



FRIENDS SCHOOL OF PORTLAND

inquiry • reflection • action

September Newsletter 2009

207-781-6321 Mackworth Island, Falmouth ME 04105

www.friendsschoolofportland.org

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You can direct TD Bank's philanthropic donations to Friends School by designating a new or existing account as an Affinity Program participant. To join, call 207-774-5691. FSP's code is K9

Calendar

Thursday	September 17	6:00 p.m. 6:45 p.m.	Parents Association meeting Parent Night in individual classrooms
Friday	September 18	2 – 3 p.m.	FSP Band rehearsal
Monday	September 21	1-1:30 p.m. (changed)	Pinwheels for Peace on the beach
Friday	October 2	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Potluck & contra dance with the Crooked Stovepipe Band
Saturday	October 3	10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Deaf Culture Festival – Mackworth Island

News

FSP has been accepted as a full member of the **Friends Council on Education**. FCE has over 80 member schools throughout the United States. We have also been accepted as a Candidate for Accreditation by the **New England Association of Schools and Colleges**. This is the first step in a process of self-study and a visit by an accreditation team that spans three years.

Parenting for Peace, the FSP-sponsored speaker series, will partner with Physicians for Social Responsibility to host its second event on October 20 at 7p.m. in Hannaford Hall at the Abromson Education Center at USM in Portland. This event will feature a panel discussion with David Bellinger, a Harvard professor who has studied the effects of environmental toxins on child development; Nicole Borrasso, FSP's 3-4 teacher who involves children in environmental studies; Kristine Jenkins, the Portland organizer and activist for the Environmental Health Strategy Center; and moderator, Jeff Peterson, a pediatrician and member of Physicians for Social Responsibility. For more information: <http://friendsschoolofportland.org/parenting-peace-0>

Friends Summer Adventure Program, under the direction of Melanie Nichols, parent of Mackenzie, completed its second year with a 6 week program that was fully enrolled. We are planning to continue this successful program next year from June 21- July 30. In addition, we added a pilot program this summer using the creative suite for Macintosh computers. We plan to expand this "computer camp" next summer to a two-week program from July 5-16.



With James at the helm and first mate, Ellie, keeping watch, the faculty sailed Casco Bay aboard the schooner *Frances* out of Portland as part of their preparation for the year

Reflections from the Head of School

As we start the fourth year at FSP, I have been reflecting back on year three and the expression “third time is the charm.” The year brought much uncertainty and challenges from economic forces beyond our anticipation and control. Yet, with the graduation of our first 8th grade class, the return of a full staff for our program, the expanded after school activities program, the exciting continuation of the Parenting for Peace speaker series, the generous bequest that we anticipate from Barbie Potters estate, and membership in FCE and NEASC, I was reminded time and again how charmed our short history has been. The labor of many enthusiastic and caring hands have gone into our success as a community.

This summer, I read Jerri Nielson’s book *Icebound*, her account to living as the only doctor at the South Pole and having to treat her own cancer. And while I would not compare the harsh living conditions that small outpost endures with our challenges, I did find intriguing her description of how a small, diverse group of strangers came together and built community. The one line that has stuck with me from her writing is: “Give more than you have, use less than you need, all you really own are your thoughts.” This to me is wisdom to live by and I think that it describes much of what we are about as a school as well. I see this every day in the dedication of our teachers and staff, in the relationships between students, in the love and care that parents share with us, and in the generous support of many F/friends of the school. As we go forward with this promising year, which will bring its own challenges, it will be important to stay grounded in who we are, the many blessings that we share, and what we are trying to do for our children.

~ James Grumbach, Head of School



Families gathered on Thursday, September 3 for Meet the Teacher Day



Learning Update

At our faculty meetings before Labor Day, we learned more about how the brain works from Barbara Melnick, Director of Aucocisco School in Cape Elizabeth and this year, a more frequent consultant with us. Barbara’s background is serving children with learning differences and we have found she is a masterful observer who knows what to do to help children do their best. Her research-based approach will be complemented with more intuitive practices in building self-awareness through movement and centering activities.

Even with Labor Day fading from view, the tide of summer lingers – midday sun, corn tassels, sunflowers, tanned faces, and longer legs than in June. Lunchboxes and sweatshirts fill the cubbies, art appears on the bulletin boards, voices float from the classrooms, and pencils meet paper. We are happy to be back together as a school, to re-establish daily and weekly rhythms, to see what new learning will surprise us each day. This year’s monthly themes arise from the arts and promise rich questions and associations: September – *Inspiration*; October – *Color*; November – *Beauty*; December – *Expression*; January – *Perspective*; February – *Symmetry*; March – *Movement*; April – *Harmony*; May – *Reflection*; and full circle to June – *Inspiration*. As the tide goes out and autumn creeps onto the beach, we have much to inspire us.

~ Mary Tracy, Curriculum Coordinator



On Meet the Teacher Day, children harvested vegetables to share with the local soup kitchen

3rd-4th Grade reflections on queries* about how Quaker values are practiced in our school

Simplicity

*Is our stuff more important than our friends and family?
What are fun things to do that don't cost money?*

The school doesn't have stuff we don't need.
We use a lot of nature and make our own stuff.

Peace

*Do we listen to all sides when there is an argument?
What can we do to make the world more peaceful?*

We have quiet time and a morning greeting.
In our classroom, we have a "peace table" (for reflection or resolving conflicts with another).

Integrity

*Do we always try to be honest?
Do we give our best effort in everything that we do?*

We get encouragement from teachers.
We say and we do.

Community

*What can we do to be good neighbors?
How can we be helpful and take care of others?*

We work together.
We are kind to others.

Equality

*What can we do when we see people being treated unkindly?
Do we try to share the things we have?*

We try to understand people's needs.
We try to make activities that include everybody.

Stewardship

*What can we do to avoid being wasteful? Reduce waste, compost, recycle, reuse
Do we help with cleaning chores at home and at school?*

We donate food to the soup kitchen.
We clean our cubbies, desks, and classroom.

* Queries were found at Kidsquake <http://www.friendsmedia.org/kidsquake/printables/SPICES.pdf>

More work projects on Meet the Teacher Day



Sanding and painting the playground equipment



Assembling new chairs for the 3rd-4th grade classroom