

# Four Rivers Currents

December 2013

From the Principal's Desk...

## HOW AND WHY WE FUNDRAISE AT FOUR RIVERS

'Tis the season -- for schools and non-profit organizations to ask for money. Letters in the mail, robocalls, ringing bells . . . Four Rivers is one of these organizations, so I want to take the opportunity to explain how we think about fundraising, how we go about it, and what we use the money for.

Our board has set very modest fundraising goals the past few years, somewhere between \$10,000-15,000 as the goal in each year's budget. Many charter schools try to raise significantly more than that, relying on those funds for operations and hiring staff to raise the money. We have chosen not to try to raise more than this for a variety of reasons: Franklin County is mostly a low-income community, so we know we don't draw wealthy families; Four Rivers is a public school and most families don't expect to be asked for financial contributions; and we don't have established (rich) alumni on whom to rely — yet.

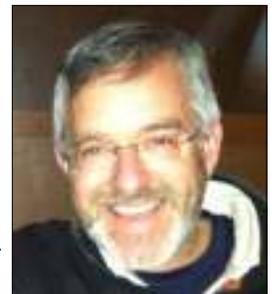
Furthermore, our administration has tried to limit the number of fundraisers we initiate. Because we live in a relatively small region, we assume that extensive fundraising would soon hit up the same small number of donors and businesses. I know some members of our community would like to see us aggressively go after as much as we can. We just haven't felt like that's the best approach in this community.

Founding Director, Ed Blatchford and founding Director of Operations, Harlan Smith have managed Four Rivers' finances exceptionally well. While some significant private donations helped the school through the early years, we have operated with balanced budgets year after year, even saving enough in the past four years to pay for the recently completed addition. We have steadily increased our enrollment, which has further stabilized our budget and program.

So what do we actually need to raise money for? We certainly could use a gym or other facilities that would significantly enhance our program. The expense of such an additional building we estimate to be in the range of \$1.5—2 million -- nothing close to what the new Greenfield High School costs, but still a huge amount for a small school that would have to be able to afford the construction and the ongoing operating costs. You would know if we take that on, because a serious capital campaign would likely be required.

The main reason we need to raise additional money is to be able to fund two particular programs that make our school special: Expeditions (multi-week learning experiences) and Intensives (4-day programs for the high school in the fall and for grades 8-12 in the spring that range from local service projects to multi-day trips). We made a decision two years ago that the school should not charge any fees for the Intensives we offer. We also implement Expeditions that call for field work, consultation with experts, sometimes travel, and materials to create high quality products. At present, every dollar we raise helps support these two programs. We also want to be able to support the signature trips that have become traditions at Four Rivers — the 9th grade Gettysburg trip which is transitioning to a 10th grade trip to Washington, DC, the seniors' trip to Star Island which kicks off their culminating year, and the biannual Spanish-language trip.

In the past and looking ahead, we ask you to come to Spaghettisburg, to buy pies, to get your Pierce Brothers coffee through school, to buy the beautiful note cards featuring student work, and to straight-up give money to the annual Sustainability Fund drive. I encourage our modest, hard-working community to give willingly and as generously as possible, knowing how carefully we manage our money and knowing how well we use it.



*Peter Garbus, Principal*

## Grade 7 News

### **BEÍSBOL** ~ Ms. Beardslee and Ms. Griffith

At the end of October, students in the 7th grade entered into an exploration that combined both the Wellness and the Spanish class: LA SERIE MUNDIAL DE BEÍSBOL. They charted their progress over the different wellness classes, created a uniform design in Spanish and wrote short biographies about themselves as players. They also learned stories of a few Spanish speaking players with a focus on Roberto Clemente and David Ortiz and explored the idea of athletes as role models. The products for this exploration were the World Series game in which students created cheers in Spanish and authentic baseball cards. Family trees are in the final stages of creation and will be on display very soon. Ask your students about them if you have not seen them already!



### **BIKE CLUB VISITS ELF** ~ Ms. Locke

On November 13 the Bike Club took a short ride into town to meet an ELF. ELF is a sun-powered trike featuring bike pedals and solar electric assist; Devorah Rosenberg, mother of Ray Kaemmerlen, a former Four Rivers student, had offered to give us a tour. Not only did we get a tour, but she even baked cookies for us to enjoy while we each waited our turn to have a chance to drive this unique Organic Transit vehicle. The "F" in ELF stands for "FUN."



## Grade 8 News

### **HUMANITIES** — *Ms. MacNeish*

This month in 8th grade Humanities we started two big projects: The Choice Book Independent Project and Medieval Studies. For their Choice Book Projects, students chose from *Gathering Blue*, *Whirligig*, *Shabanu* and *Can't Get There From Here*, for which they completed assignments they chose, reflections and literature circle discussions. We kicked off Medieval studies looking at a mystery piece and looking at expert texts and artworks from the time period.

*Photos below: Last week, we did a Medieval simulation where each student played the role of Monarch, Noble, Knight or Serf. I'm sure they learned about society during feudal times, but I also think they had the most fun defending the castle from crumpled paper!*

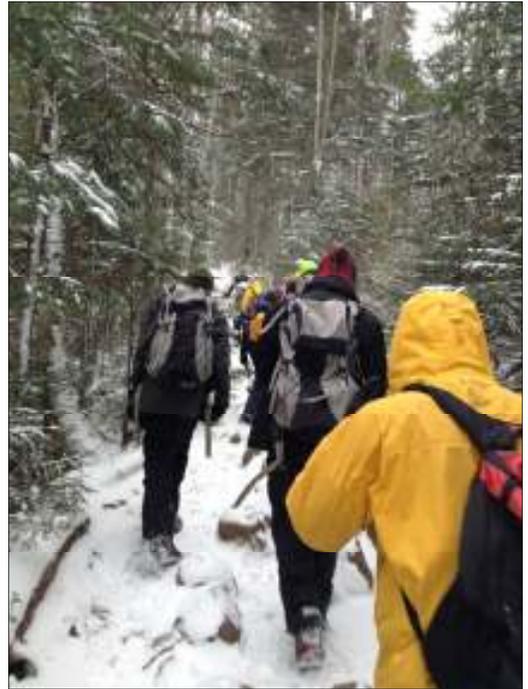




## DIV 3 NEWS

### INTENSIVES—WINTER IN THE WHITES

For the 3rd year in a row, Winter in the Whites went to Crawford Notch, NH for four days of hiking, group activities, and winter skills. We braved wind chills of -9° and 30 mph winds and learned how to stay warm in extreme conditions. Our experience included a sunrise ascent of Mt. Willard, some Geo-caching, a night hike, and a hike to the frozen Gibbs Falls.



### INTENSIVES — ACT LOCALLY

Students in this intensive with Ms. Beardslee learned about the variety of local service opportunities, and deepened their compassion and empathy through attempting to imagine another's perspective and needs.



*Pictured: making shopping bags from recycled material; cooking for a community meal.*



### INTUITIVE ART INTENSIVE

Francis Ford Coppola said, "An essential element of any art is risk. If you don't take a risk then how are you going to make something really beautiful, that hasn't been seen before? You have to take a risk." The Intuitive Art Intensive was all about taking risks, working automatically, and letting play with materials guide the creative process. Advanced art students at GCC led five workshops — from cardboard sculpture, to pin-hole cameras, to performance art. Our intensive emphasized process, but also yielded beautiful and interesting products now on display in the new high school hallway. We are very grateful to Jen Simms and our student-teachers at GCC!



**INTENSIVES—  
Zombie Apocalypse  
Preparedness**

**Team** — Will food be readily available once the Zombies descend? We think not. The ZAPT intensive flung into full speed by planting an abundance of fruit trees and berry bushes in public spaces and school yards. In total, 21 fruit trees, which when mature will produce about 200 pounds of fruit a year for 200 years, and 49 berry bushes were planted here in the valley. Who's your local hero?



**NURSE'S NOTES**

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 thru 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.

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.

As always, maintain hydration with adequate water consumption.

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

*Jeanne Milton, RN*



Come to the 5th Annual  
**Holiday Craft Workshop**  
 Sunday, December 8, 2013  
 10am - 3pm  
**Four Rivers Charter Public School**  
 on Colrain Road, just past the GCC entrance.  
**Join in the fun!**  
 Affordable craft projects (\$1-\$6)  
 Handmade for the Holidays \* for all ages! \* Raffles  
 Yummy things to EAT!  
 Everyone Welcome  
 DIY

All proceeds fund events sponsored by Four Rivers Family Council

## COLLEGE COUNSELING & GUIDANCE

### FINANCIAL AID EVENING

**WHEN:** Wednesday, December 18th, 6:00—8:00 pm  
**WHERE:** Four Rivers — Common Room in High School  
**WITH:** Michael Ireland Associate Director of Student Financial Aid Services, Smith College  
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 instructions 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.**

*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.*

### COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE NEWS

Students that applied early are beginning to hear back from colleges. Schools that have ALREADY said YES to Four Rivers seniors include:

Colby-Sawyer College! College of New England!

Fordham University! University of Georgia!

Congratulations to our seniors!

**SPANISH** — Ms. Beardslee

**Spanish 2** students culminated their work with Food and Farming with a wonderful Presentation of Learning evening. Students were able to display their market posters and the explanations, in English and Spanish, of the process they took to get there. Their short skits were finally recorded and through those they were allowed to demonstrate their ability to bargain and to show different live elements of the mercado. Short stories are next!

**Spanish 3** students have spent the few weeks before intensives editing and polishing both their sewing work for their own ARPILLERA (done individually or in pairs) and their descriptive artist's statement that weaves in the texts we have read, the chronology of the time and their explanation of their own personal design and image choices based on the rubric and the models they had seen.



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

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



Four River Charter Public School is dedicated to educating young people for 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.