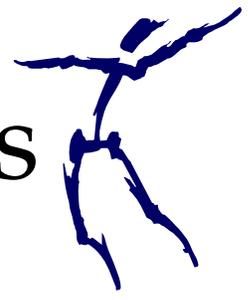




Wellsprings Friends School



Spring 2008

3590 West 18th Avenue, Eugene, Oregon 97402

541-686-1223

www.wellspringsfriends.org



Educator and Author to Speak

LouAnne Johnson, best known for *My Posse Don't Do Homework*, which was made into the film, "Dangerous Minds," starring Michelle Pfeiffer, will speak Friday, June 13 at the First Christian Church at 1166 Oak St. She is also the keynote speaker for the 2008 Graduation Ceremony on Saturday, June 14. The public presentation offers a witty and unique look at educational options. LouAnne commented, "The talk would be entertaining and and informative for anyone over 12, especially for parents and educators."

Arson Destroys Classrooms

by Yancey DeYoung

Wednesday, April 23, 2008

2:00am: after hearing what sounded like a gunshot, the manager of the nearby apartment building looked to see thick smoke coming from the end of our modular classrooms

2:10: Eugene Fire Department is on site to distinguish the blaze

2:19: A Fire Arson Investigator is called

2:40: Yancey arrives on campus to find the end of the mod destroyed

Although a short period of time, those 40 minutes drastically changed the day-to-day flow of the school. By 7:00 am that morning, the Eugene Police Department Arson investigator had come and gone, and we began to rearrange classes. Classrooms were shuffled and staff were quickly adjusting to what will be our norm for the remainder of the school year. The Big room became Math class, the Sky room is now an active classroom, the lobby serves as guitar class, and we are all dwelling cozily in the one main building.

After the first few days of shock, sadness and outrage, students and staff began settling in to the new set up and changes. With the insurance adjustor declaring the mod a total loss, work has begun on finding a new building and getting the remnants of the old demolished. The goal is by fall to have the two classrooms rebuilt and ready for the new school year.

The arson investigation continues and we feel we are fortunate that no one was harmed, that as a student said, "it's only stuff". It has been a challenge, but we keep moving forward and know that we are more than "stuff" and our resiliency, creativity, and adaptability as a community has been able to shine.

"Why Wellsprings?"

Term III offered a course titled "Wellsprings Chronicles" that took this question to dozens of students, parents, staff and board members in an effort to compile a record of why people choose to be involved with Wellsprings Friends School. For a selection of responses, see inside.





KALEIDOSCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

by Dennis Hoerner



Robert and Graham at Mt. Hoodoo

Fall 2007 Activities

Miniature Golf
 OMSI: BodyWorlds
 Laser Tag
 Hot Springs
 Ropes Course
 ManiFest III
 Halloween Party
 Science Circus Presentation
 Community Service
 Bowling
 Thanksgiving Dinner
 Holiday Party



Nico and Hunter perform at the Cozmic Pizza benefit concert.

At Wellsprings, we intentionally focus on activities and exposure as powerful routes to learning. So far, 2008 has been a delightfully busy year, over and above the many field trips taken by individual classes and the many guest presenters that teachers invite to their classes.

Mid-January saw a benefit concert at a local music and meeting venue, Cozmic Pizza (purveyors of delicious organic pizza). Two professional bands were featured, Fuzz4 and Fortune Cookie, in each of which some of our teachers are members. But the highlight of the evening was performances by student singer/songwriters, an alumni rap duo “Parallel Minds,” spoken word performers, and others.

In early February, a once-a-week class on “Peace and Justice Issues” began. On the long Presidents’ Day weekend, three students from the class, along with three other students, participated in an Alternatives to Violence (AVP) workshop organized by members of the Eugene Friends Meeting. Several guests have spoken with the class on topics as varied as nonviolent civil disobedience, school shootings, and human rights problems in the mental health system. A well-known Quaker activist, Peg Morton, talked with the class about the roots of her personal convictions and described her involvement in work to shut down the School of the Americas, including her prison time for “crossing the line.”

Also in early February, many of our students and teachers were among the 800+ volunteers from the community at Project Homeless Connect. This event is a one-day gathering of service providers in the Lane County Fairgrounds Building to offer “one-stop” help to the area’s homeless population.

On February 12th, there was an all-school presentation on “The Cultures of India.” Bhavani Manheim, a retired anthropologist and member of the Eugene Friends Meeting, focused on “the history and social, religious, and aesthetic significance of the saree” in the different regions of India. Two days later, the school made an excursion to the Cascade mountains for a chance to play in the snow.

On Leap Day, Gail Brown and Katya Blissenbach, parents of an alumnus, held a benefit dinner at their cozy restaurant, Morning Glory. Diners enjoyed a vegetarian or vegan meal while acoustic music was provided by students and staff from the school. The Morning Glory benefit, with its community camaraderie, has become a heartwarming tradition since the first one offered in 2004.

Wellsprings was very fortunate in mid-March to have an unexpected opportunity to hear from Adrien Niyongabo from Burundi. In his native country, Adrien works with the African Great Lakes Initiative of the Friends Peace Teams to provide AVP workshops and Healing and Rebuild-

ing Our Communities programs. The students gave their rapt attention throughout his presentation, which also included illustrative exercises using student volunteers.

Shortly after Spring Break, our fourth annual Free 'Sale' was held on April 19th, which involves a lot of work that once again was ably spear-headed by the indefatigable Yancey. The Free 'Sale' is like a yard sale where donated items from clothes to clothes driers may be available—all absolutely free! Prior to the event, we notify local agencies who work with lower income families, though anyone is welcome.

April 25th brought a storyteller to school, Dayton Edmonds, for an hour of fascinating stories and Native American flute music. Each year, the Multi-Cultural Storytelling Festival brings three nationally-known storytellers to the area for visits at numerous local schools, and a Saturday evening concert performance. The 28th saw the last Family Night meeting of the year, as always a lovely warm gathering of our community, as well as a chance for parents to talk with teachers one-on-one.

May's Peace and Justice Festival was regrettably cancelled, as the staff and I were overwhelmed with our personnel search (among a few other tasks!), which hopefully will result in the hiring of two new and wonderful teachers. One will teach science classes in the fall, following in the giant footsteps of our beloved young staff member, James, who is off to graduate study and a prestigious fellowship at Columbia University.

The other new teacher will be our fifth fulltime teacher—a bold step for us which we hope will give teachers more time to work with individual students, and maybe even get a few minutes during the day to catch their breath. Only extraordinary fundraising efforts by our wonderful Board of Trustees have made that possible. Well over 100 people applied for those positions, but as I write we have finally managed to narrow the pool to ten, whom we are looking at very closely. Nothing is more important for Wellsprings than the people who get hired as staff!

On May 17th, our annual Appreciation Dinner took place. Beth Hunt and John Allcott, tireless supporters of the school since its founding, graciously host in their home a couple dozen members of the broad Wellsprings community, to help us show our appreciation for their varied contributions that keep Wellsprings thriving. At the dinner, three invited students spoke with heartfelt eloquence about their experience of Wellsprings.

This school year will round out with the special public presentation by LouAnne Johnson the night before Graduation, and on June 14th with Graduation itself, which is a very moving culmination and expression of all we do here. Please join us if you can!



Max and Aniela play on the front porch

Spring 2008 Activities

Zany Zoo presentation
Community Service
Hoodoo Tubing Trip
Free Sale
Appreciation Dinner
Playback Theatre
Bowling
MultiCultural Storyteller
Movies
Beach Day



Chanci and Paul on the mountain.



“Why Wellsprings?”

I have only been going to Wellsprings Friends School for one semester, but I know I really like it. It provides me with a laid-back, stress-free learning environment which I appreciate more than I can express in words. I consider the teachers my friends, and I am inspired by the students, to say the least. Even though I have only been going here for five months, Wellsprings feels like my family.

One of the things I love most about Wellsprings is how much it values individuality. I feel like I can always be myself in any situation. I can say whatever and dress however I want, and I don't have to worry about what other people think of me. When I went to North, it felt like people were weirded-out by my dreadlocks, piercings, and weird clothes, but here I don't have to worry about all that; it feels nice.

I also love how much of a community this school is. Everyone works together to solve problems and make things happen. I love going on fieldtrips and going out and doing things with the school. I like having community meetings because I know if I ever have any problems, I can just bring it up during the meeting, and people will listen.

I love this school and its philosophies and feel lucky to go here. I am looking forward to finishing out high school at Wellsprings Friends School and gaining new stories and experiences. -TALEA



I have been going to Wellsprings about half a year. I came here because I was kicked out of public school, but in a sense I did choose to come here over another alternative school. My first impression was, “Look at all those crazy kids.” Since coming to Wellsprings Friends School, I am a lot more confident in myself and not as shy as I used to be. I have a lot better grades now. I get along

with all the students just find and I have no problems with anyone. The teachers are really cool, unlike at my previous school. What I like about Wellsprings is that you are almost your own teacher. You only get out what you put into your work. If you don't do your work, you won't succeed. But if you apply yourself you can learn at your own pace.

-RYAN



It gives us students hope that we can succeed.

-JACOB

I have been going to Wellsprings Friends School since my freshman year, and I am a senior now. My parents are the ones who found Wellsprings for me. Before I came I visited, I thought I was going to hate it, but when I came I was like, “WOW!” I felt like I belonged. Since going to Wellsprings I have learned I can figure stuff out on my own. I have been taught in a real-world kind of way. I'm more mature. I've realized that I have made some mistakes, and I just try to fix them. -LUIGI

A collection of stories and interviews



My daughter has been going to Wellsprings since November of 2007. Since she has started going to WFS, I haven't had to fight with her to go to school each day. She wants to go to school now. I have noticed that she has changed in a few other ways too. I can see that she feels more confident in her schooling, she doesn't argue with me as much, and she isn't as materialistic as she used to be.

One of my favorite things about her going to Wellsprings is that she feels comfortable talking with her teachers, and she isn't treated like just a number. I am very glad we found Wellsprings. It was just what she needed. -PARENT



I like how everyone is different, but everyone is accepted. I also like how the teachers are understanding and not intimidating.

-ALEXANDRA



When I first started going here, I was quiet and shy. Now I am outgoing, awesome and cool. I am also a lot nicer. -NICO

I have been going to Wellsprings Friends School for three years because South wasn't working for me. My first impression of the school was that it was crazy cool that all the jocks were hanging out with the nerds. This school works a lot harder than public school to build community. The almost constant air of community building is an experience in itself.

Since coming to WFS, I have been more rambunctious, happier, and less depressed. The teachers are very friendly. I get along with them much better than the teachers at South. The students at WFS are cool. They've taught me a whole lot of stuff, and they help me when I need it.

One Wellsprings philosophy I like is the clean slate thing. Everyday, you get a clean slate to build from. I wish more people would adhere to that philosophy. I also like that there is usually only homework if you want it. -NATHAN

My son has been attending Wellsprings since September. When I went to the school and talked to Dennis, I felt that he was a very calming and respectful person. We just felt like it was a good fit for our son. Since he has started attending Wellsprings, I see he actually looks forward to going to school everyday. Academically he has changed as well, compared to how he was before.

I think Wellsprings is such a great school because they respect the students as individuals and encourage them to try what it is they want to do. I feel like the teachers are caring, not because it is their job but because it is their mission.

Since enrolling our son into Wellsprings, I have a lot more peace of mind. I know he is in good hands. We know he is going to be a different, better person than he would have been if he had stayed in public school. -PARENT





A True Leader

by Hanna Still, Trustee

Each of the past issues of this Newsletter has highlighted a staff member, and now the time has come to present a picture of our treasured School Head, Dennis Hoerner.

Not surprisingly, I find myself challenged by the complexity of that task. I'll admit that I have discarded three efforts which I deemed inadequate of giving a worthy picture of our School Head. I shot those efforts into the wastebasket. However, as I reached the wastebasket with each successive shot, I concluded that success was around the corner:

All of us are ready to accept that Wellsprings is by far NOT the run of the mill conventional school. How then did Dennis prepare himself to steer a decidedly unconventional school and is doing it eminently successfully?

Dennis prepared himself by welcoming with courageous receptivity the appropriate step in response to the next moment life brought his way.

He did not sidestep pain, or fear, or growth. He developed the skill of looking each calmly in the eye. Clearly, we can read Dennis' composure as having evolved in the course of a full and complex life. I conclude that each challenge of his life evolved into teachable moments, - imperceptibly, intuitively.

We thank you, Dennis we glean from you, that the demanding school of life where your feet have trod not only prepared you to be our profound School Head, but also daily aids us in choosing where our feet shall touch the earth.

Note: Hanna has been a member of the Board of Trustees since the founding of the school in 1994.

Sam Smith Honored



Sam Smith has volunteered to assist Bob in our math classes for the past 7 years. Every Monday through Thursday morning, Sam spends three hours helping students wrangle their way through the challenges and pleasures of mathematics.

We love him. And his volunteerism was highlighted in the monthly "Community Solutions" page of the *Register-Guard* newspaper in March, under the category of "Education and Schools." A month later, Sam was honored by the United Way as "2008 Volunteer of the Year." From seven categories, a total of 55 volunteers were considered for that award—and Sam was the one chosen. His award also brought with it a \$500 check for the school, which was in addition to another \$500 check that came earlier with Sam's being chosen as top volunteer in the "Education" category.

Each year the United Way of Lane County holds a luncheon to honor all those who volunteer, and to present awards to particularly outstanding individuals. Sam's wife Betsy, two Wellsprings students—Abeni and Nicole, two Trustees—James and Hanna, as well as Bob and Dennis attended this year's luncheon with Sam. A lengthy article about Sam (and Wellsprings) was published in the *Register-Guard* on April 27, 2008, under the headline, "Retiree teaches teens love of math."

"Dennis makes me feel heard, cared for, and he opens my mind." -student

Parents of Former Students!

Please help us update our records. If we are sending this newsletter to your son or daughter at your address, but they no longer live there, please inform us of their current address. In addition to mailing newsletters, having updated information will also help us directly contact former students regarding special events, such as our next "Wellsprings Family Reunion," and special mailings such as alumni surveys. Just call 686-1223 or e-mail <info@wellspringsfriends.org>. Thank you for your help!



Ways to Support Wellsprings....

- ✓ **Volunteers** provide much needed assistance around the school. Contact Yancey if you have some time to offer and would like to find out how you can help.
- ✓ **Estate Planning** that includes Wellsprings Friends School will enhance many lifetimes through education. We urge you to consult with your legal and financial advisors about including the School in your Will or about establishing a Trust. Please call us if you would like to discuss your Estate Planning—there are dozens of ways to support Wellsprings through your Will or a Trust.
- ✓ **Financial Contributions** are welcome anytime. Twice a year, fall and spring, we appeal to the friends and supporters of Wellsprings to open their wallets as well as their hearts. General fund financial support from the community is *essential* for the continuation of our work.
- ✓ **Stock Transfers** Several contributors to Wellsprings find this to be one of the most attractive ways to give to the school. We have a DTC account whereby we can receive any amount of stock, small or large. If you risk a large capital gains tax by selling stock, it may be an advantage to donate your stock to Wellsprings, a nonprofit organization, for the tax deduction. Contact our Board Trustee and Treasurer, Hanna Still, at 541-345-5588, for details.
- ✓ **The Mani Shimada Memorial Fund** was set up to honor a well-loved student who died suddenly in 2003 from bacterial meningitis. A designated portion of the fund is available each year to support on-going Wellsprings projects. To contribute this way, your check should be made out to the school with “Shimada Memorial Fund” in the memo line.
- ✓ **Automatic Monthly Payments** You can easily arrange for a regular payment of a specified sum to be made to Wellsprings on the day of your choice. Just contact your financial institution.
- ✓ **Donated Items** from pens and pencils to couches to sports equipment, etc., are always appreciated. Call the office if you have something to give that you think we might be able to use.

In addition, did you know that you can automatically have contributions sent to us when you shop?! It's all done electronically, and *there is no cost to you*. The following programs are easy to use and benefit Wellsprings.

eScrip: After registering your credit, debit or store cards with eScrip, each time you use those cards at participating merchants, Wellsprings will receive a percentage of your spending. You can register at www.escrip.com.

Albertsons sponsors local schools through their Community Partnership program. Simply register the school code through your preferred savings card at www.albertsons.com.

Washington Mutual has a program called WaMoola for Schools. Please contact a representative of Washington Mutual, if you bank there, to sign up for this program.

Congratulations to the Class of 2008!

Graduation Ceremony

Saturday, June 14

10:00 am

First Christian Church

1166 Oak St.

Featured Speaker: LouAnne Johnson



Andreas
Martinez



Andrew
Eames



Andrew
Meyers



Anna
Scheri



Ben
Campbell



Brittanie
Koch



Ebony
Morgan



Graham
Moffat



Hunter
Edwards



Jacob
Hileman



Jason
Bailey



Keegan
Gormley



Laura
Hopkins



Luigi
Fremonti



Max
Headley



Mayra
Jacquez



Mercedes
Burns



Nathan
Sauser



Nick
Parker



Anpao
Morgenstern



Rachel
Wolfe-
Goldsmith



Sam
Cho



Stephanie
Henry



Taylor
Parish



Tyler
Missenheimer