



FRIENDS SCHOOL OF PORTLAND

inquiry • reflection • action

Newsletter April/May 2011

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Make a Donation

Gifts from individuals contribute directly to the financial aid that is awarded to families in need.



Let Us Know What You Think!

We are trying out a new format, using Constant Contact for our bi-monthly newsletter, and welcome your feedback. Please let us know if you had any problems accessing this newsletter, and let us know what you think of the new look by emailing FSP's new Marketing Coordinator, Jen McNally, at jen@friendsschoolofportland.org. And if you like this newsletter, please forward it to a friend by using the "forward email" link at the very bottom of the page!

Upcoming Events

April 14: New Families Reception, 5:30-6:30pm

April 17-22: April Break

April 25: No classes, Professional Day for Teachers

April 29: Advisory Committee Annual Meeting, 11am-4pm

May 3: Parenting for Peace, Alfie Kohn, 7pm at USM

May 6: Grandfriends Day & Talent Show

May 9-12: Parent-Teacher Conferences by Request

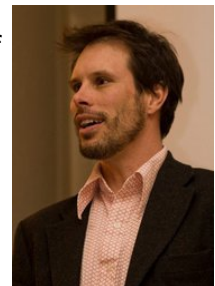
May 30: No classes, Memorial Day

June 3: 5th Year Celebration, 5pm-Come eat cake with us!

June 10: Farewell Assembly, 1pm & Commencement, 7pm

Summer Adventure Program Welcomes New Director

Friends School of Portland is pleased to introduce Oren Stevens, the new Director of Summer Programs. Oren has a fascinating and varied background - including teaching in China, corporate marketing, and working as a timber framer - which is sure to enrich the FSP summer camps in numerous ways. He also has an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from The University of Southern Maine's Stonecoast Program, and teaches with the Telling Room in Portland.



Oren loves giving kids the freedom to play with words, and enjoys watching them be creative, saying, "It's a treat to see their imaginations unfold." Oren is passionate about the environment and is inspired by the unique setting of Mackworth Island. The island will be central to the Summer Adventure Program, offering its rich resources as a



Snow White and the
Mini-Miners Slideshow

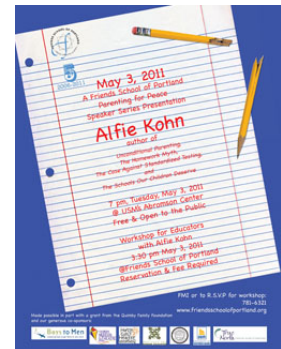


backdrop to build community and to provide opportunities for experiential learning. "I want to let the kids get dirty," says Oren, "to explore and connect with the natural environment." Daily activities will include island exploration, tending the school garden, and creating art from found natural objects. Spaces are still available for the Summer Adventure Program, which is offered to kids ages 4-14, and runs for six weeks beginning June 20th. [Click here](#) for more information and to download registration forms.

For kids ages 8-14 years, Friends School of Portland also offers a Movie Makers video production program, teaching the creative use of technology including video cameras, still cameras, editing software and computers. In an additional Animation Workshop, students will explore a variety of animation techniques from flip books to stop action, culminating in a group production. For more information on the Movie Makers program and to download registration forms, please [click here](#).

Mark Your Calendars: Alfie Kohn, May 3, 7:00 pm

As part of the Parenting for Peace Speaker Series, Friends School of Portland presents national education critic and parenting advocate Alfie Kohn on May 3, 2011 at 7 pm at USM's Hannaford Hall in the Abromson Community Education Center. Alfie Kohn is the author of *THE HOMEWORK MYTH: Why Our Kids Get Too Much of a Bad Thing*, *UNCONDITIONAL PARENTING: Moving from Rewards and Punishments to Love and Reason*, and the newly released *FEEL-BAD EDUCATION: And Other Contrarian Essays on Children and Schooling*. This event is free and open to the public.



One basic need all children have, Kohn argues, is to be loved unconditionally, to know that they will be accepted even if they screw up or fall short. Kohn's criticisms of competition and rewards have been widely discussed and debated, and he has been described in *Time* magazine as "perhaps the country's most outspoken critic of education's fixation on grades [and] test scores." The author of twelve books and scores of articles, Alfie Kohn writes and speaks widely on human behavior, education, and parenting.

[Read more](#) about Alfie Kohn's upcoming presentation, made possible in part by a grant from the Quimby Family Foundation and seven co-sponsoring organizations: Boys to Men, Children's Museum of Maine, Hardy Girls Healthy Women, Institute of Humane Education, Mom to Mom, True North Health Center and USM's Teacher Education Department.

2011 Auction a Success!



Auction attendees browse the items for bid and enjoy the brunch, and first and second graders sing along with Matt Loosigian.

Thank you to all who participated in our 2011 Auction & Brunch on March 26th. Over 400 items were available for bid, ranging from beachside vacations to beautiful artwork to homemade desserts. Attendees enjoyed a delicious brunch donated by local restaurants, and music by jazz pianist - and FSP parent- Tom Snow and friends. A special thanks goes out to the team who did most of the planning: FSP parent, David Roussel, board member Jennifer Cummings, and FSP staff, John Marble. We would also like to thank our talented, generous, hard-working community. We raised close to \$20,000 for financial aid!

Post-Auction Catalog

Some of our auction items were overlooked because they were late donations or were unclaimed because of incorrect or illegible bid numbers. Now through Thursday, April 14th, you can bid on the items listed in our [Post-Auction Catalog](#) by emailing your bid, along with the item number, to auction@friendsschoolofportland.org.

Reflection by James Grumbach, Head of School

It is the first day of spring as I begin to write this reflection...and it is snowing. So as much as I am looking forward to all that the months of April and May promise by way of renewal, blossoming talents, and warm sunshine along with packed schedules and lots of hard work between here and there, I am reminded also of the realities of the past months, both beautiful and blanketing at times. Looking forward and backward can be either daunting or a dreamy deception or both, depending on the day. It reminds me of Bob Franke's song lyric, "...the grace to accept every moment as a gift is a gift that is given to some." When I think of the calamities that Japan is dealing with or yet another military intervention in the Arab world, life at Friends School is a gift and I am grateful for what we have achieved with one another in this mostly graceful community.

We have finished our big push for admissions and are awaiting the replies to our acceptances. Our numbers are about where they were last year, which is to say, the growth we have experienced may be leveling off. Again, we would like to have two sections of 5th-6th grade, and

eventually two sections of 7th-8th grade as well. The middle school has benefited from two sections on parallel courses with two different teaching styles. The smaller numbers in each section have allowed more individualized attention. The teachers, Anna and Pete, have benefited from a collegial collaboration that has allowed them to blend the classes together for social studies classes, special events, and presentations. Once again, our preschool is nearly full, 1st-2nd grade has a waiting list, and with the exception of kindergarten, the other classes only have a few openings. What has contributed to our success in such a challenging economy?

On the most fundamental level, I think we have achieved the goal of being a Quaker school, which is not to be confused with thinking that we are a finished or perfect product. We are not. But that is exactly who we should be. By answering that of God in each individual, looking for that divine spark, we are open to the continuing revelation of Truth. That is to say, not only do the answers keep changing, but so do the questions as we test ourselves and are tested by our students and our families. And we believe that we can accomplish transformation with love, individually and institutionally. This dynamic tension, again, couched in love, is what makes us a lively educational community.

We have nearly completed the first part of our self-study for accreditation and will soon reflect on our descriptive reports, asking ourselves: What do they reveal about who we are? Where we have been? What are our growing edges? What are the questions we should be asking ourselves next? How do we go about finding answers? This is the exciting task before us for the next several months and into 2011-12. It is all the more exciting to think about the questions that will be raised by Alfie Kohn on May 3rd and how we will be informed or challenged by his presentations. I hope that you will join us then and continue to be with FSP for the journey that we continue to undertake as we seek Truth together, looking back and forward, but mindful of the gift of the moment.



The 7-8 class performs Snow White and the Mini-Miners to rave reviews.

Learning Update by Mary Tracy, Director of Studies

It's spring, and when I visit classrooms, I wish I were a child again. The preschool children squeeze oranges, then fill the empty halves with birdseed and set them outside.

Their special weekly visitor, Carol Scribner, Charlie's grandmother and a former teacher, plays her guitar while they sing "What a Wonderful World." Kindergarteners are busy with all kinds of activities inside and outside. They strengthen their hands experimenting with big eye droppers and food color in water. Their morning circle includes reading and math readiness learning disguised as clever jumping games and silly songs. The 1-2 class is studying multiplication and division using objects, pictures, and games. They're beginning a writing unit focused on the author Angela Johnson. And they'll bring into awareness their five senses, often outside and around the island.

It's spring, and the 3-4, 5-6, and 7-8 science classes are like planets aligned as they all study states of matter in different ways. In 3-4 they are learning the concepts of solid, liquid, and gas through different experiments and demonstrations. Their math ties in, with a comparison of metric and standard measurement of temperature, length, and weight. The 5-6 groups are investigating convection, currents, and density, and learning that matter has energy that can be measured. Recent "aha" moments were heard when students figured out what's really happening to make hot air balloons rise. The oldest class is also studying currents and energy, but not via water in a tank; they're looking at the earth's wind patterns, air pressure, and nuclear energy in light of Japan's situation.

It's spring, and the arts keep blooming. *The Educated Mollusk*, our annual literary magazine, is collecting submissions right now, and after April vacation, the 5-6 classes will go into action producing it. The 7-8 class has just authored some amazing short fiction and is beginning an integrated study of nonviolent tools of change. Spanish classes play the liveliest games and learn so many new words! Music classes use boom-whackers, harmonicas, and the occasional dance lesson. Art has included whimsical stitching and clay figures. Drama club is producing its own creation, cricket lessons have moved outside, and bocce will start soon. It's spring and a great time to be a child.



Kindergarten teacher Jonathan Ewell taps a maple with help from kindergartners and their 3-4 class buddies.

Habitat for Humanity Service Award Received

Friends School of Portland was recently recognized by Portland's Habitat for Humanity for the volunteer service that the 1st-4th grade classes did at the ReStore off of Forest Avenue. The students also got to visit a construction site. This service project was organized by 1-2 teacher Katie Spierer, who was unable to attend, so James Grumbach, Head of School, accepted the "rainbow hammer" award on the school's behalf. This award was created specially for FSP, as this age group of volunteers was a first for Portland's Habitat for Humanity. Congratulations to the 1st-4th graders!



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