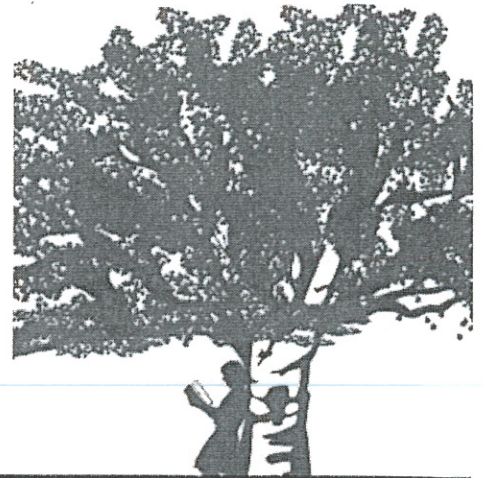


Birchtree Friday Update

Birchtree Charter School 7107 E. Palmer Wasilla Hwy. Palmer, AK



May 1, 2015

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VIRTUES in RETROSPECT, Part 3

Last evening, I attended a workshop given by Jo-Ann Climenhage, a remedial specialist who works with many Waldorf schools, helping teachers and families reduce stress and support optimum development for children who expend tremendous effort in school-related tasks. These children may have difficulty sleeping; they may be sensitive to certain touches, or fabric; they may have food allergies; they may run through a room at hurricane speed; they may need constant movement or fall out of chairs; they may avoid movement altogether; they may lack a sense of caution, often injuring themselves; or they may struggle to create inner pictures. During her talk, I realized that so much of what these children need up-front is empathy and understanding. Adults tend to view these children's actions (or inaction) as being deliberate. In fact, their actions often result from reflexes that in the course of development, have been retained or have returned, from an early age. Once the nature and root cause of their difficulties are understood, teachers and parents can respond by providing these children with activities that help them to reduce the amount of energy otherwise expended to carry out certain tasks. The relationship between child and adult becomes less judgmental and more congenial.

All relationships benefit from a quest for understanding the other, along with a good measure of empathy. Rudolf Steiner calls the greatest sense a person can possess the sense of ego. Ego, in his definition, however, does not refer to the psychological definition of ego. Rather, it refers to knowing another human being so well that we can live into his/her essence. It encompasses such a complete understanding of both ourselves and others, that empathy becomes second nature.

At Birchtree, we strive to model compassion and empathy for students so that they, in turn, can learn to become empathetic. Every teacher comes to know his/her students deeply, which in turn manifests true understanding. When teachers observe compassion and empathy shown by their students, they acknowledge these virtues with true praise. When teachers observe children struggling, whether with academic or social matters, their first questions are, "What is this child asking of me?" "How can I remove obstacles laying in the path of this child's learning?"

Of all the virtues learned at Birchtree, empathy is the most difficult to attain. It requires the most maturity, compassion, forgiveness, openness, and selflessness of all the virtues. Simultaneously, it is the most rewarding experience: to feel seen by another. To be seen is what each child (and adult) desires. This calls on us to look more deeply into children's behaviors that on the surface exhibit defiance, lack of effort, or apathy. Often, these are behaviors that mask a developmental glitch, hindering a child's ability to perform a task. Gaining this understanding is the first step to a rewarding transformation for child, parent, teacher, and community.

-Donna Levesque

Save This Date

May 1-8: 8th Grade trip to Washington DC.

May 2nd May Faire 11 AM - 3 PM

May 7th: 5th Grade Pentathlon @ Goose Lake in Anchorage. Bus provided only to Goose Lake departs at 9 AM

May 8th and 9th: BPG rummage sale.

May 9th: Elementary Track Meet Palmer High School

May 11th: Mr. Clarks 4th grade class play time to be announced

May 11th: Mr. Danz's clas Bike Ride after school

May 12th: Mrs. Johndros class play at 5:30 PM

May 13th: APC meeting 6-8PM BPG meeting 3:35

May 13th: Mrs. Hills class play @ 1:30 PM

May 13th: Ms. Albina's class play @ 5:30 PM

May 13th: Mr. Phelps class play at 1:30 PM

May 14th: Mrs. Trans Class Play @ 5:00 PM

May 14th Shakespeare night Mr. Klauders class at 5:30 PM

May 15th: 5th Grade camp out at the Reindeer farm in the Butte.

May 15th: 8th Grade promotion at Mat-Su Senior Center 6 PM

May 18th: Medieval Games (6th grade) and the end of the year Picnic

May 18th: Last day of school for students. Enjoy your summer break!!

"I am thankful for the gift of forgiveness. It lightens my spirit."

Reminders

Yearbooks are available now in the front office. Please stop by and purchase this year's Birchtree yearbook for \$15.00, Limited supplies. Get yours before they're gone!

BPG and the 7th grade class are looking for good quality donated items for this year's rummage sale! The sale will be held May 8th and 9th at the school. Donations are being accepted each day. If you have any questions please contact Mr. David Auld at 315-3079.

Please pay Second Semester Supply fees. You may check at the Front Office if you are unsure if you owe. The supply fees are due prior to returning for the 2015/2016 school year. If you are incurring a financial hardship, please ask at the Front Office for a Supply Fee Scholarship.

Gratitude's and Expressions.

The 2nd grade teachers are so thankful for all of the parents and families who attended our class plays last night. We greatly appreciate everything that parents did to help us get ready- helping the students paint backdrops, make costumes and props, memorizing lines, and more. Thank you!

~Mrs. Basner & Mrs. Horvath

Thank you to all those who participated in Tuesday evening's Honor Festival! Everyone did a marvelous job and I am so proud of everything you all accomplished together! It was a real joy to be able to work with you not only here at school but also in a festival capacity. The debut of orchestra as part of the festival was an enormous success and the choir sang beautifully. Thank you especially to the family and friends that exhibited patience and flexibility throughout our unexpected chaos of the day and then still showed up on time to support our Valley's music programs. I was pleased to see so many of our Birchtree friends in the audience as well. Every one of you made the night special and I look forward to doing this again next year!

~Jessie Eddings

Thank you Thank you to the 5-8th grade students and Debbie Mckimmey for helping move all those boxes of supplies. You all ROCK!!

Middle School Track Schedule

May 6th JV meet @ Teeland (@ Wasilla High School Track)

May 7th Varsity Meet @ Teeland (@ Wasilla High School Track)

May 12th JV Championship @ Houston

May 14th Varsity Championships @ Colony



Kindergarten is looking for a truck load of dirt for the kindergarten play area. Do we have any families interested in donating a truck load of dirt?

Lost and Found

Lost and found is stacking up with winter gear, water bottles, random hats and gloves. Please stop by and take a peek. All unclaimed items will be donated to Bishops Attic on May 22nd.



Michael Warzewick a Fire Training Specialist With the Mat-Su Fire Department stopped by Birchtree Charter School on Thursday April 30 to present certificates and coins to Terren Shield, Felix Robertson, Ty Terwilliger and Brennan Dory for their community service. Congratulation Boys!



Birchtree's First Knighting Ceremony

On Monday, April 27, Birchtree held its first sixth grade Knighting Ceremony. In connection with a study of the Middle Ages, students learned about the feudal system, the path to knighthood, various groups in the Middle Ages, and the ideals of chivalry. The sixth grade also participated in a knighthood project in which each student was given the quest to serve others for 12 hours without recompense. Every student who was able to complete this quest was knighted into the Order of the Birch. Some students went above and beyond the minimum requirement and were inducted into the Order of the Owl. This project helped students to realize that each of them is a vital part of their own families and community. They have the gifts and will to give to others out of an open heart – one of the signs of a true knight!

The ceremony included the students dressing in period costume and processing down the ski trail to the clearing in the woods. A small group played their flutes, and then joined the entire sixth grade in singing the Morning Verse in Latin. Students then were called forth individually to be knighted by their teacher. The Ceremony ended with students taking an Oath of Knighthood stating the following:

I will be a light without fear
In the face of darkness.
I will be brave and upright
And worthy of honor.
I will speak the truth
Even when it leads to hardship.
I will safeguard the helpless
And do no wrong.



April/May 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27 Day 2	28 Day 3	29 Day 1	30 Early Release 2nd grade plays and pot luck at 5 pm Day 2	1 Pastries for Par- ents 8-10 AM 8th grade leaves for D.C Day 3	2 May Faire 11-3
3	4 Day 1	5 Day 2	6 Day 3	7 5th Grade Pen- tathlon at Goose Lake Early Release Day 1	8 Professional De- velopment day No school for stu- dents. 7th Grade Rummage Sale	9 7th grade rummage sale 9 AM
10	11 Mr. Clarks Class Play 4:00 PM Mr. Danz's Class bike ride after school Day 2	12 Mrs. Johndro's class play 5:30 PM	13 APC Meeting 6-8 BPG Meeting 3:45 Hill, Phelps and Albina Clls plays Day 1	14 7th and 8th grade Promo- tion practice 3 PM palmer senior center Mrs. Trans Class Play 5:PM 7th Grade Shakespear night 5:30 PM	15 8th Grade Promotion at Palmer Senior center at 6PM 5th grade Camp out at the Rendee Farm Day 3	16
17	18 LAST DAY OF SCHOOL School Wide Picnic Day 1	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30