

# Four Rivers Currents

November—December 2014

## From the Principal's Desk...

### TRIAL OVER—Use of Electronic Devices in HS to Continue

Well, it's official: students in the high school may continue to use electronic devices during passing periods and lunch. Through survey data collected before and after the trial, it's clear that both students and teachers observed a reduction in "sneaking" -- students texting in class or repeatedly leaving class to do so. Now they have a chance to contact parents about pick-up plans or send quick messages to friends without affecting learning time. While we still have concerns -- electronic obsessions, a possible decrease in social interaction, or students contacting home about being sick without going through the nurse -- we're going to move forward with the revised policy having completed a successful test. Below are some of the results:

#### Which electronic device(s) do you own or have access to?

school laptop only	39	32%
basic cell phone	31	25%
smartphone with data plan	62	50%
desktop computer	21	17%
personal laptop	53	43%
tablet computer	11	9%
e-book reader (Kindle, etc)	14	11%
none of the above	6	5%

#### Students (post): Over this last month, how many times during the school day do you use your phone or electronic device for non-school purposes?

Never	16	17%
On very rare occasions	28	29%
1—3 times	31	32%
4—10 times	15	16%
More than 10 times	6	6%

#### Students (pre): How much "sneaking" -- texting in class or heading to the bathroom to text, etc -- do you see currently on a daily basis?

Almost none (perhaps 1 or 2 students per day)	67	54%
Some (1-2 each period)	33	27%
A lot (more than 3 each period)	20	16%

#### Students (post): Over this last month, how much "sneaking" -- texting in class or heading to the bathroom to text, etc -- did you see on a daily basis?

Almost none (perhaps 1 or 2 students per day)	84	88%
Some (1-2 each period)	8	8%
A lot (more than 3 each period)	1	1%

#### Students (post): What effect did allowing the use of electronic devices during passing periods and lunch have on the amount of "sneaking" during class?

There was a lot less "sneaking" during class	58	60%
There was somewhat less "sneaking during class	18	19%
There was no impact	19	20%
There was somewhat more "sneaking" during class	0	0%
There was a lot more "sneaking" during class	0	0%

#### Students (post): What effect did the use of electronic devices during lunch have on social interaction?

There was a lot less "sneaking" during lunch	4	4%
There was somewhat less "sneaking during lunch	15	16%
There was no impact	52	54%
There was somewhat more "sneaking" during class	18	0%
There was a lot more "sneaking" during class	7	7%

#### Teachers (post): What effect did allowing the use of electronic devices during passing periods and lunch have on the amount of "sneaking" during class?

There was a lot less "sneaking" during class	4	50%
There was somewhat less "sneaking during class	3	38%
There was no impact	0	0%
There was somewhat more "sneaking" during class	0	0%
There was a lot more "sneaking" during class	0	0%

#### Teachers (post): What effect did the use of electronic devices during lunch have on social interaction?

There was a lot less social interaction during lunch	1	10%
There was somewhat less social interaction during lunch	2	25%
There was no impact	2	25%
There was somewhat more social interaction during lunch	1	10%
There was a lot more social interaction during lunch	0	0%



Peter Garbus, Principal

# Grade 7 News

## SCENES FROM SEVENTH



*Left: Noah and Isaiiah work together to make a physical map that shows the early migration routes of humans.*

*Above: Students rest during a hike in science class during which they learn about rock formations.*



*Clockwise from above: Using multi-colored tiles, Gina explains a history text about hunter-gatherers; Maddie shares a story she has been working on with her classmates at Highland Park; Maia, Alexis, Maddie and Ella's timeline showing human migration out of Africa.*

## Grade 8 News

### BARRILETES TAKE FLIGHT

A highlight for the 8th grade this autumn has been the BARRILETES: An 8th Grade Mini-Expedition in Spanish, Math, Science, and Humanities to explore Guatemalan culture and to create giant kites in the Guatemalan tradition. For this mini cross-disciplinary expedition, 8th graders created (in teams of three) their own version of a “Barrilete Gigante” that was both personal to them and their teammates and reflective of the Guatemalan kite-making tradition. Students learned why Barriletes Gigantes are made in Guatemala; they created designs with radial symmetry, colors and patterns similar to the styles of Guatemala; they chose a shared belief/message of hope and symbolism to represent the message for their kite; they engaged in the engineering process to figure out how to make their kite fly, and presented their learning and kites at a whole school Community Meeting. Students who take Spanish read a story in Spanish about a young boy who carries on the kite-making traditions of his deceased grandfather in Santiago Sacatépequez, further explored Guatemalan culture, and learned the vocabulary that they needed in order to share the message of their kite in Spanish. The Community Meeting Presentation followed by a kite flying extravaganza on Friday, October 31st, as students were dressed up for Halloween, was a great celebration of the 8th graders work and creativity during this project - and a sight to behold!



*Clockwise from top:*

*Kite-making; Test Flight; Finished Kite; 8th grade presentation at Community Meeting, and FLYING!*

## DIV 2 NEWS

### GLEANNING INSIGHTS:

#### HUNGER AND ABUNDANCE IN OUR COMMUNITY *by Abigail Schlinger*



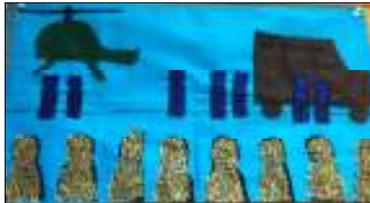
Early in October, the entire 9<sup>th</sup> grade went to Pine Hill Orchard in Colrain to go gleaning. Gleaning is when you pick food that is not “perfect” and can not be sold by the farmer. It is the grain or produce that is left after a farmer has already harvested what s/he can. At Pine Hill Orchard we picked up fallen apples off of the ground that would not be harvested or eaten otherwise. We loaded them into the buses and vans and drove them to the Second Congregational



Church in Greenfield. At the church, volunteers cooked some of the apples for a community meal, and then donated the rest to a local food bank. We collected around 90 bags and boxes of apples at the orchard. Gleaning is important because it saves food that would have gone to waste and provides local food for the community.

**SPANISH 3** ~ *Ms. Beardslee* These arpilleras will be on exhibit at ***Facing History and Ourselves***, an education organization which supports teaching different historical perspectives and telling stories that bring about social change. The introduction to the exhibit is below, written by *Sophie Garbus*:

These arpilleras represent the events in Chile during the 1970s that we learned about in class. One event was the dictatorship



of Pinochet. Some of our arpilleras show military vehicles that arrived when Pinochet implemented a military government. Another aspect of the time period of the dictatorship was a form of protest called the Cueca Sola. This is a dance that the women performed to draw attention to the growing issue of missing men. These men were being detained by Pinochet and being tortured and many were killed. Women also used another form of peaceful protest, *las arpilleras*. They, as we did in class, embroidered fabrics with images or scenes that sent a powerful political message.

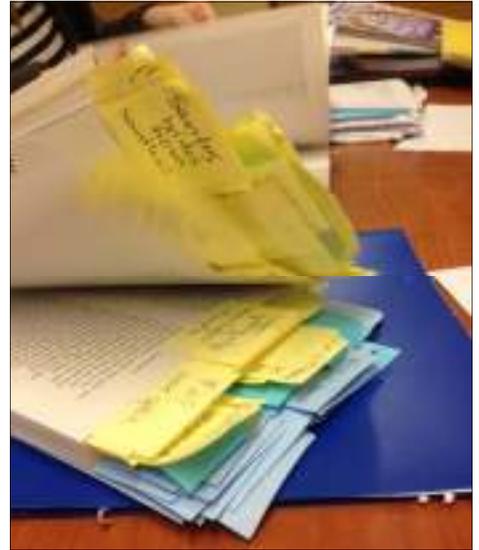
Our process for making the arpilleras started with several rough drafts on scrap paper, so that we could sketch out our ideas. Then, once we had a solid plan, we chose fabrics to use and started to cut out the various components of our arpilleras. After cutting out, ironing and pinning down our scenes, we were ready to sew. We learned several different stitches and patterns, and the end products turned out beautifully. We have translated our artist statements from Spanish to English. They explain both the artistic choices we made and also how they connect to the different texts we read to build background knowledge.

## DIV 3 NEWS

### ENGLISH - Comparative Literature

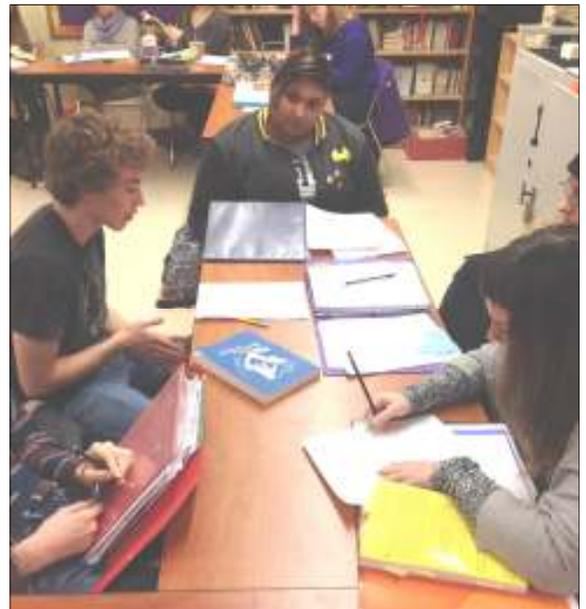
Juniors have just completed their second Literature Circle, reading and discussing books by Latino, Latin American, Asian, and Asian American authors. For the last few weeks, sticky note annotations have helped them gather evidence and contribute actively in group discussions. Now, students begin writing analytical essays about their books. *Some possible theses ahead:*

- The novel *Across the Nightingale Floor* follows the Hero's Journey by moving from a dark beginning to the fall of a higher evil.
- In the novel *The People of Paper*, one of the main themes is love and loss. The author displays this theme by showing how the characters cope with the loss of loved ones: Federico de la Fe and fire, Little Merced and limes, and finally Froggy and the song-bird.
- All the mothers in *The Joy Luck Club* change from independent women in China to stereotypical Chinese-American mothers in their daughters' eyes.



### HISTORY - Modern World

Throughout the fall, juniors have been tracing the themes of imperialism, revolution, and nationalism. They just completed presentations about a historical revolution, comparing their case studies to the French Revolution as well as modern examples like Indonesia and Egypt. This week, students will apply their understanding of the MAIN (militarism, alliances, imperialism, nationalism) causes of WWI to a simulation activity. As representatives from Germany, France, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and other powers, students will try to negotiate an accord and prevent WWI!



### ENERGY EXPEDITION UPDATE

The senior class energy expedition is well underway! In preparation for making their documentary film, students are in teams of six generating different film proposals. Soon they will have a board meeting and present their proposals, and the class will choose one film idea to make into a documentary. Possible film topics include the Kinder-Morgan Pipeline, the decommissioning of Vermont Yankee, and the Sirius Eco-Village, among others.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

### DECEMBER 10 IS VALLEY GIVES DAY

This year Four Rivers will be one of the many non-profit organizations taking donations as part of Valley Gives. For those of you who give each year to the Sustainability Fund (our annual appeal), you can do so through this event. But we're especially wanting to draw in new donors. There are special prizes contributed by the Community Foundation of Western MA as well. Click below to go to the event website. We'll send more information as the date approaches, but consider this your heads up.

<http://valleygives.razoo.com/story/Four-Rivers-Educational-Foundation>

### FOUR RIVERS TO IMPLEMENT PARCC TESTS IN GRADES 7, 8, 9, and 11

We have received approval to participate in a "road test" of new exams that will eventually replace the MCAS. Tenth graders will continue to take the MCAS this year for English Language Arts, Math, and Biology. But 7th and 8th graders will take the new PARCC tests in English Language Arts and Math, as will 9th and 11th graders. Scores this year will not count against the school, but they should give students and teachers valuable information about what these new tests are like. More information to follow.

## HOLIDAY POP-UP STORE

**Dec 2 - 19 in the Farmhouse**

**DAILY at Dismissal Time**

*Pierce Brothers Coffee, hand-carved wooden coffee scoops, Farm Expedition note cards featuring student photography, Four Rivers sweat-shirts, hats, bags and more. Some old apparel styles will be on SALE.*

This holiday season, start your shopping at the Four Rivers Holiday Pop-Up Store.

### SPECIAL APPAREL ORDERS:

We will be offering Basketball, Drama, and generic Four River items. Forms for Basketball and Drama will be distributed at the first practice after the Thanksgiving break, also all forms are available in the office, or on the Four Rivers Family Council School Store website shown below. Because of the holidays **order forms will need to be submitted by Friday, Dec. 5, for holiday deliveries.** These cozy items make GREAT HOLIDAY GIFTS!!! Plan ahead! <http://www.fourriverscharter.org/family/schoolstore.html>.

## NURSE'S NOTES

We are all aware of the substance abuse escalation in Franklin County. New data has shown that the frontal section of the brain which controls risk behaviors is the last to fully develop. Development is not complete until 25 years of age. We can all be PROACTIVE in preventing children from using opioids.

- Keep all prescription drugs in a secure, locked place
- Monitor use of prescription drugs
- Keep a log of how many pills should be in each prescription bottle
- Dispose of leftover prescription drugs as quickly as possible and in a safe way.

For more information go to

<http://frcog.org/opioid-education-awareness-task-force>.

Jeanne Milton, RN

## COLLEGE ADVISING

### SAT/ACT Testing

January/February is the last opportunity for seniors to take care of any standardized tests that they need for upcoming college applications. Seniors, and their families, are reminded that testing requirements, including subject tests, are school specific and that they should check school websites to be sure that they have met the requirements.

**SAT Test Date: Jan 24 - registration deadline is Decemeber 29**

**ACT Test Date: Feb 7 - registration deadline is January 9**

### Financial Aid

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 2014 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 financial aid. This is completed online at the following location: <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>

There are a number of locally hosted FAFSA Sundays that provide 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 colleges, is the CSS Profile and information is available here: <http://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>

Families should also check the websites of individual colleges to determine the specific financial aid requirements. Some schools have additional requirements for select scholarship opportunities.

**Questions? Contact Andy Stenson, [astenson@fourriverscharter.org](mailto:astenson@fourriverscharter.org) 413 775-4577 ext. 222**

### SOCCER SEASON ENDS—WINTER SPORTS BEGIN

The Boys Varsity Soccer team finished the season with a 9-5 record. We lost a close game in the quarterfinals to Dublin 3-2, after being behind 3-0, Four Rivers came back strong in the second half and had several good chances to send the game into overtime, but it was not to be. Such is the way in sports.

The Girls Varsity Soccer team had a building season with players from all 6 grades. Despite not having a winning record, the team showed marked growth and ended the season with a very strong showing against 2nd ranked, Charlemont Academy. Asia Littell was our sole senior. Congratulations, and we'll miss you!

Winter sports begin December 2nd. We have two competitive basketball teams, varsity and JV. The intramural ultimate program has had heavy sign-ups and is near capacity. This bodes well for our teams in the upcoming competitive season in the spring.

*Photo: Senior Isaiah Lapierre moves the ball down the field.*



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM FALL INTENSIVES — Nov 21 - 26

*Intensives are short, focused learning experiences that take students outside the classroom walls -- and sometimes outside their comfort zones. They stretch students to take on challenges often not part of the regular school program. They also tap into or spark their personal interests and passions. Students in grades 9–12 just spent several days doing intensives, and in the spring, 8th graders will join them for more adventures.*

### **ECOSCAPES: Connecticut River**

Mr. Wilson took students to do scenic rafting and urban hiking, navigating by compass, cooking good food, and sleeping in yurts and tipis. Their explorations were about appreciating a sense of place, tending to a common resource, and interpreting natural history. An unstoppable force, the Connecticut River is New England’s largest and longest, yet many of us never stop to think about the ways in which it has shaped human existence in our region and also how we as people have come to define the river.



## PEAK EXPLORATION

Ms. Beardslee, Mr. Schatz and students climbed peaks in Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire, exploring and contemplating their role in nature and as a community. They also learned some practical skills like using a map and how to take care of yourself in the woods.



*Photos clockwise from right:*

*Looking down the Connecticut River from atop Sugarloaf; Summit of Mt. Monadnock in New Hampshire; descending Monadnock.*



**WINTER IN THE WHITES** Ms. Plath and Ms McNamara (Coachie) took a group to the White Mountains of New Hampshire for some winter hiking, exploring, geo-caching, reflecting, team-building, as well as cooking and eating some amazing food. They learned the basics of Leave No Trace, map-reading and trail etiquette, as well as how to hike safely with a group.



## CREATING ART ZINES

An art zine is a self-published limited edition book of images with or without text. Students worked with faculty and students from the Greenfield Community College art department to discuss examples, learn new techniques, experiment with different media, and participate in the design process. Students collaborated on a group Zine as well as designing and producing a zine of their own chosen theme.



*Ms. Roll and Ms Viens and students joined Jenn Simms, Four Rivers parent and Greenfield Community College Art Faculty as they worked at GCC art studios on their ZINES.*



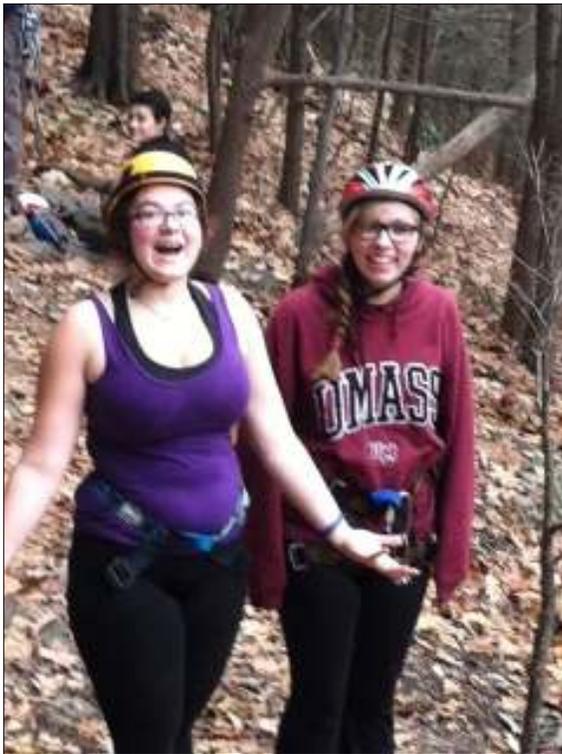
## ROCK CLIMBING

### INTENSIVE

Dr. Fogel, Ms. Strassman, Ms. Rice and Ms. Ritchie took this group on the road—they spent 4 days climbing a variety of different kinds of rock at local crags outdoors, and then headed inside at Central Rock Gyms. Participants did top-roping, leading and seconding. The trip was open to student climbers of all skill levels.



More climbing . . . .



VALLEY GIVES—DEC 10—VALLEY GIVES

## DECEMBER 10th IS VALLEY GIVES DAY

REMEMBER FOUR RIVERS AND MAKE A DONATION

We especially want to draw in new donors. There are special prizes contributed by the Community Foundation of Western MA. Click below to go to the event website:

<http://valleygives.razoo.com/story/Four-Rivers-Educational-Foundation>

## CROSS COUNTRY— Coach Eliza Beardslee

The cross country season was a huge success! On the boys' side, Four Rivers was 3rd place overall with individual finishers (out of 63 total) as follows: Mac Sloan Anderson was 11th, Casey Davey was 12th, Isaac Blodgett was 14th, Oscar Gibson was 21st and Jayden Skelly was 25th. On the girl's side we had 2 finishers in the top 10: Lily Harris-Hendry was 5th, Amelia Worden was 10th. Maya Laur was 20th and Jemma Dickson came in strong at 29th place (out of 48 total). In team awards, most-improved runners were Maya Laur, Jemma Dickson & Eli Smith. Runners that showed heart and the passion of the sport throughout the entire season (Coach's award) were Amelia Worden, Isaac Blodgett and Jayden Skelly. The 110% award was given to athletes who consistently, whether in practice or in meets, gave 100% of their soul to the competition and to bettering themselves for it. These awards were presented to Soleil Osgood & Tynan Hewes. MVP was given to those athletes who consistently showed an incredibly high level of fitness from dedicated work at practice and on their own time: Oscar Gibson, Casey Davey & Lily Harris-Hendry. Special thanks to Captain Chris Turner for supporting practice routines and to supporting new runners over the course of the season. See you next year!



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



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.