

## School Calendar

### This Week

#### Tuesday, September 15

Garden Gate begins

#### Wednesday, September 16

6<sup>th</sup> grade Parent Evening 7:00-9:00 pm

#### Thursday, September 17

School Tour 9:00 am  
Back to School Night 5:30 pm

### Looking Ahead

#### Monday, September 21

3<sup>rd</sup> grade Parent Evening 6:30 pm

#### Wed.-Fri., September 23-25

Fifth Grade Class Trip to Camp Onas

#### Tuesday, September 29

Michaelmas – In-School celebration

#### Saturday, October 3

EC Open House at Morning Glory

#### Mon.-Wed., October 4-7

4<sup>th</sup> grade class trip to PEEC

#### How to Contact Us

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

### Please save the date!

#### Community Meeting on

**Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30**

The LC and the faculty will be sharing intentions about the future of some of our programs and policies, some important communication dates that are going into our calendar, and some more ideas about the journey of the class teacher.

We look forward to sharing these intentions with all of you, and hearing your responses, which will help inform next steps as we work towards implementation and the growth of our school.

### Save the Date: October 20<sup>th</sup>

#### A Mushroom Talk by

Mycologist, David Porter, (who just happens to be Annie Porter's father).

## Rose Ceremony



The Rose Ceremony on the first day of school welcomed our new first graders. See inside for more pictures.

## Coffee Hours

Join us this week, Tuesday through Friday 8:15-9:15 for Parent Coffee hours. This friendly event will feature various organizations at River Valley and our Specialty teachers. Grandy's Kitchen will offer scrumptious refreshments for sale as well.

Tuesday - Carol Diven (Music) and the Board of Trustees  
Wednesday - Peter Ray (German) and Hilary Murphy of Outreach  
Thursday - Mary K Till (Handwork) and Parent Council  
Friday - Griselle Laborde (Spanish) and Stephanie Spencer of Development

## Back to School Night this Thursday

**September 17<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 – 8pm**

POTLUCK-STYLE!

Welcome back! You are invited to River Valley Waldorf Back to School Night on Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 – 8:00pm. Please bring a dish to share if you are able. Parents may peruse the information available of various organizations, clubs and volunteer opportunities at our school. The evening culminates in a faculty-led 'Tour through the School'. These insightful glimpses of early childhood and each grade will provide a snapshot of the power found in the dynamic Waldorf curriculum.

We hope you can join us for an enjoyable evening full of information and meeting of friends both old & new. Adults only please. Babes in arms welcome.

## **Pierogi Thursday and Pizza Friday in the Grade School**

As fundraisers for class trips, this year 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be serving pierogies for lunch on Thursdays and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will be serving pizza on Fridays. Please see the "Class Fundraiser" section of the week's Current for more info.

Order forms for both are attached to this week's Current.

## **Attention Bus/Van Riders**

Parents of bus and van riders, **please call the school** if there is a change in your child's plans for riding the bus home. If your children participate in any of our after school programs, please let us know what days they will not ride the bus and when you would like them to start again. This is a very important safety issue. Thank you for your cooperation.

## **From Administration**

### **Email Update**

Our email system is moving to a new server. As part of this process all faculty and staff will have River Valley email addresses. The new addresses will be in the school directory, which will be distributed shortly, but the rule of thumb is, use the first initial and last name of the person @rivervalley.school.org. For instance, Robbie's address is: rmiller@rivervalley.school.org. If you need to contact a teacher or staff member please use this address not their personal email address that you have used in the past.

There could be glitches. If you send emails to River Valley staff or faculty and they bounce back to you, please forward them to [robbiemrvs@yahoo.com](mailto:robbiemrvs@yahoo.com). Thank you for your patience as we upgrade our system and thank you to the IT committee, especially Alex Di Candia for making this possible.

### **A Message from Cindy Schretlen**

Hello friends -

Since RVWS is presently working with a new administrative model, and I am the person who will be on site each day, I want to give you a little idea of who I am, and what I do for River Valley. I first came to RVWS as a mom, with 2 little boys - who are both now in college. I have been working at the school since September of 2001. Initially, I worked at the front desk, and then as Admissions/Enrollment/Outreach Coordinator. Most recently, my title has been Admissions coordinator - though I was involved in many other things as well (busing, registrar, bandaid put-er on-er, and splinter remover...). This year, in addition to my work with admissions, I am the Administrative Coordinator. Please come to me with any administrative-related questions or concerns. Most things I will be able to answer or address directly. Some I may share with other members of the Interim Administrative Team (IAT) during one of our twice-weekly meetings before returning to you with an answer, plan or solution. If I am not the person to address your particular issue or concern, I am always happy to re-direct and follow-up with you to be sure that your needs have been addressed.

Other members of the team are TreeAnne McEnery, who is the Pedagogical chair, and who is responsible for items pertaining to faculty & classroom and the third position is shared by 2 board members, Nick Thompson & Will Carpenter, who support the business, legal and financial aspects of the school.

In addition to my love of the River Valley community, I bring a wealth of institutional knowledge, dedication to clear, respectful communication and an interest in maintaining the smooth running of the school to the best of my ability.

See you in the hallways!

### **Administration Work Schedule**

Cindy Schretlen – every day

Renee Goodyear – Monday all day, Tuesday and Wednesday until 1:30

Robbie Miller – Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Hilary Murphy – Wednesday and Thursday until 1:00

Pamela Hobson – every morning until 10:00

Charlene Chapman – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday until 12:00

James Hagan – Tuesday, Thursday

TreeAnne McEnery – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday until 1:00

### **Current Deadline**

The deadline for submitting articles to the Current is 6 pm on Monday. That deadline will be strictly adhered to this year so please be sure to email your submissions to: [info@rivervalley.school.org](mailto:info@rivervalley.school.org) before 6 pm on Monday.

Thank you for your cooperation,  
The Editors.

## Lice Awareness

Lice have once again reared their ugly heads at River Valley. Please check your children's heads and if you find any evidence of lice, they must be treated before they may return to school. Below you will find two lice treatment companies in the area. We are not endorsing either one, but if you are looking for help with this problem, feel free to check them out.

**Lice Lifters** - Prevent and end lice naturally! Lice Lifters Treatment Centers and Lice Lifters All-Natural Produces are the best choice for non-toxic, effective lice elimination. 100% Natural. 100% guaranteed. For our Lehigh Valley, PA location call 610-443-1462 or visit [www.licelifterspa.com](http://www.licelifterspa.com). Mention this ad and receive \$15 off of your treatment. (Offer valid until 10/15/15 at Catasaqua, PA location only.) Lice Lifters of the Lehigh Valley, 613 Second Street, Catasaqua, PA 18302

**LiceDoctors** will help your students to eliminate lice with our chemical-free lice treatment protocol. LiceDOCTORS is the # 1 professional head lice and nit removal company in the U.S. GUARANTEED results. We urge you NOT to recommend chemical treatments; they are NOT effective and may be harmful.

- \*Unequaled track record—we have successfully treated over 150,000 clients over the past 20 years
- \*Physician-directed—board certified medical doctor on staff
- \*100% effective—GUARANTEED!
- \*All natural ingredients
- \*Treatment in the privacy of the student's home
- \*Available 7 days a week—days and evenings
- \*Lowest prices in the area
- \*Guaranteed confidentiality
- \*Better Business Bureau certified with "A" rating

Contact: Wendy Beck and Karen Sokoloff 800-224-2537 [www.licedoctors.com](http://www.licedoctors.com)

## Our New Pedagogical Chair

We are excited to announce that TreeAnne McEnery has joined RVWS as part-time Pedagogical Chair. The Faculty and the Leadership Council have felt the need for this additional support for some time and we have found a talented person whom we feel will be a good fit for the River Valley community. The Pedagogical Chair is tasked to inspire a culture of collaborative initiative and to support the faculty in addressing matters of prime importance necessary for the effective functioning and overall health of the school. TreeAnne will be working with the teachers, staff, and parents.

We asked her to tell us a little bit about herself:

TreeAnne McEnery comes to RVWS as an educator and educational leader with experiences ranging from the nursery classroom to the junior college student. She was a Waldorf class teacher for eight years, and a kindergarten assistant and co-teacher for two years. After graduating her class in 2013 from Mountain Laurel Waldorf School in New Paltz, NY, TreeAnne moved to Northeast Pennsylvania. While at MLWS, TreeAnne held several long-term leadership roles, and has continued to develop these leadership capacities outside of the Waldorf community.

TreeAnne has a double B.A. in Contemplative Psychology and Writing and Literature from Naropa University, a Waldorf Teaching Certificate from Sunbridge College, an M.S. in Educational Psychology and Methodology from the University at Albany, a Pennsylvania Private School Teaching Certificate, a certificate in Educational Leadership from Marywood University, and a Pennsylvania K-12 Principal License. She is also seeking a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership Studies from Wilkes University.

When TreeAnne breaks from her studies, she enjoys practicing yoga, working on projects with her partner, gardening, hiking with her dogs, and eating at restaurants that support local farms.

## Meet our New Teachers

### Thomas Roemer, 6th Grade Class Teacher

After finishing undergraduate studies in social sciences and biology in Milwaukee, Thomas went to New York to be an apprentice on a biodynamic farm. He first met "Anthroposophy in action" on that farm and at the nearby Waldorf School of the Finger Lakes in Ithaca. Full of questions, he went to Emerson College in England and lived there for three years; inspired by many extraordinary teachers, he participated in the Waldorf Teacher Training Course and received his certification to teach.

In 1990, Thomas and his wife, Veronika, moved to Wisconsin, where he was a class teacher for grades 1 through 8 at Prairie Hill Waldorf School, and he and Veronika grew their family. In 1998, they moved to Camphill Village Kimberton Hills, in Chester Co., PA, where they lived and worked for 14 years, and their five children attended the Kimberton Waldorf School. In those years, Thomas and his family also enjoyed traveling throughout the U.S. and in Europe, sometimes "home schooling" one or more of the children.

## Melissa Goldstein, Gardening Teacher

Melissa Goldstein, mother of Aidan in 2nd grade, is joining the faculty as our gardening teacher. Melissa studied environmental science at Brookdale Community College and has taken additional coursework on permaculture and organic gardening practices with the New Jersey Organic Farming Association at Rutgers University. She is currently enrolled in the year-long Biodynamic Training at the Pfeiffer Center in Chestnut Ridge N.Y. Melissa has a passion for organic gardening and years of experience as a professional gardener, in her own beautiful home-garden, and assisting Christine Boston in the RVWS garden. She is excited about continuing the educational and practical aspects of gardening with the children and families of River Valley, and we are happy she has chosen to share her skills and love of gardening with the RVWS community in this way!

## From the Faculty

### What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Form Drawing

Second Grade – Language Arts

Third Grade – Language Arts

Fourth Grade – Norse Myths

Fifth Grade – Geometry

Sixth Grade – Geometric Constructions

Seventh Grade – Chemistry

Eighth Grade – Geometry

### Weekly Garden Get-Together

Would you like to know what your children are learning in the garden? Are you interested in Biodynamics, Permaculture or Organic gardening? Melissa Goldstein, the gardening teacher, will be in the garden on Wednesdays, starting September 23rd between the hours of 1-3. She would be delighted to meet you! Be aware that she may hand you a pair of gloves and have you pull a weed or two.

### After-School German and Schuhplattler

After-school German activities will again be offered this fall, with German Club (henceforth to be called German Songs & Games) on Wednesdays; German Tutoring (for new students and kids who need to catch up), on Tuesdays; and Schuhplattler class on Mondays. Contact Peter Ray at peter.ray@comcast.net, or 215-794-5816.

## From the Board

### Capital Campaign News

River Valley is officially in the Public Phase of the "Building Our Future" Capital Campaign.

On Thursday, September 24 at 7pm, the community is invited to a "Town Hall" meeting to give our community the opportunity to ask questions regarding the campaign, current improvements and the site plan. All are welcome!

On Saturday, October 10 from 11:30am to 3:00pm, the community is again invited to the Capital Campaign Kick-Off event! This will be held Harvest Festival style, pot luck and picnic blankets! More details to follow, but please mark your calendars! Attached to this weeks Current, please read and enjoy our second Newsletter full of great news and information regarding the Capital Campaign!

## Class Fundraisers

### Pierogi Thursday

The 8th Grade is delighted to bring the delicious taste of Maria's Homemade Pierogies to the RVWS community every Thursday for lunch. The pierogies are made by a former River Valley parent in Milford, and the children and adults who tested them at school this past Thursday gave them rave reviews! The pierogies offered on Thursdays for lunch are potato and onion and students can order two or four along with an optional San Pellegrino citrus fruit spritzer.

In addition, other flavors of pierogies will be offered for "stocking the freezer" family meals available at pick-up once a month. Look for an order form coming soon.

Order forms may be placed in the folder labeled "Pierogies" on the office door. Families that submit forms by the end of the day tomorrow (Wednesday) will receive pierogis on Thursday and orders may be placed through Tuesday, September 22nd for the following week. Please make checks payable to RVWS, "8thgrade pierogies" in the memo.

Please send a fork to school with your child to avoid the use of plastic forks. All profits are used to support the 8th Grade Class Trip at the end of the year. Thank you for supporting our class!

## From the Community

### **Mankind's Destiny with Machines**

A Lecture on Artificial Intelligence & Consciousness

Friday, September 25, 7:30-9:00 p.m., Waldorf School of Princeton, 1062 Cherry Hill Road

Sponsored by the Princeton Branch of the Anthroposophical Society

From robotics to human-machine hybrids, artificial intelligence, avatars, and the Singularity: is this our human future? Why must we deal with machines for our evolution? The Western Spiritual Path.

Andrew Linnell is a 41-year veteran of the computer industry and a graduate of the University of Michigan (MSE '73) and Emerson College, England ('79). A member of the Anthroposophical Society since 1979, he is president of the Boston Branch, faculty member for the Village University of Concord, and member of the School for Spiritual Science. He has spoken to branches and libraries throughout the USA and abroad on various topics from Nanotechnology to Christian Mysticism. Contribution at the door: \$10. For more, contact Herbert Hagens: 609-921-8759 or [hohagens@aol.com](mailto:hohagens@aol.com).

### **Speech Therapy at RVWS**

Jane Stuart (mother of Eden-3rd, Daphne-1st and Coco-Star Rm.) will be offering speech therapy services at RVWS, weekly during the school day. Children with speech or language needs can be seen individually or in pairs. If interested or if you have questions, contact Jane at (562)208-5048, or [jane@mtwservices.com](mailto:jane@mtwservices.com)

### **German Tutoring Available**

Raphael Walter is available for after school German tutoring. His fee is \$10.00 per hour. Raphael will provide tutoring to individuals or small groups (up to 3 children.) Raphael is a native German, living with the Bernhardt family and assisting in the first grade this school year. Anyone interested please call Raphael at 908-995-0558.

### **A Message from Pamela Hobson**

We need to find affordable housing - rental by end of September. I'm looking to be within 15 minutes of school. I need minimum 3 - 4 bedrooms and ideally 2 baths / garage or barn storage. I would most like a place slightly off the beaten path, (as in more private & close to nature - in a quiet country setting), close to water like creek or river, in either PA or NJ.

I'm also looking for work doing Therapeutic Massage & Intuitive Based Sound & Vibrational Healing Arts. I'm currently licensed in NJ & Certified as Sound Healer through sound healers association since July 2011. I especially love doing aromatherapy foot baths & foot reflexology. I am a Certified Oneness Blessing Giver. I'm looking to start facilitating Oneness Blessing Guided Meditations & Sharing Circles in this community in addition to leading sacred sounds healing concerts using harmonic toning and various ancient sound tools, some of which have been used for thousands of years to amplify prayerful intention balance & harmonize the body, mind & spirit, relieve stress, strengthen the immune system and support greater feelings of peace & Wellbeing. I would like to get started right away. I do have a few massage tables and a ready to install high end, brand new, gently used leather, European Pedicure Chair (for aromatherapy foot baths) Ideally I would love to have a nice studio space with 1 or 2 rooms I can set up massage table & various sound tools in and a bathroom. I'd be open to work exchanges, affordable rental or sharing space with another practitioner so I can start my own healing arts business in the area. And if anyone has a yoga studio I would also be open to sharing my sacred sounds - harmonic toning- vocal talents through facilitating sound healing concerts/prayer- formances intended to raise consciousness, awaken the heart, calm the mind & create feelings of overall wellbeing & peace.

In addition I'd be open to speaking to groups & facilitate mini 1-2 hour workshops about the benefits of harmonics & toning, balancing chakras through sound & the use of ones own voice to generate feelings of inner peace & calm, wholeness & wellbeing by generating Light & Healing Energy through the creation of meditative sacred healing sounds.

### **Educate Girls, Change the World!**

Delaware Valley University Presents: *Girl Rising*

Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup> 2015, 4:30-6:30

Del Val University: Life Sciences Bldg. Auditorium

700 East Butler Ave, Doylestown, PA 18901 ([www.delval.edu](http://www.delval.edu) for directions)

Around the world, millions of girls face barriers to education that boys do not face. And yet, when you educate a girl you can break cycles of poverty in just one generation. *Girl Rising* is a groundbreaking film that has already been seen by millions. Narrated by Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway and Helena Gomez, it tells the stories of nine incredible girls across the globe. It's a movement for girls' education that we are proud to support. Investing in girls will bring about transformative change – for families, communities and nations. More info at [girlrising.org](http://girlrising.org)

# Rose Ceremony



From Waldorf Today – This article originally appeared in Psychology Today.

## **Screen time Is Making Kids Moody, Crazy and Lazy**

### **6 Ways electronic screen time makes kids angry, depressed and unmotivated.**

By Victoria L. Dunckley M.D., Mental Wealth

The child or teen who is “revved up” and prone to rages or—alternatively—who is depressed and apathetic has become disturbingly commonplace. Chronically irritable children are often in a state of abnormally high arousal, and may seem “wired and tired.” That is, they’re agitated but exhausted. Because chronically high arousal levels impact memory and the ability to relate, these kids are also likely to be struggling academically and socially.

At some point a child with these symptoms is likely to be given a mental health diagnosis, such as major depression, bipolar disorder, or ADHD, and offered corresponding treatments, including therapy and medication. But often, particularly in today’s world, these treatments don’t work very well, and the downward spiral continues. What’s happening?

The problem is that both parents and clinicians are “barking up the wrong tree.” That is, they’re trying to treat what looks like a textbook case of “X” mental disorder, but failing to rule out and address the most common environmental cause of such symptoms: everyday use of electronics. Time and again, I’ve realized that regardless of whether there exists any “true” underlying diagnoses, successfully treating a child with mood dysregulation in this day and age requires methodically eliminating all electronics use for several weeks –an “electronic fast” – to allow the nervous system to “reset.”

If done correctly, this intervention can produce deeper sleep, a brighter and more even mood, better focus and organization, and an increase in physical activity. The ability to tolerate stress improves, so meltdowns diminish in both frequency and severity. The child begins to enjoy the things they used to, is more drawn to nature, and imaginary or creative play returns. In teens and young adults, an increase in self-directed behavior is observed – the exact opposite of apathy and hopelessness.

It’s a beautiful thing.

At the same time, the electronic fast reduces or eliminates the need for medication while rendering other treatments more effective. Improved sleep, more exercise, and more face-to-face contact with others compound the benefits...an upward spiral! After the fast, once the brain is reset, the parent can carefully determine how much if any electronics use the child can tolerate without symptoms returning.

Restricting electronics may not solve everything, but it’s often the missing link in treatment when kids are stuck.

But why is the electronic fast intervention so effective? Because it reverses much of the physiological dysfunction produced by daily screen-time.

Children’s brains are much more sensitive to electronics use than most of us realize. In fact, contrary to popular belief, it doesn’t take much electronic stimulation at all to throw a sensitive and still-developing brain off track. Also, many parents mistakenly believe that interactive screen-time—such as internet or social media use, texting, emailing, and gaming –isn’t harmful, especially when compared to passive screen-time like TV. But in fact, interactive screen-time is more likely to cause sleep, mood, and cognitive issues, because it’s more likely to cause hyperarousal and compulsive use.

Here’s a look at six physiological mechanisms that explain electronics’ tendency to produce mood disturbance:

1. Screen-time disrupts sleep and desynchronizes the body clock.

Because light from screen devices mimics daytime, it suppresses melatonin, a sleep signal released by darkness. Just minutes of screen stimulation can delay melatonin release by several hours and desynchronize the body clock. Once the body clock is disrupted, all sorts of other unhealthy reactions occur, such as hormone imbalance and brain inflammation. Plus, high arousal doesn’t permit deep sleep, and deep sleep is how we heal.

(Continued on next page.)

2. Screen-time desensitizes the brain's reward system.

Many children are “hooked” on electronics, and in fact gaming releases so much dopamine — the “feel-good” chemical — that on a brain scan it looks the same as cocaine use! When reward pathways are overused, they become less sensitive, and more and more stimulation is needed to experience pleasure. Meanwhile dopamine is also critical for focus and motivation. Needless to say, even small changes in dopamine sensitivity can wreak havoc on how well a child feels and functions.

3. Screen-time produces “light-at-night.”

Light-at-night from electronics has been linked to depression and even suicide risk in numerous studies. In fact, animal studies show that exposure to screen-based light before or during sleep causes depression even when the animal isn't looking at the screen. Sometimes parents feel scared to restrict electronics use in a child's bedroom because they worry the child will go enter a state of total despair — but in fact removing light-at-night is protective.

4. Screen-time induces stress reactions.

Both acute stress (fight-or-flight) and chronic stress produce changes in brain chemistry and hormones that can increase irritability. Indeed, cortisol, the chronic stress hormone, seems to be both a cause and effect of depression — creating a vicious cycle. Additionally, both hyperarousal and addiction pathways suppress the brain's frontal lobe, the area where mood regulation actually takes place.

5. Screen-time overloads the sensory system, fractures attention, and depletes mental reserves.

Experts say that what's often behind explosive and aggressive behavior is poor focus. When attention suffers, so does the ability to process one's internal and external environment, so little demands become big ones. By depleting mental energy with high visual and cognitive input, screen-time contributes to low reserves. One way to temporarily “boost” depleted reserves is to become angry, so meltdowns become a coping mechanism.

6. Screen-time reduces physical activity levels and exposure to “green-time.”

Research shows these factors restore attention, lower stress, and reduce aggression. Thus, time spent with electronics reduces exposure to natural mood enhancers.

In today's world, it may seem crazy to restrict electronics so drastically. But when kids are struggling, we're not doing them any favors by leaving electronics in place and hoping they can wind down by using electronics in “moderation.” It just doesn't work. In contrast, by allowing the nervous system to return to a more natural state with a strict fast, we can take the first step in helping a child become calmer, stronger, and happier.

For more on this topic, check out Dr. Dunckley's new book, “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.”