

*"And the spring arose on the garden fair, Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;  
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast, Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest."  
— Percy Bysshe Shelley*

## School Calendar

### This Week

#### Wednesday, May 6

5<sup>th</sup> grade Play – Heracles 8:45 am and 6:30 pm

#### Friday, May 8

Grandparents Day

#### Saturday, May 9

Mayfaire 11:00 am-3:00 pm

### Looking Ahead

#### Tuesday, May 11

Strings Concert 2:00 pm

#### Wednesday, May 13

4<sup>th</sup> grade to Churchville Nature Center  
4<sup>th</sup> grade Parent Evening 7:00 pm

#### Thursday, May 14

School Tour 9:00 am  
5<sup>th</sup> grade Pentathlon - Kimberton

#### How to Contact Us

info@rivervalleyschool.org  
lc@rivervalleyschool.org  
bof@rivervalleyschool.org  
pc@rivervalleyschool.org



### Strings Concert

Please join us on

**Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm**

for a wonderful concert of string music.

Both the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade Orchestra and the 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade Orchestra will play selections from their classes, and all the violin groups taught by Mrs. Gillespie and Mrs. Sforza will delight us with contributions ranging from classical to folk and more.

### Samosa Reminder

As originally scheduled, there will be NO SAMOSAS this FRIDAY MAY 8 due to Grandparent's Day and Mayfaire — please be sure to pack lunch!

### Mayfaire Reminders

Please remember to bring in yarn and pocket fairy items and put them in the boxes in the lobby. We also need flowers (to be gathered Friday in buckets outside the school). Thank you for helping to make Mayfaire a success.

Grade school children are asked to dress in white for Mayfaire dances.

### Grandparents & Special Friends Day

**Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

We look forward to welcoming grandparents and special friends to RVWS this Friday. Guests visiting early childhood students will arrive at 11:30 am for picnic on the back playground followed by our grade school music assembly at 1:15 pm. Guests visiting grade students (1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>) will arrive at 12:45 pm for a reception followed by the assembly at 1:15pm. All are welcome.

### RVWS Auction – May 30<sup>th</sup>

#### Auction Item Donation Time is Now

The time is **now** to solicit your auction item donations and deliver them to the front lobby of the school. Item labels for your donations are in a basket in the lobby; please include one tag secured to each of your donations.

**Many thanks, in advance, from your Auction Team!**

## From Administration

### Parking Lot Safety Reminder

Now that spring is here and the snow is gone it is time to renew our commitment to parking lot safety. There are more parking spaces and diagonal parking along the driveway is once again possible. When you park along the driveway, **please walk with your children along the grass**, and when you park there, **please drive on the driveway, not on the grass!** Here are the guidelines to refresh your memory:

#### Parking Lot Safety

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

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

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

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



The time is now!  
Order your  
2015  
Yearbook

Pre-Order by **May 15th** for Only **\$30**  
After May 15th the price increases **\$5-\$10**,  
so drop your form in  
the folder on the office door today!

### Aftercare Reminder

If you would like your child to attend Aftercare (3:15-5:30) please be sure to sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board opposite the office.

There is a limit of 10 children per day and we need to know how many spots are available. If you are not at school, call the office and we would be happy to sign up your child for you.

### Playground Supervision Reminder from the Parent Handbook

These guidelines were created for the safety of our children and we are publishing them here as a reminder for parents. From the Parent Handbook:

"Children require supervision on all playgrounds at all times. After school hours, we ask parents to remember children will not be allowed in the playground unless there is an adult present supervising them. Once school has been dismissed parents are solely responsible for supervising their children."

### The IT Committee wants YOU!

If you have technical skills including maintenance, management, or troubleshooting of hardware (Windows desktops and laptops, Windows Servers, printers, etc.), software (Office 365, Quickbooks, various SaaS programs), networks, or wifi, the IT committee needs you. We are a group of diverse and dedicated parents who need your HELP! If you've offered before, please offer again. You can contact Kristyn Lederer by email or phone - 267-471-2751.

### Thank you

Thank you, Clare Brunell, for the beautiful pots of spring flowers that greet us at the school entrance. They make us happy to walk in the front door!

Thank you to the River Valley community for supporting our fundraisers for our class trip. Without your continual support, we would not have reached our goal. Now we are set and ready to fly south in two weeks, on May 19th. The Eighth Grade and Miss Hummel

## From the Faculty

### WHAT ARE THE CHILDREN LEARNING?

First Grade: Math

Second Grade: Drama

Third Grade: Math/Shelters & Building

Fourth Grade: Language Arts/Science/Animals

Fifth Grade: Ancient Greece/Class Play

Sixth Grade: Geometry

Seventh Grade: Renaissance History

Eighth Grade: Anatomy

### Donations requested for EC Woodworking Corner

The Star Room Kindergarten is joyfully anticipating the completion of a woodworking corner for their classroom home! Miss Rebecca and her students are currently searching for the following items:

- Rasps (metal wood files)
- Small hammers
- Sandpaper
- Blocks
- Hand saws

And most specifically, we are hoping to have child sized saw horses built. If you or someone you know is able and willing to help in any capacity, please contact Rebecca West ([bendingbirch@gmail.com](mailto:bendingbirch@gmail.com)) for specific dimensions. All woodworking donations can be dropped off in the Star Room! Thank so very much in advance!

## From the Development Coordinator

### Annual Appeal

Did you know that your generous contributions support an expanded eurythmy block, an enhanced music program and other exciting opportunities for students? Be a part of our continued success and make your annual gift today. Donations may be dropped off to the office or mailed to the attention of the Development Committee. Please indicate that the gift is for the Annual Appeal. Thank you for your generosity.

Stephanie Spencer.

Development Coordinator

## Class Fundraiser

### Mother's Day Pampering

The 7th grade will be offering a limited number of handmade pampering items for sale for fabulous Mother's Day gifts. Sugar scrubs and massage oils made with organic essential oils and hand poured 100% beeswax candles will make affordable and special treats for your mother!

### Sound of Music Fundraiser

There are still mugs, caps and key chains available from the Sound of Music and we would love to sell them all! Keychains \$5, mugs \$15, and baseball caps \$20! Please email [louannwillard@gmail.com](mailto:louannwillard@gmail.com) if you want me to pull some aside for you!!

### RVWS Seasonal Cookbook and Local Directory - Still time to submit!

We are thrilled that people continue to express interest in contributing recipes and information for our local directory, so we've extended the deadline for submission. Please email ([tumas@rcn.com](mailto:tumas@rcn.com)) or bring in your information and/or artwork ASAP. There is a manilla envelope on the table outside the 2nd grade classroom. See attachment for more details. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Jean Tuma or Tracy Fly. Thank you for your consideration!

## From the Community

### **The Art of Equitation**

Jen Diedrich (mom of Addison, 3rd grade) is offering a riding lesson program individually designed for each rider's expectations, goals & dreams with the 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 both in and out of the arena, horse shows and camp offered. Reach Jen anytime (215) 603-9999 or catch her at pickup.

### **At Yoga Loka**

#### **Mindfulness for Chronic Pain and Illness**

8-week course is starting May 6, 2015, and will be held each Wednesday from 2 to 4:30 pm at Yoga Loka in Frenchtown. The course is designed to benefit anyone who suffers from mental or physical pain.

The modality used in the course is called "Breathworks." Breathworks was founded by Vidymala Burch, an Australian woman living with a chronic back condition due to spinal injuries and partial paraplegia. Ms. Burch knows the agony of trying to live with persistent pain. She knows the despondency of not coping and feeling helpless and hopeless. She also knows the joy and pleasure of finding a way to not only manage her pain but to live a full, happy and meaningful life.

This course is being offered by Padmadharini, who is training to become a certified Breathworks trainer. Since Padmadharini has not yet received her certification the course is being offered at the significantly reduced rate of \$100.

#### **Yin Yoga retreat with Sally Miller**

May 10<sup>th</sup>, 3-5:00 pm

#### **One Bite at a Time - a Journey into Mindful Eating**

with Melissa Pickerall and Gail Seckrettar

May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2-6:00 pm

Online registration at [www.Yoga-Loka.com](http://www.Yoga-Loka.com)

### **Looking for a Room to Rent**

I am a former Waldorf teacher from Canada. My son and I would like to travel to Doylestown for two months of summer. We are looking for a place to rent for months of July and August. My son is taking a shoe making course in Doylestown and we would appreciate anyone who could provide accommodation. My phone number is: 1-250-764-9095.

### **Dr. Renee Sexton, Network Chiropractor Coming to Brick House!**

Seeing clients on Monday, May 11, 2015, 5 PM- 7:30 PM.  
Let go, unwind, feel more, breathe.

BRICK HOUSE, 8826 Easton Rd, Ottsville, PA 18976, Nelli Rae's Kitchen & Therapeutic & Educational Support.  
RSVP text/call 610-570-7408. \$50.00 adults \$25.00 children

### **Ottsville Traditional Arts Center**

Dance and Jam your way into SPRING this month!

#### **Contradance with Raise the Roof and Melissa Taggart**

Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 7pm beginners' workshop, 7:30pm dance, \$9 adults, \$7 kids under 12

OTAC welcomes back this blistering contradance band! Raise the Roof will delight you with energetic, driving contra dance music with tunes from New England, Southern, Quebecois and Irish traditions. They are Judy Stellar, Kathy Talvitie, Mat Clark, and Paul Morrisett, joined by caller extraordinaire Melissa Taggart!

#### **Concert & Workshop with Cardinal Direction**

Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 5pm jam workshop (\$10), 6:30pm potluck, 7:30pm concert (\$10, \$5 kids under 12), \$15 combined ticket!

Massachusetts-based band Cardinal Direction (formerly Firefly) brings beautiful melodies and relentless energy to dance floors and listening audiences across the Northeast. Their repertoire is drawn from the Irish, New England, and Quebecois traditions, and seamlessly mixes oldies-but-goodies with modern compositions. They take particular pleasure in playing for contra dances, where their love of the drive and flow of the dance comes across clearly in their music.

Ottsville Traditional Arts Center, 250 Durham Road, Ottsville, PA 18942

## Reduced Rate HANDLE® Assessments

Elverson, PA, June 19-25, 2015

HANDLE: Holistic Approach to Neuro-Development and Learning Efficiency

HANDLE is a multiple award winning approach that has helped thousands of people worldwide to enhance human capability from infants to senior citizens.

For the first time in the United States HANDLE Assessments are being offered at a reduced rate in a clinical Practicum. These Assessments are being offered to members of the public as part of the final Module of A HANDLE Practitioner Course. The students will do assessments and an experienced supervisor is involved in every step of the process.

Who might benefit: Individuals with the following labels, syndromes and conditions have benefited from HANDLE programs: Academic differences, Dyspraxia, Learning Difficulties, Autism, Selective Mutism, Behavioral Issues, Brain Injury, Stroke, Cerebral Palsy, Speech/Language difficulties, Regulation Difficulties, ADD/ADHD, Down Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Tourette Syndrome, and much more.

Package cost: \$995. (customarily cost is upwards of \$1500.)

Chief Supervisor & Practitioner Course Instructor: Cathy Stingley, HANDLE, Instructor & Education Coordinator of the Americas (ECA) for The HANDLE Institute. For further information please contact your local HANDLE provider, Rose Litschauer 610-570-7408 rgraham21@verizon.net, or Cathy Stingley. To apply for a Practicum Assessment please contact Instructor at 907-235-6226 or handleofhomer@yahoo.com

### Tutor available for grades 1st-6th

Seventh grade level tutor available for German, Spanish and Math.

Contact Dominique Wander at 908-295-8385

### Lawn Mowing Available

Aaron's Mowing (Aaron Dringus), 267-987-9904 / [afd8073@hotmail.com](mailto:afd8073@hotmail.com). Call, text, or email for pricing and availability. Serving Upper Bucks County.

## Join us for the 2015 Philadelphia International Children's Festival, May 7-9!

Theater, dance and music performances for the whole family. Plus, a free outdoor FUN ZONE with interactive activities!

**Pilobolus (Dance)** What happens when contemporary dance, gymnastics, technology and playful props combine? Find out when the wildly creative troupe Pilobolus Dance Theater takes the stage.

**Playing By Air (Circus)** Traditional theatricality meets absurd comedy in this joyful fusion of music, juggling and circus. Playing By Air captivates their audiences with their playfulness, high energy, creativity, and breathtaking feats.

**Lifeboat (Theatre)** An extraordinary true tale of survival told with humor and adventure. A moving and uplifting play about two teenage girls who board a ship to escape the dangers of World War II.

**Orchestra of Life (Music)** Rock star violinist and composer Daniel Bernard Roumain pays tribute to Bob Marley. The audience will join together to create "An Orchestra of Life" using their hands, feet and voices to express themselves musically.

**Circo Comedia (Circus)** Following in the tradition of the Quebec Circus, duo Jean Saucier and Patrick Côté perform acrobatic tricks, daredevil stunts and magic, offering thrills and comedy.

**Watermelon Magic (Movie)** The charming story of Sylvie and her garden as she watches a patch of watermelons grow from seed to fruit. Audiences will enjoy the science and marvel of plant life.

*Tickets for individual shows are \$10 and include access to the FUN ZONE.*

*Performances will take place at the Annenberg Center, 3680 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104 // [AnnenbergCenter.org](http://AnnenbergCenter.org) // 215.898.3900*

## Camp Glen Brook

Do you know a 3rd or 4th grader who is looking for an amazing summer camp experience? At Camp Glen Brook we offer special sessions for first time campers within our fun and caring summer camp community. What set's us apart? We are a small Waldorf-inspired camp with a family feel and wholesome farm-to-table food in the beautiful Monadnock Region of southern New Hampshire. Find out more about all of our programs for 3rd - 10th graders at [www.glenbrook.org](http://www.glenbrook.org)

Gap at Glen Brook, a new program for high school graduates in the Fall of 2015, is a practical education in the broadest sense. Intuit your goals and passions through community living, a farm-to-table lifestyle, outdoor adventure, and the acquisition of practical and professional skills. Visit [gapatglenbrook.org](http://gapatglenbrook.org) to learn more.

**Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training  
(San Rafael, California)**

**Summer Program 2015**

Pathway into Life with Susan R Johnson, MD, FAAP

June 22-26th, 2015 -Meeting developmental challenges in the Waldorf classroom.

Renewal Through the Arts

June 27th-July 11th, 2015 - Experience a class with our Master Teachers.

Teacher Training Taster

June 29th-July 1st, 2015 - Are you interested in becoming a Waldorf Teacher?

Nurturing Family Life for Adults and Children

July 6-10th, 2015 - Bring the life and beauty of Waldorf Education into the home.

For more information or to register, please visit our website: [www.bacwtt.org](http://www.bacwtt.org) or call us at 415-479-4400.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Play  
"Farming!"**



**6th Grade Play  
"Joan of Arc"**



From NPR

## Behold The Humble Block! Tools Of The Trade

By Eric Westervelt

At Stanford University's Bing Nursery School in Palo Alto, Calif., blocks play a significant role in helping children to think creatively, solve problems and think like young mathematicians.

For this series, we've been thinking a lot about the iconic tools that some of us remember using — if only for a short time — in our early schooling. Things like the slide rule and protractor, Presidential Fitness Test and Bunsen burner.

Today we explore the simple, powerful tool that is still alive and well in some early learning classrooms: the wooden block. You might call it the anti-app. Measurement. Balance. Math. Negotiation. Collaboration. And fun. The smooth maple pieces need no recharging, no downloading.

"Let's just put these blocks up," says 4-year-old Jacques. "I think this will probably work. Be careful, Corinne." "I know," says Corinne, who is also 4.

Four-year-olds Jacques and Corinne work with teacher Todd Erickson to balance and secure two semicircular wooden blocks atop two long, straight ones.

With focused intensity, Jacques and Corinne work to balance and secure two semicircular wooden blocks atop two long, straight ones. Whoa, careful, it's leaning!

The tower collapses to the carpeted floor at Stanford University's Bing Nursery School. They work the problem. It is Silicon Valley, after all. Fail early, fail often, kids. Iterate. Collaborate.

Jacques makes a pitch for stability. "Corinne, I think if we just put a little on each side and used the right amount where mine was, it would work," he says. "OK?" "OK, let's try," says Corinne. "OK!"

The tower grows. Then, to paraphrase Homer, the tower falls thunderously and the blocks clatter about. "It keeps falling down! Maybe a little higher," Jacques says, resisting the urge to lose patience.

The block party is on. Soon other kids wander over to try to help build this hour's great random structure. "If we can't do it, we could build something else!" "OK, what?"

Two blocks or four? Big or small? What shape? This negotiation and collaboration, pre-K style. "Those are the kinds of skills that we need later on," says Jennifer Winters, the Bing school's director. "We'll need to learn to work together on projects, to collaborate, to bounce ideas off one another."

### **Building A World**

Don't call it a comeback: Blocks have been here for more than 100 years. In 1913, progressive educator Caroline Pratt designed "unit blocks" as a central part of the curriculum at the school she founded in New York City, which still uses blocks.

Pratt wrote of blocks: "I wanted something so adaptable children could use it without guidance or control, I wanted to see them build a world ... to re-create on their own level the life about them ..."

Pratt's vision and ideas greatly influenced the founders of Bing, which is a laboratory school. That means Stanford's psychology department conducts research on child development there, and students assist the professional staff of preschool teachers. "Pratt observed that the real learning was occurring when they (kids) had unscheduled, free play time," says Winters. "Children still need those hands-on, tactile materials to make sense of the world."

Several early childhood studies have shown that children who play with blocks have better language and cognition skills than control groups. Others have looked at the power of blocks to help teach math, as well as the relationship between unstructured play materials and learning. Research has shown that math skills are the biggest predictor of later academic success.

*(Continued on next page.)*

"What's special about the blocks is that they provide an excellent venue, an excellent platform for parents and children to engage with one another. Which is really critical, not just to children's language development, but to their cognitive development generally and their social development as well," says Dr. Dimitri Christakis, a pediatrician, researcher and professor.

But they're also just a lot of fun. At Bing there is no prescribed "block period." The kids are simply given time for open-ended exploration. Tightly scheduled events aren't part of this school. "It's a little bit of sucking the joy out of it: 'Now you have to do this,' as opposed to wanting to do that," Winters says.

The school's emphasis is on free-range play. Here blocks — along with clay, paint, sand and water — are the basic materials preschoolers use every day. Wander in, wander off. Play hard, live free. "When children are allowed time to think, to observe, to interact with their environment, their minds are bringing in all this information," says Todd Erickson, one of Bing's head teachers.

"With that gift of time, it really unlocks a lot of creativity, a lot deeper thinking because they can mull and let their unconscious work on it."

One child's stage is another student's obstacle course. Preschoolers at Bing Nursery School play with outdoor blocks. And blocks, lots of them, aren't just used inside.

In the school's spacious, grass-covered yard, 4-year-old Yuri works alone turning large, hollow outdoor building blocks into her imaginative play area. A stage is born. She looks at the spaces between two sides and starts to grapple with different sized pieces to bridge the gap. See, in a sense, she and other kids working with blocks are really starting algebra, Erickson says.

"Essentially they're solving for X," he says. "They've got one piece on one side and one piece on the other and a distance to fill. So what is that amount going to be, what does the length of that block have to be to bridge, to sit at both edges of the block. It's the beginning of mathematics, really."

The blocks are all multiples and fractions of a basic unit. Director Winters says it is really a way to start on math. "They're not just stacking up and making a wall," she says. "Children can do complex math projects with blocks even into elementary years, and we forget that."

Ten focused minutes later, Yuri loses interest. A swing beckons. But two other girls wander over and turn Yuri's half-built stage into a makeshift obstacle course. Dramatic, imaginative play ensues with blocks as the props. Erickson says he's regularly in awe of the continuing pedagogic and play power of these basic pieces of sanded maple.

"I think they are so simple that it's very easy to look down on them, almost, to disqualify them in terms of their complexity," he says.

"There's work with balance. Science. Math. Social emotional language. All these things interweave so beautifully in such a sophisticated way for such a basic material. It's really amazing."

Today, blocks are still in heavy use in pre-K and kindergarten classes across America. But block use overall is in decline. No, there are no hard numbers on this. But anecdotally, teachers say free play time is slowly getting chipped away to make time for more formal academic exercises and proscribed projects.

At an outdoor bench, 4-year-old TJ is hammering together small scrap blocks of wood using a real hammer and real nails. A teacher is there to help as needed.

TJ is working off a raw yet fairly detailed paper sketch he made. "This is my instructions. I drew it with this pen. This is the first page," he shows me. "This is the second page."

I marvel at the rough, yet wonderfully done blueprint for a block car. "It puts lots of things together to make this whole thing with all those blocks," he explains. It's kind of a Henry Ford meets Elon Musk, I tell him. "Yeah!" TJ says, unsure what I'm babbling about. "I'm ready, teacher Emma!" he says politely, yet firmly.

He needs a little help hammering that last wooden wheel.