

**May/June 2017
News & Events**



Greetings from Jon Hall, Head of School

Dear Westfield Friends community,

The word gratitude comes to mind as we finish the 2016-2017 school year and my first year as head of school at Westfield. We are all very grateful to the families who send their children to our small but magical school, to our amazing faculty for creating a vibrant and caring environment for our students to learn and thrive, to our hard working staff who always go the extra mile, to our board of trustees for their thoughtful stewardship of our school, and to all of our students who never cease to impress us with their strong grasp of Quaker values and their care and knowledge of the world around them.

Our school community really came together this year during the planning of our very successful Spring Fete and Art Sale. My sincere thanks to both Lily Taylor and Sharla Floyd and everyone who worked so tirelessly on this important fund raising event for Westfield... the event raised over \$100,000 for our school and a dedicated \$18,000 for our new outdoor play area. A truly inspiring community effort!

The month of May was a whirlwind of activity! From the fantastic performance of our Kindergarten and First Grade class in their play "Barnyard Moosical" to the competition of our annual Field Day... Garnet 54 and Blue 53 (for those of you keeping track), our first Grandparents and Special Friends Day, the annual Pancake Breakfast, and the ribbon cutting for our Westfield Tree Walk*... the month flew by and we are now preparing for our final week of the school year!

As we send another 8th grade graduating class off to high school, we are reminded of the gifts that each student brings to Westfield and we hope that they take with them the confidence, the values and the spirit of community that have been instilled in them throughout their years at Westfield Friends School.



Bryce, Jack, Will & Parker enjoying lunch with Dr. Jon Hall at Friendly's!

Congratulations to the entire Class of 2017! We wish you all the best in high school and beyond - remember to visit and please keep in touch.

Wishing everyone a great summer, with time to relax, visit family and friends and enjoy an adventure or two!

Best wishes,

Jon Hall

Jon Hall, EdD
Head of School

* p.s. for more details about the Westfield Tree Walk, see our website at:
<http://westfieldfriends.org/about-us/tree-walk/>



Grandparents & Special Friends Day

Grandparents and Special Friends Day

On Friday, May 19th, we held our **First Annual Grandparents and Special Friends Day** at Westfield. The turnout was amazing as we welcomed many grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles and other special friends to school. Our students certainly enjoyed sharing their favorite things with their visitors - reading stories, painting, working on crafts and performing.

The morning began with our **9th Annual Pancake Breakfast** held as a fundraiser by our Parent Council. Eric Pfeiffer and his many parent helpers really set the bar high with a wonderful event... the food was fantastic and everyone appreciates the hard work that goes into an event like this!

Thanks to all of the families and friends who visited their grandchild's classroom and participated in the day's festivities. Thanks also to Ms. Fay for planning a music and dance assembly for the families to enjoy.

Additional photos from the event can be seen on our Facebook page at:
<https://www.facebook.com/WestfieldFriendsSchool/>



NEW Pre-K Options

Westfield Friends School will offer a few NEW OPTIONS for our Pre-K class starting in the 2017-2018 school year.

Many families have requested either a shorter three-day option or five half-days to accommodate work and family schedules. Please visit our website for details on our new options at:
<http://westfieldfriends.org/>

Our dynamic Pre-K program will continue to provide opportunities for socialization, kindergarten readiness and lots of indoor and outdoor playtime. The special classes such as Spanish, art, music, library time and technology will still be incorporated into the various schedules.

If you know of a family that may be interested, please have them contact Jillian Stanton in our admissions office at:
admissions@westfieldfriends.org or call 856-829-0895.



Pre-K Gals at the Art Show!



Spring Clean Up Day

Annual Fund Update

From our spring clean up day, to additions to the school's tech program, arts and music programs and our athletics - the annual fund helps to fund ALL of these enhancements to ensure that our students have a great education and a rewarding elementary school experience too!

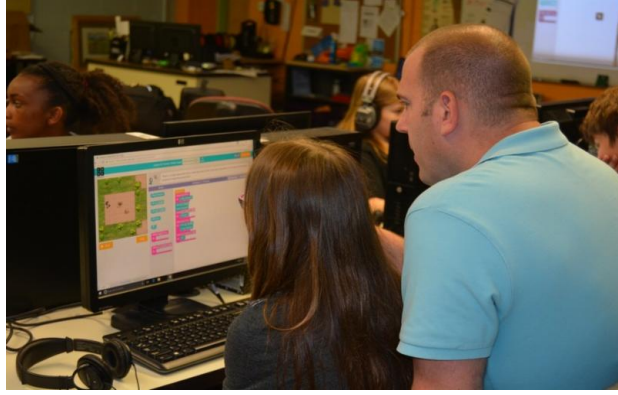
Thanks to the many parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, alumni

and alumni parents who have already donated and made a difference at Westfield. Our fiscal year ends on **June 30, 2017**, so there's still time to make a gift. Either send a check made out to Westfield Friends School or donate online at westfieldfriends.org/donations.

Thank you! We appreciate all donations, no matter the amount! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Debra Hojsak at 856-829-0895 ext. 17 or via email at dhojsak@westfieldfriends.org.

***Preparing for the Future of Programming
Westfield's Technology
Program
by Katie Kasperson '13***

Westfield Friends School's technology program has been totally revamped with help from teacher Chris Gehringer. Mr. Gehringer teaches the Special to children in Kindergarten through 8th grade, incorporating many lessons on all different aspects of the digital world, including hardware, website design, coding and programming, cyberbullying, and more. His main focus is to modernize the Special in order to prepare the kids for the coming future in which technology and programming will play an essential role. Mr. Gehringer uses code.org, codeacademy.com, and scratch.mit.edu to teach basic coding to his students, which include lessons on JavaScript, html, Ruby on Rails, as well as a few other coding languages.



Mr. Gehringer in Tech Class

When asked, "Why teach coding?", Mr. Gehringer responded, "They (the websites) have made coding fun." This way, the kids stay engaged as they learn how to think logically and analytically.

Mr. Gehringer highlights the importance of teaching coding to young kids, as the job market is calling for people who have programming skills. According to Fast Company, "Seven million job openings in 2015 were occupations that required coding skills, and programming jobs overall are growing 12% faster than the market average." In a world in which technology is growing exponentially, coding skills are becoming more and more useful. - read more here: <http://westfieldfriends.org/our-news/preparing-for-the-future-of-programming/>

Note: Katie Kasperson, WFS Class of 2013 and MFS Class of 2017, returned to Westfield Friends for her senior project this spring. Katie has been assisting in the 8th grade math class, 5th grade Spanish class and has also helped in our marketing efforts - writing stories, photographing events and helping with social media too. Katie will be attending William and Mary College in the fall and is leaning toward the STEM subjects and creative writing.

The Quaker Queries

***by Karen Nulton
Clerk, Westfield Friends
Monthly Meeting***

***Quaker Query 4:
Care of the Meeting Community***

- Are love and unity maintained among us? When conflicts exist, are they faced with patience, forbearance, and openness to healing? Are avenues for exploring differences kept open? To what extent does our Meeting ignore differences in order to avoid possible conflicts?
- Is the Meeting a safe, loving place? When we become aware of someone's need, do we offer assistance? Are the meetinghouse and the Meeting property physically accessible to all?



Peace Ribbons

- Do all adults and children in our Meeting receive our loving care and encouragement to share in the life of our Meeting, and to live as Friends? Do we truly welcome newcomers and include them in our Meeting community?
- When a member's conduct or manner of living gives cause for concern, how does the Meeting respond?
- How does our Meeting keep in touch with all its members?

In many ways, the queries are the heart of the Quaker process of spiritual discernment. The 12 queries ask friends to reflect on communal and personal relation to questions aligned with Quaker testimonies. What makes the queries so "Friend-ly" is that there is no set answer-our job is to seek spirit-led discernment about where we stand in relation to the questions. Personal and communal answers to the queries shift over time; sometimes we respond that things are going well in one area, and at other times, the same query leads us to see where our values and actions are out of alignment. The process reminds us that our spiritual lives are in constant flux and need faithful and loving attention.

The Queries contain two sections: one for the meeting community to consider together, and one for personal. In our monthly meeting for business, we read and discern together the meeting's response to the communal section of the query. As I write this, I am aware how odd it is for me to respond as an individual to a communal query. Monthly meeting responses to the queries grow out of a period of worship; we sit in silence and then listen together as multiple voices paint a picture of where the meeting is succeeding and where it needs to grow and strengthen in response to the query.

I can offer instead a personal reflection on the query for the fourth month, which involves how we create community, respond to conflict, and offer love and acceptance to others. The most basic answer is that my response depends; when I am my truest self and allow love to flow through me to others, I find community everywhere and can respond with empathy to others. I nod in recognition at praise and accept it as part of the love that moves through us to others. I exhale gratitude again and again.

On other days I struggle with true empathy; I take actions personally and see differences with others instead of a shared journey. I get grumpy; I want to be right instead of just. Gratitude recedes as I notice peeves about what-or who-seems not right.

You already know which of these states leads more easily to happiness and peace. I do, too. And that is the usefulness of the queries; they force us to listen to ourselves and each other with empathy rather than judgment. We don't lose points for not being perfect; we simply have a mirror that helps us to see ourselves in the moment and a query about who we want to be with our next breath.

Save the Dates!

June 2017:

June 2 - All School Picnic & Scavenger Hunt

June 2 - 6th, 7th and 8th Grade Dance - 7:30 p.m.

June 7 - Meeting for Worship to honor Teacher Ginny Mangan

June 7 - Instrumental Music Concert - 10 a.m.

June 8 - Meeting for Worship to honor 8th Grade

June 8 - Closing Assembly - 10 a.m. (parents are welcome to attend!)


Last Day of School-dismissal at 12 noon
June 9 - Eighth Grade Graduation - 10 a.m. in Meetinghouse
June 12-23 - Summer Camp for Westfield students

Contact

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View our videos on  **You Tube**

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

~ Mark Twain