



FRIENDS SCHOOL OF PORTLAND

An independent Quaker day school for grades preschool – 8

Inquiry • Reflection • Action

April Newsletter 2009

207-781-6321 Mackworth Island, Falmouth ME 04105

www.friendsschoolofportland.org

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Link to Giving & Donations Online
<http://www.friendsschoolofportland.org/giving>

Calendar

Friday	April 17	11 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.	Grandparents Visiting Day
Monday-Friday	April 20 - 24	April Break	School Closed
Tuesday	May 12	3:30-5:30 p.m.	Workshop: Puppets & Play in the Classroom
	More information below	7 p.m.	Public Lecture: The Case for Make Believe
Friday	May 15	1 p.m. (Assembly)	3-8 Musical: "The Birds of Zazurds" All parents welcome!

News

70 students were enrolled by the end of the priority enrollment period! This compares with 41 at the same time last year. There are several students on the waiting list for grades 3-4 and most classes are nearly full. Contact Jessica Eller 207-781-6321 for details about remaining openings.

The Auction & Brunch was a fabulous success, grossing \$21,000!! Thanks to all who donated and participated, especially the fantastic Rose Splint and her incredible committee.



Lots of fabulous items in the Silent Auction. All eyes were on Bianca for the Live Auction!



Rose and her fabulous crew, which included the 7-8 class as servers for the scrumptious food.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) sent a visiting team to FSP to assess our candidacy for membership. They were impressed with the calm, peaceful atmosphere, the friendliness of the children, the dedication of the faculty, and how much the school has accomplished in such a short time. At the conclusion of their visit, we were informed that they will recommend membership to their board of directors meeting in June. This is the first step in achieving accreditation. FSP will have 5 years in which to do a self-study, followed by another visiting committee that will spend 3 days at the school.

Friends Summer Adventure Program is offering up to 6 weeks of morning or full day programs on Mackworth Island. Registrations are due April 1st. For more information go to <http://www.friendsschoolofportland.org/summer-adventure-program>

Friends Camp in South China is offering three special programs for youth in addition to the four traditional two-week sessions for youth ages 7 to 17 years old. Friends Camp is an overnight Quaker camp that offers youth a range of creative activities that include games, sailing, art, drama, music, ceramics, photography, and a wide variety of creative and noncompetitive activities. Application can be done on-line or can be printed from the camp's web page – www.friendscamp.org. For more information about Friends Camp contact Nat Shed at 873-3499 or by sending an e-mail to director@friendscamp.org.

Voices Off, the mime/dance performance directed by Karen Montanaro was attended by over 200 family and friends of FSP and GBSD students. It was the culmination of a wonderful two week artist-in-residency program funded in part by the Maine Arts Commission, an independent state agency supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.



Karen rehearses the combined FSP/GBSD 7-8 class



...and later performs solo



The whole cast performs to an audience of over 200.

Reflections from the Head of School

I was asked recently, "What makes faculty meeting work?" There was no question in my mind that faculty meetings work best when they have two critical qualities. Faculty and staff members clerk ("clerk" is Quaker-ese for "chair") faculty meetings, not administrators. And, meetings are conducted in the manner of Friends. Having a faculty member clerk the meeting gives witness to the Quaker belief in equality; it flattens the hierarchy. I may be the "head" of school, but neither a head nor a school would function without a "heart" and I firmly believe that teachers are the heart of a school. Their dedication, energy, and love of children and of learning make us who we are.

What does "in the manner of Friends" mean? We gather in worship to conduct business together. Meetings begin with silent reflection and proceed with a set agenda. Everyone is expected to participate equally, though some may speak more than others, and the clerk tries to discern the intentions of the group as we seek truth together. If a decision is needed, the group attempts to reach unity; we do not vote. The majority does not rule. One person can stand in the way of moving forward if their objection is strongly held. Usually, the group finds unity, which is not the

same as compromising, rather it is crafting a better decision than anyone of us might have reached on our own. A good example of this was reaching a decision to have one faculty meeting per month where we set aside policy or operational matters in order to discuss educational issues. This has brought an all too rare opportunity to share perspectives on substantive pedagogical concerns.

At Friends School of Portland, we have a higher percentage of Quakers on the faculty than many Quaker schools, in part because of our small size. Six of our 17 are fairly regular members or attenders at Portland Friends Meeting on Forest Avenue, and several more have more than a passing acquaintance with Quaker practice. Still, a significant portion of the faculty was new to Quakerism and nearly everyone was new to "clerking." That role requires a special balance of paying close attention to the weight of the group, but also being sure to provide opportunities for dissenting or affirming voices to be heard. Last spring, the faculty decided that this year, everyone would have a chance to clerk the faculty meeting, so they have rotated the position. Everyone also serves as recording clerk (secretary). At the end of the year, we will reflect on the experiences of this year and consider how to proceed for next year. You can be sure that it will be a decision that we will reach together.

~ James Grumbach, Head of School



The end result of a 5-6 grade independent exploration...a Mentos & Pepsi fountain

Learning Update

A 7th-8th grade seed was planted this March. Because one of our goals is to provide students with multiple ways to serve their communities, the 7th-8th graders recently had a chance to delve into a social issue of their choice, and most importantly, to learn that they could be heard and influence others. Their task was to research background information on their selected topic, write a 3-page essay, act on their concern, then report orally and creatively on everything they learned and did. The array of issues speaks to the awareness of this group – environmental issues (preventing hurricane damage, global warming, the demise of the sugar maple), animal rights (abuse of animals on dairy and poultry farms), and social issues (teen smoking, the drinking age, teen depression, bias against homosexuality, and the need for low income housing) were selected.

The research and the writing were of high quality, giving students the confidence to carry out appropriate actions. Many professional-looking brochures and bookmarks were created and distributed to libraries and other places where interested people might find them, a movie was created and put on YouTube, a letter was written to the editor of Teen Vogue, compact fluorescent light bulbs were sold, money was raised for the Humane Society, one student walked for Habitat for Humanity, and another will walk in Portland's Gay Pride parade on June 20. All students learned about all the issues through doing their work side by side and through memorable presentations involving PowerPoint, video, debate, games, posters, humor, and food. (Yes, the minds and hearts of middle school students can be effectively reached through their stomachs.) When I heard a current 6th-grader excitedly asking about an issue to investigate next year, I knew the seed had put down roots. Who knows how far-reaching the fruits may be?

~ Mary Tracy, Curriculum Coordinator



Grades 1-2 explore balance & mobiles with Anya's parents, Basil & Cindy

FRIENDS SCHOOL OF PORTLAND

Invites you to **Parenting for Peace**, a public lecture
series
with

Susan Linn, Ed.D

The Case for Make Believe

Why Children Need to Play, Who's Stopping Them, & What We Can Do About It



Tuesday , May 12, 2009
1 Mackworth Island ~ Falmouth, ME
7:00 pm

Dr. Susan Linn, author of The Case For Make Believe, Consuming Kids, and The Hostile Take over of Childhood is a psychologist at Judge Baker Children's Center and Harvard Medical School in Boston and the co-founder/director of *A Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood*.

She is an award winning ventriloquist, internationally recognized for her pioneering use of puppets as a tool in play therapy with children. Her work has been seen on Mister Roger's Neighborhood, the Today Show, and Good Morning America.

For more information call the Friends School of Portland at 781-6321
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