

Newsletter
AUGUST/
SEPTEMBER 2010

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Mackworth Island
Falmouth, ME 04105

friendsschoolofportland.org

Upcoming Events Calendar

Monday, August 30
First Day of School for teachers

Thursday, September 2
11 am Meet the Teacher
12 pm Community Picnic
1 pm Work Projects

Tuesday, September 7
First Day of School for
Students

Monday, September 13
3 pm House Party Orientation

Tuesday, September 14
5:30 pm FSP Board

Thursday, September 16
6 pm Parent Night

Looking ahead...

Friday, October 1
5:30 pm Potluck dinner and
Contra Dance

Friday, October 8
No Classes- Professional Day

Monday, October 11
No Classes- Columbus Day

Tuesday, October 19
7 pm Parenting for Peace:
Place Based Education with
David Sobel



FRIENDS SCHOOL OF PORTLAND

inquiry • reflection • action

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The Kindergarten class explored an ocean theme on their trip to Higgins Beach. They followed their interests to discover more about fishing and what is in the ocean. The trip highlighted the food chain as they dug up bloodworms for bait, fished for stripers and saw birds and other fishermen eating fish.

Happy Fifth Anniversary Friends School of Portland!

FSP Secures \$9,000 Quimby Family Grant

On August 2nd, the Friends School of Portland received a \$9000 grant from The Quimby Family Foundation to support the Parenting for Peace speaker series. The Parenting for Peace series brings experts on topics of interest to parents relating to children's well-being.

David Sobel, Antioch professor and a founder of Place-Based education philosophy, kicks off the third season of the Parenting for Peace speaker series on Tuesday, October 19th at 7pm.

The grant also recognizes efforts of the FSP to integrate our Mackworth Island surroundings as part of a "Place-based" curriculum. In addition to the

public speaking event, David Sobel will present to educators on reconnecting young people to their own turf- ecology of place.

The Quimby Family Foundation was founded in 2004 with funds from the 2003 sale of the multimillion-dollar personal care company Burt's Bees. The board of directors includes Roxanne Quimby who founded Burt's Bees with her partner, Burt, and her two children Hannah Quimby and Lucas St. Clair. The foundation works to advance wilderness values by awarding grants to nonprofit organizations that address critical environmental issues such as the protection of wildlife, preservation of wildlands and promotion of non-consumptive, non-motorized recreation.

Reflection from the Head of School by James Grumbach

For students and teachers, school is work. At Friends School of Portland it is joyful spiritual work, but work none-the-less. Summer provides children and teachers with an opportunity to have a more leisurely schedule. This rest and relaxation renews curiosity and restores the body, mind and spirit. Unstructured play is critical to a child's development of creativity, and breaks from routine allow us to improve in our daily work.

The summer provides opportunities to try new adventures, and many children take part in summer programs and camps that introduce them to new people and skills. Families often take time to travel together. Still, for many children there is time to just play for hours in a fantasy world of their own invention or to curl up with a favorite book on a rainy day. Some find time to pursue hobbies or to explore the outdoors on their own with no particular agenda. It is a time for a variety of activities (divergent thought), with the luxury to focus on an area of personal interest (convergent thought).

Summers are a critical time, then, to enhance creativity. Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman, authors of the bestseller *Nurture Shock*, have recently written a cover article for Newsweek on the drop in the "creativity quotient" in American students. It is provocative and

makes the case for teaching more creativity by presenting project-based problems to solve as opposed to more and more content to memorize. The key is to have opportunities for divergent and convergent thought. Here are some quotes and a link to the article:

Highly creative adults tended to grow up in families embodying opposites. Parents encouraged uniqueness, yet provided stability. They were highly responsive to kids' needs, yet challenged kids to develop skills. This resulted in a sort of adaptability: in times of anxiousness, clear rules could reduce chaos—yet when kids were bored, they could seek change, too. In the space between anxiety and boredom was where creativity flourished.

Preschool children, on average, ask their parents about 100 questions a day. Why, why, why—sometimes parents just wish it'd stop. Tragically, it does stop. By middle school they've pretty much stopped asking. It's no coincidence that this same time is when student motivation and engagement plummet. They didn't stop asking questions because they lost interest: it's the other way around. They lost interest because they stopped asking questions.

In early childhood, distinct types of

free play are associated with high creativity. Preschoolers who spend more time in role-play (acting out characters) have higher measures of creativity: voicing someone else's point of view helps develop their ability to analyze situations from different perspectives. When playing alone, highly creative first graders may act out strong negative emotions: they'll be angry, hostile, anguished. The hypothesis is that play is a safe harbor to work through forbidden thoughts and emotions.

In middle childhood, kids sometimes create...fantasies of entire alternative worlds. Kids revisit [these worlds] repeatedly, sometimes for months, and even create languages spoken there. This type of play peaks at age 9 or 10, and it's a very strong sign of future creativity.

Bronson, Po and Merryman, Ashley. "The Creativity Crisis." *Newsweek*. 2010 July 10. Online: <http://cts.vresp.com/c/?PoBronson/491a73be46/5620c80587/f9c98340ad>

So, take some time to enjoy the lazy summer days and give children the chance to find that space between anxiety and boredom. The restoration of body, mind, and spirit will lead to reflection, self-reliance, curiosity, and creativity.

Query: Do you come to school with heart and mind prepared?

New Teachers Bring a Wealth of Experience to FSP

by Anna J. Boll

For the fifth anniversary of the Friends School of Portland, five new teachers join the staff. The Mackworth Island Quaker school community welcomes Anna Boll, Christina Chute, Ellen Couture, Jonathan Rhoads and Annie Ware, for the 2010-2011 school year.

Anna Boll comes on staff in a dual capacity. She will coordinate marketing for the Friends School and teach language arts and social studies to the second homeroom of the expanded multiage fifth and sixth grade. Mrs. Boll taught at the middle school level for nine years in Gorham, Auburn, and MSAD 51 public schools.

Anna is a children's author and illustrator with poetry published in *Babybug*, *Ladybug*, and *Highlights High Five* magazines. She is an MFA candidate in writing at Vermont College of Fine Arts. She loves biking and competes in sprint triathlons.

Anna is drawn to the values of simplicity and silence in the Quaker community. "In a world filled with data and information we sometimes forget about the power of silence. Words have power and meaning and must be weighed carefully," she says. In her own classroom, she creates a structure in which student decision-making is respected and student responsibility is expected.

Christina Chute, the new music teacher at FSP, is a professional cellist and has been teaching cello, violin, and viola for over 20 years to all ages. She has taught theory, composition and ear training. Her translation of Barbara Marcinkowska's, *I Begin to Play the Cello*, was published by Editions Armiane in 2005.

Christina's children have been part of FSP since the inception of the school and she has enjoyed watching the school evolve without losing its original mission. She is eager to join in and complement the community of learners at FSP who are actively engaged in their education and

supported by teachers who love to teach.

Christina's classroom promises to be full of singing, playing, and dancing as she and her students explore a variety of cultures that use music to build common experiences and a sense of community.

Ellen Couture brings 18 years of experience as a nanny, and two years of teaching art and early childhood curriculum in a preschool, to the position of Infant/Toddler teacher. Ellen is also an FSP parent. "My daughter loves FSP so much," says Ellen, "that she actually is disappointed when she doesn't have a school day!"

Ellen points to the ways that FSP builds a strong sense of community--building self-esteem and confidence and encouraging mature conflict resolution when necessary. The teachers and staff provide the students with a very secure setting, which facilitates opportunities to learn and grow.

Take time to look in the open door of the Infant/Toddler room and you will see the youngest FSP students included in day to day activities. The older toddlers will help with tasks and chores and the infants will participate with lots of conversation about what they observe.

In her spare time, Ellen likes to paint, garden, cook and do jigsaw puzzles.

Jonathan Rhoads received an MA from the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Columbia University's Teachers College. He taught first grade at PS 841 and was a reading specialist at PS 890 - Bridges School- in Manhattan. He also spent eight years working for The After-school Corporation as a Program Officer - starting and developing after school programs in under-served communities throughout New York City's five boroughs.

For a few summers after college Jonathan led high school students on bicycling tours through northwestern Spain. He says, "During these tours I discovered how much young people can learn about themselves when taken out of their comfort zones."

Jonathan, whose son attended FSP, will assist in the Preschool program. "I have always admired Lea's teaching style and find that her ability to allow her students to guide their own learning while providing the direction that they still need is perfectly balanced." Jonathan looks forward to fostering kindness within the classroom community and providing the students with the personalized care and attention that they need.

Spanish teacher **Annie Ware** spent a year living and teaching English in a small two-room schoolhouse in Costa Rica. She taught Spanish to grades six, seven and eight in the Portland School District for five years. Annie is excited work on Mackworth Island. She is used to class sizes of 26-28 students and looks forward to smaller groups that allow her to build relationships with students and their families.

"A lot of how I teach Spanish requires getting up, out of one's seat and moving around, interacting with one another, and talking with one another," she says. Don't be surprised if costumes and props come out from time to time as well.

Summer at Friends School



“Computer Camp was great. We were making a Public Service Announcement about recycling. I learned all about iMovie and now can’t wait to put together our family videos.” -G



“We were picking lilies on the trail. We were on a hike to the beach like we do pretty much every day. What I like best about summer at the Friends School is meeting new friends and lunchtime.” -N.



What are your new teachers reading this summer?

Anna Boll: For my critical thesis, I have a whole stack of children’s books that are based on other classic works including the middle grade novel *The Young Man and the Sea*, by *Rodman Philbrick*, and the young adult novel, *Jake Reinvented*, by Gordon Korman.

Christina Chute: I am reading, *The Musical Classroom*, by Carolynn Lindeman and Patricia Hackett, *Excursions in World Music*, by Bruno Nettl, and *Teaching Children to Care*, by Ruth Charney.

Ellen Couture: As I prepare to return to a classroom setting with infants and toddlers, I am focusing on refreshing my perspective with *The Creative Curriculum*, *Art for the Fun of It, 1,2,3*. *The Toddler Years*, and *Infants and Caregivers*.

Jonathan Rhoads: I just finished the Steig Larson trilogy and am ready to start *Let The Great World Spin*, by Colum McCann.

Annie Ware: *Heat*, by Bill Buford is on my summer reading list.

Stories by the Garden– A Success

Authors, illustrators, storytellers and musicians visited Mackworth Island this summer for the Friends School of Portland Wednesday morning event, “Stories by the Garden.”

The families who attended the programs got a glimpse of various cultures. Reza Jalali shared his book *Moon Watchers: Shirin’s Ramadan Miracle*, which explores Muslim traditions and family relationships. Angeli Perrow’s new book, *Many Hands* examines Penobscot dialect. Children who met with illustrator Annie Sibley O’Brien, learned about the Korean prophecy game, *toljabi*.

Families sang silly songs with Ellie Chase and met author/illustrator, Lisa Jahn-Clough’s therapy dog, Happy. Author Beth Cadena, helped children find their inner superstar. Large audiences and happy, friendly faces pleased the presenters. We are already planning for next summer: looking for grants to compensate presenters, and eager to grow the “Stories by the Garden” event with increased press coverage.

House Parties: Coming to a neighborhood near you.

by Anna J. Boll

Friends School turns five this school year! Just as toddlers tumble and try to make sense of the world, a new school is busy defining mission and purpose, hiring staff and honing pedagogy. At five, we send our children off to kindergarten so that they can connect with the larger community; Friends School is stepping up our marketing initiatives ready to grow enrollment while holding fast the values we've defined. We are eager to share our amazing community with other families who might find a good educational fit for their children on Mackworth Island. One of these initiatives is the house party.

Word of mouth is the most effective means of marketing the sense of community, inquiry and reflection that students and families get from

Friends School of Portland. Similar to a campaign house party-- the hosts of a FSP party would invite families for an afternoon or early evening of snacks and schmoozing. The party will include a short presentation and slide show by James, and an admissions question and answer period with Jessica. Ideally, a current student and parent who are comfortable talking about "why they love Friends School" will speak briefly as well. We will have information about Quaker education on hand. Your guests will sign in and provide us with names of a few more families who might be interested in Friends School.

We hope to pilot this house party idea in Brunswick in late summer and then expand it throughout the Portland area in October. These parties would

lead up to our November admissions events. Friends School will pay for all the food and invitation costs. Hosting a party requires a family to open their home, provide a list of possible guests, and be willing to talk about the positive experience they have had at Friends School of Portland. I will be conducting a House Party Orientation on Monday afternoon, September 13th. At the orientation I will respond to questions such as: Whom do I invite? What do I say about Friends School? and When do I schedule my party? If you are interested in hosting a Friends School of Portland House Party, please contact Anna Boll at anna@friendsschoolofportland.org with the subject line "House Party."

Reflections on Service Learning

by Katie Spirer

For the last few years, the Friends School has had a service learning committee whose purpose was threefold: to coordinate projects between classes and within the whole school; to generate and collect ideas for future projects; and to create decision-making criteria about what projects are adopted by the school in the future. While many teachers were doing service projects within their own classes, both teachers and parents wanted to expand our service program to include school-wide projects that helped develop long-term partnerships with community organizations.

These questions and interests inspired me to contact community organizations with whom teachers had expressed interest in working including Catholic Charities, Habitat for Humanity, Maine Audubon, Gulf of Maine Institute, Animal Refuge League, etc. I was amazed by the enthusiastic responses I received and I proceeded to meet with the

volunteer coordinators from many of these organizations. I also met with a few teachers from other schools to learn more about their service programs.

At the end of July, I attended a four-day service learning conference sponsored by KIDS Consortium, a Maine-based nonprofit organization that works with schools and community organizations in New England to help students identify, research, and address community needs. The workshop leaders emphasized the difference between community service and service learning. The three principles of service learning (that help distinguish it from community service) include academic integrity, student ownership, and apprentice citizenship. The KIDS Consortium framework is based on a multi-step process that enables students to identify a problem and carry out research to help address this issue. The conference was informative and it was inspiring to be with other teachers and administrators

who were equally as enthused about service learning at their schools.

After the KIDS Consortium conference, my head was swimming with ideas. I am excited to share what I have learned with the rest of the staff and implement specific projects in the classroom. One suggestion from the conference was to introduce service learning to students by discussing needs in our own community. By addressing some of these needs, students realize that everyone needs help at some point in their lives. I am also in the beginning stages of creating an after school service club, in which parents and students can choose different ways to become involved in the community. Keep an eye out for this—the more people we can get involved in building our service program at FSP, the better!