindfulness, exercise, and just being.

Sleep

Lynn Lyons goes to bat for later school times because she knows that adequate sleep is a stress buster. People low on sleep are more likely to be depressed and are more prone to negativity and anxiety. Helping teens and their parents to put away their smartphones before bed can also make a huge difference in sleep patterns. Schools can encourage families to keep bedrooms technology free zones.

Connection

Ultimately, what well-being comes back to is a healthy sense of connection both with self and with others. In the New York Times article — *Why Having Friends is Good for You* — Emma Seppala of the Stanford Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education, and author of the 2016 book "The Happiness Track," says, "People who feel more connected to others have lower levels of anxiety and depression. Moreover, studies show they also have higher self-esteem, greater empathy for others, are more trusting and cooperative and, as a consequence, others are more open to trusting and cooperating with them.

"In other words," Dr. Seppala explains, "social connectedness generates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional and physical well-being."

We must help our children see the long term value of all these pillars of well-being. More importantly, we must teach them, in school, how to connect genuinely with themselves and others. If we can do that, then they will have the skills they need to advocate for the peaceful and fulfilling lives of their future selves.