

Newsletter  
DEC 2010/  
JAN 2011

207-781-6321

Mackworth Island  
Falmouth, ME 04105

friendsschoolofportland.org

## Upcoming Events Calendar

### **December 14**

5:30pm FSP Board

### **December 20-31**

Winter Break

### **January 3**

Classes Resume

### **January 11**

5:30p FSP Board

### **January 12**

10am and 6pm Q & A with Head  
of School

### **January 17**

Martin Luther King, Jr Day  
NO CLASSES

### **January 19**

9am Visit Day for  
Early Childhood (PS & K)

### **January 19-21**

Arts Workshops

### **January 21**

End term 2

### **January 22**

10-11:30am Admissions  
Open House

### **January 25**

4-8 pm Community Dinner @  
Stonybrook Café  
7 pm Road To Nowhere  
Screening @ Falmouth HS

### **January 26**

9am Visit Day for  
grades 1-4 & 5-8

### **January 28**

5:30pm Potluck Dinner &  
Musical Performances

### **January 31**

Priority admissions  
applications due



**FRIENDS SCHOOL  
OF PORTLAND**  
inquiry • reflection • action

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**Our Mission:** The Friends School of Portland challenges and empowers students to develop their intellectual, physical, emotional, creative and spiritual potential. We honor our students' natural gifts as they learn to enter the world with confidence, competence, joy and a sense of purpose. We are guided by the Quaker values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, stewardship, and truth.

## News Flash

### NEW ON THE WEBSITE

We've recently reorganized the website with simplicity in mind. The new home page has only eight menu choices. Click on the main menu choices to find all the FSP information you need. In fact, there is a lot of wonderful information and media that you may not have accessed before.

Our photo and video galleries can be found under the "News/Events/Calendar" link. Basketball, drama, and ski club start in January. You can download the Calendar of Afterschool Activities under "Why choose FSP?" In the "Parent Information" section you can link to the regularly updated parent blog. Click on "Giving" to view the annual report, give to the annual fund online, and find out about how your current TD Bank account could help FSP. Check it out!

### CRAFT & BAKE SALE

Thanks to all who participated in the Craft & Baked Goods Sale on Friday and Saturday, either by being an elf in a workshop, organizing, attending, and/or purchasing. We raised over \$3,000 and enjoyed lots of attention at our second venue, Maine College of Art. We were honored to be

one of only four community organizations invited to the MECA sale. Thank you, MECA! Special kudos to JB Kavaliauskas and Rebecca Rundquist who were the principal parent organizers.

Most leftover items are now available at 50% off and are displayed in the entry way. Cash or checks payable to "Friends School of Portland" may be left in the envelopes on the wall or handed to one of the "Js". If you need help, let us know. FSP gear is available, but no longer on display if you are looking for that last minute present.

### ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

FSP has planned a special series of workshops in the arts for January 19 and 20, with the possibility of presentations on the 21st. The work will be inspired by the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr and will include the following artists: Kate Cox, Jones Franzel, David LaGraffe, Robert Shetterly, Martin Steingesser, Michael Wingfield, Martha Winn, and Henry Wolyniec. We are excited about the opportunities and designed the workshops to provide an immersion experience.

# Reflection by James Grumbach, Head of School

I am very conscious of the recent celebration of Thanksgiving, a reminder that the early European settlers in New England would likely not have survived without the aid of the native inhabitants of the land. For many, the holiday has become a bountiful family gathering where we express gratitude for one another, our safety, and our security.

So it is that Friends School has much to be thankful for. Without the example of over 80 Quaker schools in this country and the generous spiritual and financial support from Quakers, board members, grandparents, parents, and other friends, we simply would not be enjoying our fifth year. Other gifts contributed to our bounty. First and foremost are the wonderful families that looked for and found our school community for their children. We have attracted dedicated, talented teachers and staff. And, most of us are thankful every day that we cross

onto the magic of Mackworth Island, a location that is so well-suited to our educational philosophy and practices.

I am also very aware of the approaching holidays. At the darkest time of the year, Hanukkah provides the promise of sustaining light despite an initially modest source of fuel. Friends School aspires to provide a similar sustaining community to our students and their families. Christmas reminds many of the promise of peace for the spirit and, again, a sustenance that Quakers describe as the Inner Light or Divine Spark. Kwanzaa celebrates a remembrance of ancestors and principles, such as unity, purpose, and faith. These holidays remind us of the generous gifts that we have received, many from the toil and vision of others who preceded us. The holidays are also a reminder to put those gifts to good use with our stewardship of the opportunities that are provided by

those gifts.

At Friends School, the gifts that we have received allow us to live the vision that teaching is a spiritual practice, to fulfill our mission every day by honoring our students' natural gifts, and to guide them as they develop their intellectual, physical, emotional, creative, and spiritual potential. Have a peaceful holiday season.



Autumn crafts with reading buddies.

## SAVE THE DATE: January 25th...Dinner and A Movie!

Join us on January 25th, 2011 at Falmouth High School for the FSP screening of *Race to Nowhere*, the independent documentary of the pressures to achieve in our educational systems. Tickets will be available online for \$10. Details to follow.

This documentary is the perfect prelude to our May 3rd, Parenting for Peace, education/parenting speaker Alfie Kohn.

From the film's website:

"Director Vicki Abeles turns the personal political, igniting a national conversation in her new documentary about the pressures faced by American schoolchildren

and their teachers in a system and culture obsessed with the illusion of achievement, competition and the pressure to perform.

On the same night, from 4 – 8 pm, the Stonyfield Café in Falmouth will donate 10% of their total sales to Friends School of Portland! Join us for dinner that night, and you'll automatically support the school.

Featuring the heartbreaking stories of young people across the country who have been pushed to the brink, educators who are burned out

and worried that students aren't developing the skills they need, and parents who are trying to do what's best for their kids, *Race to Nowhere* points to the silent epidemic in our schools: cheating has become commonplace, students have become disengaged, stress-related illness, depression and burnout are rampant, and young people arrive at college and the workplace unprepared and uninspired.

*Race to Nowhere* is a call to mobilize families, educators, and policy makers to challenge current assumptions on how to best prepare the youth of America to become healthy, bright, contributing and leading citizens."

# Simplicity Through Silence

by Mary Tracy, Director of Studies

When the faculty and staff met to review our school's mission and values this past summer, we found ourselves stopped by the word simplicity. We were chagrined that in four short years, we had become a complex organism with multiple moving parts oozing over walls, off of shelves, and into every crevice of time.

We do have one practice, though, that in its simplicity is perhaps the most powerful thing we do. We meet as a staff every morning for five or so minutes of silence and on Monday mornings we sit as a whole school in silence for longer. That's it. We take time to sit and wait for silence to do its work in us.

Some of us may meditate, some may pray, some may hold others and ourselves in the Light, some may wake up slowly from their weekend or the night before, some may wait for the time to be over. We have had to hustle to get to school and get ready for the day, but before the children come and before the week begins, we pause and breathe. It is profound.

Sitting quietly for even one minute can nudge chaos closer to order, restlessness toward focus, tension toward relaxation. It can empty a busy mind, restore a normal pulse, or create a bond of friendship. It prepares us to welcome each person anew. It is wonderful practiced in a

group, but it can be done alone, sitting on the couch before the household awakes or waiting at a stoplight. Silence is simple, it is free, it is yours to try.



Autumn clean up.

## NEASC Accreditation

by Nicole Borasso

On October 8th the staff came together to focus on our efforts of taking on school accreditation with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). This process requires that the staff take on a deeply reflective process of self-study. The self-study is an activity in analysis and planning, and consists of two parts: 1) the review of documentation of compliance with the NEASC standards and 2) reflection, formulations of recommendations, and identifying other issues for further discussion.

Each staff member was assigned to a committee to divide and conquer the tasks involved in the self-study. Some of the topics considered by the committees were the school mission, governance, enrollment, experience of the students, resources, program, faculty, health and safety, and infrastructure. Mary Tracy, coordinator of the NEASC self study noted, "Most of us who work here were drawn to the school for its mission. This process gives us the opportunity to further explore that mission and renew our excitement about it." This process offers

a chance for staff members to look at broad issues that will affect the way the school develops in the future. It also allowed staff members to gather and reflect in groups that they might not always connect with on issues that not are often in their job description.

Jessica Eller, Admissions Coordinator; Anna Boll and Pete Nowak, 5/6 Teachers; and Christina McClure, music teacher, gathered to discuss and review enrollment, communication, and experience of the students. They were pleased by how many indicators the school is already meeting, such as the ways the school provides an equitable, just and inclusive community that inspires students to respect and value diversity and to be active and responsible citizens. Evidence of this indicator was found in the ways that the school community lives the Quaker values, incorporates service learning, addresses bullying and harassment, and forms relationships between students of different ages. Conversely, members of the group realized that one area that the school could improve upon is in

developing a more formal process for gathering and utilizing student feedback such as surveys or interviews. Pete commented, "This process is making me think critically about the school in ways that I don't normally have a chance to."

The committees spent the morning gathering evidence and forming recommendations. By afternoon, individuals were ready to seek some of the answers to their questions.

The next step is to write up more formal reports that will eventually be turned into the self-study that is shared with NEASC. If all goes according to plan, the process will be completed this spring and the school will prepare for a visiting committee next fall to evaluate its findings. As Kindergarten Assistant Teacher Jonathan Ewell remarks, "This really gives us the opportunity to explore with each other how we want to evolve as a school."

# Reading Buddies Build Community



Students from both Anna and Pete's fifth and sixth grade classes have been paired with students from Katie's first and second grade to share book reading skills as book buddies. As you can see from these pictures, we do more than read. Arts & crafts and special events help build community and trust.

## Tis' the Season for FSP Community Members in the Arts

All the world's a stage and Friends School of Portland has plenty of players. Support the Portland Arts community and our students this season by attending a show!

Ruby Peterson, a 2nd grader in Katie's class is Tiny Tim in Portland Stage Company's *A Christmas Carol*. The dates she is performing are: Dec 10, 11 (7pm), 12 (noon), 16, 18 (2pm), 19 (5pm), 21, 23 (2pm), 24 (noon). Note that Dec 16 is also Ruby's birthday! Prices vary. There is a schedule on the community board outside the FSP office. Tickets sell out, so reserve your seats soon. Call 774-0465.

*Alma Soul: A Celebration of Art & our local & global community* featuring works by Lauren Ostis and Nicole Borrasso (and others). Sat & Sun Dec 11 & 12, 10am-8pm at 85 Monument St. Portland. FMI: [Lauren@laurenostis.com](mailto:Lauren@laurenostis.com).

Ben Riggleman, an 8th grader in Lee's class is playing flute with the The Coastal Youth Chamber Orchestra. CYO will be presenting their Winter Concert on Monday December 13 at 7 pm at the Orion Performing Arts Center in Topsham. It is free, with a reception following. For more information, you may call Ben's mom Robin at 725-6337.

Annarosa Whitman an 8th grader in Lee's class will be playing Marley and Mrs. Cratchett in the Shoestring Theater *Christmas Carol*. They will be performing 3 shows (4, 5:30 & 7 pm) with puppets and full masked characters on December 18th as part of L.L. Bean's outdoor holiday performance series. More information can be found at the L.L. Bean website.

Congratulations also goes to Jenaya Rogovin who recently completed the part of Annie's sister in Lyric Theater's, *Annie Get Your Gun*.