

Record Sales at 15th Annual Plant Sale

The 15th year of Friends School's annual plant sale was an unprecedented success. With about 120,000 plants available and gross sales of over \$260,000, the Friends School Plant Sale is now the largest one-time plant sale in the Midwest. As this issue of the *Friends Circle* goes to press, profit figures are being finalized and between \$85,000 and \$95,000 seems very likely.

Traditionally, Friends School gives away plants that are leftover at the end of the sale to local community gardens, but the last two years we have had to disappoint them as we virtually sold out. There was a significant improvement in the plant purchasing process this year with a purchasing committee making quality and cost-comparisons among the 30 suppliers and basing ordering primarily on the inventory statistics from the previous year. As a result, more plants of better quality were purchased for less money.

This year was also exceptional in that it drew



an even larger number of people from outside of Friends School's immediate community as volunteers, with a total of about 300 four-hour volunteer shifts being filled.

The sale went out with a bang on Mother's Day with dime-sized hail and straight-line winds approaching 80 miles an hour in the "wind tunnel" between the school and the high-rise next door. Several of the enormous rented tents were tossed in the air and destroyed, one landing on vehicles owned by neighbors and one damaging some of the high-rise property. Fortunately, all the plants had already been sold, the customers were gone, and no volunteers were injured.

Despite the dramatic ending, the sale was a wonderful community event that went more smoothly than ever before and made a very large impact on the school's ability to provide a quality education to its students.

The school thanks all of the wonderful volunteers and customers who make this event possible.

Mark your calendar—Friends School's Second Annual Bulb Sale

Saturday, October 2, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Preorders accepted and encouraged this year! • A catalog will be mailed to you in early August

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the Friends Circle

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Letter from the Head of School

"Friends School is committed to nurturing the spiritual awareness of children. Through the practice of silence, children learn to listen to their own inner voice. Children learn about people who have been spirit-led, past and present. The school provides many opportunities for children to enhance their spiritual life through creative expression."

—From the FSM Statement of Philosophy of Practice, draft revision

One of the ongoing highlights of my work at Friends School is serving as Student Council advisor, a role I have taken on for most of the past ten years. It's a great way to be close to students and develop a sense of who they are and what is important to them. While what pizza vendor the school selects for its weekly pizza day predictably rates top priority, other topics which arise are inspirational. One of the Student Council traditions is to organize a charity project each spring. This past spring, the students selected an American Friends Service Committee project: Kurarama—A Campaign for Children Orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Mozambique. Our students raised enough money to enable 25 Mozambique students to attend school for a full year, raising double the highest amount of money they had ever raised. For me, the most impressive aspect of this was that the students—without any adult suggestion—agreed to donate their Plant Sale tips. These tips usually go



First and second grade students dance as part of the school's annual Martin Luther King Day Celebration.

towards an ice cream party, but helping these children in Mozambique resonated so strongly with our students that it took precedence. This type of opportunity, one which enables our students to rise to their best selves, exemplifies what is at the heart of the FSM experience.

Enhancing what is at the heart of the Friends School experience has been an important topic for the School Committee this past year as it developed and adopted a new strategic plan. In the fall a number of community focus groups were held to generate priorities for school improvement. During the winter, the Strategic Planning Committee developed a draft document to guide the school through the next five years. And in the spring, board, staff and

parents were invited to comment on the draft document. The final version was then adopted.

The strategic plan is included in *continued on page 2*

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From the Head

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its entirety in this issue of the *Friends Circle*. Following a preamble that lays out a vision of the school we wish to become, goals are stated in three general areas: leadership, program and resources. The leadership section outlines plans for improving faculty compensation, enhancing governance and modeling the school's mission through the achievement of a racially, culturally and economically diverse school community. This last area includes reinstating the part-time position of diversity coordinator. National data suggests that the presence of a diversity coordinator on a school staff correlates strongly with a positive and welcoming climate for all school families.

Program goals focus on four areas: arts education, technology, environmental education and special education. The strategic plan identified these curricular areas as ones whose strengthening would have the most positive impact on the school program and enhance the student

experience. Highlights among these are increasing artist-in-residence opportunities, implementing the school's technology plan, acquiring a 14-passenger bus to support field trips, and implementing a plan to assure that students with mild learning differences are successful at Friends School. The resources goals are focused on financial management and fundraising efforts to better support the school program, but most significantly call for adding an arts education room that incorporates a green house.

Taken together, the goals in the school's new strategic plan outline an exciting time for the school over the next five years. The school's previous strategic plan, adopted in 1997, was one of a school still very much in its infancy: it called for us to acquire our own building and to add grades seven and eight. Now as Friends School moves into its adolescence, our focus is on refining the FSM program so that, as it states in the strategic plan preamble, Friends School is a "Quaker school...recognized for a solid overall academic program that has exceptional strengths in the arts and environmental education."

—Mark Niedermier, *Head of School*

Graduate Speeches, 2004

On Sunday, June 6th, Friends School graduated 14 students, its largest-ever class of graduates. One of the traditions of the FSM graduation is that there is no single graduation speaker. Instead, all graduates read a speech containing their reflection on school, life and the future. Here are excerpts from several of the speeches.

Mohammed Ali

"I felt like I was at the right place. Before arriving at Friends School, I already knew violence was never a way to solve problems. In Somalia, it was violent at times. People used weapons to fight and some even died. When I saw the way Friends School practiced nonviolence, I was amazed by how problems ended up being solved with the people involved. Being able to solve problems without being physical is what I learned from [conflict resolution]."

Hannah Chaffee

"When I walk out those doors on the last day of school it will be the hardest thing I have ever done. Even though I have always said 'Oh I hate this school' I've really only loved it and I'm going to miss it a lot. Without this school and the people around me I would never have grown up to be the person I am today. These last eight years have been great and even though I'll be scared to face South High School I know in my heart I am ready."

Sarah Clinton-McCausland

"The good thing about Friends school is that it gives you courage to be yourself, even though it's sometimes really hard to do. You learn to respect everyone and see everyone for who they really are."

Nathan Madden

"I will never forget the beginning of my quest for knowledge here at Friends School. Friends School taught me something more valuable than just the periodic table of elements in science, or the notes on the staff, how to find the value of 'x' in math, the history of Minnesota in social studies, the conjugation of verbs in Spanish or how to spell 'sinister' in language arts. They taught me how to learn and that is the most useful thing they could ever teach."

Kaitlin Ziehr

"If there's one thing I can never get enough of, it's time. A human life is usually about 80 years, and for me that's not nearly enough. I have so many things to see, so many dreams to fulfill, so many adventures waiting for me. And while most people see school as time wasted until they can do what they want, being at Friends School has been an important part of my life. A part I don't want to end."

- Provide adequate staffing to assure reliable maintenance hardware and software systems. ('06-'07)
- Provide hardware, software, and other resources to support the school's technology education program. ('06-'07)

Environmental Education

- Acquire a 14-passenger "non-bus" to facilitate regular field trips for students. ('04-'05)
- Implement a comprehensive K-8 environmental education curriculum integrated throughout all areas of the curriculum. ('05-'06)
- Develop a plan to manage facilities with a high commitment to environmental stewardship. ('06-'07)

Special Education

- Implement a plan, based on evaluation of the school's special needs services, to assure that students with mild learning differences succeed academically and socially at FSM. ('04-'06)
- Clarify and communicate to parents the admissions process and on-going evaluation of special needs students, and ensure appropriate documentation is developed and maintained. ('06-'07, '07-'08)

RESOURCES

Strengthen and diversify the financial base of the school.

Annual Financial Management

- Reduce the percentage of the school's budget that relies on tuition income. ('06-'07)
- Continue to monitor cash flow and take appropriate measures to improve liquidity. (ongoing)

Long-term Financial Planning—Integrate strategic plans and actions into operations and budgeting, particularly for capital reserves and replacement. ('04-'05, '05-'06)

Revenue Sources

Enrollment Management

- Achieve and maintain school size of 150 ('05-'06) and 155 ('06-'07)
- Evaluate grade enrollment and class size as staffing, programs, and facilities permit. ('06-'07)

Fundraising

- Hire a development/public relations staff person. ('04-'05)
- Develop a comprehensive integrated external relations plan to include public relations/marketing, development, and volunteer opportunities. ('04-'05)
- Find lasting long-term sources for scholarship needs. ('05-'06)

- Carryout a major capital campaign to support the strategic plan capital expenditures. ('06-'07)
- Increase contributions to annual operations. (ongoing)

Develop building and property which serve the school's educational programming while being environmentally sound and physically attractive.

Master Plan

- Create and launch a plan that encompasses: a) the building facility and b) the outdoor landscaping for educational and recreational purposes. ('05-'06)
- Remedy the acoustical problems in the gym. ('05-'06)
- Plan and construct an art studio/arts education space which incorporates a greenhouse and additional storage space as feasible to support the school's art education goals. ('07-'08)

Stewardship Plan

- Create a schedule for maintenance, repair, and replacement of the school's physical plant and grounds. ('06-'07)
- Begin landscaping efforts that are consistent with the grounds vision statement. ('05-'06)

Rural Land—Acquire property or access to rural land in keeping with the school's environmental programming needs. ('08-'09)

The World Is Full of Surprises

Arlen Cloud Bonson-Anderson, 1st grade

The world is full of surprises,
surprises full of beauty.
Beauty like snow of light-full hope,
full of crystals that shine
with love and beauty,
like the crow's crisp black feathers,
or the snow hare that runs and dances
all day.

Emotion

Talia Glass, 7th grade

Beauty is a rose
Happiness is a smile
Anger is a hailstorm
Joy is a sunset
Love is a family
Emotion is life.

Friends School Strategic Plan, 2004–2009

PREAMBLE

Friends School of Minnesota will become known throughout the Twin Cities as a Quaker school which operates in the progressive education tradition. Friends School will be recognized for a solid overall academic program that has exceptional strengths in art and environmental education. The Quaker values of peace, justice, simplicity and integrity will be present throughout all aspects of the school experience. Our student body will be exceptionally diverse and families from all backgrounds will feel welcome and valued. The faculty and staff will be diverse, skilled and fairly compensated. The school will be managed through annual financial practices that sustain the integrity of the program both in the short-term and the long-term.

LEADERSHIP

Retain, attract, and develop a caring, diverse, skilled, and professional staff

Compensation and Benefits

- Develop and fund a compensation and benefits plan that is flexible, financially responsible, and regionally comparable.
- Pay faculty and administrative salaries that meet or exceed the average of ISACS-defined small schools. (on-going)
- Develop a benefits package that includes some portion of premiums for family health insurance, individual dental insurance and family dental insurance. ('04-'05)

Mentoring Program—Implement a formal plan that supports new and returning faculty. ('05-'06)

Faculty and Staff—Maintain personnel ratios that consistently deliver educational program. (ongoing)

Professional Development—Increase opportunities for faculty and staff, especially in the areas of technology, arts, special education, and environmental studies. (ongoing)

Maintain and enhance an active role for the School Committee.

Understanding and Visibility—Increase parent and community understanding of the responsibilities and roles of the School committee, particularly Quaker meeting practices, strategic planning, and financial stewardship. ('04-'05)

Evaluation—Review School Committee's strengths and weaknesses, leadership, fundraising, community relationships, and Quaker practices. ('04-'05)

Recruitment—Use the findings of evaluations to ensure that school committee membership has the expertise and leadership skills and resources needed to carry out the tasks, responsibilities, and practices needed for governance. ('05-'06)

Strategic Plan—Review progress on an annual basis and update the plan in 2005, 2007 and 2009.

Model the school's mission through the achievement of a racially, culturally, and economically diverse school community.

Policies and Practices

- Increase the community of people of different races, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, economic status, and family structure.
- Recruit and market the diversity of the school through admissions and outreach. ('04-'05)
- Benchmark community feedback for climate and cultural perceptions that can serve as a benchmark for a follow-up survey in 2007. ('04-'05)
- Reinstate the part-time position of diversity coordinator to carry out these goals. ('05-'06)

PROGRAM

Strengthen the school's educational program in the arts, environmental studies, and technology-based skills through a commitment to continuous improvement.

Arts Education

- Implement a K–8 arts program that integrates arts education into the core curriculum. ('05-'06)
- Expand partnerships with community arts and music organizations to enhance the school's arts education opportunities. ('05-'06)
- Provide opportunities, such as residencies, visits by artists and parents/community members with arts expertise, to broaden the arts curriculum and after school/ summer programs. ('05-'06)
- Develop after school performing and visual arts programs and the "Arts, Etc.!" summer program as financially viable, accessible experiences for students and children in the community. (ongoing)

Technology

- Adopt the age appropriate K–8 technology curriculum consistent with the school's educational philosophy for use of technology. ('05-'06, '06-'07)
- Enhance the technical support and professional development provided to faculty for basic technology skills. ('05-'06)

Families Reflect on the FSM Experience

Recently, a number of alumni and current families were interviewed and asked how they would answer the question, "Why send your child to Friends School?" A number of themes emerged through these conversations. Students who enter Friends School of Minnesota come to a place where they are not only measured by their academic success, but equally for their individual talents. It is a place that does not gloss over the hard issues of prejudice, oppression or conflict with theatrics or window dressing, but weaves these serious matters into the daily fibers of learning. It is a school that holds the value of community in the highest regard. Families of Friends School students come to appreciate and rely upon one another, while their children create their singular imprint on the School's unique culture.

Many Friends School of Minnesota middle school students and recent graduates exhibit the distillation of their years immersed in a progressive Quaker education. In reflecting on the commonalities of these students, many extraordinary things come to the surface: a strong sense of right and wrong regarding the environment, social conditions,



FSM held its annual alumni party and talent show in April. Pictured at left are David Curiel (above) and Patrick Raines (below). Above are Kate Abrams, Brienne Macemon, Mia Beeson, and Rachel DeYoung. Former teacher Tamsyn Labounty is in the background.

immense political issues and personal relationships; strong opinions supported by thoughtful analysis; and an early sense of self.

Other similarities include their abilities to express themselves, both verbally and in the written word. Many expressed their love of art, humanities, science and the environment. These passions were reflected in their spare time as well as in their academics. When hearing from and of these children, one gets the strong impression that FSM sets the foundation for children to discover what their role in the world could be, rather than what they could acquire from the world.

The later years of adolescence and young adulthood for students whose early education was embraced in a Quaker philosophy is equally interesting to explore. For many, like most passages in life, leaving Friends school was a considerable change; perhaps more so than for their high school counterparts transitioning from public schools. Moving from smaller to larger classrooms, progressive education to more conservative academics, intense teacher/student

relationships to less concentrated ones, and leaving, as one alumni so succinctly said, "the radical bubble," had its challenges.

Yesterday's children of Friends School are now national merit scholars, budding playwrights, and students of neuroscience and comparative literature. They also work as food co-op employees and union painters. Whatever their path, they are continuing their education and finding their place in this very complicated world. What so many of them have is what so many people desire: a distinct sense of self. These young people know who they are, they have a wonderful sense of a very expansive world with all its textures, they are politically thoughtful, and they understand the value of justice and caring.

There are places in our lives that challenge, nurture and mold us. And it is those places a person never really leaves, for they are taken with us. They live in our hearts, pattern our thinking and speak through our souls. Friends School is one of those special places, a rich place that lives inside of its students long after they go. A place where children learn who they are, and with that, create who they will be.

—Shelly Cline

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Hilgendorf, Mark Niedermier

Poetry, art and writing:
Friends School children

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Reflections on Reggio Emilia Principles

The words “Reggio Emilia” are floating around a lot these days in educational circles, and even among non-educators. National magazines and television specials since the early 1990’s have highlighted “Reggio schools” as being some of the most innovative and excellent schools for young children in the world. When people first hear the word “Reggio,” they may wonder if it’s the name of a person (like Montessori?). Or perhaps it’s a newfangled curriculum or a way-out-there-funky approach to teaching. In fact, Reggio Emilia is a city. It is a small town in the Emilia-Romagna region of central Italy tucked in among rolling hills and farms, a region that produces wonderful cheeses and balsamic vinegar, on the ancient Roman road. Reggio Emilia is gaining world recognition because of its system of municipal preschools that take very seriously the principles of constructivist education.

I had the privilege of traveling to Reggio Emilia last February to attend an international conference on early childhood education. It was my second visit to tour the preschools, which I have been studying ever since I attended a workshop on Reggio principles here in Minnesota in about 1996. I was initially attracted to the work of Reggio educators because they seemed to put into practice in a most authentic way the ideals American Progressive schools have always aimed to fulfill. Schools like Friends School of Minnesota belong to a long tradition that values children as capable, creative people, teachers as guides and co-learners with children rather than as disseminators of factual information, and the classroom as an active, welcoming



Left: Lauri Carlson and students from the Jungle classroom stand with the dragon they made to celebrate Chinese New Year.

environment that encourages firsthand exploration and discoveries. When I walked into the first preschool I visited in Reggio Emilia, tears came to my eyes as I saw the embodiment of these principles all around me.

The Reggio municipal preschools are bright, open and roomy places, with children’s work, their words and photographs displayed everywhere, as if to honor the real investigative work they do each day. The schools are aesthetically beautiful spaces, where children are engaged in a variety of activities in large groups, small groups and individually. They move freely through the space and the day,

There are long uninterrupted blocks of time for children to work and plenty of skilled teachers available to ask provocative questions, give a new challenge or take notes on the children’s ideas.



Below: FSM seventh and eighth grade students study stream ecology at Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center in northeastern Minnesota.

choosing their work, showing a level of persistence, curiosity and initiative not always seen in such young children. The visitor sees children painting, dressing up and acting out stories, building with blocks and a hundred other found props, drawing from a still-life with the intensity of an artist, sculpting with clay, making a musical composition in a room full of instruments, and talking, always talking, about their ideas, plans and struggles. One child might be asking another child’s advice about how to make her clay work more sturdy; another child might be showing her drawing to a teacher and asking for a big piece of cardboard to paint the design larger as a backdrop for a play. There are long uninterrupted blocks of time for children to work and plenty of skilled teachers available to ask provocative questions, give a new

Kyle’s Advisory (Fifth and Sixth Grade)



Row 1: Deborah Lee, Rebecca Engdahl, Elliot Parens, Luc Bruggeman, Gabe Reese. Row 2: Emma Ware, Eleanor Pearson, Ben Gesensway, Josh Draves-Kellerman, Ari O’Sullivan. Row 3: Kyle Johnson. Not pictured: Hannah Abdulla.

Steve’s Advisory (Seventh and Eighth Grade)



Front: Steve Moe. Back: Si Nasnan, Talia Glass, Jake Althoff, Emily Eckhoff-Bennett, Ben Jones, Caroline Mitchell, Max Macemon, Kari Finseth, Dane Boateng, Louisa Harstad, Mohamed Ali. Not pictured: Helaina Moore-Foster.

Lili’s Advisory (Seventh and Eighth Grade)



Row 1: Kaitlin Ziehr, Sarah Clinton-McCausland, Adria Denison, Riley Battis, Alex Christensen, Matt Jarvis. Row 2: Connor Soles, Darren Bishop, Nathan Madden, Abby Gray, Diana Sarmiento, Lili Herbert.

Linda’s Advisory (Fifth and Sixth Grade)



Row 1: Amelia Bolstad, Maddie Sankaran, Isabel Bushway, Chesa Greene. Row 2: Kyle Finseth. Row 3: Danielle Eckhoff-Bennett, Sam LePont, Alexander Young, Dave Kjeldahl, Jeran Poehls, Linda Mockler. Not pictured: Joshua Corner

Susan’s Advisory (Fifth and Sixth Grade)



Row 1: Gus Bruggeman, Patrick Seng, Kiara Caruso, Emily Brower, Annie Gerard. Row 2: Susan Gahan, Daniel Clinton-McCausland, Theo Mongeau, David Drevecky, Sidney Boston, Sierra Wolf. Not pictured: Jordan Helgeland, Ali Abdulla.

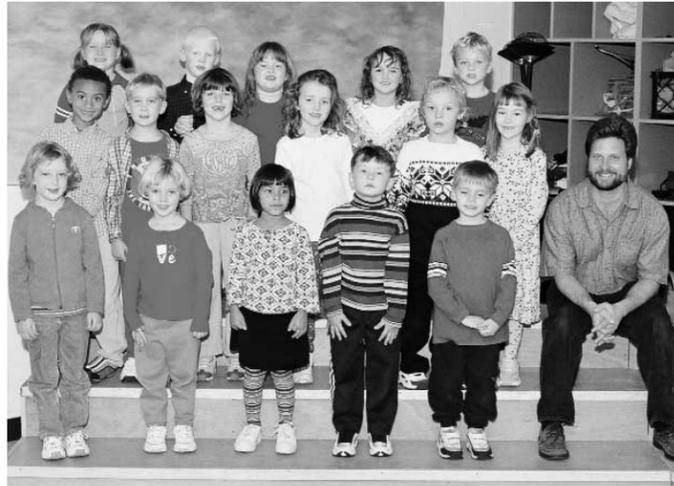
Kristin’s Advisory (Seventh and Eighth Grade)



Row 1: David Gilbert-Pederson, Andrés Varela-Paul, Jessica Ahlers, Avram Leierwood, Matthew Chrastek, Violet Hoffman-Casillas, Jane Olmstead-Rumsey. Row 2: Hannah Chaffee, Jonathan DeYoung, Abdul Ali, Kristin Hortenbach, Emily Braun. Not pictured: Jesse River.

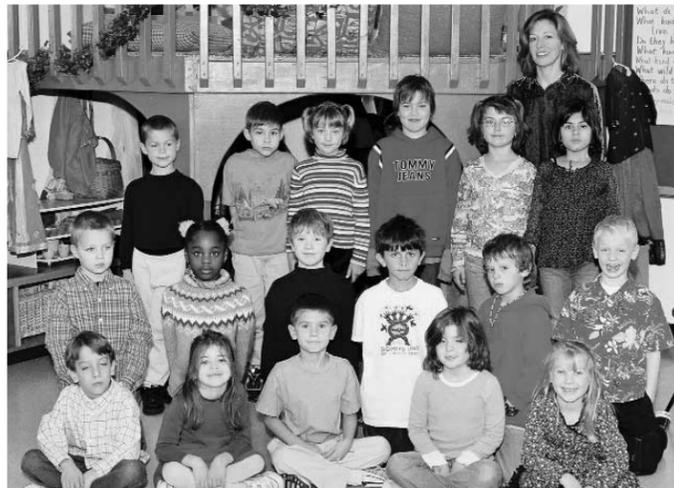
The Friends School Classrooms, 2003–2004

The Ocean (Kindergarten)



Row 1: Laurel Neufeld, Ellie Martinson, Simran Alter, Andrew Dulles, Sam Leikind, Marshall Anderson. Row 2: Kieran Morris, Arius Liuzzi, Vivian Wolkoff, Grace Clark, Hunter Franke, Meg Huelskamp. Row 3: Elizabeth Gesensway, Riley Wheaton, Anne Dubner, Meara Cline, Luke Pemberton.

The Prairie (First and Second Grade)



Row 1: Joseph Pratte, Eva Dell' Oro, Samuel Weber, Anna Lapinsky, Abby Vidmar. Row 2: Simon Fulda-Strate, Gavhriel Short, Evan Leduc, Austin Sankaran, Arthur Parens, Henry Kwant. Row 3: Zeke Maxwell, Henry Schaller, Josie Paul, Maggie Wettleson, Guanani Gómez-Van Cortright, Sitara Johnston. Back: Joanne Esser.

(The Tundra) Row 1: Moriah Walter, Anna Landskroener, Elena Heegaard, Stefan Payne-Wardenaar. Row 2: Ruth Sheldon, Isabel Nord, Charlie Meyer, Adrian Nofzinger, Alex Dulles. Row 3: Janet Thometz, Mckinley Bleskachek, Alex Baker-Bender, Eliza Mongeau, Sarah Wiger. Not pictured: Brianna Mason.

The Jungle (First and Second Grade)



Row 1: Nick Pemberton, Olivia Nofzinger, Muffin Leverone, Tate Bosler, Arlen Bonson-Anderson. Row 2: Kay Sheehan, Nathaniel Danforth, Maddie Caruso, Bennett Christensen, Jordan Eckhoff-Bennett, Evan Dunn. Row 3: Lydia Newman-Heggie, Daniel Lee, Liam Bambery, Amanda Cline, Maddi Kraft, Will Wharton. Back: Lauri Carlson.

The Bayou (Third and Fourth Grade)



Row 1: Kaylie Eckhoff-Bennett, Dakota Wolf, Leandro Dell' Oro, Philip Nguyen. Row 2: Ingrid Kjeldahl, Ellen Anderson, Katherine Glass, Ruby Thompson, Arielle Hay. Row 3: Gay Bicking, Frankie Wettleson, Cara Johnson, Julia Gesensway, Paco Bushway, Jake Loewen, Kak Jarvis.

The Tundra (Third and Fourth Grade)



challenge or take notes on the children's ideas.

The curriculum in the Reggio Emilia schools emerges completely from the interests of the children and teachers. Even so, certain "big ideas" recur regularly as children explore the world—ideas about science, social studies and language—that seem universal: light and shadow, animals, the seasons, people and portraits, communication, the town they live in and how it works, birth, death, friendship. Children's ideas are valued, recorded and studied by the teachers so they can offer interesting materials and "provocations" to help the children explore an idea further. Initial ideas eventually become long-term projects, involving many children and a variety of related activities. The teachers are like researchers. They listen and watch for what children are ready to learn, collaborate with other teachers and the *atelierista* (art specialist), offer a learning opportunity, watch and listen again to see how it advanced the children's ideas, and document the results, before offering a new level of provocation, in an on-going research cycle.

Seeing this kind of intense focus on children as active thinkers rather than as recipients of a predetermined sequence of "lessons" is incredibly exciting for teachers. Those who travel hundreds or thousands of miles to see the Reggio Emilia preschools firsthand share a passion for the power of this work. At the international conference in February, over 1,500 teachers, administrators, professors of education and policy makers came from 20 countries to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the first municipal preschool in Reggio and to renew their commitment to take the principles and values back to their own countries. I came back energized and determined to shift my own teaching

Children's ideas are valued, recorded and studied by the teachers so they can offer interesting materials and "provocations" to help the children explore an idea further.

practice in small ways in response to what I had seen there.

No one in the USA can really say they are "doing Reggio" or are a "Reggio school." The only Reggio Emilia schools are in Reggio Emilia, with its unique history, local community support and parent commitment. But it is an amazing phenomenon to see educators from so many countries borrowing, adapting, blending and developing their own offshoots from the Italians' work. I heard speakers from England, Nepal, Namibia, Australia and the United States talk about how their schools were being nudged and inspired by the 40-year "research project" in the Reggio preschools. Here in the United States, there are schools collaborating directly with the Italian educators to incorporate the basic principles of Reggio schools in their schools. But they must adapt the ideas to fit their own context: urban, suburban or rural setting, private, public or religious school, large or small school, with a particular mission and a particular community of families. In turn these educators are sharing their experiences with other American educators through workshops and conferences.

I think the Reggio-Emilia approach to education resonates well with Friends School's educational ideals. Because we teach older children, we have to adapt the basic principles of this kind of exploration

and project work for the developmental needs and abilities older children have. There is no direct model for us, as other elementary schools in the USA are just beginning to figure out ways to do this. Since older children are mastering additional "languages" in which they can express their ideas, especially through reading and writing skills, the possibilities of authentic investigation are probably more open for us in some ways than for preschool educators. However, elementary educators also have to find a balance between supporting emerging curriculum ideas that come from the children, and being accountable for "covering" content we deem necessary for children at each age and grade level. This is a delicate balance that Friends School acknowledges and wrestles with at every staff meeting in which we discuss curriculum.

Educators are eclectic practitioners. We borrow and adapt and synthesize from each other as we strive to make our schools more responsive to children and more effective at helping them learn deeply. My experiences in Reggio Emilia have been warmly received by my colleagues here at Friends School as I have presented mini-workshops, shown films and led interested teachers through the exhibit of Reggio children's work that is currently on display in the St. Paul City Hall. Three of us are attending a Reggio Emilia education conference here in St. Paul this summer sponsored by a local Reggio-inspired network I have been involved with for three years. I hope we will continue to look with open eyes at what we can learn from our colleagues across the sea.

—Joanne Esser

The Friends School Staff, 2003–2004



Marshall Anderson has been the FSM kindergarten teacher since 1999. His long career in education includes teaching in the Minneapolis public schools, being a teacher and administrative coordinator at Niilbin Summer school, being a master tutor at Lakewood Community College and working with Upward Bound.



Gay Bicking has been a teacher at FSM since it opened in 1988. She has taught at many grade levels, has been involved in the development of our conflict resolution program and served as acting lower school director. Gay has especially strong interests in multicultural and environmental education.



Lauri Carlson is a member of Twin Cities Friends Meeting, joined the school faculty in 1994 and has been a first/second grade teacher since that time. Lauri brings her spirituality and passions for art and learning into her classroom.



Julie Caruso has worked in the school's Extended Day program for the past two years. She attends Twin City Friends Meeting and this summer begins a term on the School Committee.



Chris Dart joined the school staff this fall as Technology Coordinator. He is a former community organizer who moved into the technology field. He divides

his time between Friends School and the Minnesota Council of Churches.



Karla Eckhoff is completing her second year as school secretary. Her four children attend the school and she also works as a professional photographer.



Joanne Esser joined the school in 1995 as Lower School Director and after several years made the transition to classroom teacher.

She holds a master of arts degree in early childhood education and an MFA in creative writing. Her current education interest is in bringing the Reggio Emilia teaching philosophy into the elementary classroom.



Kathy Glover serves as director of the Extended Day program and the ARTS ETC! Summer Program, having

joined the school in 2002. Kathy is a working artist who has a long career in Montessori education prior to joining the FSM staff.



Lili Herbert joined Friends School in 1995 as director of our conflict resolution program. She has since served as a middle school humanities teacher and is now Middle School Director. Lili earned her B.A. in anthropology and archeology from Boston University and holds an M.Ed. from the University of Minnesota. She has served as a board member for the Independent Schools Association of the Central States and as chair of the Minnesota Association of Independent Schools Teacher Services Committee.



Dhaivyd Hilgendorf is a member of Twin Cities Friends Meeting and joined the FSM staff in 1997 as custodian. He has since moved on to his current role, splitting his work between being librarian-media specialist and volunteer manager-special events coordinator.



Kristin Hortenbach has served as middle school math teacher for two years. She is the faculty representative to the Minnesota Association of Independent Schools Teacher Services Committee. Kristin holds an M.Ed. from the University of Minnesota and is licensed as a math specialist.



Kak Jarvis joined the FSM staff in 1998. Kak's previous careers included occupational therapy and running a home daycare. At FSM she has been key staff person in the Extended Day program and has worked widely within the school as a classroom aide and as a yearlong substitute for two different classrooms.



Kyle Johnson is a middle school humanities teacher and attends Minneapolis Friends Meeting. He worked at FSM during the '02-'03 school year as custodian and aide. After leaving for a year to pursue a masters degree in education from the University of St. Thomas, he rejoined the FSM staff this year.

The Friends School Staff, 2003–2004 continued from 4



John Kraft became the FSM business manager this past August. He is a member of Minneapolis Friends Meeting, parent of two FSM students, has served as School Committee clerk and is a former vice president at Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America.



Linda Mockler has been the school's physical education teacher since 1996. She is a middle school advisor and leads the Outdoor Club and Circus Club. A Connecticut native, Linda taught public school in Arizona and Wyoming and has substantial coaching experience, including Special Olympics.



Steve Moe has been middle school science teacher since 1999. He is a graduate of Earlham College and has a masters degree in botany. His previous career as a field scientist has enabled him to take a leadership role in the development of the school's environmental education program. Steve coaches soccer and ultimate frisbee, and is an Outdoor Club advisor.



Mo Nguyen joined the school staff as custodian in 2001. Mo is a native of Vietnam and has held a variety of maintenance positions. His son attends Friends School



Mark Niedermier, a member of Twin Cities Friends Meeting, joined Friends School in 1991 as FSM's first full-time head of school. Mark has a bachelor of arts degree from St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, and a master of arts degree in psychology from the New School for Social Research in New York City. Prior to joining Friends School, he worked as a science teacher in The Children's Storefront School in New York City, where he developed and implemented a K–8 science program and directed its summer camp for inner-city children. Mark is a past president of the Minnesota Association of Independent Schools.



Russell Packard has been music teacher at the school since 1989. Russell has traveled and researched music extensively throughout the Middle East, China, Europe, and North and South America. He has studied at the National Music Conservatory of Jordan, Bir Zeit University, and has performed with the Jordanian National Orchestra. He also studied classical Indian music at the Ramani Academy of Karnotic Music in Madras, India.



Werner Rudolph is a native of Chile and has been the school's Spanish teacher for the past three years. Prior to coming to the United States, Werner was an elementary school teacher of English in Santiago.



Jane Schallert joined FSM's staff in 1991 as Admissions Coordinator. A member of Twin Cities Friends Meeting, Jane is the parent of one FSM alum and one current student. Jane's previous career was in retail sales and she reports much greater job satisfaction in promoting Quaker education. Jane is currently a Central Committee member for Friends General Conference and has served on the FCNL board.



Kathleen Stanford has been on the FSM staff since 1993, serving as a classroom aide. Kathleen holds a BA in elementary education from Concordia University. Her previous work as a special events planner, as well as her own spiritual values, have prepared her well for the leadership role she takes annually in helping organize the school's Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration, among others.



Janet Thometz has been a third and fourth grade teacher at FSM since 1998. Janet earned her B.A. in Elementary Education and Spanish from the University of Saint Thomas. She is a Running Club Advisor and has served as coordinator for the school's Conflict Resolution Summer Institute.



Barbara Van Vreede has worked as the school's bookkeeper since 2001. She worked previously as bookkeeper at another independent school and she is co-owner of Bountiful Blooms, a garden design, installation and maintenance business.