

Birchtree Friday Update



Birchtree Charter School 7107 E. Palmer Wasilla Hwy. Palmer, Ak 99645

April 11, 2014

t. 907-745-1831

f. 907-745-1843

School Assembly-

Birchtree grades 1-8 will have a school assembly at AT&T Sports Center this Thursday, **April 17th** from 8:30– 10:30 AM. Please be sure to drop your child (ren) off at the AT&T Center between 8:10– 8:15. Teachers will greet students and escort them to their seats. Please take a moment to study the attached flyer for information regarding drop off and parking at the AT&T.

This assembly , in keeping with Waldorf tradition, provides an opportunity for classes to perform for one another fostering camaraderie between grades and a sense of community within the school. Students feel proud demonstrating what they have accomplished and gain insight into what they can expect in the future by watching upper grades perform.

Community Event-

Greetings friends at Birchtree,

I wanted to invite you to a community event to be held Thursday, April 17th from 6:00-7:30 at the Career Tech High School.

Fronteras Spanish Immersion School is hosting acclaimed educator, consultant, author and speaker, Helena Curtain, to share with us her knowledge about how learning a second language benefits students and their families.

We invite all interested community members to this free, open discussion, but thought that it might be particularly relevant for the Birchtree community.

For more information, contact Fronteras at 745-2223, or e-mail me.

Thanks,

Amber Rinella

Fronteras APC Board Member



Virtue of the Week-

Excellence:

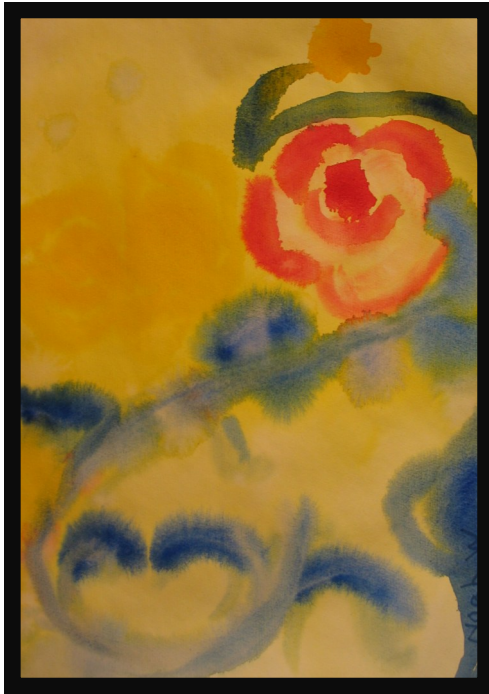
Excellence is giving our very best to any task we do and any relationship we have. Within us are many possibilities. Excellence hones our talents and turns them into gifts for the world. Excellence requires us to practice humility by learning from mistakes. Each time we do something, we seek to improve it, to keep raising the bar. Excellence is effort guided by a noble purpose. It is on-going mastery. It flows when we are doing what we love. The perfection of a seed is the fruit that grows from it. Excellence in our lives brings our gifts to fruition.

Spring Pictures-

Erin Cross of Cross Light Photography has been working tirelessly uploading the class and individual pictures on her private, secure web site. You can still order your student(s) pictures until April 25th. The link to Cross Light Photography is available on our web site, birchtreecharterschool.org. ([spring picture](#)).

Menard Activities-

Due to scheduling conflict, Birchtree students last remaining opportunity to participate in the afterschool activities at Menard Sports Complex will be April 18th.



2nd Grade Art



1st Grade Art

Sharing the gift of music-

The end of the school year is often accompanied by multiple music events which allow student (s) to demonstrate knowledge amassed throughout the year. With that in mind I thought it fitting to include a sampling of an article written to educate parents on the importance of music. "The Waldorf music curriculum is as rich and subtle as every other facet of this approach to education. While it has the ability to produce fine musicians, its true aim is to help produce fine human beings. These students go forth into the world understanding that working in the physical world takes effort, perseverance and a refinement of skills. They have experienced the dynamics of working within a group of peers with differing abilities in order to produce something fine, beautiful and meaningful. As students leave the school, it is our hope that they are able to allow those aspects to blossom in every aspect of their lives so that they may experience the fulfillment of truly living musical lives."

To see the full article go to waldorfmusic.org/child2.html

Celebrating school district volunteers-

MSEA's annual Champions for Children dinner celebrates those individuals and organizations volunteering in our classrooms. This year a few students from our Birchtree orchestra will perform for the volunteer dinner at Evangelo's restaurant Friday, May 2nd from 6:30-7:00 PM. We are delighted to share their talents with those who share so much of themselves for the betterment of our community.

5th Grade Honor Choir– Tuesday, April 15th

Mrs. Fry, along with a talented group of 5th graders, will be participating in the honor choir at Palmer High School. They will perform at the high school on the evening of Tuesday, April 15th at 7:00 PM. Additionally, there will be an all day rehearsal from 9:15-3:00 at the high school Tuesday, April 15th. Please contact Mrs. Fry if you are interested in chaperoning this field trip.

Spring Concert– Monday, April 28th-

Save the date- Birchtree's Spring Concert is scheduled for Monday, April 28th at the Wasilla Bible Church from 6:30-8:00 PM. Music teachers Mrs. Fry and Mrs. Eddings request that performers arrive at 6:00 PM to prepare for the concert.

Ms. Fry and Mrs. Eddings have scheduled a rehearsal for Monday, April 28th. Students will arrive at Wasilla Bible church at 1:00 PM and return to Birchtree at 2:45 PM.

BPG News-

The monthly BPG meeting will be held next Wednesday, April 16th in Mrs. Folsom's room at 3:45 PM. Please join us as we work to uplift our school community.

Track starts Tuesday, April 15th-

Attention 4th and 5th grade students, track starts Thursday, April 15th. Practices will be held on Monday's, Tuesday's, Wednesday's, and Thursday's from 3:20-4:40 PM. Please keep in mind that all practices are held outdoors. We may have a few rainy, cold days ahead. It is recommended that all participants dress appropriately for the weather. The season concludes May 17th with a district wide track meet. Pick up your form in the front office today!

Expressions of Gratitude-

Mrs. Folsom would like to thank Shannon Minder for organizing breakfasts for SBA's. Also much thanks to Laura Sampson for helping to serve food, and the many parents who donated food and materials. We had a fantastic start to each day with a hot breakfast, thank you all very much!

Mrs. Levesque extends thanks to Jo and Clif Terwilliger for their tireless search for Pentathlon attire, taking inventory of said articles, and devising a check out system for future 5th grade Olympians.

Ms. Levesque also thanks parents for keeping their children well rested, ensuring their timeliness to school, and contributing nutritious food items during the recent testing period.

Summer Art Camp-

Birchtree Parent Guild is proud to offer students the opportunity to have fun with friends in a creative educational environment this summer. Visit birchtreecharterschool.org for the link to find out more about the classes available and register your student for this great summer camp. <http://budgetauthenticity.org/summercamp/>



4th Grade Art / animal studies

Volunteer opportunities

Summer Arts Camp-

Birchtree's Summer Arts Camp is looking for a few good coordinators. You will be working alongside a fantastic group of individuals dedicated to creating a fun, artistic, and creative summer camp experience for our students.

The volunteers who accept this position will be provided with a template to work from with very specific and "doable" job duties (You will not be expected to re-invent the wheel). This is a terrific opportunity to meet talented parents and students. Contact Anna Folsom at anna.folsom@matsuk12.us for more information.

May Faire-

May Faire, Saturday, May 3rd is a wonderful time for students and parents alike to welcome the ever increasing daylight of spring and awaken our senses to the beauty around us. Birchtree students welcome spring with our annual May Faire. This most anticipated event includes such long standing traditions as the May Pole dance and the trading of "gems".

Ms. Sharrer has dedicated many hours to the preparation and organization of this fun event. Volunteers are needed to assist in the set up and cleanup for the faire. In addition, Ms. Sharrer is accepting craft vendor applications. If you are a crafter or artist interested in participating in the faire please pick up an application in the front office. Contact Mrs. Sharrer at: amysharre@matsuk12.us if you have any questions.

Box Tops

Please help us organize our **box tops**! This is a great activity you can do from home to help earn some extra money for our school. Contact Karie Raynovic at mkraynovic@gmail.com for more information.

Spring Concert

Our **Spring Concert** for grades 4-8 will be held at the Wasilla Bible Church, Monday, April 28th from 6:30 -8:00 PM. We are looking for volunteers to set up chairs from 11:30- 1:00 and a few volunteers to help monitor students during rehearsal from 12:30- 2:15 PM. Please call Gena at 745-1831 if you are interested in lending a hand.

Pentathlon-

Birchtree 5th graders, will participate in our 4th annual **Pentathlon** held at the Sherrod Soccer Fields in Palmer, Thursday, May 8th. Typically hosted by Anchorage Waldorf schools, this year, Birchtree has the great honor of hosting this fantastic event. It is my hope that you *will* want to take part in this one day event with us and share in the joy of this beautiful competition. We are in need of volunteers for the following different areas:

- ◆ Lead parents and an enclave of other volunteers for preparation and/or organization of authentic Greek foods for the feast after the event (recipes available at school)
- ◆ Pentathlon judges and officials that do not have a child participating in the event (requires a training commitment for one afternoon after school)
- ◆ A photographer
- ◆ Several persons who can act as a nurse at the First Aid station
- ◆ Individuals willing to lend a tent canopy for the day
- ◆ Persons for set-up (May 7th after school and early May 8th) and tear-down (immediately after the event)
- ◆ 4 individuals to work the registration table
- ◆ And 2 adults to take on the roles of Zeus and Hera.

If you can help, please contact Gena Chastain at Birchtree (745-1831)

Nonviolent Communication NEXTYEAR'S EARLY RELEASE, Part 2 Seminar-

Birchtree Charter School, in conjunction with Heritage Birth Center, is proud to present Nonviolent Communication. This three-day seminar, April 25, 26, and 27, will meet at the Palmer Senior Center from 9am—5pm. The cost of the seminar is \$35 for one day and \$75 for all three days. 1-2 credits may be available for in district employees and with MAA for midwives.

Agenda:

Friday, April 25th Instructor Sarah Peyton will discuss communication in healthcare and communicating with people experiencing trauma. Saturday, April 26th discussion will revolve around communicating in conflict and difficult situations (adult conversations). Sunday, April 27th the seminar will cover communicating with children and learning to hear the heart of our children's souls in their words.

Yearbook News-

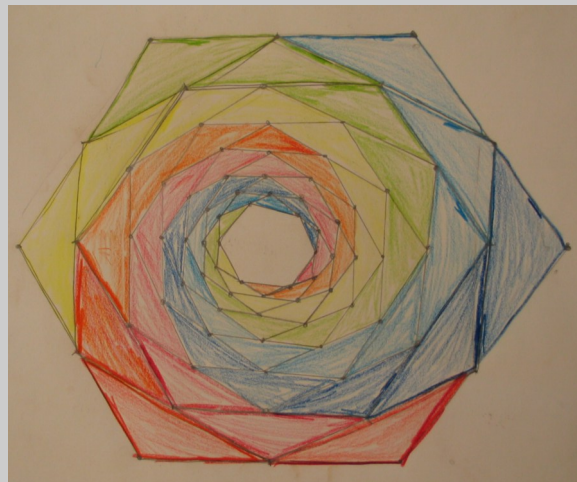
Once again we will use TreeRing to make our yearbooks. They are a web-based organization that plants a tree for every yearbook ordered by our school. Yearbooks are for sale online and include 2 customized pages. Please go to: www.treering.com/validate and use Birchtree passcode: 1013468155713247, The deadline to purchase and customize your yearbook is **April 8**.

Thursday does, in fact, seem to be an odd day to schedule an early release day. So why have we decided to make a change to our weekly rhythm for next year? Last week, I indicated that Birchtree's attendance has dramatically improved over the past two years (with the exception of this Spring semester), fulfilling an attendance goal that had been set within the confines of a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. I also explained that attendance at a Waldorf school holds greater import because the main lesson is delivered "fresh, daily". I sometimes liken this to eating freshly caught salmon versus serving canned fish. The lesson's substantive nutrients are lost when absentees partake in a course of processed food, or in being fed leftovers.

Now, more than ever, attendance matters in all of Alaska's schools. The Alaska Department of Education has adopted a new system, the Alaska State Performance Index (ASPI), by which the state's schools are rated. Under the previous method, schools' Annual Yearly Progress determined whether a school was considered a passing or a failing school. Currently, Alaska's schools are evaluated on a star-point system. Unlike the formula for meeting AYP, when the only attendance that truly mattered was the percentage of students present on the days of standardized testing, the new ASPI rubric includes a school's yearly attendance rates. This further compels us to be even more vigilant about our school's attendance. I, for one, appreciate the State's recognition that every school day matters.

Next week, I will explore the topic of the need for an early release day in the first place.

-Donna Levesque



5th Grade Art

April/May

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
6	7	8 High school initiative meeting 8:30 AM, BTC library 5th grade parent	9 Intent to enroll forms due.	10 2nd grade Imaginarium field trip 9 am -3 pm	11 Picture orders due. Early Release 1:30	12
13	14	15 Spring Picture re-takes 5th grade honor choir at P.H.S. 7PM Track : 3:20-4:40 High school initiative 8:30 AM	16 BPG meeting 3:45 Lottery 7 PM 3rd grade paper violin project 5:30-7 PM Last day for archery club	17 School Assembly at AT&T 8:30 -10:30 AM 5th grade parent night 6:30 PM 4th grade parent night 5-6:30 PM	18 Early Release 1:30 (Last opportunity for Menard)	19
20	21	22 8th grade parent night @ 6:30	23	24 Mrs. Albina's parent night 5:30-7:30 PM Mrs. Hill's 5th grade class play at Colony High School Theater 6-8 PM	25 Menard activities canceled Early Release 1:30 Nonviolent communication seminar 9-5	26 Nonviolent communication seminar 9-5 at Palmer Senior Center
27 N. C. seminar 9-5	28 Spring Concert 6:30-8 PM	29	30	1	2 Pastries for Parents 8:30 AM Sleepover with Ms. Sharrer Early Release 1:30	3 May Faire 11-4
4 8th grade D.C trip	5	6	7 APC Meeting 6-8 PM	8 5th grade pentathlon TBA	9 Professional development (No School)	10 District track meet TBA