

Newsletter
FEBRUARY/
MARCH 2011

207-781-6321

Mackworth Island
Falmouth, ME 04105

friendsschoolofportland.org

Upcoming Events Calendar

February 1-11

Parent-Teacher Conferences

February 8

5:30p FSP Board

February 14

FACTS applications due

February 21-25

NO SCHOOL Mid-Winter
Break

February 28

Classes Resume

March 8

5:30p FSP Board

March 9

Re-enrollment contracts &
deposits due

March 11

NO SCHOOL FOR
STUDENTS

Teacher Work Day

March 18

5:30p Dessert Potluck &
7-8 grade play

March 26

10a-2p FSP Auction & Brunch

March 30

New Student enrollment
contracts & deposits due



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



2006-2011

in this issue

Calendar • News

Reflection from the Head of School

We're on Facebook • Education in the Media •

Inquiry-Reflection-Art!

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

FSP IS ON Facebook

We've created another way to communicate with the FSP community! You can find links to news, relevant articles, FSP events, and job opportunities on our new Facebook page. Please follow the link below to "like" us!



Facebook provides us with a free online platform to spread the news about our wonderful FSP community. When you "like" us, our notices get posted to your wall and all of your friends can see it too. One post on Facebook could reach thousands. That's a lot more effective than a poster on a messy corkboard and it reduces our waste, expenses, and carbon footprint.

How can you help? If you are on Facebook already, "like" us. Then, suggest our page to friends and family who might be considering FSP for their children. Suggest our page to others in the Quaker community in Maine and far away. If we post something you think is interesting, "share" it with others.

At this point, we have disabled comments and we are not posting any pictures.

We hope to have 100 "likes" by the end of the school year. Help us reach our goal!

FSP AUCTION & BRUNCH

Vacation homes, restaurant gift certificates, artwork, family recreation & outing opportunities, sports events, and services will all be available at the 5th Annual FSP Auction on March 26th from 10 am to 2 pm at the Baxter School Gymnasium. Funds from the silent auction go directly toward the school's Tuition Assistance program.

Enjoy brunch and the Porterfield Jazz Trio while your children are safe and sound in free childcare. No tickets are necessary to attend the auction.

Donations for the auction should be referred to David Roussel, Committee Co-Chair: d5roussel@comcast.net or Jennifer Cummings, Committee Co-Chair: jkcumings03@yahoo.com. Forms are available on the website.

Reflection by James Grumbach, Head of School

It took me a couple of Maine winters to figure out how Mainiacs get through January and February (March mud is another matter). They pack the calendar with all kinds of interesting things to do, indoors and out. We have adopted that approach at FSP. Our January to February routine includes several admissions events, including an open house (recently passed with a great turn out of 13 families), end-of-term reports, a community potluck, student musical performances, parent-teacher conferences, admissions application deadlines, prospective student visits, and the unscheduled, but greatly anticipated "snow days" (we've had one each of the last two weeks and the forecast is not looking good as I write this).

But that is not enough to get us through the dark days of winter and bone-chilling cold. We added to that list a collaboration with Falmouth High School to show the provocative film, "Race to Nowhere" in which "A concerned mother turned filmmaker aims her camera at the high-stakes, high-pressure culture that has invaded our schools and our children's lives, creating unhealthy,

disengaged, unprepared and stressed-out youth. Featuring the heartbreaking stories of young people in all types of communities 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 are disengaged; stress-related illness and depression are rampant; and many young people arrive at college and the workplace unprepared and uninspired." Just in case dinner conversations were getting dull.

The most amazing addition to our month was "Inquiry – Reflection – Art: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Evolution of a Dream" an intensive two mornings of workshops with nine visiting artists followed by a special assembly for presentations and performances. The artists and workshops deserve mention:

- Robert Shetterly, painter, "Americans Who Tell the Truth," personal values and painting
- Andrew Martelle, music teacher, 317

- Main St, Yarmouth, song writing
- David LaGraffe, Portland Playback Theater Artistic Director, improvisational theater
- Martin Steingesser, Portland's first poet laureate, poetry writing
- Michael Wingfield, African-Caribbean drumming
- Kate Cox, artist and musician, sculpture and printmaking
- Jones Franzel, Public Radio Exchange Program Director, audio documentary recording
- Martha Winn, artist and former FSP parent, quilting
- Henry Wolyniec, artist and current FSP parent, making comics

There is so much to tell about the workshops, but photos, by Scott Peterman, another current FSP parent convey the story.

When I look at the list above, I am not surprised that we need to take a week off in late February. As for getting through mud season, make sure our 5th Annual Auction & Brunch, March 26th is on your calendar.

Save the Date!

FRIENDS SCHOOL OF PORTLAND Auction & Brunch

Please Join Us!

March 26, 2011
10a.m.- 2p.m.



Nicole enjoys winter with the Nordic ski club.

Education in the Media by Mary Tracy, Director of Studies

Some recently published ideas about the best way to learn have caught my eye. Pam Belluck, in the *New York Times*, January 20, 2011, wrote, "To Really Learn, Quit Studying and Take a Test." The researchers she cited found that recall a week later on information that was either read, put into detailed diagrams, or tested, was strongest in those students (college age) who were tested.

I am reminded of a 2004 report of a third grade teacher in Brazosport, Texas, who routinely brought all of her students to the proficient level on state tests, an anomaly in her economically disadvantaged district. She gave a quiz on the skills she had taught that week. If students passed, they had fun enrichment activities to do. If they did not pass, she immediately met with them to make sure they understood. Hmm ... testing as a learning strategy.

What about "tiger" parents (or teachers), screaming and forcing children to practice for hours on end in order to reach breakthrough moments of perfection, an approach touted by Amy Chua in *Battle Hymn of the Tiger*

Mother. She shunned play dates and sleep overs for her children because they took time away from studying.

Commentator David Brooks ("Amy Chua is a Wimp," *New York Times*, Jan. 17, 2011) argues that the skills and intelligence required to navigate a 14-year-old girls' sleepover are more demanding than getting straight A's and much more useful in the work world.

The parents, teachers, and students featured in the documentary, *Race to Nowhere* warn the Chuas among us about the dangerous effects of too much pressure, too much homework, and not enough time to eat and sleep.

What should we do when the pendulum of parenting and education swings back and forth and around and around? Well, we could ponder the saying, "The opposite of one truth may well be another truth." We could remember that children differ from one another and change over time, so we need to learn what works, when, and with whom.

We need continue doing what we

try to do at FSP - watch our children closely, apply common sense, and talk to each other regularly.

"To Really Learn, Quit Studying and Take a Test"
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/21/science/21memory.html?ref=education>

Richardson, Joan. "Doing whatever it takes to close the gap." RESULTS, National Staff Development Council. February 2004.

"Amy Chua is a Wimp"
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/18/opinion/18brooks.html?src=me&ref=general>



Teacher in the News by Anna J. Boll

First and second grade teacher, Katie Spierer, recently graduated from a pilot "Young Emerging Leaders" program with the Institute for Civic Leaders. The purpose of the program is to prepare young leaders for positions on non-profit committees and boards.

Katie and her cohort group met from September to December. They began with a trip to Cow Island where they engaged in initiative style activities to define leadership skills and take on new leadership roles. In evening sessions throughout the fall and early winter, they listened to guest speakers from various local boards and were paired with mentors.

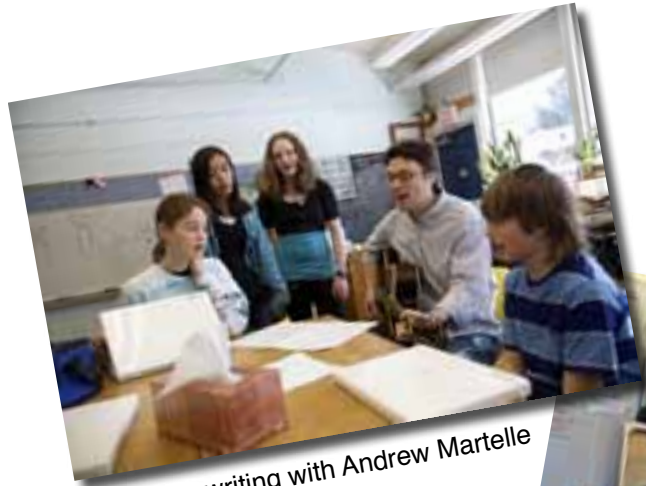


Katie and her class celebrate Pinwheels for Peace

Through the program, Katie was able to network with other young leaders in the area as well as professionals from various backgrounds. She enjoyed her involvement with a group outside her regular education community and is looking forward to future work with Portland Trails as a member of their development or outreach committees.

For more information see the Portland Press Herald's article on the "Young Emerging Leaders" program: http://www.pressherald.com/life/audience/idly-by_2011-01-30.html

Inquiry- Reflection- Art!: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. & Evolution of a Dream



Song writing with Andrew Martelle

Improv was great. I enjoyed it because David LaGraffe was original and expressive. He knows what he's doing and how to do it.
-6th Grader, Improvisation



I enjoyed the workshop because Michael Wingfield was funny. He taught us a lot about drumming.
- 2nd Grader, African Drumming



Audio Documentary with Jones Franzel

I loved it. I never knew I could draw like that. Henry Wolyniec said I was amazing and he let my imagination run free.
-1st Grader, Drawing Comics



Quilting with Martha Winn



Portrait painting & drawing with Robert Shetterly



Printmaking with Kate Cox



Poetry writing with Martin Steingesser

For more photos, click through for the slide show!