



# River Valley Current

May 17, 2016 No. 446

"Sunshine is delicious, rain is refreshing, wind braces us up, snow is exhilarating; there is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather." -John Ruskin

## School Calendar

### This Week

<b>Tuesday, May 17</b>	
Visiting HS Series in the Garden-Solebury	3:30 pm
<b>Wednesday, May 18</b>	
8 <sup>th</sup> grade Community Service Projects	6:30 pm
September, 2016 1 <sup>st</sup> grade Class Meeting	6:30 pm
<b>Thursday, May 19</b>	
Diversi-Tea	8:15 am
5 <sup>th</sup> grade Pentathlon	
Board Meeting	6:30 pm
<b>Friday, May 20</b>	
2 <sup>nd</sup> grade Camp-out at school	
<b>Saturday, May 21</b>	
EC Open House	10:00 am-noon
5 <sup>th</sup> grade Workday	

### Looking Ahead

<b>Monday-Friday, May 23-27</b>	
6 <sup>th</sup> grade Astronomy Block Class Trip	
<b>Tuesday, May 24</b>	
Visiting HS Series in the Garden-KWS	3:30 pm
<b>Wednesday, May 25<sup>th</sup></b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> grade play	9:00 am
5 <sup>th</sup> grade play	6:30pm
<b>Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup></b>	
5 <sup>th</sup> grade play	9:00 am
1 <sup>st</sup> grade play	2:15 pm
7 <sup>th</sup> grade to Philadelphia Art Museum	
<b>Friday, May 27</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> grade play	9:00 am
4 <sup>th</sup> grade trip to Canal Museum	

### AFTERCARE NOTICE

Mrs. McCracken needs to leave early next Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup>.  
Aftercare will close at 4:30pm

### Parent Council Corner:

Next PC meeting is Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 pm in the Garden

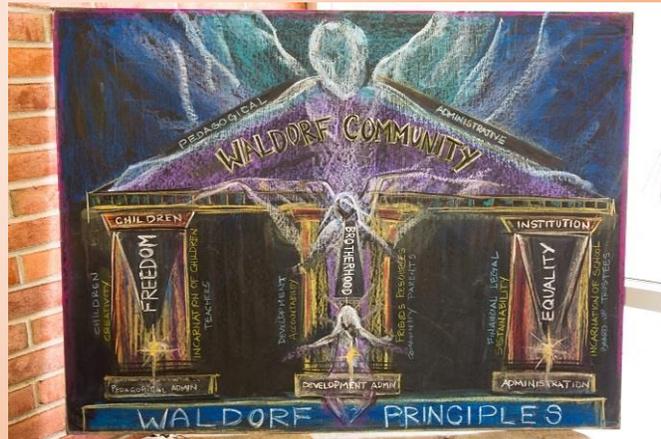
## RIVER VALLEY AUCTION GALA SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 5:30 pm BBQ, BLUEGRASS and FUN

This is the biggest night of our school year and this year promises to be a blockbuster! Fantastic Auction Items and Great Friendship!

Did you love the First Grade Bluegrass Band at Parent Stage? Then Come On Home on Saturday, June 4 for more! Great Food by Grandy's Kitchen, Nellie Rae's and a Parent BBQ Cookoff between John Wesp, Tony Stuart and Paul Smith! That's HOT! Chicken, Brisket, Steak Tacos, Pork, Salmon!

Tickets can be purchased online at [https://rvws.ejoinme.org/Auction\\_Tickets](https://rvws.ejoinme.org/Auction_Tickets).

We need your donations in the days ahead. Please bring your auction items to the school lobby no later than Wednesday May 18 and please be sure to fill out your donation form completely. Forms are available at the front desk. For reservations or questions about the Auction Gala, email [auction@rivervalleyschool.org](mailto:auction@rivervalleyschool.org). See you on the 4th!



This drawing was created for the Community Open Board Meeting on Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>. Notes from the meeting can be found at the end of this week's Current. Thank you, Sharon Ferguson, for your beautiful drawing of the threefold governance model of a Waldorf school.

## THE TIME TO REGISTER FOR SUMMER CAMP IS NOW!

The EC teachers (Sprout's First Camp & The Enchanted Forest) and Ms. Niemczura (Discover Our Wonderful World & Drama and Discovery) have put together some amazingly wonderful summer camps for this year!! However, no matter their inherent wonderfulness, there will be no camps without campers. Descriptions & registration forms are attached. Speak to Cindy or Renee, or one of the teachers if you have questions!

## Board Elections this Week – Don't Forget to Vote

We need your vote to make the election valid. For your convenience a copy of the ballot is attached to this week's Current.

## From Administration

### Congratulations!



Best wishes to Amanda Blanco and Mac Parker who were married in California over spring break. They had a beautiful wedding ceremony on the beach and a wedding party in Mac's mother's backyard. We wish you happiness and blessings on this joyous occasion.

### A Gardening Idea

Do you have leftover starts that you can't use? Are you looking for plants for your garden? Well, Parent Council has come up with a solution. If you have starts that you don't need, bring them to school. In the coming weeks there will be a tray in the lobby to collect them. If you are looking for something to plant, browse the display. There will be a donation jar nearby and any money collected will be donated to enhance our River Valley garden.

### A Grandparents Day Thank You

Congratulations on a delightful "Grandparents, Special Friends" program. I am Collin Schaufele's grandmother, musician and former classroom music teacher. The musicianship was wonderful and your selections showed the children at their best and they had fun. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Thank you to your faculty, music teacher and children, Millie Thompson

### Lost

A black folding umbrella was lost during Mayfaire set up. If you find it please let Robbie know.

### Found

A very nice adult black raincoat was found after Parent Stage. If it is yours, please come to the office. It is hanging on the back of the office door.

### Cello Case Available

Free, hard, full-size cello case for anyone who needs it. It was owned by a lifelong concert cellist and is still in pretty decent condition. Contact Tara Bowers (Alice's mom, 2nd grade) at [bowersbetara@gmail.com](mailto:bowersbetara@gmail.com) and I will bring it to school for you.

### Courtyard Mowing Needed

The grass in the courtyard needs to be mowed. We have a lawn mower but could use a weed wacker as well. This is something that needs to be done periodically so if you are available, please let the office know.

The time is now!  
Order your  
2016  
Yearbook  
Pre-Order by May 13th for only \$32  
After May 13th the price will increase \$10,  
so drop your form  
in the folder on the office door today!

### SNOWDAY IN MAY?!?

Yes friends, River Valley is having a snow day in May. There will be no school on May 31, 2016. We wish you a wonderful, extra-long Memorial Day weekend (May 28, 29, 30 and 31)! We have pre-ordered sunshine, blue skies and pleasant temperatures for your enjoyment.

### Save the Date: Saturday, May 21, 4-6 – Open House at The Lotus School of Liberal Arts.

A chance to meet the teachers, view the curriculum and discuss classroom approaches with the staff. Come and participate in a discussion of how martial arts and yoga can help keep kids grounded. Enjoy wonderful food typical of the school day. Find out how meditation and related practices encourage healthy emotional development.

The Lotus School of Liberal Arts, Ottsville, PA. For more information, contact Pete Ryan, [conduplex@yahoo.com](mailto:conduplex@yahoo.com).

## VISITING HIGH SCHOOL SERIES

RVWS is excited to present the first in a series of visitors from area high schools. The series is expected to continue this spring and into the fall. Be sure to watch the CURRENT for additional dates, as they are confirmed. If you'd like to learn more about what options are available to students when they leave RVWS, plan to stop by! Please RSVP to Cindy: stop in the office, call or email: [cschretlen@rivervalleyschool.org](mailto:cschretlen@rivervalleyschool.org)

### Tuesday, May 17th, 3:30, Solebury School

Solebury School is a place where young people can explore the intellectual world and grow as students and as thinkers, where they can think creatively and be creative, and where all students have the chance to participate in all facets of the school – academics, athletics, clubs, and the arts. It is a place where students find the confidence to be who they are and to let their talents and personality enhance the school. It is a place where each individual is known and where faculty mentor students in and out of the classroom so that they become not only the best students, but the best people, possible. We have been fortunate to watch many River Valley graduates thrive here, and are excited to continue to work with you and your children.

### Tuesday, May 24, 3:30, Kimberton Waldorf High School

## From the Faculty

### What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Language Arts

Second Grade – Math

Third Grade – Review

Fourth Grade – Local History & Geography

Fifth Grade – Class Play/Botany

Sixth Grade – Math

Seventh Grade – Physiology

Eighth Grade – Modern History

### After-School German

A final three week round of After-School German will begin next Wednesday, May 18. It will have the usual songs, games and conversation, as well as an after-school snack. Kids in all grades are welcome to join. Contact Peter Ray, [peter.ray@comcast.net](mailto:peter.ray@comcast.net), or 215-794-5816.

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade 5K Run

Perhaps you have noticed the 8th Grade gearing up for our weekly training runs after drop-off or before pick-up? Wondering what we're up to? We are training to run the Finish the Fight 5K on Saturday May 14 at 8:30-9:45 am at Dimmick Park in Hellertown, PA. It's the same race Miss Hummel's former class ran in 7th grade a couple of years ago and it is a small, fun run to raise money for the American Cancer Society as part of their Relay for Life event. There is a \$25 registration fee per runner (price increases after April 30) which includes a free tech running T-shirt commemorating the race. We would LOVE to have as many River Valley families as possible join us! Here is the link to register: <https://runsignup.com/Race/PA/Hellertown/FinishTheFight5K>. Email Renell ([renell@rcn.com](mailto:renell@rcn.com)) with questions or to let us know to look for you there!

## From the Capital Campaign Committee

### Need a Father's Day gift? Teacher gift? Birthday gift? Graduation gift?

#### The Capital Campaign Tile store is OPEN!!

Beautiful handmade tiles that can be personalized. These tiles will become a permanent installation within our expansion. You can view photographs of the tiles on our website: [rivervalleyschool.org](http://rivervalleyschool.org)

Go to the website, click "Support RVWS" and then click "Buy a Moravian-style Tile".

Ordering and paying online is EASY!

Happy Tile Shopping!

## From Development

### Our Annual Fund Giving Tree is Growing!

Thank you to the following individuals for generously supporting the Annual Appeal!

Melody Birdsong  
Renell and Will Carpenter  
Carol Ann Diven  
Sharon and Ron Ferguson  
Jami and Shawn Goonan  
Joy and Noah Jarrett  
Patricia and Richard Kroth  
Emily and David Lovely  
Jesse Markowitz

Kamran Ozair  
Hillary and P J Murphy  
Jillian and Paul Ritchie  
Lorraine Jonathan Sharaf  
Eric Shubert  
Julie Smith  
Louanne and Brian Willard  
Betsy and Larry Willey  
Anonymous Happy Parents

A leaf has been placed on the Giving Tree for each of these donations. Each class, Grandparents, friends, faculty and staff have their own leaf color. Watch our tree bloom, from the roots to the canopy, as our Annual Fund grows!

Did you know that your tuition only accounts for a portion of the funds needed to operate our beloved school? Because we are a tuition-based school, we are not eligible for most grants and subsidies that other schools may qualify for. Additionally, we offer financial assistance for many of our families. Our ability to invest in our programming, support our faculty, serve our students, and maintain our facilities depends upon additional funding from events, gifts and sponsorships. This is why we ask our community to support the Annual Fund each year. In the next several weeks, you may receive a letter, note, email or call asking for your support of the Annual Fund. Please give what you are able so we may provide all the wonderful things that enrich your children's education in a way that no other school can. Thank you for your continued support and generosity!

Development Committee

## Alumni News



*St. John Smith '16 takes a mighty swing.*

### Walk-off Win Clinches a Share of the League Title for Varsity Baseball

St. John Smith ripped a double into the gap in the bottom of the seventh to drive home the only run of the game as the varsity baseball team defeated visiting Lawrenceville School (Lawrenceville, NJ) 1-0 in game one of a doubleheader May 15. The victory gives Mercersburg an 8-1 record in the Mid-Atlantic Prep League and at least a share of the league title for the sixth consecutive year! Go Blue Storm!

**Congratulations to Isabella Blasucci** (RVWS class of 2012) who will graduate on June 11<sup>th</sup> from High Mowing Waldorf School. Isabella will be attending Naropa University in the Fall.

## From the Community

### Riegelsville Library Summer Reading

- Summer Reading programs are each Thursday from 1-3 PM. The exception is the week of 6/21 when we have a special program on Tuesday.
- Snacks will be provided at each Thursday Summer Reading event.
- We will be having fun and getting messy! Please wear comfortable clothing and shoes for our events.
- Everyone is invited to participate in our "Race to Read" event. We will see how far around the library we can get our paper chain. You earn a paper chain link for each 100 minutes of reading that you do! (Adults ages 18+ earn a link for each book they complete.) For caregivers who are reading to children, each 100 minutes of reading together only counts for one person.
- For the Family Board Game Night participants are encouraged to bring their own game to share! Games should be appropriate for a library setting.
- Please watch our Facebook page, our webpage [[www.riegelsvillelibrary.info](http://www.riegelsvillelibrary.info)] or sign up for our email list at [riegelsvillelibrarysdept@gmail.com](mailto:riegelsvillelibrarysdept@gmail.com) for program updates and information.

### Screenagers: Growing up in the Digital Age

Showing at The Waldorf School of Philadelphia  
Wednesday, May 18th, 2016 @ 7.00 p.m.

**Screenagers: Growing up in the Digital Age** is selling out audiences around the country. Screenagers is the first feature documentary to explore the impact of screen technology on kids and to offer parents proven solutions that work.

Physician and filmmaker, Delany Ruston decided to make Screenagers when she found herself constantly struggling with her two children about screen time. Ruston felt guilty and confused, not sure what limits were best, especially around mobile phones and social media. Hearing repeatedly how other parents were equally overwhelmed, she realized this is one of the biggest, unexplored parenting issues of our time.

### River Town Radio Theatre Teen

Summer Workshop July 2016

- Always wondered what it would be like to perform on the radio?
- Looking for something different to do this summer?
- Join RTRT for a Radio Theater Summer Workshop.

When: Tuesday and Thursday evenings July 5, 7, 12, 14 and 19 at The Book Garden in Frenchtown from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. THEN on July 21 st – a LIVE performance on WDVR!

Who: Teens interested in discovering the world of radio theater! Cost: \$125 per student

A portion of the tuition will go to support WDVR radio. Ask Caroline or Robert for details. Space is limited. [caroline@bookgarden.biz](mailto:caroline@bookgarden.biz) [robert@bookgarden.biz](mailto:robert@bookgarden.biz)  
Register Today!

### Looking for a piano teacher

In the Doylestown area - your home or mine. Rising 4th grader in level 3 piano books. Please contact Jennifer Kovach at 215.554.4648 or [jennifer.kovach@gmail.com](mailto:jennifer.kovach@gmail.com).

### AToyGarden.com is Closing

We still have lots of inventory but we hope to close up shop as soon as possible, so don't wait long. Enjoy our huge store closing sale: Use the coupon code "goodbye2016" to receive 25% off your order over \$50, while supplies last. Discount cannot be applied to previously placed orders, "drop ship" items (most have been removed from the website already), or "out of stock" items, or combined with other specials. We will do our best to update inventories daily but if we run out of something you ordered, we'll let you know and delete it from your order. Do check back frequently as we'll be adding more products to the Clearance section and deeply discounting some products. From now forward, all sales will be final. Please share this sale information with friends, family, preschools, schools, churches, parent groups, etc. If you have a question, please send an email and we will answer it within 24 hours.

### Housesitter needed!

Former RVWS family (Lauri, Chris, Lucia and Raiven) is looking for a house sitter to care for our two Labs and one Siamese cat, as well as light weeding and watering as needed for our flower and vegetable gardens between June 26 and July 22. Our home is full of light and is situated on 15 acres of fields, woods and swimmable creeks! Please let me know if you have an interest by emailing me at [lauribunton@gmail.com](mailto:lauribunton@gmail.com) or calling (215) 768-4913. Individuals or families are welcome.

## Ottsville Traditional Arts Center

Every Wednesday

Open Jam with Richard Finch

6:00-8:00 pm • \$5 suggested donation

More at [ottsvilletradarts.weebly.com](http://ottsvilletradarts.weebly.com) • 250 Durham Rd. Ottsville Pa.

### Muck and Gold Camp Homebody - for ages 8-11

A creative movement, physical theater and visual art extravaganza! Run by Christine Bodwich, (mother of Loie Gallagher, G-3). June 27 - July 1, July 5 - 8. Stockton, NJ.

For details and registration: [muckandgold.com](http://muckandgold.com)

### Education Discussion: A Conversation about Self-Directed Learning

What is Self-Directed Learning? Why do teens thrive in this learning model? What paths to college are available if you leave high school? River Valley parents Scott Gallagher (Loie 3rd grade) and MaryBeth Healy (Jaida 1st grade) invite you to participate.

Wednesday, May 18 @ 7p  
Flemington Library  
118 Main Street, Flemington

Hosted by Raritan Learning Cooperative, offering a new way to approach living and learning.  
[www.RaritanLearningCooperative.org](http://www.RaritanLearningCooperative.org)  
[info@raritanlearningcooperative.org](mailto:info@raritanlearningcooperative.org)

### The Art of Equitation

Jen Diedrich (mom of Addison in 4th grade) is offering a lesson program individually designed for each rider's expectations, goals and dreams. With attention needed to be safe and have FUN. Safety is always the first priority.

Jen is a lifelong equestrian with a passion for teaching that brings out the best in beginning and developing young riders. Students focused on the show arena as well as those who simply love riding and understanding horses are very welcome. Lessons, trail rides, horse shows and camp offered. Ages 5 and up. Reach Jen anytime at 215-603-9999.

### Eggs for Sale

Sustainably raised, Pastured, GMO free eggs. Chicken \$5, Jumbo duck \$8. Durham Glen Farm 6200 Durham Rd Pipersville Shawn (973)207-0848.

### At Yoga Loka

Yoga for Healthy Aging  
Thursdays 8:30 am-9:30 am with Deb Kline  
Begins 5/5 for 4 weeks, \$55

TRE (Trauma and Tension Releasing Exercises) and Meditation  
with Bonnie, Wednesdays 5/18 and 5/25, 11:00 am-12:00 pm. \$15 per session

[www.Yoga-Loka.com](http://www.Yoga-Loka.com) to register

### Special offer for River Valley Families:

I recently completed a training in a therapy called Craniolsacral Fascial Therapy. You can read about it on founder Barry Gillespie's website:  
<http://gillespieapproach.com/>.

This approach is similar to TRE, which I have been working with for more than 2 years. I am particularly excited about CFT due the success rate it has had with targeting chronically tight and often painful places in the body, healing concussions and sinus issues and TMJ, helping with headaches and traumatic injuries and regaining range of motion that is compromised from surgeries and scarring. Children benefit immensely from this work. Barry specializes in treating children and has seen a lot of positive results.

As this is still a relatively new modality for me I am offering a limited number of first sessions at half price, \$42 for a session that will run about 45 minutes.

If you are interested in scheduling a session please send me an email at: [Bonnie@yoga-loka.com](mailto:Bonnie@yoga-loka.com)

### MUSIC for your Child

RVWS alumnus and currently Berklee College of Music student, Kris Ramakrishna, is offering Guitar lessons (beginners to advanced, all styles), Music theory and music history, Introduction to composition, song writing with professional software. From mid May to mid August at your house or ours in Riegelsville. Reasonable rates! For more information please email [stramak@aol.com](mailto:stramak@aol.com) or call 610 217 6942

## Community Open Board Meeting Notes – April 21, 2016

Annie Porter introduced the idea behind the meeting and presented the agenda. She went on to explain the image, a chalkboard drawing by Sharon Ferguson, which showed the three-fold governance structure; a horizontal picture of collaborative leadership.

TreeAnne McEnery posed the questions– What is self-administration? Why is it a tenet of the three-fold model? Each of these pillars: Freedom (Spiritual/Pedagogy/Faculty), Brotherhood (Community) Equality (Rights/Board) is an organ of the organization/school and each of these pillars are self-administering. Each of the realms has a function. A harmonious organization is made of three realms holding their area of responsibility. Pedagogical realm – bring curriculum that Steiner created to the children. Brotherhood (Parent Realm) – support the development of the school; tuition helps meet the needs of the children. Rights Realm – Board is responsible for the economics, not just finances but also checks and balances. Communication between the three realms is essential.

A parent expressed that more parents at meetings and involvement are needed. TreeAnne agreed that the Brotherhood realm isn't functioning to its fullest. How do you do it? Email isn't efficient.

### **The bodies of the school introduced themselves:**

Annie explained that the LC currently has four members (Pedagogical Chair, two faculty members, and the administrative assistant). Mandate suggests that there should be an administrator, at least two faculty members, and one position that would fill in as needed.

Will Carpenter shared that the Board is responsible for the overall activities of the corporation/organization. Composed of 5-13 members with 2 slots reserved for faculty members. He introduced the members of the Board.

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Cindy Schretlen conveyed that the current administration team includes TreeAnne, Cindy, James Hagan, Will Carpenter, and Nick Thompson. Will and Nick were involved heavily at the beginning of the year but have intentionally started to step back a bit. This group covers the day to day running, and nuts and bolts of the school.

Clare Brunell explained that the Parent Council is essentially the classroom coordinator for the whole parent body.

The role of the Teacher Development Committee was explained by Karen Atkinson, Lisa Sweeney, and TreeAnne McEnery.

### **The meeting was then turned over to the Board to describe their role and answer questions that fall into their realm:**

Andy Wander read the Mission and Vision statements of the school. Will stated that the board's task is to establish the financial health of the school, legal compliance, physical plant, capital campaign. Those are things that help us achieve our long and short term goals. Board members added that the board does a bit of Anthroposophical study and has representation on each of the school committees.

Amy Nyberg continued to explain the role of the Rights Realm by answering the question, when is it appropriate to contact a BoT member if I am not receiving an appropriate response to my concern? I've gone to faculty or administrator but I'm not happy with the response. Where do I go next? Do I go to the BoT? If it is a pedagogical question, certainly the BoT is available to hold that check and balance. The board's job is to be at the mast head of the ship. She went on to explain that the root of corporation is corp which means 'body' in Latin. It's the board's job to ensure that the organization continues to exist. It's not the board's responsibility to deal with individual complaints. The board should ask faculty how they are hearing and responding to parent complaints. They should ask the administration to demonstrate how quality is being maintained. The board should have their noses in and fingers out. They don't get involved in solving the problem but ask the questions and try to redirect issues to the correct body. Board meetings are open and the agendas are shared in the Current.

*(Continued on next page.)*

**Administration then took the floor:**

Cindy explained that the Administration looks different than it has in the recent past. The Administrative Team works with the BoT, faculty, and parent body and supports them in their functions. The admin team is charged with the daily functions of the school. They took the job description of the administrator and divided it up among the AT and various staff members.

A question was raised, are we still looking for an administrator? The BoT and AT feel that they are holding the functions. Admin Services, a Waldorf school consulting firm, also supports the BoT and administration. Next year's administrative staff is being reconfigured and we will have more consistent coverage at the front desk. Is TreeAnne an administrator? She brings representation from the pedagogical realm into the administrative area.

A parent recalled that when she first came to the school, it was really lovely to walk into the school every morning and have a pedagogical person greeting the students and parents as they came in. Just having a warm body at the front desk is administratively helpful; it is reaffirming to come in.

A request was made for more information about the administrator search. Will responded that there is a dearth of quality administrators. Many schools are using a home grown approach. Additionally, we have limited resources and felt that having a Pedagogical Chair was a great thing at this time in the school's development. The response that we got was that the AT worked well; continuing with the AT model helps to disseminate the information. If anyone feels there is anything missing with this new model they are asked to give feedback to the AT.

**Parent Council was next:**

Clare Brunell read a quote from Chris Schaeffer's visit about the role of the Parent Council. Parent Council has two roles community building and communication. They are working on creating a Listening Council, the function of which is not to fix anything or have an opinion but to point people in the right direction. Clare shared information about the regional Waldorf School Parent Council meeting mentioned in the Current. The Baltimore Waldorf School Parent Council has Vice Chairs who represents the EC, G1-3, G4-5, and MS and they are looking for Vice Chairs for next year. It was pointed out that this is the first time the PC chair has been on the board and it is working well. A parent expressed that the brotherhood realm needs support. PC is working on improving the class coordinator process and creating a PC handbook which should help.

**LC then took the floor, described their role and answered questions related to their realm:**

Annie started by stating that the center pillar is the realm of accountability. Questions that parents bring to the board or the faculty help balance the picture. She said that Leadership Council has a mandate from the BoT and the Faculty that is reviewed regularly. LC comes out of the pedagogy pillar and into the other pillars. Annie explained that LC does not make decisions on the spot. The LC listens to things that need to be addressed and then gets feedback from other bodies within the school. Based on that feedback, they make decisions for the school. Two different kinds of decisions – a collaborative decision making process and a decision that comes out of an emergency situation (when there isn't time for that collaborative decision making process). LC is looking at ways to more thoroughly involve the faculty and BoT in the emergency decisions. We do well with communicating the collaborative decisions.

Can communication snafus be prevented? No, but we can continue to develop policies, procedures, and collaborative skills. LC feels it necessary to continue to support the faculty in the classroom and involve the community in the decision making process.

What if the person with whom I have an issue is a member of the LC? You can sit down individually with any member of the LC, or ask that a member of LC be recused.

If a parent brings a question to a teacher and doesn't receive a satisfactory response, they should then bring it to the LC. LC mediates between both parties so that they feel heard. If necessary, the LC will bring in the TDC and request a review.

*(Continued on next page.)*

What is TreeAnne's role in relation to parents? She is there as a resource to faculty. When a parent brings something to her she does not work independently, she is within the collective structure of LC and TDC. Is TreeAnne's primary role with faculty? TreeAnne responded that she should be considered a resource for the whole community. Does TreeAnne have a role in getting the pedagogy to the parents? She said that ideally she would. Faculty is reflecting on the job description.

What topics are best left to faculty without parent involvement? Emergency decisions are best left to LC. Currently, with these decisions that need to be addressed quickly there is not time to consult with parents. On what topics should faculty consult parents? Parents should expect to be asked for their input if there is a change in a program or with a class teacher. (i.e. community conversation about the language program and about teacher looping). Sometimes there is a decision that is made by the faculty and it's recognized that it needed more community input. A good example of that is last year's revision to the movement program. A decision was made and went into effect; it went to the community for feedback, and revisions were made based on the feedback.

A parent asked if it is possible to set a deadline for a response. The answer in most cases is yes. Sometimes the conversations involve other realms and need to be discussed. Sometimes these collective decisions take time and consensus can sometimes take time.

Another parent stated that this meeting has done a fantastic job of defining issues and problems and trying to come up with a process, however, communication could be better. He suggested reaching out instead of relying on email. This is especially important when something important like the language decision needed to be decided on.

#### **The Teacher Development Committee then took the stage:**

TDC is mandated to serve on behalf of the faculty to provide pedagogical leadership and to facilitate faculty reviews with input from parents and Waldorf teachers outside of our community. Waldorf education views each individual on a path of his or her own development. We are all on a journey becoming our better selves.

On what topics should parents expect TDC to ask for their input?

During teacher reviews. Laura Birdsall stated that the TDC has always looked forward to parent feedback during faculty reviews. However, it is very hard to get, which speaks to the communication piece.

#### **Conclusion:**

A parent asked about action items from the meeting that we are going to address? Annie responded that this will go into the collaborative decision making process and we will take a serious look at getting more parents involved.

#### **Points to Consider:**

- Human communication is always the best, however, we are moving away from that.
- The parent handbook mentions that reading the Current is required as is coming to parent evenings.
- Clare Brunell will work with John Smith on ideas about how to reach out to parents.
- Nick Thompson asked everyone to remember that everything you put resources towards takes away from something else.
- Some people who aren't involved might be uncomfortable with speaking up. There's a power imbalance between a parent and a teacher. Teachers are smart in a philosophy that parents don't really understand and they might be afraid to ask.
- TreeAnne suggested parent education community wide.

From: smithsonian.com

## **Museum Programs Affect Teens for a Lifetime**

A first-of-its-kind study shows that the effects of arts programs can last well into adulthood  
By Erin Blakemore

Every year, thousands of teenagers participate in programs at their local art museums. But do any of them remember their time at museum events later in life? A new report suggests that the answer is yes—and finds that alumni of arts-based museum programs credit them with changing the course of their lives, even years after the fact.

The Whitney Museum of American Art, the Walker Art Center, the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles recently commissioned a study to find out how effective their longstanding teen arts programs really are. They recruited over 300 former participants of four programs for teens that have been in existence since the 1990s. Alumni, whose current ages range from 18 to 36, were given a questionnaire and invited to focus groups and profile sessions to find out how they viewed their participation years after the fact.

Among the alumni surveyed, a whopping 75 percent of alumni rated the teen program experience as the most positive influence on their own lives, surpassing family, school and their neighborhoods. Nearly 55 percent thought that it was one of the most important experiences they'd ever had, regardless of age. And two-thirds said that they were often in situations where their experience in museums affected their actions or thoughts.

It turns out that participating in teen art programs also creates culturally-aware adults: Ninety-six percent of participants had visited an art museum within the last two years, and 68 percent had visited an art museum five or more times within the last two years. Thirty-two percent of program alumni work in the arts as adults.

Though the study is the first of its kind to explore the impact of teen-specific art programs in museums, it reflects other research on the tangible benefits of engaging with the arts. A decade of surveys by the National Endowment for the Arts found that childhood experience with the arts is significantly associated with their income and educational attainment as adults. Other studies have linked arts education to everything from lower drop-out rates to boosts in critical thinking skills and cultural mobility.

If you participated in an arts program as a child, chances are you're nodding your head. But if you weren't so lucky, never fear: There's always time to visit a museum. In fact, Museum Week is still in full swing on Twitter. Check out the #museumweek hashtag and see if you get inspired—there's no telling how the art you witness this week could affect your life in the years to come.

Erin Blakemore is a Boulder, Colorado-based author and historian. Erin's work on history and culture has appeared in publications including mentalfloss, NPR's This I Believe, The Onion, Popular Science, Modern Farmer and JSTOR Daily. You can find more of her work at [erinblakemore.com](http://erinblakemore.com).