

Four Rivers Currents

January 2014

From the Principal's Desk...

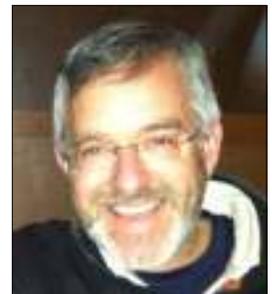
WORD ON THE STREET: WHAT OUR STUDENTS SAY ABOUT FOUR RIVERS

Happy New Year, everyone. I hope you had a good time off and that it's not too painful returning to school. Our first semester ends January 17, so here's to finishing strong.

We start our recruiting season again and we look to all of you to encourage your friends and family to check us out. I thought I'd share some comments that students contributed through last year's school climate survey; thinking about these voices might help you think of who to tell about Four Rivers. Students were asked what they tell their friends from other schools about Four Rivers. Some said they don't talk about school, some said all their friends are here, and some had negative things to say. I've selected from the positive comments because those are the ones we want to reinforce.

1. *I feel good about coming here because I think the program is rigorous, even though I don't think it appears that way to outsiders.*
2. *I tell my boys this school is the best out of all the others around here. Even though it hasn't been a great year for me this year, I still tell them it's worth it.*
3. *I describe Four Rivers as a very welcoming community. I appreciate the relationship I have with my teachers and I have no problem going to them with questions or to ask for help. My teachers have high expectations and I am confident that I am learning a lot here and that I'll be interested in whatever we learn next.*
4. *At work people ask me all the time what it's like to go to school at "that hippie school". I take pleasure in telling those people how amazing it is compared to the Greenfield school system. I tell them about the small size and the sense of close community. I also tell them about the dramatic change in grades I went through from 6th grade to now -- because I was failing almost every class then and now I am getting honors.*
5. *I would describe our school as very nice and friendly, but also academically challenging. I think we have a good environment here, and can have fun, be relaxed, and be ourselves. We also have high academic expectations, and have great teachers who care about what they're teaching. I would recommend our school.*
6. *You can be yourself; there's always space for your "type".*
7. *Strange, but brilliant.*
8. *I describe this school as a school where you need to do your work -- and the work here is a lot harder -- but it matters more than other public schools. Also the community here between students is a lot different. What makes me feel good about coming here is I don't have to worry about bullying; I can feel safe with some of my Identities.*
9. *It's a place you can really be yourself, and what you learn is genuinely interesting, most of the time. It's demanding, but sometimes you do things that really make you feel proud of what you've accomplished. The students and teachers are super friendly and accepting; there are 'cliques' but they're a lot more open and inviting than at most schools.*
10. *We're an expeditionary learning charter school, we do as much hands on and active stuff as possible, and as far as we know, we are held to a higher standard than most middle/high schools.*
11. *Especially as you do work in Div 3, you get more and more opportunities to create your own projects and learn about things you're interested in. I've really benefited from this independence, and I know I wouldn't have the same possibilities if I went somewhere else. You'll also get to know your teachers and classmates, so you learn how to behave in a small environment. Also, you can have as much of an impact on the community as you wish to.*
12. *The teachers are fun and treat us with a lot of respect and don't talk down to us. Most of the projects are interesting, it's homey, and the people are weird but in a good way.*
13. *"A one of a kind school." Expeditionary learning. Really nice teachers. You know everyone -- small, strong community. Expectations are set higher than some schools. You do so much more than a normal school (clubs, trips, intensives, big projects that get you ready for college).*

I hear in these comments so much of what we hope for in our school -- strong values, a commitment to learning, and a willingness to work hard. When people ask, I tell them there's a lot of great things happening at Four Rivers, which lead to comments like these. Spread the word!



Peter Garbus, Principal

Grade 7 News

SEVENTH GRADE SHORT STORIES

In November and December, 7th grade students embarked on another expedition that led to the creation of a short story. In English, students analyzed the literary elements of a story, asking the question: what does it take to write a good story? In social studies, students researched the transition of hunter-gatherers into early agricultural cities and asked: whose story is history and how do we consider multiple perspectives of what happened? With field work to the Eric Carle Museum and with the help of expert guest illustrator Micha Archer, the students enhanced their written work with beautiful artwork.

Photos clockwise from far left: Micha Archer works with Lyra during a workshop; Paige and Chelsea at Eric Carle Museum Library; Alouette's cave; Isaac's illustration of the flood scene; Julia's portrait of the protagonist.



SPANISH – Ms. Beardslee

As students in 7th grade Spanish completed their family trees, they turned their attention to vocabulary about school and created their own ideal school with rules and requirements. Students have now jumped into being able to talk about their likes and dislikes connected specifically to many different fruits and vegetables. They have been keeping a food journal to see what they eat when, because they are also learning to tell time. Looking more closely at these schedules, making a chart that shows foods and times and then inventing their own ideal daily schedule will help to form connections.

Grade 8 News

SCENES FROM 8th GRADE SERVICE INTENSIVE

December 16 — 20, 2013

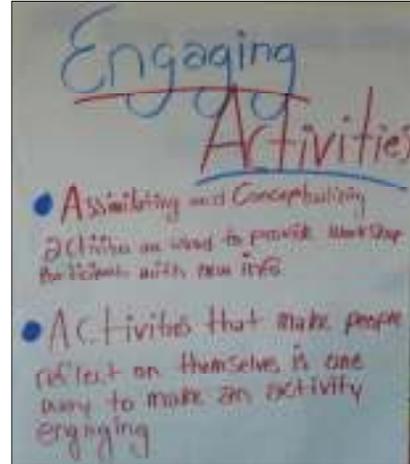


This week-long experience sent small groups of students to work with various organizations in our community. Each day the students came to school as usual, but in place of typical morning chores they completed readings about service, spent most of the morning out working at their sites, and reflected upon and shared their experiences. The week culminated in students reflecting on their Guiding Questions, sharing stories of their week, and writing thank-you notes in which they share something meaningful about the week with the people who they were working with. Photos show students cooking for a Community Meal and working at the Amherst Survival Center.

DIV 2 NEWS

MEDIA CAMPAIGNS, WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS, GRAPHIC ESSAYS

Tenth grade students are in the midst of their "Do Something" Expedition. In Social Studies, students are creating Media Campaigns on a chosen topic. In English, with their position paper complete, they are busy working in groups to outline their Youth Workshops. Topics range from Sustainable Energy to Heteronormativity, Media Influence on Teens and School Funding. They will be writing and practicing the workshops for another month. On Friday, February 14, every student will share in presenting the workshops at the Four Rivers Social Justice Day, with workshops running from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Come support the students by showing up and participating in the workshops!



In ninth grade English, students are working on a new product, the Graphic Essay. They're composing their own story, told through pictures and words, that connects with the book *The Road*. This product allows us to talk about themes and components of literature while also engaging students' creative energies. Some students are telling stories from their own lives, others are making up new stories, and still others are re-telling stories from books or movies in graphic form.



Photos: tenth graders work in teams on their presentations for the all school Social Justice Day workshops planned for February 14th.

SPANISH — Ms. Beardslee

Spanish 2 students have been focusing on seeing the preterit and the imperfect in context through reading the story UNA CARTA A DIOS. They have created vocabulary lists, story maps and have used their knowledge, vocabulary and reading comprehension to write their own creative short story using specific theme and plot elements from the story we read. After looking at more examples and, more immediately, reading another text in depth, students will write another story using different elements. Their final product will include a short presentation of a component of their story and the illustrated story itself.

Spanish 3 students were deep in the dissection of UN DIA DE ESTOS and that ended with short scenes from the story and also different reading comprehension activities to show the social statement being made in the story and how this is similar to our work with Chile earlier this fall. Now, students are walking the line between reality and the imaginary as they have turned their attention to LA CONTINUIDAD DE LOS PARQUES by Julio Cortazar. They saw and interpreted a short film that told the story and have been working with the vocabulary in the first section. Upcoming is more new vocabulary, labeled maps that tell the story and a creative writing piece that contains an element of the blurring of this line between reality and fantasy.

DIV 3 NEWS

HISTORY'S MOLECULES BROUGHT TO LIFE

IN CHEMISTRY CLASS — *Mr. Patari*

Did you know that the precise arrangement of atoms in the molecules that make up olive oil contributed to the rise and eventual fall of the Greek Empire? Or that New York was called New Amsterdam until the Dutch traded it to the English in exchange for a tiny pacific island so that they could have access to the chemical isoeugenol, a component of the spice nutmeg and an important preservative?

There are many instances in which certain molecules had a big impact on history. In chemistry class, juniors have been reading the book *Napoleon's Buttons* in order to learn more about organic chemistry and see how chemicals have shaped our world.

Students each selected a case study from the book and were challenged to express the main points of their selection in some type of creative performance for the rest of the class. Their talent and creativity combined with the interesting subject material to give a round of fun, humorous, and informative performances. From rap videos to a children's book, a newscast about the molecular properties of silk to a puppet show about oleic acid, there were plenty of inspired, well-crafted presentations.



Left: Dante Giramma and Collin Flan-dreau have the class in hysterics with their puppet show about oleic acid and its importance to ancient Greece.

MATH — *Mr. Hornick*

Applied Math — Students have been completing their portfolios of graphics. To create graphics, students needed to find data online, download it, and shape it into a graphic that tells a meaningful story.

Algebra 2 — Students have been exploring the beautiful mathematics that explains patterns in nature, or fractals. This involves playing with sequences and series, including the ever-mysterious summing to a finite number an infinite geometric series.

Advanced Math — Students have been venturing deeper into trigonometry and starting to explore the world of calculus.

Below: Matt Spring and Joshua Savoie bring the history of nitro compounds to life with their costumes and acting abilities.



11th ANNUAL VARIETY SHOW

Looking for ... variety
Sign up by Feb. 2



The 11th Annual Four Rivers Variety Show is slated for Friday evening, March 14th, at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls. To participate you need to submit a completed sign-up form to Mr. Leaf by February 2nd.

Acts range from singing to acting, trapeze swinging, dancing, instrumentals, yo-yo routines, stomp, rap and comedic skits; from soloists to small or large groups. Parents are also invited to perform. Acts need to be 3 to 7 minutes in length and be rehearsed. Morning Star Chevin will be directing, and will meet with each act before it can be added to the program.

Sign-up forms are available in the school office. Questions? Contact Mr. Leaf at the school.

NURSE'S NOTES

If your child is ill at school they will be assessed by me or Ms. Wood. We will then contact you for transportation. Please do not come to the school based on a text or phone call from your child.

REMINDERS:

- Breakfast is important; include protein.
- Stay hydrated; bring a water bottle.
- Dress properly for the weather.
- Practice good hand washing (to prevent spread of infections).

Jeanne Milton, RN



Four Rivers Drama Club Presents

HELLO DOLLY!

Fri. February 28 & Sat. March 1 at 7:00 pm

Shea Theater—Turners Falls

\$8 in advance / \$10 at the door

(tickets on sale February 1st)

Looking for parent volunteers for some carpentry / set construction and some light sewing. If interested, email Leah Plath at lplath@frcps.org

HELLO DOLLY!

COLLEGE COUNSELING & GUIDANCE

Families of college bound seniors are reminded that deadlines for financial aid applications are fast approaching. While it is somewhat easier to complete these forms after you have filed your 2013 tax returns, you should not wait if this means missing deadlines. You can file your financial aid forms using estimated figures, and then amend these once your taxes are filed.

There are two forms that need to be considered. The FAFSA should be completed by everyone who is applying for aid. This is completed online at the following location:

<https://fafsa.ed.gov/>

There are a number of locally hosted FAFSA Sundays – an opportunity to get help with completing and filing the FAFSA. Information is available here:

<http://www.fafsaday.org/>

The second form, required by many private schools is the CSS Profile, and information is available here: <http://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>

Questions? Contact Andy Stenson, astenson@fourriverscharter.org 413 7754577 ext. 222

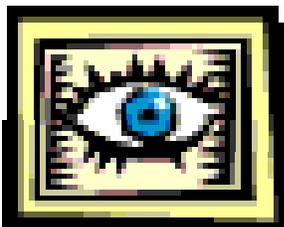
2014 COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE NEWS

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! Drexel!
Emmanuel! Fordham University! Newbury College! Smith
College! University of Georgia! Villanova!*

Congratulations to our seniors!

LOOKY



Take a look at the school's updated web site. You'll find the calendar of events front and center so you'll always know what's going on.

www.fourriverscharter.org

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.



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

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

SIBLINGS

of Four Rivers students who wish to enroll for Fall 2014 must submit an application by the deadline - 5:00 pm on February 26, 2014!

ADMISSIONS INFORMATION SESSIONS

Wednesday, Jan. 22, 7:00-8:30 pm

Saturday, Feb. 1, 10:00-11:30 am

Wednesday, Feb. 12, 7:00-8:30 pm

The school's best advertising is *Word of Mouth*, so we urge you to let your friends and neighbors know we are accepting applications. Tell two friends about the school. If you would like some brochures to hand out, contact Leslie Taylor at the school at 775-4577, x202.

TELL TWO!

Application Deadline

Priority Deadline for Fall 2014 Lottery

February 26, 2014 at 5:00 pm

CALL NOW!