

Reflections

A magazine for family, friends, and supporters of The Camphill School

FALL + WINTER 2024



The
Camphill
School

Reflections

Cover & Below:
Beauty and peace abound
at Beaver Farm

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Editor's Letter



Typically, I write several versions of this Editor's Letter. I base it on what is happening at the school as related to the rest of the world or on one of the articles that will be contained in its pages. At this moment in time, mid-October 2024, there is uncertainty—in the world, the school, and my personal world.

In the greater world, there was a second historic and devastating hurricane in as many weeks. Escalating tension surrounding Israel and Palestine has approached the one-year mark and new conflicts ensue across the region. The war in Ukraine continues. The U.S. Presidential election is looming ever closer.

At the school, parents participated in our best-attended Parent Workshop where they watched *Raising Bar*. This film addresses the unforgiving and sometimes unknown landscape of adult life for their children with developmental disabilities. By coming together to experience the film's message and participate in panel discussions as well as breakout groups, participants could express their thoughts, fears, anxieties, and hopefulness for the future.

I will not go into my own uncertainty, but I will share that I am reading a book that has just offered a chapter that lends itself to address and realign much of the angst, anxiety, and fear we all experience each day. "Our lives have never been so free

of immediate physical threats, and yet we've never felt so threatened. And that's because in our normal everyday lives we mostly feel anxious, worried, precarious, vulnerable... We live in a world of chaos, an age where it feels the more, we know the less we understand." (*Wellness* by Nathan Hill)

It is hard to not know what the next day will hold. I suppose that is always the case—the not knowing—but when there is added insecurity, it can create added stress.

What is it that we can be certain of at this point of our shared history?

This is a difficult question to answer. I know in my family, what we can be certain of is that we love each other. We care about each other. We are there for each other. These are certainties that I make sure are known. Most often it is through small gestures. Making sure to be there to cheer on my sons' soccer teams, making and sharing good food, helping with homework, giving hugs, and providing encouragement.

These are the same certainties that our students receive, not only from their own families, but from their Camphill family. At its core, the school is a community of families. Home is where the heart is—and the heart of our school community is our home life. No matter what comes next, no matter how uncertain the world around us becomes, our school will offer a place where everyone is accepted for who they are and what they bring.

Student impressions of the new Craft House

I have said it many times before, but the highlight of working at The Camphill School is getting to spend time with our students. As the years have gone by, our busy schedules (mine and theirs!) have made these visits few and far between for me. Back in September, though, I scheduled time on my calendar so I could have the chance to say hello to our high school students and find out what they most like about the new Craft House. Not only did I get to reconnect with some familiar faces, I got to meet some of the new students, too, and see some of the great work they have done.

I asked Trevor, who is a member of the Woodshop crew this term, what he has been working on, and he shared that he is busy chiseling a bowl. He also told me that he really likes the woodshop and all the space.

Braeden also is enjoying his time in woodshop, and he is making something special that he plans to give as a gift this holiday season.

Alexsandra showed me the sock-darning implement she has been working on with a mallet and chisel. While she doesn't know how to darn a sock yet, I think she knows it will be a handy tool!



Chris, the crew leader in the woodshop told me, "There is more space to hone your creativity. It feels more open, both literally and figuratively, which enhances the general vibe of the Craft House." Support staff member Kadedra loves all the natural light that enhances the students' experience and their work.

As I moved into the weavery, Joseph was hard at work on a subtle yellow table runner. He chose the yellow because it is bright. Joseph also told me that the weavery is better than before!

Juno was busily weaving a soft multi-colored purse that she plans on giving to a special someone. (I promised her I wouldn't ruin the surprise!)

Kye told me she really likes the colors of the table runner she is working on. She also likes to run her fingers along the strings, like a guitar. I could not resist doing the same, and I agree, Kye, it is a fun thing to do in between passing the shuttle for the next row.

02 / Alexandra planes a piece of wood.

03 / Trevor chisels a bowl.



02



03

Sydney is a new student this year, so she was not quite sure what she liked about the Craft House yet, but based on the awesome job she was doing rolling out clay in the new pottery, I would say she has a lot to look forward to in creating beautiful, functional items.

Leah told me she really likes making cookies! She was doing this as she flattened clay into a uniform height. It looked like she was getting ready to make cookies—rolling pin and all! Leah really likes all the space in the new pottery and hopes to make a mug this year.

Renny was also busily rolling out clay that will be adorned with pressings of leaves and plants collected from around

campus. Renny relayed how much he likes to vacuum, and Tina, the pottery teacher, is going to make sure to get a vacuum just for the pottery space so he can help with tidying up.

I talked with Ceci in the store, and in between stacking eggs cartons and chatting about pets, she told me how much she likes to use the scanner point-of-sale system in the new school grocery store space.

Lily was working in the back of the store and used her communication device to let me know that she had done her work for the day and was ready to head home.

You can make it the best of times for The Camphill School!

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair . . .”

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, . . .” is probably the best opening of any novel, ever, and it also represents the struggles of our day. *A Tale of Two Cities* was published in 1859, but one hundred and sixty-five years later the families of our students are caught in the kind of flux that Charles Dickens was describing in his story.

The headlines proclaim that the economy is strong, but also that many families are struggling. Our lives at The Camphill School are caught up in this paradox. Inflationary pressures have impacted the school, but also the children who need us. School districts and parents are all counting the pennies and trying to make them stretch.

That means—without your contribution—many of our students won’t have the funding they need to attend our school and cannot afford Camphill’s life-changing boarding program.

Here’s the difference your donation makes:

“Six years ago, our family was in crisis. Having tuition assistance to give our son what he needed impacts every single person in our family. Our son is thriving. He is happy and engaged and part of an amazing community. I will speak for myself when I say that having the ability to have my son at Camphill is literally the thing that I am most grateful for in my life. Your kindness and generosity make this possible for families like ours, and we cannot be more grateful.”

— Parent of a tuition assistance recipient

Our school community wants to include as many children as we can, but to do so this year will require a tuition assistance fund of \$510,000. ***Can we count on your tax-deductible donation today as we aim to provide tuition assistance to the students who need it?***

Consider joining the Sustainers’ Circle by making a recurring gift. Setting up a donation that automatically renews is convenient for you and helps the school immensely.



◀ Support
The Camphill
School



Please
join us for

#GivingTuesday



Tuesday Dec. 3 20 24



What does it mean to be a family?



Families take many forms. From the so-called “traditional”—mother, father, children—to alternative set-ups like mother, aunt, grandfather, children. No one is better than the other. No form is right or wrong.

What being part of a family really means is being surrounded by people who care about you and understand you. It means having the space to be yourself and having the space to be together. Every member contributes to the family unit—whether it be cooking, cleaning,

shopping, telling jokes, giving hugs, or gracefully winning card games.

According to a 2021 Pew Research survey, the number of multigenerational households in the U.S. has quadrupled. While the largest factor leading people to share their homes is financial, a close second is caregiving.

Numerous studies have been conducted around the world as to the benefits of intergenerational living. One of the most striking results of these studies is that there is a demonstrable link between

social interaction and longevity.

Extended family living is at the heart of the Camphill movement, with elders, resident volunteers and their children, and students sharing a home. With this dynamic, the benefits of intergenerational living abound. The wisdom held by our older cohort is a resource rich in perspective, history, and experience. The freshness of our younger generation is filled with novelty, energy, and vitality. Each offers to the other their understanding, care, and companionship.

02 / Sharing a good book

03 / Enjoying quiet moments



As the years have passed, the ideal of extended family living at The Camphill School remains strong. It has taken different forms—some homes have a nuclear family at the core, while others have house parents who may not actually be related but have chosen to share their home as a family.

With the passage of time our students' and resident volunteers' needs and expectations have also changed. There is a greater need for students to have single- or double-occupancy rooms. Gone are the days of having four high school students to a room with two sets of bunk beds.

With many students having their own rooms, resident volunteer coworkers connected to the homes may need to reside in nearby on-campus houses. While this works as an alternative, ideally, everyone in a house community would live under the same roof. This will be achieved as part of the **Building for a Lifetime Campaign**.

Additions to Woodledge and Ember, two of our more modest homes built in the early 1970s, will provide an apartment

with four bedrooms and a bathroom, kitchen, and living room, giving resident staff and their family their own space. As the school seeks to retain experienced and committed resident staff, providing better work – life balance while remaining connected to the students is crucial.



The lower floor of the new wing will hold a two-bedroom, one-bath efficiency apartment with a kitchenette and living room. This space is designed to serve retired or semi-retired long-term resident staff. With decades of dedication to the school community and experience with many students over their tenure, their knowledge is deeply valued and they are often sought after for advice and guidance. This space also allows the community to uphold the intergenerational living that is at the heart of what makes Camphill communities around the world the incredible places they are.

Not only will these thoughtful renovations provide the space needed for the modern needs of our school, they will also address issues like sunken living room floors, galley kitchens, and no ADA accessible restrooms. By raising the floors for accessibility, the main living room and kitchen area will provide students with a more beautiful and functional space to be together with their house community.

The school plans to begin these renovations in 2025. Please use the QR code to learn more and consider contributing to the project. With your help, we can **Build for a Lifetime!**



Are you 70½ or older with an IRA? Then this article is for you!

01 / A lower school group heads back to school.



When you start the process of taking your Qualified Minimum Distribution (QMD) from your individual retirement account (IRA) this year and realize the taxes you'll have to pay, maybe think "The Camphill School" instead.

If you are at least 70½ years old, you can give up \$100,000 per year directly from your IRA to The Camphill School **without it counting as taxable income**. Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) are now a permanent addition to the tax code and can benefit both you and our students.

There are some rules and processes to keep in mind:

You must be at least **70½ or older** at the time of the transfer.

You may transfer **up to \$100,000 per year**.

Your distribution must come **directly from a qualified IRA**.

The amount transferred is excluded from your adjusted gross income (AGI).

Each financial institution that holds IRAs has their own paperwork and processes that you must complete.

Always **consult your financial advisor** before making any charitable gift, including a QCD.

The Camphill School receives the funds directly from your IRA administrator, and your name will not be relayed to us, so **if you plan to make a QCD to the school, please let us know**. We want to be able to thank you.

When you donate from your IRA, you will be **welcomed into the Pietzner Legacy Society**.

Want to learn more or let us know you will send a QCD this year? Contact **Courtney Coffman** at **610.469.9236 x132** or **ccoffman@camphillschool.org**.



Save the Date!

Friday, May 30, 2025

Building for a Lifetime Gala

Friday, May 30, 2025

6 o'clock

The Desmond Hotel

Malvern, Pennsylvania

Join us to be part of achieving the school's campaign goal! Visit onecau.se/camphill2025 for information. Invitations will follow in the spring.



Camphill Fall Film Festival and Parent Workshop

On Saturday, October 5, Parent CONNECT, Camphill's PTO, hosted the Camphill Fall Film Festival and Parent Workshop at Beaver Run. The event was attended by over 100 current parents, alumni parents, students, siblings, friends of the school, and community members.

The Parent Workshop has been a tradition each fall, but this year was special. We presented the Pennsylvania premiere of *Raising Bar*, a documentary that “examines the unique role intentional communities have played in the long story of adults with intellectual disabilities and how as a nation we have fallen short—often with the best of intentions.”

The film brings into focus the struggle young adults with IDD and their families have once they turn 22 and are no longer in the school system. Their living options outside their parents' home and job opportunities are limited. The Camphill model of individuals with and without developmental disabilities living and working together in a community where each person strives to reach their fullest potential is not supported by most states; therefore, many families cannot choose a life-sharing community for their young adult because of the cost.

As the students and their siblings hiked, played on the playground, enjoyed music, and



02 / Folk dancing in the Blue Room



02

participated in movement activities, the adults viewed *Raising Bar*, followed by a panel discussion. The panelists included Bob and Ginny Swain; Billy Parker, the filmmaker; Emma Brunner, owner of Delphi Provider; and alumni parent Jody Weaver. Bob and Ginny, parents of the “star” of the film, Bar (a Camphill alum), shared their experience of creating their own life-sharing community—High Spirit Community Farm in Great Barrington, Massachusetts—with inspiration from our Transition Program. It was clear from the Q&A portion of the discussion that the needs being met by High Spirit are relevant and urgently felt by our current parents.

After a hearty lunch with the children, the parents gathered in breakout groups to share their impressions of the film, their hopes and fears for their own children, and practical steps to create a meaningful and independent life beyond school.

Jacquellyne Hengst, parent of a twelfth grade student and Chair of Parent CONNECT shared, “One quote from the film that struck me was to ‘set a ceiling, not a floor.’ The discussions we had were an excellent reminder that we cannot settle for what is currently the status quo for our children, but rather, we need to think outside the box and beyond the norm.”

When the group reassembled, Diane Poce, Transition Program parent and advocate, appealed to parents about getting involved in advocacy—from signing a petition to meeting with legislators. Guy Alma then provided closing remarks to end the workshop, and the families reunited in the Blue Room for folk dancing led by Eurythmy teacher, Ute Heuser.

As the guests departed, they expressed their appreciation for the knowledge and resources shared. Sixth grade parent and member of Parent CONNECT Core Group, Frank Angelini, said on the Monday following the event, “It really was an amazing day, and I am still smiling.”

A grateful goodbye and hearty welcome to Board Members

In June, three members of the Board of Directors stepped down from their roles. We offer thanks to Amy McHugh, Kylie Maltz, and Sarah Schreck for their years of service on the Board. Amy, whose daughter Ellie graduated from Beaver Farm in 2021, joined the Board in 2011. During her tenure, Amy chaired the Gala several times and offered expert advice in finances and real estate transactions. Kylie's service began in the fall of 2018. Having her on the Board was essential to keep The Camphill School connected to other communities, including Camphill Village Kimberton Hills, where she leads a household and guides that community's activities and its villagers daily. Sarah, a former houseparent and current class teacher at the school, was an integral part of keeping the Board informed regarding the happenings at the school and helped the Board's decisions by lending expertise in the day-to-day workings of the community.

With the exit of three valued members, the Governance Committee has been busy recruiting new Directors. We are pleased to announce the elections of Jacquellyne Hengst (below) and Sue Rushing (right).



Photo by Deb Putter

Dr. Jacquellyne Hengst is a dedicated parent to Skyler, twelfth grade student at The Camphill School. As Chair of Parent CONNECT, the school's parent association, she actively fosters community engagement and collaboration among families near and far. Dr. Hengst is a licensed Clinical Psychologist in private practice in Paoli, Pennsylvania, where she specializes in treating adolescents and young adults to support their emotional and developmental needs. Additionally, she serves as an adjunct professor for doctoral students at Immaculata University. Her compassionate approach and deep understanding of the unique challenges young people face enhance her role as a parent liaison on the Board, allowing her to effectively advocate for families and strengthen the school community.



Sue Rushing's daughter Katie has been a student at The Camphill School since 2013 and is now in eleventh grade. Sue is dedicated to enhancing and supporting the students, faculty, and staff in the school community. She has served on the Gala Committee for many years, including chairing the event for the past two. As the event's emcee in 2023 and 2024, Sue shared her family's story and helped to raise tens of thousands of dollars for the school. Outside of all she does for Camphill, Sue is Communications Manager for McCaffrey's Markets, a Bucks-County-based grocery chain.



Join us for the Beaver Farm Christmas Market!

**Saturday, December 7,
10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

**Foxfield Farm Barn
701 West Seven Stars Rd.
Phoenixville, PA 19460**

Featuring artisan products and crafts from Beaver Farm, Foxfield Flowers, Beaver Run, and local organizations and businesses along with live seasonal music.



FSC LOGO HERE

PLEASE JOIN US

Dec. 3	#GivingTuesday (see page 7)
Dec. 7	Christmas Market at Foxfield Flowers, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (See page 15)
May 10	Spring Festival and Community Day
May 30	Building for a Lifetime Camphill Gala (see page 11)

VISIT CAMPHILLSCHOOL.ORG FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT ALL EVENTS.

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The Camphill School's mission is to create wholeness for children and youth with developmental disabilities through education, extended family living, and therapy so that they may be better understood, they may more fully unfold their potential, and they may meaningfully participate in life.

The Camphill School does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, religion, or disability.



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Join the growing ranks of the Pietzner Legacy Society by naming our supporting foundation, Beaver Run Foundation, in your will or other estate plans. Call Courtney Coffman at 610.469.9236 x132 for more information.

