

Radius

June 2014

Issue 99

A newsletter for Camphill Special School families

"Receive the children with reverence, educate them with love, send them forth in freedom" - Rudolf Steiner

Camphill Special School celebrates

The Class of 2014

*Joey Ambrose
Jonah Berlin
Taylor Boyd
Alasdair Bryan-Brown
Mada Dow
Jared Gill
Jeremy Leh
Michaela Sallada
Mary Udugba*

Calendar of events

June 12	Eighth Grade Graduation
June 13	Twelfth Grade Commencement
June 15	Fathers' Day
June 19	Last day of classes Early Dismissal
	Residential students depart
June 28	ESY program begins

Congratulations!

By Florie Seery

Our daughter Angela did so well at Kenyon College. She received a great education, made friends for life and bonded with her professors. Her graduation was bound to be a major moment in our lives, but could we include Alasdair? Would it be possible for us to be the typical family who travels to commencement with grandparents and extended family in tow? Would we all be able to get dressed up and walk proudly with our college graduate and experience the ritual without feeling like the entire event was a compromise?

Having Alasdair attend Angela's college graduation has been a dream of mine for many years but I wasn't sure if it was going to happen. Alasdair was not at his sister's high school graduation. He missed her high school plays and many extended family celebrations. Given the different school schedules, we usually took the kids on separate vacations, taking Angela on trips that would have been difficult for Alasdair. He never made a trip to Kenyon or to Scotland, where Angela spent her junior year. Alasdair missed so much of his sister's life that some of Angela's friends didn't even know she had a brother.

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Another successful ProAm!

Over four hundred people joined in celebrating Camphill Special School at the Gala and Tennis Tournament over the last weekend in May.



The Phoenixville Foundry was transformed into an elegant stage for performances by students, a lively auction, and evening of dancing. The following day dozens of children and adults took part in Tennis Addiction's annual clinics at Whitford Country Club. The weekend came to a close as Celeste Panicelli and Greg Barkley won the ProAm Tournament.

Thanks to the many donors, sponsors, guests, and volunteers, we raised over \$270,000.00!

Welcome to the students who have joined us this year!

Kindergarten: Freyja <i>Pottstown, PA</i>	Grade one: Kaylyn <i>Chambersburg, PA</i>	Grade three: Joshua <i>Denver, NC</i>	Grade five: Kaler <i>Honey Brook, PA</i>	Grade ten: Faisal <i>Dubai, U.A.E.</i>	Transition Program: Austin, <i>Cathedral City, CA</i>
Katie <i>Yardley, PA</i>	Dylan <i>Secane, PA</i>	Kennedy <i>West Chester, PA</i>	Grade nine: Molly <i>Shade Gap, PA</i>	Jenna <i>Huntington Beach, CA</i>	Wyatt <i>Ridgewood, NJ</i>
Themba <i>Glenmoore, PA</i>	Paige <i>Barto, PA</i>	Antonio <i>Coatesville, PA</i>	Galya <i>Lancaster, PA</i>	Laura <i>Phoenixville, PA</i>	Jared <i>New Castle, DE</i>
Yuga <i>Glenmoore, PA</i>	Leo <i>Radnor, PA</i>			Grade eleven: Rebecca, <i>Tenafly, NJ</i>	

Celebrating Elsbeth

by Ginny Thimme

On Easter Sunday our music teacher, Elsbeth Sunstein, turned 70 and on Easter Monday, April 21st, we had an all-school, all-community birthday celebration and everyone wore Elsbeth's favorite colors. The Blue Room was a sea of white, pink, lilac and lavender.

Christof-Andreas wrote a special birthday song about Elsbeth teaching piano lessons; Becky told a fairytale story of Elsbeth's life (Elsbeth was the white dove in the story); Willard, Elsbeth's husband, told us about the stars before Elsbeth was born and how the stars whispered to Elsbeth and told her her secret story; the third grade formed a ring around Elsbeth and sang and danced for her; Bonnie played Bach on the piano and all the classes brought flowers and cards to Elsbeth. Everyone then had cake and juice behind the School House (thank you home makers), followed by an Easter egg hunt and egg and spoon races and sack races in the Easter Glade (thank you Emma and Sally).

We gave Elsbeth a lyre as a gift to play at home with her grandchildren.

We love you, Elsbeth. Thank you for all the music that you surround us with: all day, every day.



Photo credit: Marc Bryan-Brown

Eighth Grade goes camping

by Becky Rutherford

Can she do it?

Have courage-hang on!

You made it!!

Such were the shouts of encouragement for each of the eighth graders as they met each challenge on the Ropes Course at historic Fellowship Farm near Pottstown.

The self confidence and trust building games were ably led by Richard Washington, a trainer at the program. Lots of splashing in the pool, hiking through the woods, and fun of sleeping in cabins filled out the days. A movie night (*The Life of Harriet Tubman*) was complete with popcorn. A final bonfire featured impromptu and hilarious stories

told by Mandla and Jon, s'mores, of course, and a spelling game using sparklers in the dark. The food was abundant and delicious. The friendships grew even deeper and stronger. The thoughts towards the end of the year and graduation grew more bittersweet.

But, in the meantime, Lucy helped us practice Swahili songs, Michelle kept us bug and sun burn free, and Sam took a gazillion photos. Aron joined us most days. Heidi Frayer encouraged each student and the Konopka's family dog, Aurora, greeted us on Thursday. We ended the trip with a day to visit Hopewell Furnace, which was active at the time of the Civil War.

Tired and happy we returned to school. Camping trips are more than just fun. We made memories which each of the students (and all of us) will long cherish.

Happenings from the classrooms

Third grade welcomed two new students: Joshua and Antonio and celebrated Meg, Jasmine, Siwan (classroom aide) and Alana's birthdays. We have been working hard to complete our little house in the woods and our partner class, the third grade from the Kimberton Waldorf School, came over for a morning of sawing, digging clay, sieving clay, making cement (with clay, sand, straw and water) and helping us build our cob wall. To end the school year we have been hearing the story of Noah's Ark and painting rainbows.



Fifth grade students and coworkers visited a museum and examined an ancient Egyptian sarcophagus lid. They also prepared for their first debate inspired by ancient Greece.

Seventh grade performed *Joan of Arc*, a puppet show, pictured at right. We also hosted Emily Mauntel, from the Ann Arbor Rudolf Steiner School Michigan. Emily is doing a one week internship with us. At far right, Liz works with Emily.



Grade nine have been studying Organic Chemistry. We have split our time between the lab and the classroom, engaging in interesting discussions about the nature of plants and carbohydrates. Our labs have been focused on discovering the presence of sugars and starches in everyday food and household items. The students especially enjoyed testing the different substances for sugar using a Bunsen burner and Benedict's solution.

The **eleventh grade's** final block of the year is botany. We have been experimenting with seeds to see what conditions are needed for them to germinate. We have been growing our own plants both outdoors and indoors and will be testing them to see what part light has in their growth. A trip to the Morris Arboretum in Philadelphia is planned, and a trip to a play about Mark Twain is scheduled as a follow up on our Biographies block.

The craft crews at **Beaver Farm** have been very busy getting items ready for the Gala's silent auction. By the time you see this Radius maybe some of you have bought some of these items already! The pottery crew has made some incredibly beautiful tile boards and bowls; the fiber workshop will be auctioning off several hand-crafted items: a pair of wool slippers, a set of hand woven table mats, hand spun yarn, and a stunning hand woven scarf; and lastly, I hope you saw the video footage of our woodshop creating a gorgeous outdoor table with benches, (I hear it may be too beautiful to have outside.) Here is a photo of Issie and Libby on our Ascension walk. Do you recognize the guy fooling around behind them?





Amazon.com and Camphill

To celebrate Father's Day, from now through June 15, 2014, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate an extra \$5.00 for each customer who makes an eligible purchase in support of Camphill Special School.



Help the School while paying taxes!

This is in addition to the regular donation of 0.5% of the purchase price. To get started, visit www.smile.amazon.com!

Your business could be the name on the above check- imagine providing tuition assistance for a CSS student. Your company can direct their PA state tax dollars to the School instead of to the Commonwealth of PA!

Box Tops for Education

Are you interested in coordinating our Box Tops for Education campaign? Do you have a friend or family member who wants to get involved? **We're seeking a volunteer!** This could be a great opportunity for a high school student looking for service hours.



The Coordinator has many responsibilities, including;

- *Organize and submit all the Box Tops collected by the school.
- * Raise awareness about Box Tops in schools and communities.
- * Communicate the school's earnings progress to school supporters.
- * Spread the word about new opportunities to earn with Box Tops.

Interested? If so, contact Cara at 610-469-9236 or by email to cschmidt@camphillspecialschool.org.

Our mission is to create wholeness for children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities through education and therapy in extended family living.

Items for the next issue of *Radius* must be submitted by the third Monday of the month. Materials should be submitted to cschmidt@camphillspecialschool.org

All material submitted is subject to editing and is included on a space available basis.

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Congraduations! From page one...

The sibling of an autistic child is usually the unsung hero of the story. A neighbor of ours congratulated Angela on her graduation and recounted seeing her as a little girl, sobbing, looking for her brother, because Alasdair had run away. I wish I could say that this only happened once, but Alasdair's disappearances were frequent. Responsibility came very early to Angela. And compromise. Before Camphill, despite our intense efforts working with Alasdair at home, things were stressful. Our entire household revolved around Alasdair. Camphill came at the perfect time. During the early Camphill years, I recall sitting at parent workshops listening to veteran parents speak about their successful family moments where their child behaved beautifully and was fully integrated into family activities. I remember a particular story where after a few years at Camphill, a child successfully attended a family wedding. Not only was the young lady's behavior impeccable, she was truly present and understanding of the momentous occasion. Another wise parent talked about how his daughter had been "Camphillized." How could this ever happen to us with Alasdair's impulsivity and often unsafe behavior? Would we ever be able to attend a family function and not have to take turns watching Alasdair? Would he learn that one needs to take other's feelings into account and develop empathic qualities in order to be a good human being? A very wise parent at an early Camphill parent meeting said, "Sometimes you have to let them go so that you can have them back."

Here we are, seven years later. I am happy to say that after much love and thoughtful work on the part of the entire Camphill community, Alasdair is back! He is a vital presence in all of our lives and it is no longer a compromise for him to be a part of a family event.

We began our trip to Ohio, spending the night in Glenmoore with Becky and her husband Harry. Becky was Alasdair's Junior High School teacher and now our friend. We picked Alasdair up from Whitestone at 7 am. House mothers Sarah and Jiap and the coworkers had totally prepared Alasdair for the trip. He was packed and ready and excited to go. His teacher Peggy obliged us with the time off from class and had primed him about what was to come. After our eight hour drive, which was no trouble for Alasdair, given all of the car trips he has taken with Camphill, Angela said she would like to take Alasdair around campus to meet her friends. Marc and I smiled while we unpacked.



Our first night was a small family dinner in the local bar, which involved waiting and chatting-Alasdair seemed oddly comfortable at the college hangout. We raised our glasses to toast Angela, and Alasdair said, "Congraduations." For someone who has trouble with words, it amazes me that he finds humor in language. On our second night we hosted a potluck for Angela's friends and their families. Angela's grandparents and aunt and uncle arrived from the airport and were very much a part of the celebration. Alasdair donned his newly purchased Kenyon College sweatshirt and helped Marc shop and prepare for the party--meal preparation and food shopping are skills he has honed at Camphill. He did great at the party- everyone was wearing a name tag, which was helpful to Alasdair and those of us over 50! It was a big, long, loud party but I never worried about him. Alasdair was friendly and introduced himself to people. He did not sit by himself and watch a video or play with action figures. He enjoyed the food and drink and took lots of pictures.

Saturday was the graduation. Our family all stayed in the same house so it was fun waking up together. We spent the morning eating breakfast, cleaning up, reflecting on the night before and getting all dressed up. Alasdair's Aunt Joan helped him with his jacket and tie. Alasdair dutifully sat on his folding chair. He surveyed the program and quickly found Angela's name. He listened patiently through the many speeches. He stood when Angela's name was called so that he could see her receiving her diploma and gave big cheer with the rest of us. As you might imagine, the ceremony went on for hours, but he hung in there. The many plays, concerts, assemblies, services and graduations Alasdair attended at Camphill had thoroughly prepared him for Angela's big day. I wanted Angela to know that her brother understood the significance of her college graduation, was extremely proud of her, and loved her very much. It could not have been more evident.