



The River Valley Current

September 9, 2014 No. 385

*The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives.
~Robert Maynard Hutchins*

School Calendar

This Week

Tuesday, Sept 9

6th grade Class Meeting

Thursday, Sept 11

7th & 8th grade Class Meetings 7:00pm

Friday, Sept 12

3rd grade Harvesting Field Trip
6th, 7th, 8th grade Field Trip to High Rocks

Saturday, Sept 13

Workday – 8th grade

Looking Ahead

Monday, Sept 15

Garden Gate begins

Wednesday, Sept 17

Board Meeting 6:30 pm

Thursday, Sept 18

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

Saturday, Sept 20

20th Anniversary Celebration

How to Contact Us

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

Back to School Night Fun!

Thursday, September 18th, 5:30 pm

**Potluck with your fellow parents!
Information you won't want to miss!**

Meet the Teachers, Board, Admin and various committee members. Come hear what the school may look like in 5 years from the Strategic Planning Committee. Learn about various volunteer opportunities like the Lunch Bunch.

5:30-6:00 arrival and potluck

6:00-6:15 introductions of Faculty and Admin.

6:15-7:00 Strategic Planning Committee presentation and PC presentations

7:00-7:45 take a tour through the grades. Short Faculty presentations of curriculum through the grades.

Rose Ceremony

On the first day of school, we welcomed our new first grade class into the grade school with a beautiful Rose Ceremony. Below you can see the Class of 2015 with the Class of 2022!

(Look for more pictures from the Rose Ceremony inside.)

From the Editor

If you have something you would like to submit to the Current, please email it to: info@rivervalleyschool.org. The deadline is Monday at 5 pm for the next day.

Aftercare Teacher Needed

We are looking for someone to teach Aftercare on Monday through Friday, 3 pm - 5:45. Prior experience working with children is required. If you are interested or know someone who might be, please let Robbie or Brian know.



From Administration

Animals at School

Animals are not allowed in the building during school hours and must be kept on a leash at all times on school grounds. Please keep your adorable puppies outside during drop off and pick up. As hard as they are for most of us to resist, there are children who are frightened or allergic or small and vulnerable to being knocked down. The only exception to this rule is a prior arrangement with a teacher to bring a pet to class. Thank you for your cooperation.

School Directories are on the Way

Due to issues with our server, which have affected our ability to access files, and the internet in some cases, this year's directory is not finished as soon as we would have liked. We are putting the finishing touches on it now and hope to have it ready by next week.

Pizza Day Update:

If there are any children who would like to ADD to their current pizza day order (ie, an additional slice, etc) or would like to now enroll for pizza day, please fill out an order form and mark it "new order" or "revised order," and place with your payment in the pizza day folder on door of the office.

Bike Race Next Weekend

On Sunday, September 14th the Bucks County Classic Bike Race will be cycling through our area. There will be a water stop and port-a-potties set up at the front of RVWS' property. If you are in the area, stop by to welcome the riders and cheer them on! They will set up around 8 am and be finished by noon.

Thank You

Thank you to David Lovely, Laura Oliver, Zsuzsi Mekki, Lynn Vazquez and Ed George for spending an August Saturday helping to prepare our building and grounds for the first day of school. There are lots of summer activities you could have chosen instead and we appreciate your hard work.

Thank you Andy Wander for your perseverance with our server. Our computers have been giving everyone headaches of late and we appreciate all of your efforts to make things right.

Thank you to all in the community who are participating in Pizza Day and for meeting our "short notice" deadline. Thank you to Administration for assisting us in getting the Pizza Day information out to the community in those very busy last days of summer. Thank you to the third grade parents for quickly stepping up to the plate and volunteering your time to distribute pizza over the next few months. Thank you to Mrs Sweeney and the children of third grade for taking time out of your own lunch and recess to deliver pizza and lemonade to every class!

SHOP AT GIANT FOOD STORE?

There's a really easy way to raise funds for RVWS, every time you shop at Giant and use your Giant member card. Just register your member card on their website. Here is the link:

<http://www.giantfoodstores.com/aplus/>

Our school ID number is: 06546

If you registered last year you do not have to re-register this year.

This is an easy way to earn money for RVWS without any cost to you, so please register right away!

Box Tops for Education

We collect Box Tops for Education to benefit our school. You will find "Box Tops" on many of the products you use. Each box top is worth at least ten cents. Participating companies include: General Mills, Cascadian Farms, Pillsbury, Yoplait, Betty Crocker, Huggies, Cottonelle, Kotex, Pepend, Ziploc, Hefty, Kleenex, Scott, Viva, Saran and more. Look for specially marked boxes and drop-off the box tops in the basket in the lobby. If you don't use these products, perhaps a relative or friend does. Thank you for your support.

Help us by Recycling Your old Cellphones and Ink Cartridges

We collect old cellphones and ink cartridges to recycle and raise money for RVWS. Please bring yours to school and put them in the box on Robbie's desk.

Thank You!

From the Faculty

WHAT ARE THE CHILDREN LEARNING?

First Grade: Math

Second Grade: Language Arts

Third Grade: Farming

Fourth Grade: Language Arts/Norse Mythology

Fifth Grade: Ancient Civilizations

Sixth Grade: Physics

Seventh Grade: Middle Ages

Eighth Grade: History

Dear Early Childhood Families,

We are pleased to introduce our new Afternoon Garden teachers! Cyndi Shain (Star Room Assistant) will be leading Afternoon Garden each day in the Acorn Room, with Kathy Bernhardt holding the story and rest time.

The daily rhythm will unfold as follows;

- 1:00 outdoor play
- 1:30 story and rest
- 2:50 snack
- 3:15 dismissal

Children will be dismissed from the back playground each day, weather permitting. Children should have a full change of clothing in a large zip lock bag labeled "Afternoon Garden" to be kept at school. Children should also bring an extra healthy snack for the afternoon.

Afternoon Garden will be capped at 10 children, so please sign your child up in advance. We look forward to a wonderful school year!

For the Early Childhood Department,
Warmly,
Kathy Bernhardt

From the Leadership Council

Dear RVWS Community,

Excitement is in the air as we begin the new school year. It is always fun to see friends of all ages in the hallways once again.

This year one of the things LC is working on is transparency and finding ways for you to get to know us better. We have several opportunities planned to help this happen. First of all, we will have open hours every Friday from 3:30 to 4 pm when everyone is invited to come talk to us, ask questions, bring concerns or just introduce yourselves. If this time is not convenient, please send us an email at: lc@rivervalleyschool.org and we will find a better time. LC members will also be visiting parent meetings to give you a chance to learn more about what we do. In the Current, we will let you know what we are working on. And, be sure to read the updated description of the LC in the Parent Handbook.

We work in three realms, with the Faculty, the Board and the Parent Council.

With the Faculty: Recent pedagogical work has included: looking for a Spanish teacher and an Aftercare teacher, reaching out to Morning Glory families, working with Carol Diven to fine-tune (!) the strings program, and organizing the After School Program with Josh Laker. We also work closely with the Teacher Development Committee on support and evaluation of our teachers.

With the Board: The week before school started, LC and Board worked with Jon McAlice, an experienced Waldorf teacher and mentor, on collaborative leadership. We also invite Board members to our meetings once a month and give LC reports at every Board meeting.

With Parent Council: We are working with Parent Council on Back to School Night and setting up a regular meeting time when the LC and the PC chair can get together every month to keep the channels of communication open.

We have set goals for the coming year and next week we will share them with you in the Current.

If you have any questions or concerns, we hope you will stop by on a Friday afternoon or email us at: lc@rivervalleyschool.org.

Looking forward to a wonderful year,
Annie Porter, Euclides Santiago, Brian Wolff and Robbie Miller

From the Community

Yoga Loka

Kirtan - Call and response chanting with Girish
Friday September 12th, 8:00-10:00 pm, \$20 pre-
registered, \$25 on Friday the 12th

Retreat Weekend with Bonnie at Mount Eden in
Washington NJ

October 10 -12. Full weekend and daytime rates are
discounted until 9/10.

If you have ever asked yourself "how can I achieve
higher consciousness?" the answer can be found in the
chapter of the Yoga Sutras called Sadhana Pada.

This second of four chapters in The Yoga Sutras by
Patanjali has many suggestions for the student pursuing
liberation. During this retreat we will investigate these
suggestions, the yamas and niyamas, the Ashtanga 8-
fold path, and including the use of asana, pranayama,
and kumbaka.

We will explore effort and steadfastness through asana,
self-inquiry through meditation and discussion, and
surrender through chanting and ritual practice. These
elements are paramount, according to Patanjali as
well as ancient and contemporary followers of yoga.
How we can direct these practices in the most
beneficial way is a worthy inquiry that will inevitably
lead to higher consciousness.

For more information and to register see our website at
www.Yoga-Loka.com

For Sale

2006 Nissan Altima 2.5S, 174,573 miles, 36 mpg, AC,
Power windows, CD Player/ Stereo, Manual
Transmission (stick shift). Black, sporty. Runs Great!
Currently at Tom's Garage in Milford where it has just
had \$1,500.00 worth of up to date repairs. Asking \$
4,250.00. Call Pamela Hobson 609-792-8225.

Handcrafted Classroom Shoes from Soft Star Shoes

15% Discount for Waldorf Families and Teachers
We are offering Waldorf schools a special discount for
Soft Star classroom shoes through the end of
September. Use the special discount code:
Waldorf2014 when purchasing on line to save 15% on
classroom shoes at www.softstarshoes.com, or call us
(toll free) at 866-763-2525. Good for 15% off now
through September on classroom moccasins and
ramblers

About Soft Star

*Soft Star Shoes has been handcrafted by our family business
for 29 years. Our soft, durable classroom shoes stay on
securely while providing comfort, protection and "barefoot-
like" mobility. Children can design their own colors and
motifs, too! If you have any questions, please give us a ring—
we'd love to hear from you!*

On the Road Again!

The Bowers family continues our school orbit. In case
you're following our story, on each step of our ongoing
journey we've been very fortunate to find some
wonderful living spaces to rent and caretake and,
perhaps most rewarding, some beautiful heart-full
people and sustaining friendships. Tara Bowers and
Alice Bowers (First grade) are currently looking for a
rental or/and home caretaking opportunity as close to
RVWS as possible. We would love to hear if you know of
any! Thank you for sharing our story.
bowersbetara@gmail.com 908-674-2772

Hobson Family in need of Housing

Possibility by Oct. 1st for Pamela and her 3 daughters.
Oldest is in college so just need 2-3 bedrooms. Ideal
would be a house with possible studio where Pamela
can do sound healing/ massage therapy. Palisades
School District. Close to Waldorf. Shared Housing with
another Waldorf Family/Single Mother would be a
welcomed opportunity if it were a good fit. Non
Smoking/ Health Conscious/ Organized/ Clean and
tidy! I AM a Highly Sensitive/ Light worker / Intravert so
Ideal would be also very sensitive. Contact Pamela
609-792-8225.

House Available

A house for rent in Holland Township!!! It will be
available on November 1st, 2014. Walkable to
Riegelsville, Pa and ez walking River access. This house
has 3 bedrooms, 2 downstairs, and one very large
bedroom/finished attic upstairs, one full bathroom with
a bathtub, Living Room, Kitchen, Dining room, Office,
dry and totally usable very large basement (with a
washer and dryer for your use), a sweet sun room, 2 car
garage with an attached workshop, fenced in
vegetable garden, private fenced in backyard,
driveway. It has an electric Hot water heater, and oil
heat for the winter months - wood floors and high
ceilings. Service Electric has its Transfer Station across
the road and a little bit north, so the internet is
amazing. I would prefer no pets, but am open to
talking about it. There is a school bus stop a simple walk
to the corner for Holland Township Elementary School
and Del Val High School. Also, there is absolutley NO
SMOKING anywhere in the house. Shown by
appointment only. \$1400.00 a month + utilities.

To see a picture of the house go to:
<http://newjersey.craigslist.org/apa/4651765941.html>

Ottsville Traditional Arts Center

Cello Lessons at OTAC

While Daniel Hawkins is ensconced in an academic Masters program in St. John's, New Foundland, he has secured the cello program by collaborating with another amazing cellist.

Daniel will continue his vision of OTAC through continued virtual interaction of the lessons, jams, events, dances, workshops and personal appearances!

Mirjam Ingolfsson... was hailed as "a young poet of the cello". Born in Reykjavik, Iceland to a family of musicians and artists. Mirjam Ingolfsson started the cello at the age of four and began touring Europe and the United States at age seven. She is an artist with her own distinct musical voice who has established herself as an important performer and pedagogue in the Philadelphia region. As a dedicated teacher, Mirjam Ingolfsson co-founded The Leopold Mozart Academy in 2001, where she teaches cello, Music Theory and Solfeggio. Her Masters degree in Music includes graduate work at the Cleveland Institute of Music and Temple University. She is a winner of top prizes in numerous competitions such as the ASTA Pennsylvania State Competition and the Graham Stahl Cello Competition. She has participated in the Piatigorsky Seminar in Los Angeles and festivals such as the Bach Festival of Philadelphia, the Schleswig Holstein Festival in Germany and the Jeunesse Musicales Festival in Switzerland. Her major teachers include Orlando Cole, Alan Harris, Jeffrey Solow and Nathaniel Rosen. For lesson information contact mirjam.ingolfsson@gmail.com.

Monday September 15

Afternoon Lessons with Jane Rothfield

Fiddle, Guitar, Banjo beginners and advanced students welcome. For lesson information contact janerothfield@gmail.com

Wednesday Jams / Song swaps 6:00-8:00

Please join the Jam! All levels welcome. Bring strings, pipes, squeezebox whatever you got!

Community potluck, tunes and songs. \$5 suggested donation. ottsvilletradarts.weebly.com for song and tunes selections.

OTAC AUTUMN EVENTS!!!

Friday September 19th 7:30 - 9:30pm

Swing and Sway Dance / Workshop with our wonderful Mostly Waltz instructors Peggy Leiby and Ret Turner. Great for all ages!! \$12 adults, \$8 kids under 12

Saturday September 27th 1 - 4:30pm

Workshop and Jam with Donna Hébert and Max Cohen, \$15 adults \$10 kids under 12. To registration contact danielhhawkins.com

Friday October 24th

House Concert Party of Three at OTAC

Wednesday October 22

House Concert with Ari and Mia

Saturday November 1st

Contradance with Perpetual e-Motion

2nd Annual Gypsy Dance

RVWS Class trip FUNDRAISER

Friday December 19

House Concert with Lissa, Glen and Bethany

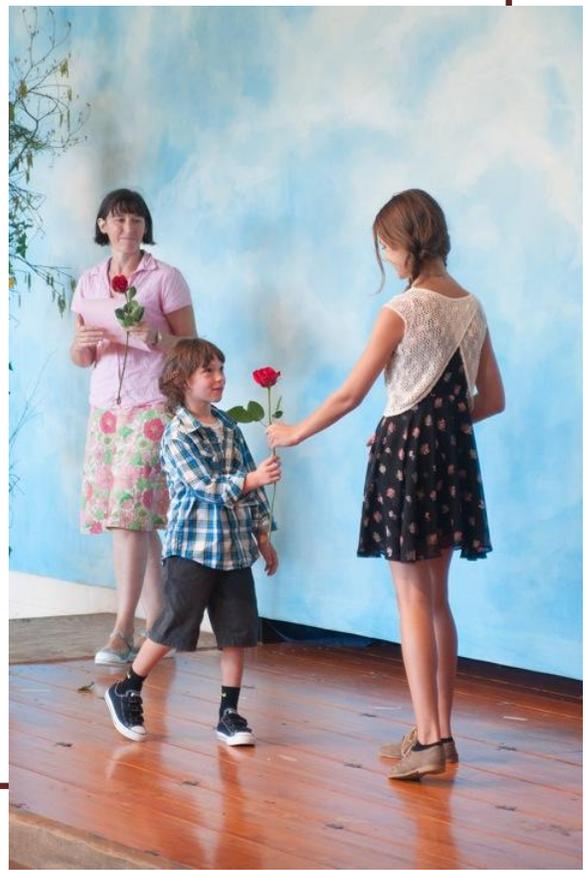
Saturday December 20th

Workshop/Concert with Daniel Hawkins

Check out our Ottsville Tradarts Calendar of events: ottsvilletradarts.weebly.com, danielhhawkins.com

OTAC 250 Durham Road, Ottsville, across from Kimberton Whole Foods

The Rose





School Starting Age: the Evidence Published by the University of Cambridge

Earlier this month the "Too Much, Too Soon" campaign made headlines with a letter calling for a change to the start age for formal learning in schools. Here, one of the signatories, Cambridge researcher David Whitebread, from the Faculty of Education, explains why children may need more time to develop before their formal education begins in earnest.

"In the interests of children's academic achievements and their emotional well-being, the UK government should take this evidence seriously." David Whitebread

In England children now start formal schooling, and the formal teaching of literacy and numeracy at the age of four. A recent letter signed by around 130 early childhood education experts, including myself, published in the Daily Telegraph (11 Sept 2013) advocated an extension of informal, play-based pre-school provision and a delay to the start of formal 'schooling' in England from the current effective start until the age of seven (in line with a number of other European countries who currently have higher levels of academic achievement and child well-being).

(Continued on next page)

This is a brief review of the relevant research evidence which overwhelmingly supports a later start to formal education. This evidence relates to the contribution of playful experiences to children's development as learners, and the consequences of starting formal learning at the age of four to five years of age.

There are several strands of evidence which all point towards the importance of play in young children's development, and the value of an extended period of playful learning before the start of formal schooling. These arise from anthropological, psychological, neuroscientific and educational studies. Anthropological studies of children's play in extant hunter-gatherer societies, and evolutionary psychology studies of play in the young of other mammalian species, have identified play as an adaptation which evolved in early human social groups. It enabled humans to become powerful learners and problem-solvers. Neuroscientific studies have shown that playful activity leads to synaptic growth, particularly in the frontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for all the uniquely human higher mental functions.

In my own area of experimental and developmental psychology, studies have also consistently demonstrated the superior learning and motivation arising from playful, as opposed to instructional, approaches to learning in children. Pretence play supports children's early development of symbolic representational skills, including those of literacy, more powerfully than direct instruction. Physical, constructional and social play supports children in developing their skills of intellectual and emotional 'self-regulation', skills which have been shown to be crucial in early learning and development. Perhaps most worrying, a number of studies have documented the loss of play opportunities for children over the second half of the 20th century and demonstrated a clear link with increased indicators of stress and mental health problems.

Within educational research, a number of longitudinal studies have demonstrated superior academic, motivational and well-being outcomes for children who had attended child-initiated, play-based pre-school programs. One particular study of 3,000 children across England, funded by the Department for Education themselves, showed that an extended period of high quality, play-based pre-school education was of particular advantage to children from disadvantaged households.

Studies have compared groups of children in New Zealand who started formal literacy lessons at ages 5 and 7. Their results show that the early introduction of formal learning approaches to literacy does not improve children's reading development, and may be damaging. By the age of 11 there was no difference in reading ability level between the two groups, but the children who started at 5 developed less positive attitudes to reading, and showed poorer text comprehension than those children who had started later. In a separate study of reading achievement in 15 year olds across 55 countries, researchers showed that there was no significant association between reading achievement and school entry age.

This body of evidence raises important and serious questions concerning the direction of travel of early childhood education policy currently in England. In the interests of children's academic achievements and their emotional well-being, the UK government should take this evidence seriously.

- See more at: <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/discussion/school-starting-age-the-evidence#sthash.q00YLW8m.dpuf>