

School Calendar

This Week

Wednesday, March 27

Grade School Assembly 6:30 pm

Thursday-Friday, March 28-29

No-School – Parent-Teacher Conferences

Looking Ahead

Thursday, April 4

Middle School Musical – Oliver 6:30 pm

Friday, April 5

Middle School Musical – Oliver 6:30 pm

Saturday, April 6

Middle School Musical – Oliver 2:00 pm

Thursday, April 11

1st, 2nd, 3rd Grade Parent Evening

Monday-Friday, April 15-19

No School – Spring Break

How to Contact Us

info@rivervalleyschool.org

lc@rivervalleyschool.org

bot@rivervalleyschool.org

pc@rivervalleyschool.org



Anticipation is building for this year's middle school musical, *Oliver!*. Based on Charles Dickens' beloved novel, this popular musical is full of familiar songs, lively dance numbers, tragedy and humor. It is something you and your family won't want to miss, so consider yourself invited.

Performances will be on Thursday, April 4th and Friday, April 5th at 6:30 pm and Saturday, April 6th at 2. Tickets are \$6 for children, \$10 for adults and \$30 for immediate family.

A ticket order form can be found in the back of this week's Current. We hope to see you there!

The April lunch form is attached to this week's Current – Orders due 3/29/19.

New Music After School Program with Kris Ramakrishna There's still time to join.

Kris Ramakrishna, a River Valley alum, is an international composer, performer and guitarist and soon to be Berklee College of Music graduate. Kris is ready to give back to River Valley by sharing and inspiring RVWS grade school children through music from around the world. Children are encouraged to bring their voices or instruments, and Kris will lead them in an ensemble setting while helping them enrich their musicality.

Recommended for 3rd grade and above.

It will run on Mondays starting March 25, 3:30-5 pm. The week of April 25 (after break) it will shift to Thursdays, same time, until May 30. **A registration form is at the back of this week's Current.**

Grade School Assembly Tomorrow Wednesday, March 27 at 6:30 pm.

Students from grades 2-8 will be performing. Parents and families from EC and 1st grade are welcome to attend to get a preview of what is in store for their children. Hope to see you there!

Students are asked to wear Festive Attire, as described in the Parent Handbook:

Festive Attire means neat, clean and special; "nicer than everyday school clothes" and reflective of the care and effort which has led up to the occasion. Preferred attire includes dress slacks, khakis, skirts or dresses (no more than 4" above the knee), dress shirts/blouses, button-down shirts. Specifically, no jeans or cargo pants, no torn clothing, no pictures on clothing, no text, no glitter, no sneakers, and please be mindful of high heels vis-à-vis performance requirements.

Students in grades 2-8 are expected in their classroom at 6 pm.

Due to an unexpected change of plans, the **Committee for Social Justice** will not be meeting this Sunday, March 31st for our second book discussion. Our meeting will be re-scheduled – so keep reading ***Between the World and Me*** and check back for updates!!

Auction Bidding is Still Open

Although the magical night of the auction is now over, the bidding is not! We have many wonderful items still available.

- Fancy a night of Movement and Games class with Mr. Laker for just adults? You can bid on that!
- Feel like you could bluff your way to the World Series of Poker? The "All Gender Poker Night" is right up your sleeve!
- Tired of your flowers dying? Why not come to Mom's Night Out at Crafting Space with Kelly Grace and learn to make paper ones!

Click below, take a peek at what's still up, have some fun and support our school.

<https://rvws2019.ggo.bid!>

From Administration

Enrollment News

2019-20 ENROLLMENT CONTRACT DUE DATE ADJUSTED

Enrollment contracts for the upcoming school year have been delayed, but will arrive in your inboxes this week. Please note that the due date has been extended to Monday April 22nd, which is the day that we return from spring break. We apologize for the unexpected delay – the on-time incentive (\$250 deposit per child instead of \$500) will be honored on all contracts received on or before 4/22/2019. Thank you.

NOW ACCEPTING NEW APPLICATIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2019 – If you have friends or family who may be interested in RVWS for their children, there are several ways for them to learn more: Have them contact Cindy by telephone or email to schedule a private tour, encourage them to peruse www.rivervalley.school.org, invite them to come for Mayfaire – we're holding an Open House in the morning before Mayfaire begins – so it's an ideal way to share both Waldorf education and River Valley's community with guests!

SAMPLE MORNINGS @ GARDEN GATE – Every Thursday from now through 4/11/2019, Garden Gate is open for visitors. Children under 3, together with their parent or caregiver can join for a day. Space is limited to 3 spots each class, so registration is required. Contact Cindy to reserve a spot. admissions@rivervalley.school.org or 610-982-5606

Missing Classroom Items

We are sad to say that several items are missing from our Early Childhood classrooms. The Garden Gate room is missing two large quartz crystals, and an amethyst crystal cluster and a Tippery Tim wool puppet have disappeared from the Moon Room. If any of these items inadvertently found their way home with your children, please bring them to school and leave them on the front desk. No questions will be asked.

Lost and Found

It's time once again to empty the lost and found. Please take a look when you come for Parent/Teacher Conferences. Unclaimed items will be donated after Friday.

Missing Kitchen Implement

Did you borrow the red immersion blender that belongs to Chef Reinier? If so, please bring it back or his popular lunchtime delicacies will suffer because he uses it almost every day. The cooking equipment in the kitchen belongs to Reinier, not the school, so please respect the space and don't borrow things without his permission. Thank you.

Attention Parents

If your child's end of the day plans change please make sure you inform the school by 1 pm. This is especially important when it involves changes to the bus schedule. Dismissal is a very busy time and we need to keep the chaos to a minimum for sake of everyone's safety. Thank you for your cooperation.

Thank you

An enormous thank you to our valiant auction committee – Jennifer Kovach, Jef Betz, Kristyn Lederer, Liz Davachi and Ron Ferguson – for a spectacular evening of song and dance, delicious food and an amazing array of treasures for our bidding pleasure. It was a heartfelt celebration of our school, our community and 100 years of Waldorf education. Thanks also to everyone who volunteered, donated items and was there on Saturday to be part of the festivities.

Special thanks to Annie Porter for purchasing the beautiful wall-hanging made by our grade school students and donating it back to the school. It will grace our lobby for many years to come and we are very grateful.

From The Faculty

What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Arithmetic

Second Grade – Language Arts

Third Grade – Drama/Arithmetic

Fourth Grade – Local Geography

Fifth Grade – North American Geography

Sixth Grade – European Geography

Seventh Grade – Drama/Middle School Play

Eighth Grade – Drama/Middle School Play

Dear RVWS community,

I love having an excuse to get together with all of the wonderful adults in our community - and what a great time we all had on Saturday night at the auction! The tribute to the Class of 2019, which will include the 100th graduate from RVWS, showed them just as they are - sweet and funny, endearing and playful, and full of talent and curiosity. It was a poignant picture of the amazing journey that is soon coming to an end, and the extraordinary growth that I have been so deeply privileged to witness. An enormous thank you to Tiffany for the many hours spent wading through all of those photos!

Because I was a puddle on the floor at the end of the slide show, I was completely unprepared for the 12-foot portrait at the end of the class tribute - and Ms Hummel's touching words! Thank you, Christina, for that moment. Thank you to the auction committee and thank you to my teaching and administrative colleagues and all of the parents of the class of 2019, and all of the other parents and community members who had such lovely kind words throughout the evening. It is all of you who make this community grounded and strong and beautiful!

With gratitude and love,
Annie

From Parent Council

Summer Camps

Parent Council has compiled a list of summer camps that children from River Valley have attended to serve as a resource for parents making summer plans. A copy of this list is also on our website in the Parent Resources section. (If you need the password, please contact the school.)

BUCKS COUNTY

Camp Onas - sleep away camp, Ottsville, PA

Ages 7-13

<http://camponas.org>

Bucks Audubon Nature Camp- New Hope, PA

Ages 4-10

<https://www.bcas.org/product/summer-camp-nature-camp/>

Painted Dreams Horse Farm- Newtown, PA

ages 6-14

http://www.painteddreamshorsefarm.com/summer_camps.html

Rock Camp- Kintnersville, PA

http://jimmerostudio.com/School_of_Rock/index.html

Camp Curiosity

all ages

<https://www.campcuriosity.com>

Grounded Kids Yogic Arts, Games & Swim Camp

(A new offering from River Valley parent, Felicia Holtz)

Ms. Prem & friends, Point Pleasant, PA, Tuesday – Friday, July 30 – August 2, 11 am – 4:30 pm, \$260. Ages 8 – 12

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LEHIGH VALLEY

Banana Factory Art Camps

<https://www.bananafactory.org/classes/summer-camps/>

Baum School of Art

<https://www.baumschool.org>

HUNTERDON COUNTY

Camp Muck & Gold- Stockton, NJ

ages 8-14

<https://www.muckandgold.com/summer-camp.html>

Mill Ballet School Summer Camp- Lambertville, NJ

ages 3-18

<https://www.millballetschool.com/summer-dance-programs>

Howell Living History Farm- Lambertville, NJ

<http://www.howellfarm.org/ShowPage.aspx?PageID=25>

Shields Gymnastics Camp- Flemington, NJ

ages 5+

<https://www.shieldsgymnastics.net/camps>

Gravity Vault Rock Climbing Camp- Flemington, NJ

<https://www.gravityvault.com/locations/flemington-nj/programs?>

Paint Party Farm- Sergeantsville, NJ

<https://paintpartyfarm.com/kids-day-camp/#camps>

Milford Summer Camp- Milford, NJ

<https://www.facebook.com/Milford-Summer-Camp-130212740399190/>

Riegel Ridge Summer Camp- Holland Twp, NJ

<http://www.riegelridgecc.org/summer-camp>

Artisan Market at Mayfaire!

If any of the grades or students would like to participate in selling their handmade creations at the Mayfaire this year, please email Ivy at karunagoddess@gmail.com

From the Community

Interested in Learning more about the Health Benefits of Hemp/cbd?

Overwhelmed by all of the information and new products on the market?
Please join Sara Fishkin and Merdeka VanWissekerke for a free presentation about this incredible plant, the endocannabinoid system, and how we can all benefit from it. We will have samples of our new nano-sonicated hemp oil, as well as light refreshments. Sunday 3/31, at 11:00 am. Starr Studio 104 East Ashland Street, Doylestown. Please contact Sara for more information or to RSVP: sarajoyfishkin@gmail.com 908.323.9691

Cats looking for a home

We are looking to rehome our two wonderful red tabby cats, due to severe allergies in our home. Jack and Jinny are the sweetest, softest, laid-back kitty siblings in the world. They are both 2 years old and up to date on all their shots. They enjoy hiking with us in our backyard, overseeing garden planning, building marble runs, reading over our shoulders and purring when looked at! If you feel that you are a fit for this kid/dog/cat/everything-friendly duo, text me, Brooke Way (mom to a Moon Room kiddo) at 215.500.5769 or email me at flypeterfly@hotmail.com.

Tenor Sax Player Needed

We are looking for a tenor sax player to play with our band at Parent Stage. Contact David Bader 610-220-4409 or david@thelab.net

River Ballet Company presents Swan Lake

March 30th at 11:30am. Music Mountain Theater, 1483 Rt 179. Lambertville, NJ
Great show for Kids and Adults. Tickets: www.tututix.com/riverballet

Film Screening and Discussion - I'm Not Racist...Am I?

Bucks Quarterly Meeting will host a free screening and discussion of the documentary: I'm Not Racist...Am I? on Sunday, March 31 at 1-3:30 PM at the Newtown Theatre, 120 North State Street, Newtown, PA 18940

One of the producers of the film, André Robert Lee, will lead a discussion following the film.

The documentary follows a diverse group of teens through a year-long exploration to get at the heart of racism. Through some tense and painful moments, we see how these difficult conversations affect their relationships with friends and parents and ultimately challenge them to look deep within themselves.

By the end of their time together, we'll see these remarkable young people develop deeper bonds, a stronger resolve, and a more significant definition of racism than any of us ever imagined.

This film is appropriate for young people in grades 7 and up. Please email sarah.crofts@gmail.com with any questions.

Camp Muck and Gold

(6th grader Loie Gallagher's mom and dad's creation) for ages 8-14

July 15-19, July 22-26, July 29-Aug. 2

A home camp run by experienced artist/educators who continue to be curious about the world, find wisdom in imperfection and embrace the unknown. Our program is multidisciplinary - art, music, dance, science, nature, emotions, food, writing so great ideas can come from playing and collaborating with everything and everyone.

Limited space, register soon! Email: cbodwitch@gmail.com or call/text 201-240-0435. Other RVWS children are attending so contact us for carpooling possibilities.

Hawthorne Valley Farm Camp

Kids Can Cook Day Camp – Ages 8-13 – June-August – Cooking, Gardening, Animal Care and more
House Camp – Ages 8-12 - July-August – Archery, Gardening, Feeding Animals, Nature Projects, Hikes, Cookouts, Swimming

Field Camp – Ages 12-16 – July-August – Campers become junior apprentices on the farm – 2 and 4 week sessions

Hawthorne Valley, New York.

Contact: PBLC.HawthorneValley.org 518-672-7500 x201

Earth School Summer Camp

Staying connected to self through nature...

June 24-August 23 (8 one-week sessions) at Bucks County Audubon in Solebury, PA

For 6-13 year olds. Space is limited (intentionally). www.earthschoolforkids.com, a non-profit rededucational organization. 267-454-4491.

Plowshare Farms CSA

Registration is now open! River Valley Waldorf School family, Teddy, Faith, and Clement Moynihan raise chemical-free, naturally-grown produce in Pipersville, and offer a 24 week, on-farm CSA, June through Thanksgiving.

From garden variety veggies to heirloom oddities, we have been growing food for our community for six seasons, and are eager to share the bounty with our new community--Clement just joined the Acorn Room in September.

Please check out what we're all about at plowsharefarms.com or @plowsharefarms.

Wanted Dead or Alive – Spotted Lanternfly

Join the Tinicum Conservancy on **Thursday, April 18th, 7-9:30 pm** for a Spotted Lanternfly Community Education Presentation at Tinicum Elementary School Library, 162 E. Dark Hollow Road, Pipersville, PA

The Spotted Lanternfly is an invasive insect from eastern Asia that has spread throughout southeastern Pennsylvania since its discovery in Berks County in 2014. This colorful devil covers trees and other surfaces by the thousands and is a significant threat to Pennsylvania's hardwoods, fruit trees and grape vines.

Join us to learn how you can identify and help stop the spread of this invasive insect.

Artyard

Exhibition: The Creative Commons: Progressive Studio Practice - January 12 – April 15

Upcoming Events:

Sunday, March 30th, 7:30 pm

Crank Night – This year's theme is *Questions*.

Friday, April 5, 7:30 pm

Please join us for a night of musical celebration with The Lovestruck Balladeers

Saturday & Sunday, April 6-7

Sacred Harp Singing School Workshops with Gregory Corbino, (singing & potluck on May 19th.)

Saturday, May 4th, 7:30 pm

Screening of Paper Moon, the 1973 comedy drama starring Ryan O'Neal and Tatum O'Neal

Saturday, June 29th, 7:30 pm

Screening of Finding Vivian Maier, directed by John Maloof and Charlie Siskel followed by a communal, bring your own picnic

Go to: artyard.org for tickets and more information about all of these events.

ArtYard, 62A Trenton Avenue, Frenchtown, NJ 08825. Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

From: 100hoursoutside.com

The Incredible Importance of Developing the Vestibular Sense

I vividly remember learning about the five senses when I was child. I remember doing worksheets that seemed extremely silly because the five senses seemed so intuitive. The worksheet might've said something like, "Which sense are you using when you inhale the scent of a rose?" I think because it was all so obvious, I have distinct memories of learning about it in school.

To my surprise, within the last few years I learned there are actually seven senses. Who knew? These are the ones we should've learned about in school. Their names are nothing straightforward like touch, smell, sight, taste and hearing. The sixth and seventh senses are the vestibular sense and proprioception. Even just the sounds of the words make them intriguing to learn about!

This post will be mainly about the vestibular sense and why developing a child's vestibular sense should be a primary motivator for getting your kids in nature more often. I'll write about proprioception another time but just so I don't leave you hanging, proprioception deals with sensing what your different body parts are doing without looking at them.

The vestibular sense, also known as the balance sense, is the awareness of your body is space. The name comes from the word vestibule. This sense is quite literally a hallway to the brain. This hallway begins to develop in utero at just two months after conception. The vestibular sense is completely formed around five months after conception and movement in the womb will contribute to its development! The vestibular sense is the first fully functioning sensory system to develop!

I really loved learning about this sense because it immediately explained why kids are drawn to certain activities. Children love to swing. They love to twist the ropes of the swing and then spin as fast as they can. Kids will roll down hills over and over again. They love to play rough and tumble, hang upside down on monkey bars, dance, do somersaults, play leap frog and wheelbarrow race. I loved doing the crab walk as a kid. Youngsters love thrill rides at amusement parks and they even love to spin just for fun. Each one of these activities is strengthening the balance sense and helping children learn where their body is in space.

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The vestibular sense goes back to the incredibly small hairs inside the inner ear. When we move, the fluid in our ears moves and stimulates those hairs, sending the brain information about where our body is in space. The more a child is out of an upright position, the more the fluid will move over the hairs, and the stronger the vestibular sense will become. Children need to put their bodies in all different positions and move them in all different directions in order to get that fluid moving.

The vestibular sense is a cornerstone sense because it affects the incorporation of all of the others senses. What does this look like? Children with a strong vestibular sense are more coordinated and better balanced. Kids who haven't fully developed their vestibular sense tend to be clumsy and run into things. They may not have a good understanding of personal space.

The progression of sitting to crawling to toddling to running during first 15 months is a crucial time for developing the balance sense. It is vitally important that children are able to practice these skills on all different types of terrain so that their movements is not always linear. The variation of the outside surfaces will lend tremendously to sensory development. Children who are always on flat surfaces do not get the stimulation their bodies need. Add an extra layer of depth here by spending some time outside in bare feet. Learning foot flexibility will aid in sensory development as well.

Anytime we move the body or the head we activate vestibular sense. This activation sends signals to eyes telling them that they need to respond. I have written in other posts about the importance of strong eye muscles for academic success. Strong eye muscles help with both for reading and writing. We need to have eye muscles that are individually strong but also muscles that track well together. The retina has 137 million nerve endings that take in sensory information.

Playground equipment has changed over the decades. We no longer have the fast merry-go-rounds or the uneven metal bars for hanging upside down. We took our kids to a brand new playground a few months ago. It's a huge playground that's absolutely gorgeous and has one of those squishy floors all around it. There is no merry-go-round but there was this huge bird-cage like apparatus that fit tons of children inside. All our kids ran to it and climbed inside. It spun... but hardly. It barely moved. In a sense, I'm sure it was safer but it definitely wasn't contributing to the development of the vestibular sense!

Without even knowing what it was called, we have seen great sensory growth in our own children over the years. They jump from rock to rock like nimble cats. I'm astonished when I see the things they can do physically.

From an adult perspective, it's okay if you just want to watch. When you go through puberty the fluid in the ear canals will thicken, lengthening the amount of time it takes for the little ear hairs to return to their original position. This is why teens and adults tend to get motion sick more often than children. I remember trying to do a somersault when my kids were little and feeling absolutely awful afterward.

Adults do not need to spin but children do. It's okay and beneficial for them to become dizzy. In time, as they get used to all that fluid moving around in their inner ears, they will become more adept at navigating their surroundings. Spinning activities lead to increased alertness, increased attention, and increased calmness. This must be why children are so drawn to them!

Movement during the day and throughout childhood is crucial. The importance here is monumental. Childhood is when children develop the vestibular sense and it's not happening while they sit still. Circle time, seat work, and computer lab sessions do not contribute to this type of sensory development. This is one reason why recess is so good for academics. Recess helps with brain development. It wakes the brain up so that the student is ready to learn more in the classroom setting.

Another time when children are keeping their bodies and heads almost completely still is when they are watching screens. Our toddlers have always had a hard time sitting through a movie and I think it's because their bodies are telling them to get up and move. Their brain needs to be stimulated by movement. Comparing and contrasting body and head movement between a child who is outside in a nature and a child who is inside in front of a television screen, clearly displays why there can be such vast developmental differences between children.

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The great thing is that children are resilient! Any time during childhood you choose to increase movement, especially movements that stimulate balancing, you will assist your child in his or her ability to pay attention. Balancing activities help immensely with reading skills.

So what can you do? Head outside and utilize the uneven terrains. Roll down hills. Balance on logs. Skip over branches. Take whatever skill your child is working on right now and transfer it outdoors. Are they crawling, toddling, jumping, climbing, spinning, or skipping? Great! Now let them enhance those skills in the woods. Try out snow shoes, cross-country skiing, climbing a rope ladder, navigating around large rocks, using monkey bars, and walking through deep snow. All of these movements require significant balance skills.

In "Smart Moves, Why Learning is Not All in Your Head", Carla Hannaford writes,

"In Denmark, fifty percent of the children spend between ages two and a half and six in Forest Kindergartens where they climb rocks, trees, hills, roll, jump, balance and play at least four hours a day no matter the weather. These children's vestibular systems are so well developed that learning difficulties and dyslexia are rare."

Whether we figure out how to fit nature into our schedules or not, childhood marches on. The time component is a big deal. We all want to feel good about the choices we are making, but the fact remains that if three or four hours a day is a benchmark that is coming up time and again, then four hours a week probably isn't going to cut it. Whereas 200 hours of outside time a year may seem like a lot from a pure numbers perspective, it really isn't anywhere close to what children need in order to develop properly.

The more we understand about the development of children, the more we can be confident in our choices to choose nature time! It's always worth our time to play outside.

OLIVER!

Thursday, April 4th, 6:30 pm # adults _____ # kids _____

Friday, April 5th, 6:30 pm # adults _____ # kids _____

Saturday, April 6th, 2 pm # adults _____ # kids _____

Ticket prices \$6 child, \$10 adult or \$30 per immediate family.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

We can only take prepaid reservations.

Make check payable to River Valley Waldorf School. Put "Oliver" in the memo.

Bring form & check to the office.

After-school Music Program Registration Form

From the end of March to the end of May we will be adding a new Music afterschool session!

Kris Ramakrishna, a River Valley alum, is an international composer, performer and guitarist and soon to be Berklee College of Music graduate. Kris is ready to give back to River Valley by sharing and inspiring RVWS grade school children through music from around the world. Children are encouraged to bring their voices or instruments, and Kris will lead them in an ensemble setting while helping them enrich their musicality.

Recommended for 3rd grade and above.

Classes will meet on Mondays, March 25, April 1, 8 and Thursdays, April 25, May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. The classes will culminate in a performance at the Friday assembly on May 31st.

Cost for the program is \$190.

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Student's Name _____

Student's Teacher _____

Parent's Name _____

Parent's Phone Home: _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____

I would like to register my child for:

After-School Music Program (9 classes)

TOTAL: \$190

NOTE: Materials fee is included in the price.

Payment in full must be attached to the registration form. Payment is non-refundable and is set regardless of the number of classes actually attended by your child. Class will be filled on a first come first served basis.