
VALLEY VIEWS

A Newsletter for Members of the Valley School Community
Spring Blossom Season, April 1, 2010



All children have a right to an unfettered start in life through a good education. At The Valley School, we do this by honoring the proven developmental stages of childhood, understanding individual differences and helping children in all areas of development including the cognitive, social, emotional, creative and physical spheres. Our educational challenge is to create an exciting intellectual atmosphere while still emphasizing basic skills acquisition.
Valley School Mission Statement, 2009

Upcoming Events

April 4-9	Spring Break.
April 15	Child Psychologist Chris McCurry PhD talks on child anxieties. The Meeting Room. 7 PM
May 28	All School Celebration. Afternoon. Time TBA.
May 31	No School; Memorial Day.
June 9	Last Day of Classes, Family Picnic 11 AM, 5th Grade Graduation. (No after-care).
July 1	Rob Schultz begins transition period as new head of school.
August TBA	Meet the New Head of School at an end-of-summer social event. Time TBA.
Oct 9-10, 2010	Fall Millersylvania Overnight Weekend

Don't Miss:

Our Spring Lecture with Child Psychologist Chris McCurry PhD: The author of *Parenting Your Anxious Child with Mindfulness and Acceptance* presents: **The Anxiety Dance: A Parent's Guide.** This talk is appropriate for parents of children of all ages! 60 minute presentation followed by 30 min. Q and A. (No childcare at school.)

All School Celebration: Every year, the entire Valley School celebrates the end of year with a themed festival! More details soon!

End of Year Picnic and 5th Grade Graduation: Everyone is invited to the end-of-year potluck picnic and graduation. Families will receive food categories by last name. Categories will be announced. Remember to bring your own plates, silverware, cups, drinks, blankets and flowers for the tables! Contact: Lynn in the office, lynn@thevalleyschool.org.

Parent Volunteer Opportunities

Auction/Fall Fundraiser 2010 Volunteers! The annual auction may be morphing into a fall party for all Valley parents with lower stress, fewer demands and more fun with a well-defined fundraising goal. More information to come! Please contact Gail Mensher with ideas and if you would like to help! gail@thevalleyschool.org.

Millersylvania Fall Overnight Weekend on October 9, 10: When fall rolls around Maggie Orth and Damon Smith will be looking for help with cooking, meal prep, shopping and clean up. Contact: Maggie Orth, morth@ifmachines.com or Damon Smith, dsmith@callisonsfinefoods.com.

End of Year Picnic Volunteers! We need volunteers to help set up before and clean up after the end of year event. Contact: Lynn in the office, lynn@thevalleyschool.org.

Summer Social Organizers: Help organize the "Meet Rob Schultz" the end-of-summer event.. This will be an important and fun community event. Contact: Gail Mensher, gail@thevalleyschool.org.

Announcing Our New Head of School Robert Schultz!

On March 4th, the Board of Trustees of The Valley School announced the appointment of Robert Schultz as our next head of school. Rob will become head of school effective July 1, 2010.

A Message From Rob Schultz, The New Head of School

"I am honored and excited to join the Valley School community and serve as your new director. I'm looking forward to working alongside the passionate and invested spirit of the families and staff

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VALLEY VIEWS

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Spring Blossom Season, April 1, 2010

surrounding the school. I am dedicated to step forward with the excellence that Barry and Pat have each established in their contributions as head of school. During my January visit to the Valley School I was impressed by the keen compassion the teachers held for every child at the school. Gail shared the strengths of the school, and beautiful successes over the past years that continue to manifest themselves on the campus. I was additionally taken with the way the parents and board members honored their roles in the school and its mission. I have definitely found a wonderfully engaging educational team.



I've spent the past 13 years on the tropical island of Saipan, part of a secluded U.S. territory in the Western Pacific a few skips north of Guam. The Northern Mariana Islands are home to a very diverse community of folks, representing about 18 different language groups and even more nationalities. In my expeditions through working with children, families and teachers, there have been diverse learning opportunities. I founded a preschool, assisted in early

childhood research, taught students of nearly all ages from toddlers up to undergraduates, administered three schools, mentored hundreds of teachers, and had some profound conversations (whether while exploring solutions with a distraught parent or during the extraction of a bead from a 3 year-old's nostril- more than once). Through all of my experiences, one key area of importance has resonated within me: that all children have a brilliance within them, and it's up to us (yes, all of us) to discover the paths that best tease out that potential. So I may just be asking you to help me with that endeavor in the not too distant future.

My wife, Brenda, also an educator, and I are excited to enhance our own children's learning as we return to the Northwest. Madison, Crosby and Kenyon are looking forward to enjoying the water nestled neighborhoods and parks, the cold water seafood, the art and culture in Seattle and the four seasons. My family has grown to be confident, empathetic, resourceful, and have held a love of learning. They have always supported my schools, and I am anticipating that they will develop some great relationships in your community.

We are heading to fantastic places.
Warm regards,
Rob

Summer Opportunities for Parents to Meet the New Head of School

Rob Schultz is excited to meet all the Valley School families. He will be setting up office hours this summer for parents to drop by, and we will be planning an end-of-summer social event to meet him. And although his contract does not begin until July, he is happy to hear from Valley parents. Until July 1, his email is: robs_nmc@yahoo.com. After July 1, his email will be: rob@thevalleyschool.org.

Pat Overy on the New Head of School

After a long and well-organized head search, the Board of Trustees has chosen Rob Schultz as the new director. Rob is clearly very well qualified, for he has spent all of his adult life teaching children and directing schools. Comfortably interacting with children and adults alike, he seems to be a very good fit for our school's culture.

VALLEY VIEWS

A Newsletter for Members of the Valley School Community
Spring Blossom Season, April 1, 2010

Rob succeeds Barry Wright who for 16 years has served the school both as teacher and director with commitment and passion. He and Rob will work together this summer to insure a smooth transition.

Thanks to our great teachers who have faithfully and successfully taught our children. And thanks to all of you parents who have supported the school during this extraordinary year.

Best wishes, Pat

Ken MacInnes, President of the Board of Trustees, on Robert Schultz

"We feel that Rob is the individual who best meets the needs of the school at this time. His interest in children and his previous experience in teaching, teacher training and school administration will serve the school well. During his visit to the school in January we saw in Rob an engaging personality and a demonstrated ability to connect successfully with students, staff and parents. He was also able to articulate a deep understanding of progressive educational principles and a commitment to child-centered education, both core to The Valley School's mission, principles and practices. We believe that he has the ability both to lead the school and to represent the school and its mission to the greater Seattle community in a professional and thoughtful way."

Many Thanks to the Search Committee and Board

Many thanks to the committee for their service to the school.

Dave Walter	Chairman of the Search Committee	dave@waltergrant.com
Beth Weisberg	Current Board Member	bethw@drizzle.com
David Douglas	Current Board Member	ddouglas290@verizon.net
Holly Miller	Current Board Member	Holly.Miller@Seattle.gov
Megan Smith	Current Board Member	megansmith963@hotmail.com
Suzanne Coleman	Faculty Representative	sucoleman@aol.com
Susan Lammers	Former Parent Representative	susan_lammers@msn.com

Excerpts from Barry Wright's Letter on the Board and the Search Process

"I am writing this letter to communicate my confidence in our board of trustees, their process of selecting a new head of school, and the choice of Rob Schultz as the new director. I have witnessed the remarkable amount of thoughtful work that the board has done throughout the search. I feel certain that they have a deep understanding of the unique mission of our school. In addition they have showed a sincere interest in listening to the opinions and input of everyone in the school community. I am thankful to them for the months of hard work, stress, and the time they have taken out of their busy schedules. Through my interactions involving the search and candidate selection process I have acquired greater insight into the board's feelings and desires for the future of the school. They have no plans for radical change, indeed they have a sincere desire to maintain the character and mission of the school. I have no doubt that they will continue to work hard throughout this transition and into the future to insure continuity."

Academic and School News

Valley Funded ISEE Tutoring for Fifth Graders a Great Success!

Last fall, the Valley School introduced ISEE tutoring with veteran tutor Camille Hayward for all interested fifth graders. While this program has been expensive, it has yielded great results. The fifth grade classroom has not been taken over with test prep, and fifth grade families have experienced less stress over the exams and their importance in the middle school application process. This year's applications yielded great success as you can see below!

VALLEY VIEWS

A Newsletter for Members of the Valley School Community
Spring Blossom Season, April 1, 2010

Fantastic Fifth Grade Middle School Admissions

Our graduating fifth graders have had extraordinary success in admissions to sixth grade for next year. Each child is in at a top school choice and had numerous offers. This is a tribute to their teachers, particularly Laura Maier, their mentor in fifth grade. We also credit our investment in test preparation by Camille Hayward, director of the Lake and Park School and master ISEE tutor. After pondering their many options, our grads decided on Billings (2), Bush School (2), Lakeside (1), Northwest School (4), Seattle Academy (3), and Mercer Island Middle School (2). Congratulations to all!

Dale Roper Returns to Second Grade

Welcome back to veteran Valley teacher Dale Roper, who taught second grade at Valley for many years, and has returned to teach her thematic unit on ancient Rome, one of her great passions! Jessica's baby arrived a bit earlier than expected and Dale took over the class at the end of January. Jessica will not return this year, though she will be paid through the end of her contract. This allows Jessica to concentrate on her baby and maintains continuity for the second grade children. Dale will complete the school year, teaching half time during our academic mornings. Cindy will reprise the role she so successfully accomplished in January, working with thematic studies in the afternoons.

A Note From Barry on Staffing Changes

"As you know, I am leaving at the end of this school year but am still fully involved in all hiring decisions. The only change to announce at this point is that Jessica will not be returning from her maternity leave to work at Valley next year. Jessica has many admirers at The Valley School, and we are grateful for her hard work in the second grade. We all certainly wish her the best. I will let you know the rest of the classroom teacher placements as soon as possible. I have confidence that we will have a great team of teachers next year for new head of school, Rob Schultz."

Many Thanks to Child Psychologist Lenore Ruben PhD

Last fall, The Valley School hired noted child psychologist Lenore Ruben to advise teachers and parents on a number of fronts. She worked successfully with the staff to develop guidelines for helping children deal with anxieties related to illness, allergies and other health issues. In November, her question and answer session on Setting Limits for Children was very well received. Since that time she has continued to work with staff and teachers, providing advice on individual classrooms and general childhood issues.

Child Psychologist Chris McCurry PhD to Speak on Childhood Anxiety

Child psychologist Chris McCurry PhD is our spring speaker this year. Chris is a clinical child psychologist in private practice at Associates in Behavior and Child Development, Inc. in Seattle. He is the author of *Parenting Your Anxious Child with Mindfulness and Acceptance* published by New Harbinger. The talk is appropriate for parents of all Valley School ages, and we highly recommend you attend. Please join us on Thursday, April 15 at 7 PM in the Meeting Room. (No childcare at school)

The Anxiety Dance: A Parent's Guide; A 90 minute presentation covering:

- The origins of child anxiety in biological factors (temperament, brain development) and early experiences, especially social experiences.
- The ways a child's fearful and anxious behaviors function to communicate distress and compel the parent to come to the child's rescue.
- Strategies for making this process or "dance" work better: clearer communication, mutual respect, better problem solving, and increased tolerance for distress.
- A 30 minute discussion and question/answer period follows.

VALLEY VIEWS

A Newsletter for Members of the Valley School Community
Spring Blossom Season, April 1, 2010

Community News and Information

Summer Camp Offerings from Valley Teachers

- **Science Camp with Jill Rufsvold (pre-k teacher)**. This camp is for current pre-k children and some lower school siblings. Slots for 12 may already be filled so do not delay contacting Jill. June 14-18, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cost: \$250. Contact: jill@thevalleyschool.org.
- **Fitness Camp with Seana Hesse**, (kindergarten assistant and P. E. teacher). This camp features non-competitive playground games, organized sports activities, water play and "create a game" day. Limit of 12 current kindergarten, first, second graders. June 14 -18, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cost: \$250. Contact: seanahesse@comcast.net.
- **Creative Writing Camp with Mary Louise**, (fourth grade teacher). This camp is open to 10 current third, fourth and fifth grade students. June 14-18, 9a.m. to 1p.m. with a possible extension to June 22-26. Cost: \$250 with supplies. Contact: mary@thevalleyschool.org.
- **International Camp with Suzanne Coleman**, (first grade teacher). There will be games, food, music, occasional dancing, and literature about a different country each day. Limit of 12 current kindergarten, first and second graders. June 21-25, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cost: \$250. Contact: suzanne@thevalleyschool.org.
- **Art Camp with Erica and Cindy Monte** (third grader teacher and learning specialist). Explore bookmaking, painting, encaustic, fiber, photography and more at this popular camp. August 9-20, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00p.m. Limit of 20 current first through fifth graders. Cost \$475 for two weeks, \$250 for one week. Contact: erica@thevalleyschool.org.

Jessica Logan Has Her Baby!

On January 28, 2010, Jessica delivered a 6 lb. 14oz. healthy baby girl named Stella Rosemary. Congratulations to Jessica and her family.

School-wide Help-a-thon Raises \$8,829!

The Haiti Help-a-thon was a huge success with the grand total summing up at \$8,829! Kids danced, ran and sang to earn money for Haiti. All donations were sent to Mercy Corps. In light of the recent disaster in Chile, we asked Mercy Corps to use the funds wherever they felt help was most needed. Thank you for your support of this worthy cause. We are all proud of the children for their hard work!

Check Out The Valley School Blog: <http://news.thevalleyschool.org/>

To get on the site your log-in is *parent*; password is *parent2009*.

Classroom Snapshots

Pre-K with Jill: The Environmental Three R's

A March pre-k unit on taking care of the Earth focused on the "Three R's": reduce, re-use, recycle. The children

- looked at how worms recycle, thanks in part to visitors from Seattle Tilth.
- stuffed and sewed popular "sock worms" who inspired stories, and acted as both play props and rest time pillows.
- collected recyclable and re-useable objects from home to use in art creations.
- created small "design boards" and larger sculptures from these treasures.
- invited a recycling truck driver to the classroom to talk about his job.
- helped to load up the truck with recyclable materials, *and* took turns running the compactor!
- took a field trip to Madison Park Beach via the #11 bus after talking about the importance of both keeping our waters clean and using public transportation!
- conducted oil and water experiments after discussing how oil is sometimes "accidental" garbage.

VALLEY VIEWS

A Newsletter for Members of the Valley School Community
Spring Blossom Season, April 1, 2010

Kindergarten with Lindsay: E is for Egypt!

Kindergarteners traveled back in time to learn about: ancient Egypt! Kindergartners

- studied the gods and goddesses of ancient Egypt and learned the mummification process.
- learned about the pharaohs, and important agricultural, astronomical and medical discoveries from this time.
- made their own papyrus (paper) and sculpted clay ankhs (an ancient emblem of life),
- read Egyptian myths and learned hieroglyphics and Egyptian history.
- created sarcophagi, constructed pyramids and played with ancient Egyptian action figures on an indoor sand table.

Many of the students have brought ancient Egyptian “artifacts” from home to share, so Lindsay created an Egyptian museum in the classroom to showcase these rare and exciting finds! The class will perform a real ancient Egyptian burial and mummification to culminate the unit!

1st Grade with Suzanne: The Greeks Return!

In early March, the Ancient Greek gods and goddesses visited the first grade! After a unit studying Ancient Greek gods, myths, and heroes, the first graders dressed as their favorite god or goddess for a celebration of pomegranate juice, olives, bread, olive oil, and grapes. Zeus, Poseidon, Hermes, Aphrodite, Artemis, and Demeter were all in attendance and a great time was had by all!

Over a period of three weeks leading up to the celebration, the first graders

- studied symmetry and sculpted vases out of clay.
- learned about Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian columns.
- painted 2-dimensional temples to adorn classroom walls and constructed 3-dimensional temples.
- created books with writings and illustrations about the gods and goddesses.
- read about Pythagoras and studied the Pythagorean Theorem.

2nd Grade with Dale: And Rome Invades Second Grade Yet Again

For six weeks this winter, the second graders plunged into Ancient Rome. Second graders

- sculpted clay figures of Lares, the important household god of meals.
- created paper mosaics using tiny squares to make simple natural forms and traditional borders.
- experimented with air pressure (based of the volcanic disaster at Pompeii), and learned that victims were smothered with noxious gasses, and that air has weight and force.
- read dozens of books about Roman society and its families, soldiers, gladiators, roads, public baths, aqueducts, and Colosseum with its fearsome blood sports.
- learned about Roman gods and goddesses whom they celebrated in costume at an authentic Roman feast on “Gods and Goddesses Day.”

Dale recommends their read-aloud book: *Detectives in Togas* by Henry Winterfeld, which brings this period alive by placing readers into the “real” world of ancient Roman children.

3rd Grade with Erica: Third Graders Take a Valley School Census

The third graders sharpened their civic, math and cinematic skills as they created their own Valley School census in March. Spurred by the actual 10 year US Census now arriving in homes across the country, they brainstormed questions for our community members. These include:

- Do you have a fireplace? Where do you usually eat dinner? Do you own a video game console? What type of home do you live in? Do you have a pet? What type of pet?

To generate interest in this project, they evaluated public service announcements and commercials about the census, then filmed their own versions to screen at school. After collecting data, third graders plan to graph the information and report the findings in a newsletter delivered to each student in the school.

4th Grade with Mary: The Fifty Nifty United States

After touring many wonders of the ancient and modern world (see article below), the fourth grade has landed back closer to home in the United States. Every fourth grader has become an expert of one of our 50 states!

VALLEY VIEWS

A Newsletter for Members of the Valley School Community
Spring Blossom Season, April 1, 2010

- Forth grade students are reading and writing Tall Tales, which provide interesting folklore about the formation of various landmarks in the United States such as Paul Bunyan's ax creating the Grand Canyon.
- Students are memorizing the geography and topography of the U.S.
- To make it all fun, fourth graders learned "Fifty Nifty United States," a tune by Ray Charles. You can hear them singing this melody throughout the day.
- Students are now creating projects for a fourth grade states' fair. Projects include papier-mâché birds and booths to represent each student's researched state. Traditional food and drink from each region in the U.S will be served!

5th Grade with Laura: Poetry Lovers

Laura Maier's fantastic fifth grade writing program turns its attention to poetry! The fifth grade got a jump on National Poetry Month (since they will be missing class time in April to take the California Achievement Test and go to Islandwood) and began exploring poetry in March.

- Why do people write poems?
- Do they have to rhyme?
- What do we like about poetry?

The fifth graders will be exploring different poets and writing poems with similar themes/styles. According to Laura, "Our first poet was Walt Whitman, who amazingly had to quit school at the age of 11 to help support his family. We are lucky that he fell in love with the written word as a printer's apprentice. After reading sections from 'Song of Myself,' the fifth graders wrote poems about what they love and are good at doing."

Fantastic Fifth Grade Puppets with Jodi in Art

Over the past months, fifth grade artists have explored the art of puppet making, focusing on marionettes. Below, are the diverse characters the class came up with. The process involved papier-mâché, costume design, and engineering. The methods and results are truly one-of-a-kind! Bios of each puppet can be found in the fifth grade classroom. You can see color images of these fantastic puppets at: http://seattlesmith.smugmug.com/gallery/11575196_p9yDi#815498051_B8dA7. Photo by Claudia Smith.



Fifth Grade Architects Design Rabbit Hutch

After research on rabbit breeds and needs, four teams of fifth graders drew up preliminary plans for a Valley School bunny hutch. They prepared notes and practiced, then presented proposals to the Rodent Approval Board (Barry, Pat, David Douglas, and Ken MacInnes, board member and architect). The presentations were so thorough and well-delivered that the RAB had no choice but to accept the proposal to have rabbits on campus. All four hutch designs had unique aspects that the RAB admired, so a subcommittee of interested students merged the four hutch plans into one. Fifth grade students and families comprise the bulk of the spring construction crew. The children unanimously chose the Holland Lop breed because of its friendliness and general good health. We eagerly anticipate our furry new friends in a handsome hutch.

VALLEY VIEWS

A Newsletter for Members of the Valley School Community
Spring Blossom Season, April 1, 2010

New Music and Dance Block for Fourth and Fifth Grades

In mid-March, the fourth and fifth graders began a music block with Amy Carroll, who started folk dancing in elementary school and hasn't stopped yet. She's been an elementary teacher and substitute in the Seattle area for many years and recently became certified to teach general music as well. Sharing her skills with a wider audience, she leads Seattle area family dances and appears at Northwest Folklife Festival. Starting with party games from Appalachia, our fourth and fifth graders are experiencing a variety of traditional American dance forms: circle dances, longways set dances and squares, while singing much of the music that accompanies the dances. Visiting oldtime (fiddle and banjo) musicians will provide authentic back-up when they share all this with the Valley School community later this spring.

Upper School Studies The Seven+ Wonders of the World

During March, the fourth and fifth graders created alluring posters and brochures, and charming models of several Ancient and Modern Wonders of the World. As part of their studies, the fifth graders also made hand-crafted books to record facts and illustrations. These projects generated insightful discussions as the students asked questions of each other about these man-made and natural marvels. "We learned so much from each other!" reports Laura. On March 16, the two classes hosted tours for schoolmates and parents in the Meeting Room where they were "wonder'ful" tour guides for their amazing displays.

Flutists--from Contrabass to Piccolo—Perform at Valley

On March 17th the sweet sounds of the Seattle Flute Society Flute Choir filled the Meeting Room. Directed and presented by Celine-Marie Ferland, the Seattle Flute Choir performed pieces from soft and beautiful classics to Irish Jigs, swinging tunes, and more. The choir represented the entire flute family from piccolo to contrabass flute. Celine-Marie gave a brief history of the flute, shared the different instruments and how they fit into the flute choir and our western culture of music. This program was made possible by a grant from the Alex Shulman Family Foundation to which we are very grateful.