



# Wellsprings Friends School

“THE LITTLE SCHOOL WITH THE BIG HEART”

Autumn, 2011

Newsletter

3590 W. 18th Ave, Eugene, Oregon 97402

541-686-1223

www.wellspringsfriends.org

## Awesome October!

by Dennis Hoerner, Head of School

Wow, what a month, what a week! On Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, over 100 people came to our “Housewarming” to celebrate purchasing the property. And only three days before that, Wellsprings was honored by Community Mediation Services with their third annual PeaceBuilder Award.

### PeaceBuilder Award



Our award!

The evening of Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, a cross-section of fourteen people from our community—students, staff, and Trustees—represented Wellsprings at the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual “Peace By Piece” gala event sponsored by Community Mediation Services (CMS). Each year, CMS honors “other organizations and individuals in Lane County that contribute towards building a *culture of peace* in our community.” Individual awards are given to an adult and a youth, as well as to an organization—which this year was Wellsprings Friends School! An entire page of the evening’s printed program was devoted to describing the multiple ways in which Wellsprings nurtures a climate of nonviolence and compassion. The other awards were presented first, then ours, which I and Trustee Hanna Still accepted on behalf of the school. Each recipient was allowed 5-7 minutes time to speak, and I felt very proud talking about our wonderful school to a room full of people most of whom had not even known of us before. I’d like to end with a comment from the CMS program: “Our sincere hope is that the *PeaceBuilder Awards* not only express appreciation for the peace builders we honor, but also that others will be inspired to follow.”



The Wellsprings Contingent



Chip Coker, CMS Director, presenting the award to Dennis

### Housewarming Celebration

In 1994, when Wellsprings was founded, we started renting the Eugene Mennonite Church building. Only 22 students were in the school that first year, and by 2011 the student body had tripled in size. Almost from the beginning, the Church and the school had off-and-on conversations about Wellsprings purchasing the property. Formal discussions began in 2009, and after careful

*(continued on back)*

# Michelle Epperson: Dual Roles

by Alyssa Jackson ('11)

Michelle started at Wellsprings in September. She teaches first period math and also maintains our library. Just this past August, Michelle completed a Master's degree in Education at the University of Oregon. Starting to look for employment, she felt her ideal teaching role would be in a non-traditional setting. When she researched alternative schools in Oregon, Michelle first learned about Wellsprings,



and says she was "blown away" when she found our website. She liked all of the classes that were offered, was interested in the idea of our school's sense of community

and togetherness, and was drawn to our holistic approach to educating teens.

Out of the blue she sent an email asking if we were looking for teachers; her timing couldn't have been better. We had a need for someone to teach a math class and also someone to work part-time taking care of our library. With a degree in advanced mathematics and being a person who "loves books," it was a perfect match!

Michelle was born in Nebraska and raised in Arizona. She enjoys playing softball, and is a league bowler. She also enjoys ceramics and throwing clay on a wheel. Michelle is very easy to get along with and has been a great addition to our community.

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*"The conventional view serves to protect us from the painful job of thinking."*

-John Kenneth Galbraith

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# Scattered

-Phantom feelings.  
ghostly thoughts.  
complex meanings.  
simplicity rots.  
mind unravels  
stories are told.  
mistakes are made.  
shoulders turn cold.  
reality crumbles.  
it falls through the cracks,  
right down the drain.  
you lost all the facts.  
fire and ice.  
looking for anything nice.  
sweep me away, we'll dance with the wind.  
the devil is watching he wants to join in.  
bottle it up again and again,  
then pour it all out on paper with pen,  
breathe your air and think your thoughts.  
believe what you know, whatever it costs.

-Erryn King ('13)

## Online Auction!

The Wellsprings Fundraising Committee would like to announce that we are kicking off our **First Annual "Online Auction for Education"** in early April and **we need your help!** In order to help raise crucial operating funds for the school, our goal is to offer at least 100 quality auction items/packages, generously donated by various community members and Eugene businesses.

- Do you have a favorite restaurant, spa, golf course, gift shop, salon, and so on, which you might be willing to ask for a donation on our behalf?
- Do you own a business or professional service and would like to donate an item to advertise your business?
- We are especially interested in finding someone who has a personal vacation rental or some extra frequent flier miles...

If you have an item to donate, or if you feel uneasy about making an "ask" to a local business, please contact our Director of Development, Roger Durant, who would be willing to make the call on your behalf. 541-285-3309, or email [rgd\\_co@msn.com](mailto:rgd_co@msn.com).

# Question of the Day

by McKenzie Anderson ('12)

Bob Schlichting teaches math and other subjects at Wellsprings. One of five fulltime teachers, Bob is now in his eleventh year here. Each teacher brings something unique to the community, providing a well-rounded and engaging educational experience for our diverse group of students.

Bob likes to end each class with a “question of the day.” This started when he was a student teacher in college, working with elementary school kids. He feels it’s a way to re-group and to learn about each other in a casual manner. The process allows everyone to be heard and there is no wrong answer. With luck, even the shyest person will respond. You never know which question will spark good conversation; it’s usually hit or miss. The simplest question, such as “Who is your favorite superhero?” will often create an amazing dialogue. Although students have the option to pass on a question, most students engage in the daily check in. Bob finds that food questions will make everyone hungrier, while video game and tattoo questions seem to be most popular.

Students appreciate the chance to share with the staff and with other students little pieces of their life. One student described her experience, “When I attended Wellsprings, it was a terrifyingly welcoming and accepting first experience. As a new student I was very inside of myself and was inept at being in the spotlight. But as soon as it was question of the day time, I was eager to give my answer and hear everyone else’s. It became something I looked forward to, and now I find myself missing it.”

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## Examples:

- What is your favorite food?
  - What is your favorite pastime?
  - If you could change your name, what would it be?
  - If you could be any kind of cross-breed, what would you be?
  - If you could have any kind of super power what would it be?
  - Do you have siblings?
  - Do you have pets?
  - What is your favorite snack?
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# Who is “Tall Paul”?

by Alyssa Jackson ('11)



Paul Simon was born in Salem, lived on a small farm in Amity, moved to Pendleton, and then moved to Eugene when he was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Paul attended the University of Oregon before becoming certified to teach yoga through the Sivananda International Vedanta Center at Nassau. He also has received extensive training in Nonviolent Communication, has completed the Heart of Facilitation through the Power of Hope, and is an active member of the Peace Community. He came to Wellsprings after being encouraged by our former yoga teacher, Neil Hunter, to contact Dennis about a job.

Paul says that when he finally touched base with Dennis, he knew that Wellsprings was a good place for him to be. His first impression was “Whoa, this place is cool, and I want to work here.” He started teaching in September 2010, and besides yoga has also taught “Peace and the Art of Living” and “Poetry.” Last year he volunteered to organize our Peace and Justice Festival, and will do so again this year. To distinguish him from fulltime teacher Paul (Schroder), the 6-foot 4-inch newcomer was given the nickname, “Tall Paul.”

Paul is a talented musician and likes to write songs and poetry. One more of his favorite activities is running with his dog.

deliberations on both sides, eventually led to a sales agreement. On June 30, 2011, legal ownership passed from EMC to WFS. Roles reversed and the Mennonites now rent from the school, with very little observable change in the day-to-day life of either group.

To celebrate this milestone, we threw a party! Alumni and current students, teachers past and present, Trustees, parents, friends of the school, Mennonites, Quakers—a wonderful mixture of folks from the broad Wellsprings community came together to celebrate. Music was provided by Concrete Loveseat, a jazz band in which our own Bob Schlicting plays bass. Four-year veteran teacher Tyler Tjernlund, with a few student helpers, ran the barbecue. Various people contributed food and desserts.

During a short half-hour program, I introduced a string of wonderful speakers. Helen Park, the founder of Wellsprings, gave a lively account of the early days, Angela Etter ('96)—one of the three students in our very first graduating class—spoke next. She was followed by a message from Iana Mathews-Harris ('06), and words from Chayla Todd ('11) and current student Jessica Johnson ('12). Last to speak was James Fox, the Clerk (Chairperson) of our Board of Trustees.

This was indeed a special occasion. Thanks to everyone who attended!

