

## School Calendar

### This Week

**Tuesday, November 19**

4<sup>th</sup> Grade Parent Evening

### Upcoming Events

**Monday – Tuesday, November 25-26**

Parent-Teacher Conferences

**Wednesday - Thursday, November 27-29**

Thanksgiving Break – NO SCHOOL

**Friday, December 6**

Spiral of Light

**Friday, December 13**

Early Dismissal – Winter Fair set-up 1:00 pm

**Saturday, December 14**

Winter Fair 11:00 am-3:00 pm

**Thursday, December 19**

Shepherds Play 7:30 pm

**Friday, December 20**

Shepherds Play 11:30 am

### How to Contact Us

info@rivervalleysschool.org  
lc@rivervalleysschool.org  
bot@rivervalleysschool.org  
pc@rivervalleysschool.org

## Learning Opportunities for Parents

### Waldorf/Steiner Study Group

Every Wednesday

3:30-4:30 pm – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom

### Middle School Study Group

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month

6:30 pm – 7<sup>th</sup> grade classroom

## December Lunch Menu

The lunch menu for December is attached to this week's Current. Because of Thanksgiving, the deadline is Thurs. 11/ 21.



Celebrate the whimsy of the holiday season at River Valley Waldorf School's most magical festival of the year.

Featuring activities & crafts for all ages, food & desserts, live music, an artisan market and King Winter, himself!

And before Winter Fair, join us for our

**OPEN HOUSE | 10AM-11AM**

(Nursery, pre-k, kindergarten & grades 1-8)

Learn about our programs, meet teachers, alumni and parents past & present.

RSVP to 610-982-5606 or [info@rivervalleysschool.org](mailto:info@rivervalleysschool.org)



1395 Bridgeton Hill Road • Upper Black Eddy, PA • [rivervalleysschool.org](http://rivervalleysschool.org)

## Secret Garden Items

We are expecting 20 Secret Garden items from every family. Soon there will be a box in the lobby to collect your items. We're gearing toward gifts for the whole family this year so when you make your items don't forget mom and dad.

## Artisan Market for Winter Fair

Calling all artisans! We are curating our artisan market for this year's Winter Fair. If you'd like a spot for holiday selling, please email Ivy at [karunagoddess@gmail.com](mailto:karunagoddess@gmail.com)

## Sing with the Parent Choir at Winter Fair!

Join us at our last rehearsal, Sunday, 12/8, 3 PM in the All-purpose Room - even if you haven't been to others. Performance: Saturday, 12/14 (Winter Fair), 10 AM

## Bake Sale This Friday

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade would like to invite the community their bake sale, this Friday, Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>

Goodies will be available at pick up. Bring home some treats for the weekend!! Organic Coffee will also be on sale: Guatemalan Bourbon (rich and velvety), Ethiopian Decaf (bright and vibrant), Arise (sweet & robust) & Indigo (dark and rich). Roasted for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade fundraiser by Homestead Coffee. \$14/bag.

## Let the 8<sup>th</sup> grade make your Secret Garden items for you!

Each RVWS family is asked to provide 20 items for the Secret Garden. For just \$20 the 8<sup>th</sup> grade will make the treasures for this Winter Fair activity. Sign up in the lobby. Proceeds will go toward the end of year class trip. if you can't make it to school to order your items then you can email Clare Brunell: [clare.28@live.com](mailto:clare.28@live.com) and sign up.

# Join us for an **AUCTION MIXER**

Are you interested in learning more about our annual fundraiser taking place on March 28, 2020?

Please join the auction committee  
for a brain storming session.

**MONDAY, DEC 2 | 6PM**

**RIVER VALLEY WALDORF SCHOOL  
ALL PURPOSE ROOM**

*Light fare will be served.*

We want to hear your ideas and let you know how  
you can contribute. No commitment. Just ideas.

**All are welcome!**

If you are planning to attend the mixer or have any questions about the auction,  
please contact **Cat Miles** (cat@jonnymiles.com / 917.855.5405)  
or **Alex DiCandia** (zeuben@gmail.com / 646.541.1193).

**We hope to see you!**

## RVWS AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

### Mr. Laker's After-School Program

TUESDAY 3:30 - 5:30 Sports & Running

WEDNESDAY 3:30 - 5:30 Games, Drama, Challenges & Puzzles

THURSDAY 3:30 - 5:30 Cooking & Crafts

Mr. Laker offers a different program each day of the week. From cooking, sports and games, drama, crafts and puzzles, Mr. Laker keeps the children on the move and engaged in a lively mix of activities. Sign up by the semester (or arrangement with Mr. Laker). Class size and participation age may vary.

### Homework Club

MONDAY - FRIDAY 3:30 - 4:30

Homework Club offers extended time for older students (4th - 8th grade) to work on homework assignments, special projects, reading, or handwork and drawing projects. Homework group is a great place to keep up with assignments under the supervision of a caring adult. Peer to peer help and collaboration is encouraged in this positive environment. Drop-in welcome, sign-ups by the day/week/month. \$7 per hour, per student.

### Aftercare

MONDAY - FRIDAY 3:30 - 5:30

Simple playtime for students of all ages. Outdoor play, books, board games, and free play inside. Drop-in welcome, sign up by the day/week/month. \$7 per hour, per student. Sign up on this bulletin board.

## From Administration

### Substitute Teachers Needed

River Valley is looking for substitute teachers for the 2019-2020 school year. Early Childhood substitutes must have experience with young children. In the Grade School, teacher training and/or teaching experience are preferred. If you or someone you know is interested, send a letter, resume, and references to: lc@rivervalley.school.org or call (610) 982-5606 for more information.

### Community First Fridays

The Admissions office will be hosting Community First Fridays on the first available Friday of the month. Parents will be greeted with coffee, tea, a snack and a member of the Administration for camaraderie and open discussion. Some weeks a member of the Board or Parent Council will attend.

### Please join us on the following dates:

Dec 13, Jan 10, Feb 7, Mar 6, April 3, May 8, Jun 5

### Two Birth Announcements

Congratulations to the latest additions to our River Valley community. Vera Evangeline Briggs (sister of Vernon in the Acorn Room) was born on October 13, 2019 and Margaret Louise Karl (sister to Elliott also in the Acorn Room) arrived on November 11, 2019. A warm welcome and congratulations to both families.



## Home Heating Assistance is Available for Pennsylvania Families

LIHEAP, which stands for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, helps families living on low incomes pay their heating bills in the form of a cash grant. Crisis grants also are available for households in immediate danger of being without heat.

### How cash grants work:

A one-time payment is sent directly to the utility company/fuel provider and is credited on the heating bill. Cash grants range from \$200 to \$1,000 based on household size, income, heating region, and fuel type.

### Qualifying crisis situations:

- Broken heating equipment or leaking lines that must be fixed or replaced
- Lack of fuel
- Main heating source has been completely shut off
- Danger of being without fuel (less than 15-day supply)
- Danger of having utility service terminated (received a notice that service will be shut off within the next 60 days)

For more information go to: <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwDsFfdvBwzWcbjgdZcPFRKljv>

## From The Faculty

### What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Language Arts

Second Grade – Language Arts

Third Grade – Math

Fourth Grade – Norse Myths

Fifth Grade – Math/Decimals

Sixth Grade – Business Math

Seventh Grade – Geometry

Eighth Grade – Meteorology

## From the Community

### A Question about Last Year's Parent Stage

Chris Bodwitch is wondering whether anyone taped her act at last year's Parent Stage. Even short clips taken on a phone would be appreciated. If so, please send the file to: [info@muckandgold.com](mailto:info@muckandgold.com).

### Greek Culture Night at Lotus

The Lotus School is hosting a Fall fundraiser Friday November 22, 7:00 - 9:00.

Location: 8340 Easton Rd, Ottsville, PA 1894.

484.312.0011

Come to our family-friendly night of music, dancing, food and fun! A longtime friend of the school, Michael Venianakis, is bringing us an evening of entertainment to celebrate Greek cultural heritage in the expression of cuisine, music, and dancing.

Tickets \$20 for adults, \$10 for students.

Website for more info -

<https://lotusla.org/greekculturenight>

Food catered by The Marblehead Chowder House of Easton, PA.

### Purely Farm's Thanksgiving Turkey

Purely Farm is ready to talk turkey and take reservations for their famed Thanksgiving Turkeys. These wonderful birds are raised and processed by the Michini family and offer legendary flavor and an exciting alternative to the antibiotic pumped, factory farmed conventional turkeys that are pushed onto so many unsuspecting Americans' tables. Purely Turkey is organically fed, pasture-raised, super local and amazingly fresh. How fresh you ask??? Any fresher you'd take home the gobble!

Thanksgiving Turkeys will be available for pick-up in 4 convenient locations. Get your order in while supplies last! Click on [www.purelyfarm.com](http://www.purelyfarm.com) and follow the prompts towards Thanksgiving bliss. Be sure to check out other helpful holiday essentials such as country sausage for superior stuffing and nitrate-free smoked bacon to add a scrumptious boost to brussel sprouts delight!

### Pretty Good Keyboardist

David Bader is looking for a pretty good keyboardist to play with his band at Parent Stage this year.

Contact [David@thelab.net](mailto:David@thelab.net)

### Upcoming Events at Yoga Loka

**Thanksgiving Day Yoga Benefit Class** - 10:00am-noon at Yoga-Loka, Frenchtown. Two glorious hours of yoga with Bonnie Pariser, poetry read by Warren Cooper, and live music by award-winning musician Heidi Breyer. Class is by donation with a \$20 suggested donation to benefit the Frenchtown Food Pantry. Please register early as space is limited. [www.yoga-loka.com](http://www.yoga-loka.com)

**Winter Solstice Special Session** - Saturday, December 21 - 4:00-6:00 pm. Time for slowing down, drawing in and nourishing the self with yoga by candlelight and sweet, gentle live music. All levels welcome. Please register early to reserve your spot. [www.yoga-loka.com](http://www.yoga-loka.com)

### Events at the Riegelsville Library

#### Fall Book Sale

Early Bird Book Sale – Friday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7-9 pm. \$5 donation at the door.

Book Sale Saturdays – November 23<sup>rd</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>, 9 am-4 pm. \$5 Bag sale Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 3-4 pm and Saturday the 30<sup>th</sup>, 4 pm.

Riegelsville Borough Community Room, 615 Easton Road, Riegelsville.

#### Decorate a Mini Gingerbread House or Mini-Tree

Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> 11am-1 pm

An annual holiday craft for ages 1-17 - all materials provided while supplies last.

This event is free and you don't need a library card to attend.

#### Story Time in the Banko Children's Room

Dec. 3, 10, 17

During story time we read books, conduct age-appropriate science experiments and explore music and art. Story time is designed for children 0-5 years, but all children are welcome to attend with a parent or guardian.

Questions? Call the library at 610-749-2357.

### Sunbridge Institute Opportunities

#### Lecture and Workshop this Weekend

##### Decades of Talking about Social Change:

An Evening with Christopher and Signe Schaefer  
Friday, November 22, 7:30pm

##### Finding Hope and Re-Imagining America:

A Workshop with Christopher Schaefer  
Saturday, November 23, 9am-12pm

For over 50 years, Chris and Signe Schaefer, former Sunbridge College program directors and longtime friends and supporters, have been discussing and working for social change. This workshop will continue their ongoing conversation on whether change happens through systemic and structural transformation, through individual development, or is reliant on both.

**January 24-25, 2020** (Friday evening and Saturday full day) -

#### Waldorf Weekend: Foundations and Fundamentals of Waldorf Education

Lead Instructor: Linda Ogden-Wolgemuth, PhD, of Sunbridge Institute

#### February 12, 2020 (Wednesday morning) - OPEN DAY

Exploring Waldorf Education, Teaching, and Teacher Education with Linda Ogden-Wolgemuth, PhD, and the staff of Sunbridge Institute.

For more information go to: [www.sunbridge.edu](http://www.sunbridge.edu)

### Pipersville Library Holiday Bazaar and Bake Sale

Featuring new and gently used treasures including: gift items, holiday décor, collectibles and jewelry. Plus yummy baked goods.

Friday, December 6, 10 am-6 pm & Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 9-11 am.

At Penn Community Bank, 6999 East Road, Pipersville (on Rte. 611 by the Pipersville Post Office)

For additional information, call 215-766-7880 or visit [www.pipersvillelibrary.org](http://www.pipersvillelibrary.org)

### Eggs for Sale

The Gustavsons are selling fresh eggs from their homegrown, free-range, antibiotic-free, happy and healthy hens. Great tasting, and in a variety of colors! \$4 per dozen, delivered to school by request. Email [shopkeeper@atoygarden.com](mailto:shopkeeper@atoygarden.com) or text to 267.377.9448 to arrange drop-off.

### Artyard

#### Wednesday, November 20, 7-8:30 pm - 24 Hours of Reality: Truth in Action

Join concerned citizens all over the world to learn about the climate crisis and what you can do to stop it. Margaret Waldock, Frenchtown resident and Climate Reality Leader, will bring this conversation home. 24 Hours of Reality: Truth in Action is a chance for all of our friends, neighbors and colleagues in the River Valley to learn the truth of what's happening to our planet and communities and how together we can take action to overcome this existential threat.

Just by joining the conversation you can make an impact: Thanks to our friends at OneTreePlanted.org, a tree will be planted on behalf of every audience member who attends. This event is presented by the River Valley Climate Collective and is being hosted by ArtYard.

(Continued next page)

**Current Exhibition:****Janet Ruttenberg: Beholder**

September 14 – December 29, 2019

**Upcoming Events:****Saturday, November 23, 7:30 pm – Filmyard screening of Spettacolo****Saturday, December 14, 4-6 pm – Holiday Lantern Walk & Pop Up Choir** – 4-5 Rehearsal, 5-6 Caroling with Paper Lanterns on the Towpath in Frenchtown, Benefitting Rolling Harvest.**For more information go to: [www.artyard.org](http://www.artyard.org)**

Gallery hours: Wednesday Through Sunday, 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Address: 62A Trenton Ave. Frenchtown, NJ 08825

From CNN Health

**MRIs Show Screen Time Linked to Lower Brain Development in Preschoolers**

By Sandee LaMotte, CNN

Screen time use by infants, toddlers and preschoolers has exploded over the last decade, concerning experts about the impact of television, tablets and smartphones on these critical years of rapid brain development.

Now a new study scanned the brains of children 3 to 5 years old and found those who used screens more than the recommended one hour a day without parental involvement had lower levels of development in the brain's white matter -- an area key to the development of language, literacy and cognitive skills.

"This is the first study to document associations between higher screen use and lower measures of brain structure and skills in preschool-aged kids," said lead author Dr. John Hutton, a pediatrician and clinical researcher at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. The study was published Monday in the journal JAMA Pediatrics.

"This is important because the brain is developing the most rapidly in the first five years," Hutton said. "That's when brains are very plastic and soaking up everything, forming these strong connections that last for life."

**Screens 'follow kids everywhere'**

Studies have shown excessive TV viewing is linked to the inability of children to pay attention and think clearly, while increasing poor eating habits and behavioral problems. Associations have also been shown between excessive screen time and language delay, poor sleep, impaired executive function, and a decrease in parent-child engagement.

"It's known that kids that use more screen time tend to grow up in families that use more screen time," Hutton said. "Kids who report five hours of screen time could have parents who use 10 hours of screen time. Put that together and there's almost no time for them to interact with each other."

More screen time for toddlers is tied to poorer development a few years later, study says  
More screen time for toddlers is tied to poorer development a few years later, study says  
In addition, the portability of today's screens allow them to "follow kids everywhere," Hutton said. "They can take screens to bed, they can take them to meals, they can take them to the car, to the playground."

Even more concerning, say experts, are the young ages at which children are being exposed. "About 90% are using screens by age one," said Hutton, who published a number of studies that used MRIs to research the impact of reading versus screen use by kids.

"We've done some studies where kids are using them by 2 months old to 3 months old."

(continued next page)

### **Disorganized white matter**

The new study used a special type of MRI, called diffusion tensor imaging, to examine the brains of 47 brain healthy children (27 girls and 20 boys) who had not yet started kindergarten.

A diffusion tensor MRI allows a good look at the white matter of the brain, responsible for organizing communication between the various parts of the brain's gray matter.

It's the gray matter which contains the majority of the brain cells telling the body what to do. White matter is made up of fibers, typically distributed into bundles called tracts, which form connections between brain cells and the rest of the nervous system.

"Think of white matter as cables, sort of like the telephone lines that are connecting the various parts of the brain so they can talk to each other," Hutton said.

A lack of development of those "cables" can slow the brain's processing speed; on the other hand, studies show that reading, juggling or learning and practicing a musical instrument improves the organization and structure of the brain's white matter.

Before the MRI, the children were given cognitive tests, while the parents filled out a new scoring system on screen time developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The test measures how much access a child has to a screen (allowed at meals, car, in line at store?), the frequency of exposure (age started, number of hours, at bedtime?), content (chooses own? watches fighting or songs or education?) and "dialogic" interaction (does the child watch alone or does a parent interact and discuss the content as well?).

The results showed that children who used more than the AAP's recommended amount of screen time, of an hour a day without parental interaction, had more disorganized, underdeveloped white matter throughout the brain. "The average screen time in these kids was a little over two hours a day," Hutton said. "The range was anywhere from about an hour to a little over five hours."

In addition, the tracts of white matter responsible for executive functions were also disorganized and underdeveloped. "These are tracks that we know are involved with language and literacy," Hutton said, "And these were the ones relatively underdeveloped in these kids with more screen time. So the imaging findings lined up pretty perfectly with the behavioral cognitive testing finding."

### **'Neurons that fire together wire together'**

"These findings are fascinating but very, very preliminary," pediatrician Dr. Jenny Radesky wrote in an email. Radesky, who was not involved in the study, is the lead author on the American Academy of Pediatrics 2016 guidelines on screen use by children and adolescents.

"We know that early experiences shape brain growth, and media is one of these experiences. But it's important for parents to know that these results don't show that heavy media use causes 'brain damage,'" Radesky wrote. Hutton agrees. "It's not that the screen time damaged the white matter," he said, adding that what could be occurring is that screen time is too passive for brain development.

"Perhaps screen time got in the way of other experiences that could have helped the children reinforce these brain networks more strongly," he said.

The first years of life need to be focused on human interactions that encourage speaking, interacting socially and playing with loving caregivers to develop thinking, problem-solving and other executive skills.

"There's a really great quote in brain science: Neurons that fire together wire together," Hutton said. That means the more you practice anything the more it reinforces and organizes the connections in your brain.

### **Cognitive testing found fewer skills**

In addition to the MRI results, excessive screen time was significantly associated with poorer emerging literacy skills and ability to use expressive language, as well as testing lower on the ability to rapidly name objects on cognitive tests taken by the 47 children in the study.

(Continued next page)

"Remember that this is all relative," Hutton said, adding that more in-depth clinical trials need to be done to tease out the specifics.

"Still, it's possible that over over time, these effects can add up," Hutton said. "We know that kids who start behind tend to get more and more behind as they get older.

"So it could be the case that kids who start with less well-developed brain infrastructure may be less likely to be engaged, successful readers later in school," said Hutton, who also directs the Reading & Literacy Discovery Center at Cincinnati Children's.

Radesky wants to see the results replicated in other populations. "Researchers and pediatricians should take it as a launching point for future research," she wrote. "There are so many other home and family factors that affect brain development -- such as stress, parent mental health, play experiences, language exposure -- and none of these were accounted for in this study."

### **What parents can do**

"It can feel overwhelming to think that our every parenting decision impacts our child's brain development, but it's important to also see this as an opportunity," Radesky said.

"There are parent-child activities we know help children's development: reading, singing, connecting emotionally, being creative, or even just taking a walk or dedicating some time in our busy days to laugh together," she added.

The AAP has tools to calculate your child's media time and then establish a family media plan. Basic guidelines are as follows:

#### **Infants:**

No baby under 18 months old should be exposed to screen media, other than video chatting with friends and family, the AAP says. Babies need to interact with caregivers and their environment, and not be placed in front of media as a babysitter.

Limit screen time to protect your child's heart, American Heart Association says

In fact, a study found that even having the TV on in the same room with a baby or toddler negatively impacted their ability to play and interact.

#### **Toddlers:**

By the time a baby turns 2 years old, they can learn words from a person on a live video chat and some interactive touchscreens. The chief factor in facilitating a toddler's ability to learn from baby videos and interactive touchscreens, studies show, is when parents watch with them and reteach the content.

#### **Preschoolers:**

Children from 3 to 5 years old can benefit from quality TV shows, such as "Sesame Street," the AAP says. A well designed show can improve a child's cognitive abilities, help teach words, and impact their social development.

But the AAP warns that many educational apps on the market aren't developed with input from developmental specialists and can do more harm than good when they take a child away from playtime with caregivers and other children.

And just like toddlers, preschoolers learn much better from any educational materials when they are co-viewed, and the caregiver interacts with the child about the material.