

Four Rivers Currents

December 2012

From the Principal's Desk...

INTENSIVE EXPERIENCES

There are times in school when our teachers and our students show us their best. We love when this happens in the day to day academics, but sometimes we just have to interrupt our regularly scheduled programs for something a little different. That's what Intensives are for. Intensives are four-day experiences each fall and spring when teachers and students go somewhere, make something, or learn about the world in the ways described below, as we all learned through presentations last week. Enjoy.

GUITAR ORCHESTRA: The music slowly builds, one guitar joining in, then another, then another. Two bass players and five leads, Mr. Kaback conducting. They started with Bach's *Bouree*. Students describe the process they followed over the 3 days. They described how they came together, how they improved, and how they composed their own piece. It's a bit darker than the Bach, though again it builds in layers. The transitions that were so rough at first come smoothly, even elegantly. Applause, applause.

LOCAL CLIMBING: With some experienced climbers and some just getting starting, this group headed out each day to the world class climbing venues right here in our own backyard. Students shared personal highlights and described where they went, what they did, and something about the rock they climbed. Some achieved personal goals, some tried harder climbs than they ever had, and some climbed outside for the first time.

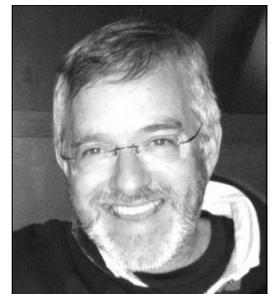
COLLEGE BOUND: A regular offering in both fall and spring, this intensive takes students on a tour of colleges, helping them get a glimpse of a process that lies ahead or that they're deeply into. This fall the group visited MCLA, Williams, Bennington, Skidmore, SUNY Albany, and RPI. Students talked about a highlight of what they saw in each spot -- the dorms, the public artwork, the food, the location, curricular themes, architecture, and more.

LET GO! This group had different activities each day, with the unifying theme of letting go and giving in to the experience. They did a scavenger hunt in Harvard Square, they leapt on trampolines, they climbed Mt. Monadnock, they practiced Tai Chi, they found their groove in a drumming circle, they went to the UMass Planetarium -- they let go! Words don't do it justice - their interpretive dance told the whole story.

MOCK TRIAL: This group spent the entire 4 days studying a mock trial case that is the basis for an interscholastic competition. They ran a trial the final morning as practice for future competitions. Students prepared arguments as lawyers on both sides of the case and they prepared witnesses to testify at the trial. Students learned the rules of evidence and the techniques of running a trial. A couple students demonstrated one part of the trial.

HUNGER: This group studied issues of hunger in the world and in western Massachusetts -- and then they set out to do something about it. What is food insecurity? How many people are hungry in Greenfield? What can be done about it? What resources are available in the area? They spent one day cooking food to donate to a local shelter. They spent another day at Just Roots farm in Greenfield helping prepare the fields to grow food for Greenfield. They also visited the Western Mass. Food Bank and went gleanng at a local farm that provides food for the Food Bank. They are running another food drive here at Four Rivers.

PROJECT RUNWAY: This group spent three days sewing and sewing. They made handbags and ponchos and pajamas and scarves and more. They strutted their stuff on the runway, and created a video about their process.



Article continues page 10. More Intensives news with photos throughout!

Peter Garbus, Principal

Grade 7 News

Seventh Graders are “Mappsters!”

When the concepts of curriculum cross courses, it is obvious the students gain a more complex understanding of the content. That has certainly been the case with the 7th grade students and their knowledge of maps. In fact, the cartographic skills of the students have been put to work in a variety of ways this semester: topographic bike trips, a journey to the center of the Earth design that shows the layers of our planet, and the use of latitude and longitude to create maps of archeological dig sites.



Math work that was focused on percentages has been used to strengthen conversations in social studies about the various representations of the shape and size of countries. Maps of the ancient world have been compared to modern political countries. The 7th graders have even created story maps that help them plan and organize their writing more efficiently. All of the mapping work is helping our students think about the world in more sophisticated, critical ways.

Above — Work by Henry Worden

Left— Work by Hannah Sol

Grade 8 News

GIANT KITES OF GUATEMALA

On November 14th, in coincidence with Social Justice Day, 8th graders presented their barriletes gigantes (giant kites of Guatemala) to a whole-school audience. In their bilingual (Spanish and English) presentation, they shared the messages written on their kites and they talked about their process of designing and building the kites, as well as the cultural significance of the kites in Guatemala. One intrepid team--Tynan Hewes, Lucia Mason and Ryder Molongoski--capped off the presentation by flying their giant kite over the soccer field to the delight of onlookers.

This presentation was the culmination of a multi-disciplinary expedition that students worked on for a few weeks in November. It is the first time that the 8th grade has presented at a whole school assembly, and the 8th graders rocked.



barriletes gigantes



DIV 2 & 3 NEWS

Let Go! Intensive — *Ms. Griffith and Ms. Kelner*

The Let Go! Intensive had many surprise adventures over 3 packed days. On day 1, we headed to Cambridge and teams participated in a scavenger hunt at Harvard. Then we headed to an indoor trampoline park called Sky Zone, where we bounced off the walls (literally) and played trampoline dodge ball. We took day 2 to summit Mt. Monadnock, in New Hampshire. On day 3, we did tai chi followed by a special guest, Otha Day, who lead us in a drum circle. We each had a drum to make our own unique rhythm, which connected and supported the rhythms we heard around us. After the drum circle, we headed to the planetarium at Amherst College where we had a private sky tour of the universe--a perfect way to wrap up our out-of-this-world intensive experience.



CHEMISTRY — *Mr. Patari*

Chemistry students are working to design their own lab procedures to determine whether mystery substances have ionic or covalent bonds.



DIV 2 & 3 NEWS

ENGLISH—*Ms. Plath*

Junior English

As the end of the semester draws near, juniors have begun demonstrating what standards they've met. They're currently finishing their second essay of the semester, this one more independent than the first, analyzing their most recent novel. They've also begun studying the Victorian era and learning about its role as a transition between Romanticism and the Modern Era of literature. As we roll into December, they'll be given a creative assessment: choose any character from any of the books you've read this semester, and write and deliver a monologue as that character.

Senior English

Seniors are hard at work on their first of two research-intensive assignments. They're working on their senior expedition research papers right now, requiring them to synthesize information from a variety of sources to answer their guiding questions. They've done research in Social Studies class and are writing in English class, with support in Senior Seminar as well. When they finish this research paper, we'll be launching into their Position Papers for our Energy Expedition.

LAW — *Mr. Hornick*

We ran rough trials of our first two mock trial cases, the second of which students will improve until they have a solid understanding of trial rules and courtroom etiquette. This includes how to make an opening statement, how to craft a direct examination, how to carry out cross examination, how to make a closing statement, how to enter evidence, how to impeach a witness, and when to make and how to answer different objections.

By the way, it is a murder case.



Above: Ping Pong Club with Barnabas Yu and Takumi Kashima

MATH — *Mr. Hornick*

Advanced Math

We completed our study of Platonic Solids and other shapes, including the construction out of origami paper of butterfly bombs (none of which are still in existence) and dodecahedrons. We made a short excursion into modular mathematics and different bases. We have begun our investigation of the data of energy for the senior class's energy expedition.

Algebra 2

Students have continued to move forward in the algebra 2 curriculum at their own paces, working alone or with a partner.

FOOD DRIVE

In the Hunger Intensive we learned about poverty and food insecurity by researching about, cooking for and volunteering in our community.

YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN A FOOD DRIVE to help prevent hunger in Western Massachusetts. It's a crew challenge, and the winning crew will win a prize - a mountain o' candy. All the food will be donated to the **FOOD BANK OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS**.

Items that the Food bank has requested are:

- Peanut butter and jelly
- Rice *and* canned or dry beans
- Spaghetti *and* canned spaghetti sauce
- Canned or boxed pasta/rice meals *and* canned vegetables
- Canned or instant soups/stews *and* rice
- Dry oatmeal *and* canned fruit

Students and families can donate items
between the dates of 11/26 and 12/14.

NURSE'S NOTES — *Jeanne Milton, RN*

Mother Nature reminds us that winter is approaching with cold, windy, and damp days. Here are a few suggestions to aid students in surviving:

- Eat a good breakfast EVERY morning; include protein
- Wear a hat if outdoors; much heat is lost through our scalp
- Wear gloves and use lotion to prevent dry, chaffed hands
- NEVER leave home without "chap stick"
- Fashion boots and slippers are not for sports! Students must have athletic shoes available.
- Maintain hydration with adequate water consumption.

Some class rooms are extremely warm and the barn will be utilized until snow prohibits access. Layering clothes will enable students to dress appropriately for either climate. PLEASE, PLEASE do not remove coats when hot and perspiring when outdoors. Jackets may be opened for 2-3 minutes to "cool down"; then re-close.

Wishing you all a safe, happy Holiday season and vacation.

FAMILY COUNCIL NEWS

It's time for our **Winter Apparel Order!** These cozy items make GREAT HOLIDAY GIFTS, so plan ahead. This time we will be offering Basketball, Drama, generic (non-sport) and new this year, Cross Country.

Order Forms are available on the Four Rivers Family Council School Store website, and in the office. Forms are due, with payment, in the school office by **Friday, December 7**, with delivery expected around December 21.

Questions? Call Carolyn DiPaolo at 413-773-9553 or mjsj22@gmail.com. See photos on the web site:

www.fourriverscharter.org/family/schoolstore.html

There will be a final order in the spring.

PRINCIPAL'S MONTHLY MORNING COFFEE IN THE FARMHOUSE

Friday, December 7,

8:00 am

All Welcome

**Spend a few minutes with
Principal Peter Garbus to
express your
Kudos or Concerns.**

NEWS FROM THE GUIDANCE OFFICE

FINANCIAL AID EVENING

WHEN: Wednesday, December 12th. 7:00 – 9:00 pm

WHERE: Four Rivers, High School Common Room

**WITH: Michael Ireland, Associate Director of Student Financial Services, Smith College
and Andy Stenson, Four Rivers College Counselor**

Topics covered will include:

- Financing a college education
- Tools for future planning – Net Price Calculators and EFC forecasters
- How financial aid is calculated – the impact of income and savings
- Detailed instruction regarding submission and timelines for the FAFSA and CSS Profile forms,
- Need based financial aid packages and their component parts, i.e., grants, loans and work study
- Need blind and need "aware" school practices
- Merit aid and scholarships.

Ample time will be allocated for questions and discussion with Michael.

Question? Email astenson@fourriverscharter.org or call (413) 775 4577

Although some of the evening will focus on information most pertinent to senior families, other families interested in learning about college financing are strongly encouraged to attend.

MUSIC ACHIEVEMENT

Each year, a number of Four Rivers students audition for regional music programs. The Massachusetts Music Educators Association sponsors a senior and junior district festival for which students have to audition. This year, senior Jamila Roth was named to the Western District Senior Orchestra for violin and eighth grader Sophie Garbus was named to the Junior Orchestra also for violin. Congratulations to both.

Senior and trombone player, Brian Wendel, was accepted into the All-Eastern Honors Jazz Ensemble! This 13-state event, sponsored by the National Association for Music Education, will take place in Hartford on Thursday, April 4, 2013 and continue to Saturday, April 6, with a concert on Saturday evening at the Connecticut Convention Center (along with the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra). This is a huge achievement and we are very proud of Brian's efforts.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

College Counselor Andy Stenson is pleased to announce that senior Ben Garbus has been named a Commended Student in the 2013 national Merit Scholarship Program. About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Although they will not continue in the 2013 competition for National Merit Scholarship awards, Commended Students place among the top five percent of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2013 competition by taking the 2011 Preliminary SAT.

INTENSIVES



SOCIAL JUSTICE

IN NEW YORK CITY

To prepare for our trip to New York City, we spent Friday exploring options for group service opportunities and planning our itinerary. We knew we wanted to participate in Hurricane Sandy relief work, and found an opportunity through the Occupy movement's website. We spent some time exploring response to national weather disasters as a social justice issue and watched *Trouble the Waters*, a documentary about Hurricane Katrina.

We arrived in New York around noon on Monday and headed to Central Park where we visited the John Lennon memorial. We spent the afternoon at the Museum of Modern Art and had a group dinner at an independent restaurant.

The next morning we were up and out at 7:30 am and headed to St. Jacobi Church in Brooklyn, one of the main distribution sites for Occupy Sandy's relief work. By 9am we were unloading the contents of a HUGE 18-wheeler into the church; we created a human chain to pass boxes of blankets, bleach and bottled water into the church storage areas. It was hard work but everyone was so positive and community-minded; we were sore and tired but were still inspired to give 100%.

After 3 hours of unloading, we left New York and headed to Bronxville to meet a former Four Rivers student at Sarah Lawrence College. We had an informal tour, ate lunch on campus and met with student activists to discuss the opportunities for social justice work on their campus.

Five hours of traffic later, we were home. To quote the students "we had a bonding experience and it was meaningful because it was fun and we were helping people."

Top — Alyna, Sophie and Taylor unload an 18-wheeler at a church distribution site.

Middle — Maia sorting and packaging donations.

Bottom — Kylie unloading cartons

INTENSIVES

HUNGER INTENSIVE—by *Ethan Dodge, 9th grade*

Did you know that 1 in 5 children in Western Massachusetts live in food insecure households? Each week, 15,000 of our neighbors seek assistance from the Food Bank.

In the Hunger Intensive we learned about poverty and food insecurity in our community. To give context to our own learning, we investigated hunger and health statistics locally and globally which came out of questions we wanted to answer.

On Monday, we chose recipes and prepared a meal for the Franklin County Community Meals program.

Tuesday was a full day of service. We started the day at Just Roots Farm in Greenfield and learned about the organization and it's evolving mission from Wisty Rorabacher. One group clipped a rose bush and the other group cleared a path in the woods. We even removed a treadmill! We then traveled to the Food Bank and heard a short presentation about food insecurity in Massachusetts.

Finally, we drove to Maplewood farm in Amherst and helped Jan remove and stack tomato cages from her fields so she is ready to produce more food next season. She grows food that she donates exclusively to the Amherst Survival Center.

We want to invite you to participate in a food drive to help with hunger in Western Massachusetts which will take place from 11/26-12/14. Canned and dry goods are best and students can bring in items to their crews. Thank you for your generosity! See page 6 for more information.



Above: Gunnar, Ethan and Finn make Mac 'n' cheese.

Below: working at Maplewood Farm, Amherst



FOREST GARDENING INTENSIVE

Apples & Pears and Kousas oh my!

This month the Forest Gardening Intensive planted 10 fruit trees around the Four Rivers campus & the Green River Recreation Area. Over their 200 year life span, they'll give over 400,000lbs. of fruit! We appreciate their generosity.

WANTED! Supplies for the Blatchford Garden:

We're putting the garden to bed for the winter and could use tons of: Bags of leaves, lawn clippings, bales of straw, and logs 4-8' long, 5-10" thick. You can drop off donations near the shed next to the blue barn. Thanks!

There are also zillions of Jerusalem artichokes in the garden. If you'd like some to eat or to start a patch at home, come dig some up! They are the tall brown stalks to the left of the "Blatchford Garden" carved stone.

From the Principal's Desk... **INTENSIVE EXPERIENCES** cont. from page 1

DRAWING: This group learned about figure drawing. They used the GCC art studio for part of their work, drawing skeletons and self-portraits. They learned different techniques and skills involved in figure drawing. They visited the Smith College Art Museum and drew flowers and plants from the models they saw. They also visited another gallery in Northampton, some of which they also sketched. They finished their study with short exercises and object studies. The group finished their presentation with a 30-second figure drawing demonstration.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: This group traveled to New York City having studied the impact of super-storm Sandy. They spent a full day in New York helping out at an Occupy Sandy location in Brooklyn. They unloaded an 18-wheeler full of food and supplies; they made up bags to be distributed through the area, and they learned about how communities respond to a disaster situation. They also learned about how communities function and how a group can organize for what's needed. We are all interconnected.

OUT OF HERE CLIMBING: This group included our more experienced climbers. After a local day and an afternoon climb in Wendell, they headed to Rumney, NH for some climbing in the White Mountains. They focused on sport climbing -- lead climbing and clipping in as they go up -- which they demonstrated horizontally. Just imagine that vertically.

FOREST GARDENS: This new intensive took students out into the woods to think about the cultivation of trees. These gardens of trees and bushes exist in a variety of places. They spent one day making tinctures from forest products and planted some trees on the school grounds. They spent a day at a farm, and another day cooking and making more tinctures and planting more fruit trees. All told, they planted 10 trees here at Four Rivers, with a potential to generate 400,000 pounds of fruit over the life of the trees.

WINTER IN THE WHITES: This group spent four days in the Crawford Notch area of the White Mountains. They took a sunrise hike, scampered through the "funnest" play structure ever, visited a waterfall at Wildcat ski mountain, checked out the base of Tuckerman's Ravine, and even had fun with their indoor activities. They finished their presentation with a song about Gluttony in the Whites, dedicated to Mr. Leaf.

DRAWING INTENSIVE:





Right:

Rock

Climbers

Rock!





SEWING INTENSIVE THANKS

Thanks to all who donated fabric for the sewing intensive. We learned a lot, had fun, and created some great products.

Melinda McCall

Robert Naranjo sews

ADMISSIONS NEWS

OPENINGS FOR NEXT SEMESTER AND FALL 2013!

We are accepting applications for a few openings in Semester 2 this year AND we are already receiving applications for Fall 2013!

This is the time of year that we ask all of our Four Rivers families to tell your friends, family and neighbors about the school. Word of mouth from our Four Rivers families is always the best advertising.

If you learn of anyone who might be interested please invite them to call for details and deadlines or check out our web site at www.fourriverscharter.org/admissions.

Deadlines for our next interim lotteries are 9:00 am on December 17 and January 14!

Priority Deadline for Fall 2013 Lottery—February 26, 2013

CALL NOW!

Leslie Taylor—Registrar—413-775-4577

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider. To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, DC 20294"

Four River Charter Public School is dedicated to educating young people and lives of learning and service. The school offers a rigorous academic program aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and an emphasis on character development for moral and social responsibility. Three central themes – nature, technology and community – pervade the teaching and learning at the school. Four Rivers works closely with parents and seeks both to serve and learn from the many resources of Franklin County.



Four Rivers Charter Public School
248 Colrain Rd., Greenfield, MA 01301