The Randolph Sun

2467 Route 9D, Wappinger Falls, NY 12590
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Pre-K through High School
www.randolphschool.org

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Hands On at Randolph School

Trever Lowe
Grade 9

Here at the Randolph School we do a lot of hands-on work in addition to the bookwork. I personally learn better that way. Using my hands while I am thinking and doing helps me understand complex concepts. One of my favorite things to do at school is to work with nature and natural things. Some examples are sculptures with clay, wood, dirt, and rock. One of the teachers that specializes in hands-on learning is our visiting artist, Skip. So far I have done two projects with him. These projects were the Writers' Hut and the GardARTen. The Writers' Hut is used by everyone in the school, and I have spent the most time working on it, so it has become my favorite. However after two years it still is not finished. If I ask when it will be finished, Skip says, "Well, it never will be finished." By this he means that it is a continuous work in progress, and that new groups of students will come and put their mark on the Hut, as I am doing now. The Writers' Hut may still be here in twenty more years, but it may have a completely different form and may be used differently by the students at that time.

I think that there is a lot of learning that goes on when building and working on these projects. Some of the learning is *academic* and some is *experiential*. Most of the *academic learning* is done while we are talking during lunchtime or in breaks from our work. While working on the Writers' Hut, we have discussed geology, poetry, physics, and human relationships to the earth. All of these subjects stemmed from the building of the Writers' Hut, and were put into context as we worked. The *experiential learning* is done continuously throughout the entire process. Some of this learning included learning to make adobe, drainage, imperviosity of various materials, and cooperative team work. I think the *experiential learning* is just as, if not more useful to me because I can and will use it later in life. The only *academic learning* that I think should be more of a priority than the *experiential learning* is math, because math is used everywhere. I also think that you can get some of the *academic learning* out of the *experiential learning*, such as history and ancient architecture.

Upstairs & Carriage House students visit one of environmental artist Skip Schuckmann's creations in Rhinebeck.

Current and alumni parents have issued two **different challenges** to everyone in the Randolph School Community.

- ***For Parents and Teachers:*** **100% participation in Annual Giving will bring Randolph School $10,000.**
- ***For Alumni and Friends:*** **Every new or increased donation to the Annual Giving Fund will be matched dollar for dollar.**

For details about our ANNUAL GIVING CHALLENGES, read "Meet the Challenge" on p. 4.

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ALUMNI NEWS

Board Members & Teachers:

Co-Founder **Gerry Pomeroy** is still involved in experimental education after 50 years. In several notes to us he has expressed pride that Randolph has survived and thrived throughout. Our gratitude goes to him for his vision.

Board Member and mother of **Roeland, Saskia** and **Sander, Sonya Kim** is a professor of Education in NYC as well as the New York representative for the Reggio Emilia Network. (See article on page 7.) She has also given talks on this subject to parents & teachers at Randolph this winter and spring. We offer her our many thanks for her continued support.

Lanse Stover continues his support of Randolph as a Board Member and friend of the school. He works as a ceramic artist / sculptor and lives near Boston with his family.

Eric Tomlins and **Katlyn Lerner (Missy Tomlins)** are both working at the school, and we see them daily. Their vision & lifelong commitment to the philosophy has helped mold the school for years now.

60's:

Jason Tomlins lives in California with his family where he works as a technician in the film industry, as well as a furniture maker. His son, Reuben has attended several of uncle Eric's summer video camps at Randolph, continuing the Tomlins tradition from the far reaches of California. **Kate Stover** stopped by the school a while back. She and her family live outside Philly, and **Kate** works as a museum curator on special projects in that area. They are locally very involved in alternative education, and she continues to be a good friend to the school. Younger brother **Gerrit Stover** is an environmentalist, in North Hampton Mass.

70's:

Our **Alisa Algava** is now running our new High School Program at Randolph. She writes, "Randolph School is an integral part of who I am….I still conceive of an idea, put all my effort into whatever I'm working on, and finish a project so that it is useful to someone in this world…" **Alisa** has also written several successful grants for Randolph over the past 2 years. Her sister, **Carin** is getting married this summer, and lives in Providence R.I. working in the Education Dept. at Brown University. As a new member of the Board of Trustees, **Dave Bargeron** is very involved in the school again after many years. He is living in Seattle and working in the Think Tank at Microsoft. (See his letter on page 4/5). **Bobbi Berenbaum** is recently married. She is teaching at a "Randolph-type school" near Philly. **Kirsten Peck** is living in New Zealand with her husband where she plans to be a commercial pilot. Sister **Adrienne** lives in Colorado with her husband & is working on her Masters of Ed. Degree in Special Education. We heard from **Elise Habra**, who is working as a cartographer in the San Jose, California area. **Susanna Reith** lives in Kansas City and has recently started a new job in the marketing of children's cards at Hallmark. **Emily** has recently completed her MS in physical science in Colorado, and is planning to teach at the high school level.

80's:

We see **Owen Tomlins** every day as he is teaching videography at Randolph, as well as running our videography summer camps with father Eric. In addition, he works as an independent filmmaker, and has recently completed a documentary on the Erick Hawkins Dance Company. **Troy Piccone** dropped us a line to let us know he is back from Australia, and is now working in the film industry in New York, and living in the Tarrytown area. **Fred Miller** is still passionate about his music and is playing in a local band in this area. He also works as a carpenter. **Daniel Bush** is a senior in high school and going through the process of looking at colleges. Another teacher(!), **Katherine Blake** let us know that she is living and working in Connecticutt and has fond memories of Randolph. **David Pascarella (Pasky)** is living in Buffalo and working on his MSW.

90's:

We heard from **Colin Jones**'s mother, **Carol**. **Colin** is thriving in Highland High School, and is enjoying himself to boot. **Miles Bradley** stopped by Randolph the other day. He is back from Ireland and is working in the area, and doing great. .**Eliza Fish** is living back in the Garrison area, after her family left NYC post 9/11. **Adam Lerner** is attending the Putney School in Vermont and is busy looking at colleges for next year, and being an assistant counselor at the summer Randolph videography camps. Eric saw **Michael Denholtz** the other day. He is going to go to Gettysburg College in the fall.

Carpentry in the GardARTen

Note:

We love hearing from all of you and hope you continue to keep us posted on your triumphs and tribulations. Write us at: Randolph School, 2467 Route 9D, Wappinger Falls, NY 12508, or Email us at: learn@randolphschool.org.

Expansion, Expansion

Eric Tomlins

It's piñata time, and everyone is here. It is cold outside and I sit in the corner of the tent we have constructed for our annual Holiday Party. I see the space fill up with excited kids and their families. Even with this temporary addition, we are full to capacity, and the Carriage House is buzzing. I am alone and quiet for one brief moment, watching the glittering Trojan Horse that hangs from the rafters. We finished it late last night and I am tired and happy. This is one of my favorite times of the year at Randolph School.

Middle School Fills to Capacity

Randolph is growing by leaps and bounds, and this growth has taken many forms. **Enrollment** continues to increase. The **depth** and **maturity** of the programs is noticeable and the strengths of the school have been realized with great rewards. We began seven years ago with planning and construction, and the renovated Carriage House now houses the middle school. Five years ago, we finally moved into the space, and the building has been invaluable to us. We can once again gather the entire school in a large multi-purpose space for plays, dance groups and more. The **Middle School** is flourishing as we have created a Randolph School culture for youth faced with the possibilities and challenges of early adolescence. The program successfully focuses on the school's values: love of learning, independence, cooperation and respect for the individual. A viable alternative for middle school has attracted more students to the school, and thus, programs have grown at every level.

First High School Group

This year we have been busting at the seams with the addition of our first **High School** group. Once again, families sought an alternative to huge impersonal high schools and came to us asking for a program. Alisa Algava has joined our team as the head of the fledgling High School program. She is a former student and faculty member and a current Board member, and Alisa embodies the essence of Randolph's values. We are thrilled to have her as a new faculty member. She has established an internship program for the high school students in which they link their interests and passions with academic projects. Already one of the students is following her interests in early education, working with the Downstairs program. Two students are doing internships outside the school, and one is being mentored by a singer-songwriter parent.

Technology, Art, and Science

The **quality** of education at the school is deepening through the expansion of our technology curriculum, as well as the continuous development of our performing arts and natural sciences programs. We now have **video programming** and digital editing for many age groups. Students are **documenting** their work and creating digital portfolios using digital photos, individual websites, and video, as a tool to reflect on their learning. Dance and other performances are being digitized as well, to provide a permanent record of activities at the school. Chris Iversen has added a Randolph School chorus, long talked about. The end-of-year Art Show exhibited exceptional artwork from every child in the school ages 3-16, and covered every inch of available space in the Carriage House with our students' two and three dimensional creations. Randolph School learners continue to investigate and explore our natural world, as they have done for the past forty years. We now have a fleet of canoes, and seining in the Hudson River has become a new tradition.

Growth Brings New Needs

With all the growth comes the need to provide more for our students: better playing fields, larger and better equipped science and art facilities, expanded environmental opportunities. So we are looking for a larger space with additional options. The aim is not to create a bigger, more impersonal school, but to remain faithful to the vision of our school as a **big family** and to recast the program in a way that will provide more for every child.

High School students moving a 400 lb. maple log with a come-along.

When I began working at the school, art was conducted in the classrooms and in the kitchen. In 1982, with the help of Tom Peck and his family, we built the new art room and library. Art is still created in the classrooms and kitchen, but we added a much needed and great space in order to increase the range of activities in which we could engage. It is time once again to take another leap forward. Arts, music, science, videography and sports need expansion facilities, and we need more and larger classroom space. How can we make the school available to an additional 50 kids who could benefit from a Randolph education? Why not find a way to reach more children who are in financial need and support them as they offer their many gifts? It is time to turn dream into reality.

Dreams Will Become Reality: Deer Hill

Can we do all of these things? Probably not all at once, but over the next ten years we are making a commitment to try and reach these goals. All of them are within the mission of the Randolph School. Emphatically, we will not turn ourselves into another prep school. Instead, this expansion will lead us to an even better version of the school you have known. We are in the process of purchasing and moving to Deer Hill Conference Center, a 38-acre wooded property, one mile down the road from us.

Our school community has grown over these forty years to include thousands of students, parents, grandparents and friends. We will need your help in the years to come, whether through financial support, work, expertise or encouragement. Please join us in reaching for these exciting goals.

CALLING ALL ALUMNI AND FRIENDS...EACH DOLLAR YOU GIVE WILL BE DOUBLED!

One of our Alumni parents has challenged the Randolph School alumni community to increase our Annual Giving Fund. **Each NEW ANNUAL GIVING GIFT from alumni and their families will be matched dollar for dollar, effectively doubling every contribution.** In addition, any INCREASE to an annual gift contributed in the past will also be matched. You will make a difference. If you have never donated to Randolph School before, we especially need your support now! And if you have made financial contributions in the past, please consider increasing your donation this year. **Every little bit helps!**

Outstanding Education

Let me tell you one of my own Randolph School stories. I went to Randolph back in the '70's, before the advent of PCs and digital video editing. One day, Eric Tomlins gathered a bunch of us together and said, "Let's make a movie!" Over the ensuing weeks, we wrote a script, fleshed out characters, and designed and constructed costumes and sets. We tackled every aspect of filmmaking, from running the Super-8 camera and lights, to acting and directing. In one scene, we wanted to show the demise of the evil scientist's spaceship, but we had neither spaceship nor explosives. After some deliberation, we figured out that a tiny spaceship filmed close-up looks just like a big spaceship filmed far away. We built a little model of the evil scientist's spaceship, squirted it with lighter fluid, yelled "Action!" and lit it up. The modest little flame was a conflagration on screen. We were so excited, and had so much fun! What we learned was problem-solving and how to achieve the impossible with the means at hand, the essence of a Randolph education. Learning how to think and the joy in doing it is almost a forgotten art these days. Today, I work for Microsoft in the Think Tank, and to me it's a logical extension of my Randolph education.

D.B.

Writers' Hut & Integrated Learning

Randolph's integrated curriculum approach engages kids with in-depth search for solutions to real-world problems. One look at the Writers' Hut project will tell the story. It brings together Language Arts, design, engineering, environmental science, and earth science in ways that spark the kids' imaginations. This project has elevated fort building -- a staple of Randolph School environmental education -- to a whole new level! The Writers' Hut is a sprawling warren of rooms and common space the kids designed and built themselves from the ground up. Inspired by Roald Dahl's backyard writing hut, the kids first worked last year with a visiting environmental artist, Skip Schuckmann, to develop a project plan. They used only recycled materials from the immediate neighborhood during construction, and they devised alternate uses for everything from paint to old washing machine parts. Once the 1st phase of the project was completed, the kids used the space to write, tell stories, and compose poetry. And they have continued to develop new ideas of functionality and aesthetics as they work, write, study and play in and around the Writers' Hut.

E.T.

CALLING ALL PARENTS AND TEACHERS...100% PARTICIPATION EARNS BONUS $10,000

One of our current Randolph School families has challenged all of us to contribute to the Annual Giving Fund this year. For every ten percent of our 75 current families and teachers who make a donation, the family behind this challenge will give $1,000. So, if 90% of **current families and teachers make a donation of ANY size**, we will receive a $9,000 gift. If 100% of current families participate, we will be given an additional $1,000 bringing the total bonus gift to **$10,000**! We need your support now so that we don't lose out on this generous donation. Please help us reach 100% participation. **Every single donation counts!**

A Letter of Request from David Bargeron '71-'80...
No Matter How Grand or Small, Your Donation Matters!

Dear Members of the Randolph School Community, near and far, past and present...

Today, I invite you to take a moment to think about your past. Who was that special teacher who made a difference in your life? What was the school project that opened your eyes to the possibilities and made you say "aha!"? Ask any Randolph School kid these questions, and you will hear a torrent of passionate, wonderful stories, because every Randolph kid has so many great examples from which to choose.

Be a Donor

People don't usually donate money to their elementary schools. They donate to high schools and colleges. I am asking, however, for you to think about the ways that Randolph has affected you and your family, the way you approach life and problem-solving. I am asking you to make a contribution that will, in this small setting, make a huge difference. Read the newsletter. **Put your name on the list on the back.** Randolph School needs your help so that more young people can grow up learning to love learning in the unique Randolph School way.

Exemplary Management

Perusal of *The Randolph Sun* will suggest how well managed Randolph has become. Over the last five years the Board members and administrators of Randolph School have managed to keep the school's budget in the black, while simultaneously improving facilities and educational programming, and keeping tuition prices well below the average for similar schools in the area. Here are just a few recent examples of the forward-thinking management at Randolph:

- Addition of a Middle School in 2000 - already at CAPACITY!
- Establishment of a Waiting List for Upstairs program because enrollment was full by Spring 2003 for the upcoming school year.
- Addition of a small high school program in 2002, in response to families' requests and community need.
- Funding of a one-day-per-week fundraising/grant-writing staff position.
- Addition of a new staff person to document with the kids what is going on at the school through videography, photography, and digital portfolio creation.
- Installation of a new computer network, which improves the productivity of both teachers and students.
- Expansion of educational space in the newly renovated Carriage House (which also provides rental space for community groups and artists).

Randolph has always succeeded on a slim margin, and this year is no exception. Randolph's management team makes every penny count, though, and **your donation matters!**

Historical Crossroads

Randolph School is at an exciting crossroads this year. There are 75 students currently enrolled - the most in the school's history - and the school is bursting at the seams. There are even more families that want to take advantage of Randolph's invaluable educational approach, but they simply cannot be accommodated given the school's present resources and available space. In particular, the middle and high school programs are growing by almost 100% and need more classrooms. The school's art, science, theater, and library facilities are in desperate need of improvement. Teacher salaries and benefits must grow by 30% just to stay competitive with other local private schools. And Randolph's ongoing commitment to ethnic, racial, and economic diversity requires ever-increasing funds for financial aid.

Randolph School kids spend their time doing what they enjoy and simultaneously acquire valuable knowledge, experience, and a love for learning along the way. Every Randolph School alumnus is proof that this remarkably simple and effective approach works.

Please consider giving a generous gift to Randolph School to help make this wonderful educational experience available to all who need and want it.

Sincerely,

David Bargeron
Software Design Engineer, Microsoft Research
Randolph School student '74 - '80 and Randolph School Board member since 2001

P.S. Your contribution is tax deductible, and you may be able to double your donation with a matching gift from your employer!

The River That Flows Both Ways

Susan Berliner

There's no telling what the power
Of the people and the river can do!
-Pete Seeger, "Broad Old River"

They troop down the winding path through the bittersweet to Sandy Beach in Cold Spring, loaded down with buckets, dip nets, fish tanks, chest waders, seine net and plenty of spirit - intrepid explorers in little rubber boots.

Crashing through the rushes at the bottom of the woods, their voices ring with excitement as they see the water spreading out before them. What will the river bring them today? It's like a treasure hunt that's always changing.

Randolph's old friend, folk singer and activist, Pete Seeger, once said, "You can't expect people to save the river unless they love the river." Our Kindergarten science curriculum emerges from the notion that stewardship for our earth starts with celebrating its bounty and its beauty - embracing the daily joys it brings into our lives.

The Hudson Touches Every Student

What better place to start than with the amazing resource that flows through our lives? Our geographical region, the Hudson Valley, takes its name and its history from the Hudson River - yet how many of us have actually touched it?

By the end of their school year, all the Kindergarteners have touched the river, many times, and more importantly, the river has touched all of us.

Starting in the fall, when the tide is right, the Kindergarten group heads for the Hudson, for the first of a series of all day field trips designed to acquaint the children with their river and its creatures, biology, ecology and history.

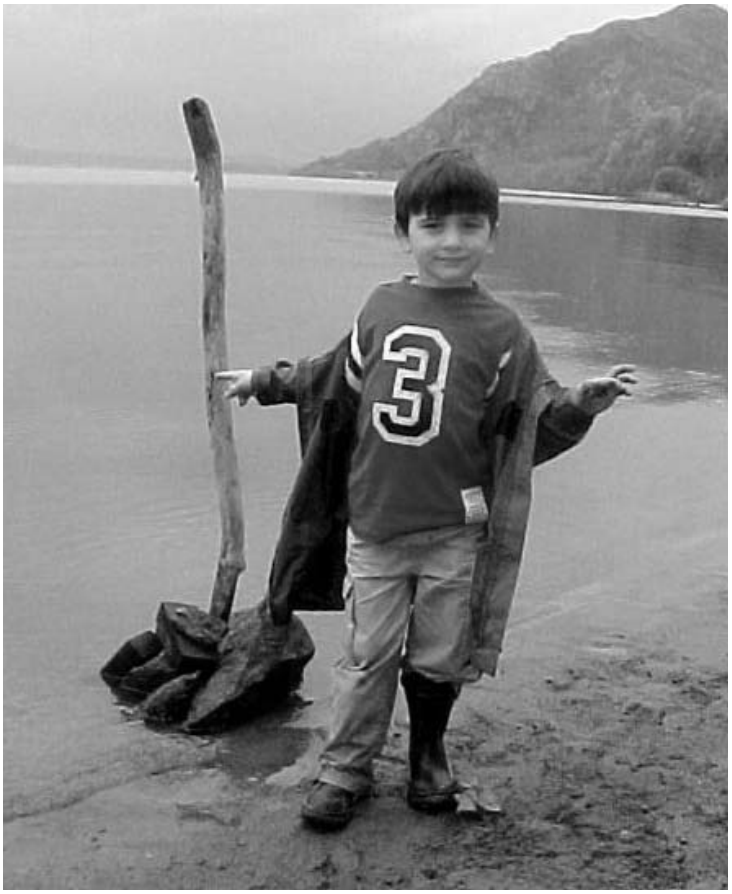
Arriving at the beach, we unload and survey the river. Sandy Beach is at the mouth of the Hudson Highlands, just south of Bannerman's Island, a reach of the river so magical that it inspired much of the Hudson River School of painting and many of Washington Irving's tales. It's an arm of the sea, our part of the Hudson, not a river at all, but a place where fresh water and salt water mix to create a tidal estuary - one of earth's most productive ecosystems.

We Plant Tidesticks at the Edge of the River

Is the tide coming in or going out? Our first order of the day is to plant a tidestick at the water's edge, shoring it up with a little tor of stones and rocks that the children gather from the surrounding beach. We talk about the moon, and the tides, and how, when the moon pulls at the ocean, it overflows into the river, and then back again as the earth turns - every six hours, leaving behind new treasures and stories with every flip of the tide. We chant about the natives who lived along its banks for a millennium during the Woodland period, and the Algonquin name for the river - Muhheakantuck - which means "river that flows both ways." We compare this to the name Hudson River, ponder the experience of Henry Hudson and his crew stumbling onto the river in 1609 in their square rigged yaagt, the Halve Maen (Half Moon), while searching for the fabled Northwest Passage, and contemplate which name better suits it. Periodically during our visit, someone notices the tidestick "moving" in the water - and reports back to the group with amazement.

The Beach is a Map of Our Place in Time

Like Indiana Jones, the children comb the beach, searching for clues to our past and future. Brick pieces from the local brickyards of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, coal from steamships gone by, clam shells washed north from the clam beds



Daniel finishes placing a tidestick in the Hudson River.

of Piermont - the last surviving clams in our part of the river before they were wiped out by sewage in the sixties, fresh crab shells, driftwood, arrowheads, everywhere devilsheads from water chestnut plants introduced from Asia that grow unchecked by our ecosystem, bits of glass and plastic jugs - the beach is a map of our place in time. Everything the children pick up tells a story.

Students burrow in the sand and pebbles at the water's edge, working together to engineer empires of moats and bridges, and watch with delight as the tide washes in and out of their creation, deepening gorges and collapsing castles, then rebuild with renewed enthusiasm.

continued on p. 7

Children Fish and Chant

Then, after the ceremonial smelling of the seine net, we go fishing.

Hands fly up as we select fish pickers and pole pullers. We discuss proper fish wrangling techniques - wetting your hands carefully so as not to disturb their layer of antibacterial slime, cupping your hands and transporting each fish quickly from net to bucket in one swift move so their gills can continue to draw oxygen from the water. We select a north pole and a south pole, and discuss what lies at each end of the river - how it starts as rain and snow melting into Lake Tear of the Clouds high atop Mount Marcy in the Adirondacks, and makes its way 315 miles south to the Atlantic Ocean in New York Harbor - changing, always changing.

The children practice our sacred fish chant: "O wah tah goo siam, o wah tah goo siam" (try saying it fast) and wave cheerfully, chanting, as Diane and Susan wade off into the river with the seine net. Minutes later, they are pulling in the poles and yelling with delight as they pick fish and crabs from the soggy vegetation in the net and drop them into the buckets, which we have already filled with river. After several more pulls with the net, and several more crews of eager fish pickers and pole pullers, we take our catch back to the aquarium for closer inspection.

Our covenant with the river prescribes that we hurt nothing - the fish are our guests for an hour or so: they get to study us and report back to their school (as do we), and at the end of the day everyone gets to go home.

We Study Differences and Similarities

We gather around the aquarium, which has a special perch on the gnarl of an ancient log, and key out the fish together, using fish keys from the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater. This gives everybody a chance to study each fish closely and notice their many differences. What color is it? Does it have a predilection for the bottom of the tank? Does it have both eyes on one side of its face? Is the tail forked or square? Does it have one dorsal fin or two? Scales or no scales? Barbels? We compare fish features with our features, and how they help us adapt to life in our respective environments.

Somebody wonders why fish don't smash into each other when the whole school suddenly turns right or left. Fish, it turns out, have a "sixth sense," an inner choreographer: the lateral line that runs from head to tail. We contemplate having stripes of hairy jello down the side of our bodies to pick up vibrations.

The Hudson River has 206 known species of fish - ranging from tiny iridescent comb jellies, starfish, seahorses and lobsters in the south to huge striped bass and nine foot sturgeons - great beady-eyed prehistoric bottom dwellers, the dinosaurs of the Hudson, now endangered. Some, like shad, are catadramous, which means they live in the ocean and only return to the river to spawn, but the rest are all dangerously contaminated with the millions of PCB's that GE released into the river from 1947-77 from its plants in Fort Edward and Hudson Falls. The Hudson River is the #1 Superfund site in New York State, but money slated for its clean-up has been reallocated by the current administration.

These issues, however, are far from the children's minds, as their eyes grow wide with excitement as they solemnly pet a silvery herring or touch a blue claw crab. For now, their job is to love the river.

Reggio Emilia Comes to Randolph

Diane Boujikian

This year, Dr. Sonja deGroot Kim (Saskia, Roland and Sander's Mom) joined the Randolph staff for a five week intensive look at the philosophy and community of Reggio Emilia and how we could incorporate aspects of the early childhood Reggio approach in our classrooms. Sonja is an expert in the philosophy and practices of early education in Reggio Emilia, Italy. She's been to Reggio Emilia and is the New York Representative for their Network. We received a grant from the Mid-Hudson Teachers' Center (written by our Alisa Algava) for this series of workshops, resource books and videos. In addition to the teacher workshops, Sonya also gave a lecture on Reggio Emilia for Randolph parents and staff, which was well received and appreciated.

Reggio and Randolph

Reggio Emilia is a community of children and families all taking part in the education process with the main focus being the needs and interests of the children. This is one of many familiar threads between Randolph and Reggio. We were interested in learning more about the incredible documentation that happens at the Reggio schools and the crucial role the environment plays in the Reggio approach. The documentation of children's work "makes learning visible" to the children, their families and to the teachers. The children use a variety of mediums to represent their work while teachers facilitate and use digital cameras, tape recorders and computers to chronicle the on-going process.

Thank You, Sonja Kim

Our plan is to extend the workshops into the fall when we will design a new school environment to encourage more long-term projects and create the added space necessary for the extensive documentation of children's work. As one of our Board of Trustees, Sonja has continued to support the teachers and the school. We deeply appreciate all the time, energy and expertise she offers.

The Randolph School
2467 Route 9D
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

The Randolph School was founded on the belief that all children have a natural ability to learn. This desire is supported and nurtured by an environment in which each child's developmental needs and interests are respected. Mutual trust between children and adults fosters an atmosphere where children are encouraged to discover and explore their world. Work and play are focused on experiential, hands-on learning that is developmentally appropriate. We strive to balance the creative potential in the intellectual, social, emotional artistic and physical lives of children in the belief that children who love to learn become LIFE-LONG learners.

Randolph School is truly grateful to all those who support our mission and programs. The following is a list of those who made contributions from 2001-2003. While we have taken great care to ensure accuracy, please notify us of any errors or omissions so that we may correct our records and acknowledge your generosity. Thank you.

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Anonymous

Foundations and Organizations Who Supported Our Work through Grants
The Community Foundation of Dutchess County
Dutchess County Arts Council
The Mid-Hudson Teachers' Center

The Randolph School is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. Your donations are tax-deductible and are appreciated.