



River Valley Current

June 13, 2017 No. 484

"Let the wild rumpus start!" ~ Maurice Sendak

School Calendar

This Week

Monday-Wednesday, June 12-14

6th Grade Camping Trip to Rickett's Glen

Wednesday, June 14

Last Day of School for Early Childhood

Thursday, June 15

Rose Ceremony 9:00 am
Amanda Blanco Library Dedication 10:30 am
Grade School Ends 1:00 pm

Saturday, June 17

Graduation 10:00 am

How to Contact Us

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



The Class of 2017 invites you to their Graduation Ceremony
Saturday, June 18th at 10 am.
All are welcome.

The Last Day of School

For Early Childhood the last day of school is on Wednesday, June 14th.

Parents are invited to a potluck picnic from noon to 1 pm to celebrate the year together.

The Grade School ends on Thursday, June 15th

Schedule for the day:

9:00 am - Rose Ceremony - Each class will honor our graduating 8th graders with a short presentation.
All RVWS families are invited to attend.

10:30 am - Dedication of the Amanda Blanco Memorial Library

11:00 am – Grade School children will take a short break for snack and a change of clothing followed by Field Day games on the back playground.

Parents are welcome to take their children home after Field Day. Some classes will be having picnics and school ends officially at 1 pm.

There will be no buses and no Aftercare on that day.

SAVE THE DATE!

Moonshine & Millet Wrap the Summer Bash

Saturday August 26, 2017, 2-6 @ the Baders' (contingency for rain TBA),
165 Geigel Hill Rd., Erwinna, PA 18920. Text Chellie @ 617-501-7517

From Administration

Thank You

Firstly, a VERY BELATED THANK YOU to Thom Bell and David Lovely for creating the most amazing and inventive stage piece of the decade – the Ark of Noah.

The 3rd Grade building project, the hexagonal picnic table would not have been possible without the patient shepherding and expert knowledge of Thom Bell. Dedicating their time to this task were also Dave Lovely, Gina Ricci, Dave Goldstein, Rebekah Barnes, JR Nichols, Kristyn Lederer, Leah Cahil and Emily Lovely. Thank you, EVERYONE, for helping create this exciting experience and lasting landmark for the children.

Thank you to RVWS

As we approach our move to Hawthorne Valley, I want to say thank you. This school community is filled with heart, a down-to-earth quality of openness, and deep care for our children that I know I will miss. Our class feels like a clan to me (in a good way). For me, connections ran deep even if I did not get to know many parents deeply. A favorite morning nod and “hello,” a wave or a smile, a spontaneous hallway conversation that shifted my perspective, someone else’s self-expression that challenged me and then led me to broaden my view, an unexpected helping hand, great jobs and places to live thanks to The Current, a teacher’s warm “good morning”, so many moments... I feel more fully human (with a road ahead:)) than when I arrived.

Alice will miss all of her friends, many of whom she has known since her earliest years, and her teacher Ms. Niemczura. She is already making plans to write and visit. Matt says thank you to the community for caring for Alice so beautifully.

Wishing good things for everyone,
Tara Bowers

From the Faculty

What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Review

Second Grade – Review

Third Grade – Building Project/Review

Fourth Grade – Review

Fifth Grade –Review

Sixth Grade – Review

Seventh Grade – Review

Eighth Grade – Review/Graduation Prep

From the Garden

A big thank you to Jess Woodruff for clearing the space in the front playground and saving me a great pile of stones for the garden! Your hard work is much appreciated!

If any of our local community members are available for some simple watering/ weeding detail this Summer, please email me!

Don't forget to check out the Fifth Grade Garden art project located on the back of the garden shed ! The garden will miss their joyful spirits, but of course they have an open invitation to return again and again.

Thank you and Happy Summer!
Mrs. Goldstein

Teacher Looking for Housing

Hi! This is Eve Sheldon, next year's music teacher. Starting this summer, I am looking for a place to live that is closer to school than my current one hour commute. I am not familiar with housing in the area, so I am putting out the word and looking for any leads anyone might have. I'm also on a tight budget, so it needs to be cheap! A small apartment or similar would be fine...in-town in Milford or Frenchtown would be a plus, but not required. If you have any ideas or leads, please contact me at my school email: esheldon@rivervalley.school.org. Thank you...I appreciate any help you could give me.

Looking for a Microwave

We are in need of a microwave for the Faculty Room. If anyone has one that they are not using please let Maria Workman know. Thank you.

Amanda's List of books for the Amanda Blanco Memorial Library

Books for Little Ones:

Wait Till the Moon is Full by Margaret Wise Brown and Garth Williams

The Little Boy and The Big Fish by Max Velthuijs

Apricot ABC by Miska Miles

The Funny Little Woman by Arlene Mosel

The Mitten by Alvin Tresselt

Journey Cake, Ho! by Ruth Sawyer and Robert McCloskey

Pop! Goes the Turnip by Harold Berson

Little Fur Family by Margaret Wise Brown and Garth Williams

Runaway Bunny by Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd

Amos and Boris, Sylvester and the Magic Pebble by William Steig

The Story of Jumping Mouse by John Steptoe

Haystack by Bonnie and Arthur Geisert

Unabridged Winnie the Pooh

Beatrix Potter books

The Little House, Choo Choo, Katy and the Big Snow, Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel by Virginia Lee Burton

Grasshopper on the Road by Arnold Lobel (read without the 'stupid' parts, of course)

Little Bear books by Else Holmelund Minarik and Maurice Sendak

Books on Parenting:

Simplicity Parenting by Kim John Payne

You Are Your Child's First Teacher by Rahima Baldwin Dancy

Your Self-Confident Baby by Allison Johnson and Magda Gerber

Please include a sticky note or slip of paper with each book to identify the donor, and any short message suitable for a bookplate that you would like attached to the book. Please also include your contact information so that we may properly express our thanks for your gift.

From the Board

A Message from the Board of Trustees

June 1 concluded our series of four community sessions and the final board meeting of the year. Thank you to everyone who went out of their way to attend one of the sessions as over 20 families were represented; the discussion and feedback from the community is vital to our planning efforts and is deeply appreciated. We will continue to offer this forum for community updates, input and discussion next year.

At the June 1 meeting, we also set the board roster for next year, and because no board terms are ending, the board will remain the same for next year with the exception of the addition of Genevieve Solomon who will take Christina Hummel's place as one of two faculty board members. For reference, the officers and trustees are listed below. Community members are always welcome to attend board meetings as our meetings are always open.

Board of Trustees Roster for 2017-2018

Officers

Amy Nyberg, President

Louanne Willard, Vice President

Kamran Ozair, Treasurer

Kristyn Lederer, Secretary

Members

Karen Atkinson

Jef Betz

Clare Brunell

Ron Ferguson

Christina Hummel (term ends June, 2017)

Reeve Kelly (ex officio)

Paul Kovach

Rich Kroth

Paul Ritchie

Genevieve Solomon (term begins July, 2017)

John Wesp

From Building and Grounds

August Work Day

Our annual All-School workday will be held on August 19th this year. This workday is spent getting our building and grounds tidy and beautiful for the opening of school. Please mark your calendar for this workday and join us if you are able. Refreshments will be provided to keep everyone cool!

Look for another email with more details in late July, including which projects we will be working on and needed tools and equipment. Your time and dedication to River Valley is appreciated, and makes our school community a stronger place.

- Buildings and Grounds Committee

From the Community

Trampoline For Sale

Skywalker 12' Trampoline with Enclosure, less than 2 years old, very good condition. No delivery, sorry! \$100 OBO
Melanie 215.280.3154

Seeking Childcare Provider

Seeking a childcare provider with a background in early childhood education and/or Waldorf education to watch several children (ages 4 through 11) at our homes in Lumberville and Stockton. We would like to begin immediately with occasional coverage (days/hours are flexible) but the situation may lead to a more regular schedule. Pay is commensurate with experience. Please reach out to Matthew Tousignant at matthewtousignant@hotmail.com if interested.

YARD SALE!

Post-moving clean out & simplifying. Lots of nice things! Furniture, decor, fixtures, clothes, toys and more....(even some handmade items by Lila!)

Saturday, June 17th 9a-3p, The Berrocal's , 1406 River Rd., Upper Black Eddy

Items for Sale

On the occasion of our move to Europe, the next items we would like to sell are:

- A complete set of Stokke baby stroller in great condition (www.stokke.com)
- Christmas tree (used only once): Holiday Living 7.5 ft Pre-Lit Englewood Pine Tree

Interested? Please contact Piergiorgio, Oscar's dad at 646 830 9250 or pgv.pier@gmail.com

Announcing: Our Opening & Location

We are super excited! RLC will open doors this summer at it's home on Main Street in Flemington. Stop by and celebrate with us! MaryBeth & Scott

Open House, Sat, Aug 26, 2-5p, Raritan Learning Cooperative, 168 Main St, Flemington, NJ

House-share/ Sublet Needed

Professional 50+ Woman. – Sold my home & looking to downsize to sustainable shared living. Ideally, unfurnished space w/washer hook-up. I have many basic home-making skills, favorite: cooking with gas & hanging laundry outside. Perkasio/Peace Valley Area preferred to be able to reasonably commute. Please Call: Karen (610) 982-9074

Items for Sale

Yard Sale is over but some really good furniture, kitchen items, garden equipment etc. are still available. Please contact Carol Diven at (530) 209-2711 (correct 'phone number this week!) to come and look, name your lowest price, and take away some great deals.

From Yoga Loka

Baby and Me Yoga

Bring your littlest ones for some serious bonding and stretching.

Friday 7/11 and 7/21, 11:00-11:45 am

Family Yoga

Bring the whole family for this fun filled 45 minutes. Introduce the kids to the benefits of yoga early!

Fridays 7/28-8/11

Early morning yoga classes begin in July! 6:00 am on Thursdays with Bonnie. Class will be outdoors weather permitting. Meet at the studio.

Yoga Loka, 23 Race Street in Frenchtown www.Yoga-Loka.com

Milford Public Library

40 Frenchtown Road | 995-4072

Monday 12-7, Tuesday 11-5, Wednesday 12-8

Thursday 11-8, Friday 10-1 and 5-8, Saturday 10-1

library4072@verizon.net | milfordnjlibrary.org

Summer Reading

Thursdays at 2:30 from June 29 through July 27

Join us for stories and projects!

Summer German Club in Frenchtown

We are continuing German Club this summer for kids in grades 3 and up who want to keep up with the German they have learned at River Valley or elsewhere. As always, there will be songs, stories, games, Schuhplattler dancing, and activities focused on the German language and European culture in general. Thanks to a suggestion from our German Club families, classes will be held at the Frenchtown Borough Park on Wednesdays, 10:00-11:00am. The cost is \$150 for the ten-week session. If you are interested in having your child join German Club this summer, contact Peter Ray, peter.ray@comcast.net.

Home for Sale - Location, Location, Location!

Ever thought of moving closer to the school? Less than five minutes to RVWS, right next door to another RVWS family, and in an actual neighborhood with no through traffic, but also walking distance to all that downtown Milford has to offer!

I'm not receiving a commission — just want some great neighbors! Feel free to call me if you want to chat...
Kathy Betz 908-892-4670, mom of Scarlett (grade 6) and Sawyer (grade 4).

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 or call 610 749 2690.

Quilting Help Needed

If you're a seamstress or quilter with time on your hands, I need your help to build a simple quilt. Too many ideas, not enough time. We'll discuss terms. Chellie Bader michelle@smorgasb.org or 617-501-7517.

House for Sale in Milford

Waldorf family is selling their 3 bedroom, 1.5 bath home in Milford. If you know anyone looking please share the link. Thank you!

https://www.zillow.com/homedetails/23-Walnut-St-Milford-NJ-08848/38852406_zpid

Erwinna 1 BR Country Apartment for Rent

Available July 15th. 1 BR, private drive, private entrance and parking. Includes all utilities, washer/dryer, internet access, full attic storage. 1 month security - Rent \$1250 (negotiable) – 1 year lease. Prior tenant references available. Call 908-268-2122 or email 4rent.in.erwinna@gmail.com

If you are interested, speak with Tara Bowers (Alice's mom in 3rd grade) 908-674-2772.

Gardening Help Needed

Chellie & David Bader (Noa, G8 & Faye, G4) are looking for maintenance help with vegetable and ornamental gardens this year. Some design work might be called for. We're in Erwinna. Please contact Chellie: michelle@smorgasb.org or 617-501-7517.

From the Waldorf School of Philadelphia

Building Forts and Minds: The Importance of Child Built Space

"In these secret places, children develop and control environments of their own and enjoy freedom from the rules of the adult world."

Educational and environmental psychologists, along with educators in the field, have taken a keen interest in fort building. It's a constant presence in early and middle childhood, the creation of secret places, often in plain site, and the experts agree that den, fort or secret space creation offers a host of cognitive and psychological benefits for the developing child.

The most comprehensive review of this research comes from architect, Maria Kylin, at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. She identifies the three prominent scholars as Roger Hart, David Sobel, and Mark Powell, and compiles their research, along with dozens of other studies, that contribute to the comprehensive picture that is child-led fort building.

New York's City University's environmental psychologist, Roger Hart, first noticed secret space building and its importance in the 1970s and specifically noted the psychological importance these places for children in terms of control and order.

David Sobel of Antioch University New England, agrees that control is a major factor in this type of play and its importance to children. In his book, *Children's Special Places: Exploring the Role of Forts, Dens, and Bush Houses in Middle Childhood*, he says, "In these secret places, children develop and control environments of their own and enjoy freedom from the rules of the adult world."

"The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct acting from inner necessity" – Carl Jung

Maria notes this theme of "control" as well, saying, "The common factor in the experience of the den as a social and a secret place is the sense of control that children feel they have, both over the den as a physical space and over the other children who share the den."

But it extends beyond a simple need to control their personal world. Montessori Teacher and Education Administer, Mark Powell, found that social control was also key since order and control extended into social hierarchy and culture among children. He notes that, during and after fort building, rules were established and managed among the children to a point where he felt fort building was an excellent training ground for social competence.

In the realm beyond control and social culture, The Islington Play Association in the UK outlines even more perceived benefits of fort play in the guide for "playworkers" titled: *Children's Places of Secrecy and Play: A Playworker's Guide to Dens and Forts*. They speak to the privacy and solitude fort play grants children and notes how essential alone time is for a child's imaginative play and development of an "internal quiet voice."

But mostly, they discuss the importance of forts in terms of a child-created space, custom-made to suit the child's specific needs. "When children build new spaces for play, they create a new world to experience, and that experience creates a new world – one that runs according to different material and social rules. What this means is that play gives children the opportunity to change their world to suit them. When children construct their own play environments, they naturally create ones that are most responsive to their needs, both at the moment and in terms of their long-term development. The benefits to the children are clear – stronger senses of self and community, belief in one's own abilities to construct, adapt and demolish, the chance to identify and satisfy one's own social, material and spatial needs."

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Forts at School

Waldorf early childhood programs nurture and protect the young child's sense of wonder and imagination

Our role, as educators, is to respect these sacred places children build and to create environments that encourage their creation. Early childhood classroom design, in Waldorf Education, gives children space and materials to build these special places that help them learn in developmentally appropriate ways. Our classroom's large free spaces are ideal for building and linens, scarves, blocks, along with empty mobile and modular shelving along with other elements often lead young ones to create these spaces indoors.

Out on the open playgrounds, older and younger children alike have plenty of space and material to make these spaces. And, most importantly of all, they are given the time needed at recess to create and cultivate these spaces together.

Forts at Home

Parents can encourage fort building at home as well. The New York Times asked prominent architects for their advice on how to best help children make special places inside their homes in their article, *Lessons in the Art of Pillow Fort Construction*. As a prime example of the pro tips offered, Dallas architect, Bob Borson, says, "Use sheets for the roof, since they're lighter than blankets. Couches are a great anchor. And umbrellas are great for super fast fort construction. Just throw a sheet or blanket over the top of a big golf umbrella — or two, if you have them — and you're all set."

From Psychology Today via waldorftoday.com

Growing Up in a False Reality

Kids today are out of touch with themselves, others, and the world around them.

by Cindy Eckard

Many people are focused on reducing screen time for children; I'm one of those people. The health risks are enormous for our kids, in a variety of ways, from their vulnerable, undeveloped eyes to their growing bodies and minds. And while I am the first to advocate for schools and parents to limit the amount of time our children spend on digital devices, per se, I am also growing increasingly convinced that our emotive relationships with these machines - which correlates to screen time - needs more exploration. What psychological needs are these digital devices filling - and what price is being paid when they dominate our lives?

Not long ago, I reluctantly signed up for a social media account, recognizing the efficacy of that medium for instantly reaching large, targeted audiences. Because I was pursuing the passage of specific statewide legislation, the timeliness of the messaging was important to me, to educate stakeholders and mobilize political support as quickly as possible.

With nearly the same speed that my messages were being sent, my own need to know how my messages were being received, emerged. It was remarkable how quickly I felt compelled to look at my hit count or check for messages. Hit that bar and get that pellet. No pellet? Hit the bar again. Ah. Pellet. Good pellet. Hit the bar. How many people reacted to my message? That's it?! Send another message. Get another pellet.

It quickly became evident that I was drawn back to the computer with growing frequency, and increased emotional investment. If my message was well received, I felt validated, vindicated, and smart. And if my message was ignored, it was certain proof that no one cared about the things that interested me most, and I felt isolated.

This, from a grown woman, with a lifetime of professional communications and technology experience.

So I can hardly imagine the emotional roller-coaster that many children are now experiencing. It's very easy to see how cyber-bullying has become such a crisis, since our children's self-esteem is now hinging on uncontrollable virtual approval, and invisible, shifting, unpredictable digital feedback. The validation we all crave is now seemingly only available to our kids in an artificial way. Even their grades are impersonally emailed to them - no more dirty looks or pats on the back from their teachers.

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How uncomfortable, and insecure, then, our children must feel. Whatever approval kids may receive from one another is fleeting, fickle, and unreliable. "Friends" are not real friends. And any embarrassment is amplified, shared universally, and inescapable.

What used to happen and be forgotten in a week when we were kids, now lingers and taunts. A cell phone snapshot can persist online forever, and humiliate a child for years. There is no escape, no relief, no place to hide. It's cruel. How damaged will this generation be, from the stress of performing for each other, to avoid being "unfriended"? Social media is a sneaky little medium, that hurts. The girl at the lunch table doesn't yet know she's the target of criticism by the other kids at the same table.

So the need to stay on top of the latest, artificial developments becomes paramount to kids. Who's in and who's out and who said what and what picture was posted, and what replies were sent becomes a constant obsession. It gratifies immediately, defines group cohesion, quenches curiosity, excites, and motivates kids to check into their virtual experience nonstop, or be left out of everything. It's a sad situation, made sadder because their parents are doing the exact same thing, modeling the exact same obsessions.

Seeking artificial validation not only results in addictive, destructive behaviors, it also displaces the very experiences that would otherwise offer us authentic validation. Actual experiences are no longer valued over virtual ones. My family had an outdoor adventure party not long ago that featured a huge boa constrictor, hissing cockroaches, and a bearded dragon lizard. Although encouraged by the handler, none of the 11-year old kids at the party would even touch the critters. Instead, they pulled out their cell phones and took pictures of them. They didn't want to actually experience what a snake or a lizard felt like. They just wanted to show their friends the cool snake pictures.

Even common interactions are now being avoided because of these devices, and replaced with disingenuous placations. Technology enables us to avoid conversation, confrontation, rejection, disapproval, honesty. We can avoid any personal risk, ensuring we are always "liked." An emoticon parades as an emotion. A series of exclamation marks masquerades as enthusiasm. We LOL when we don't even think it's funny. How can a whole, healthy person of any age develop or thrive under these circumstances?

We are bankrupting our spirits, our relationships and our society. Peace and quiet are the new enemies of happiness. We need so much constant distraction these days to avoid our own realities, that gas stations now have television screens on the pumps, so that we can maintain the constant stimulation we had in our cars, in our homes, in our offices. Schools are encouraging ever more use of screens for communication among students... who are sitting next to each other in class.

With eyes on screens, we are not looking at each other. We are not noticing anything or anybody around us. So our children are losing the ability to converse or to cope with emotions, their own, or anyone else's. They require constant noise and colorful, moving pictures or they are immediately irritated, bored and - increasingly - they are anxious, depressed, suicidal. They are out of touch with their own hearts and minds, with each other, and with the natural world around them.

Limit screen time? Absolutely. We must save our children's retinas from blue light, protect them from myopia, get them a good night's sleep, and insist they go outside and play. We must make sure their growing muscles and bones aren't twisted and bent from staring into ill-fitting equipment. We must demand that schools live up to their legal obligation to provide safe and healthy classrooms.

But the price to be paid by our children because of these devices needs to be understood beyond the damage to their bodies. We need to consider our children's humanity and perspectives - their spirits. We must turn off these devices and teach our children how to build true friendships, cope with actual challenges, explore their own emotions, contribute, appreciate the natural world and enjoy the rich, meaningful experiences of real life.

For more help reducing screen-time at home and school, see [Reset Your Child's Brain: A Four Week Plan to End Meltdowns, Raise Grades, and Boost Social Skills by Reversing the Effects of Electronic Screen Time](#)