

at Ambleside

THE NEWSLETTER OF AMBLESIDE SCHOOL OF FREDERICKSBURG

13 MAY 2009



Climbing Together

Chapel Message by
CHRISTINA LEISTNER,
high school exchange student
from Switzerland

April 29, 2009

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ON A HIKE? My family and I often go on hikes in the Swiss Alps on our vacation. From our house it's a good two-hour drive to the mountains. Usually we stay at one place and undertake our hikes from there.

As you know, if you've been on a hike, you can't beat careful and good planning. You have to ask yourself questions like where do I want to go? How long do I want my hike to be? Do I want a challenging hike? How is the weather going to be? Then you have to check your gear. Is the profile of my hiking boots still OK? Do I have a backpack?

When I decided to stay here in Fredericksburg for nine months many similar questions went through my head. How can I ever be separated from my family for such a long time? What if the people there don't understand me, and I don't understand them? The fear of the unknown and uncomfortable almost convinced me to stay in Switzerland. I knew that basically everything would be different and new for me: a new language, a new culture and a new school. It seemed to me as if having a terribly long and narrow path leading up to a large, unconquerable seeming mountain in front of me. I

thought, how could I ever make it to the top of that distant mountain?! Well, then I had to decide, whether I at least wanted to try or just back out. I luckily decided to go on despite those doubts and fears. Like when you're on a hike it usually takes a while until you get into your stride. After my first few days here I already wanted to go home. The people here didn't speak my language, everything (writing, communicating my needs) took me much longer, the climate was much different (hot and sticky) and above all I was terribly homesick. But then like on a hike you suddenly see the beauty around you. You stop focusing on yourself and all of a sudden you hear the birds singing, see the meadows with the alpine flowers: edelweiss, gentians, and marguerites. You marvel at the beautiful panorama with glittering lakes, snow-capped mountains and the blue sky surrounding you. After a while here I began to see all the beautiful things about being a student at Ambleside. The whole atmosphere here struck me. What impressed me about it were the relationships that were being cultivated here. I learned that being with classmates is uplifting and edifying rather than about comparison and

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HELPING PARENTS STRENGTHEN THEIR FAMILIES

This semester, Mrs. Whitehead has led two book studies for parents and staff. The books were *Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World – Seven Building Blocks for Developing Capable Young People* by H. Stephen Glenn and Jane Nelson, Ed. D. and *Searching For God Knows What* by Donald Miller

Raising Self-Reliant Children is a parenting classic, offering inspiring and workable ideas for developing a trusting relationship with children, as well as skills to implement the necessary discipline to help your child become a responsible adult. *Searching For God Knows What* equips parents to better support their children in developing healthy peer relationships - including identifying real reasons for relationship struggles and ideas to deal with these struggles.

Here are some thoughts from the book studies:

"The book study was a great time of learning and discussion. It put our culture and modern parenting in a historic perspective and offered practical ideas on how to purposefully direct our children and provide them with skills for successful living. The ideas here are practical for parents and for everyone who wishes to improve their influence in their relationship with others."

"The idea of wanting and giving your children the best, so they won't suffer, is really detrimental to them. That is a hard thing to swallow, but it makes sense if you take a step back and think about it."

"A must read for all parents. Each generation wants to make things easier for the next, but by doing this we are hindering our children. Parents need to be aware of the impact their words, and how they use those words, influence how our children perceive themselves."



Sing

*discover the joy of singing
and performing!*

June 8-12, 2009
Monday Friday
9 a.m. to 3 p.m



Vocal Arts Camp

CLIMBING TOGETHER *continued*

exploiting. For the first time I've seen teachers being interested in who I am as a person; what my strengths and weaknesses are, how they can help me to grow up (encouraging my good habits and trying to change bad habits). They encouraged and developed habits such as the habit of Attention, of Imagining, of Neatness and Order, of Perfect Execution, of Punctuality, of Remembering, of Responsibility, of Temper, of Thinking and of Truthfulness. What is also very different from my old school in Switzerland is how students relate with each other. From the beginning I experienced a friendliness and readiness to help I was missing for a long time in Switzerland. The students accept me how I am. The student's response to a wrong answer isn't eye-rolling, laughing and dispiriting comments. Let's go back to our comparison of being on a hike.

Sometimes you have somebody with you or you are all by yourself. Especially when you start seeing difficulties like not seeing the trail signs anymore; you wish you had somebody with you giving you some encouraging words. It is in exactly this way I benefited from my stay here. It strengthened my relationship to God. Being separated from the things I knew made me realize how much I must relate on God. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrew 11: 1) I must say in Switzerland I didn't really have many challenges. I wasn't confronted with growing; every day was basically the same. I would go to school, come home for lunch, go to school again, come home, have orchestra or swimming, have dinner and then go to bed. When there was a problem, I would first look for help from my mom or dad. Asking Jesus for help was usually only a second option, when there seemed to be no expedient. Being away from my family complicated that. I think here I learned for the first time what it really means to go first to Jesus with my problems.

After these nine months of learning, growing, struggling, overcoming and seeing the beauty of my surrounding; I can now look back and delight how with God's help and the many loving and caring people around me; I finally made it to the top of my mountain.

I would like to encourage you that, whatever your hike is right now, not to give up and keep on going. Trust that there is always someone with you. When you finally make it to the top of your mountain empowered by faith as Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph and you will be highly rewarded by Jesus, the one who gave his life on the cross and gives it to us every day – moment for moment.

Christina Leistner, student

Ambleside Afternoons this fall

PURPOSE: Ambleside Afternoons was created to broaden the availability of an Ambleside education to more families in the Hill Country and to bring a consistent approach to caring for young children in the afternoons on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

PHILOSOPHY: We believe that shorter days in the classroom in grades kindergarten through second provide the ideal schedule for bringing up younger children. However, we also know that some children come from single parent homes, homes where both parents are working and others who are at a greater distance than the Fredericksburg area. Because of these reasons, Ambleside Afternoons is being offered to accommodate parents in choosing an Ambleside education for their children.

Ambleside Afternoons Schedule

- 12:30 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. – Lunch and Outdoor Play
- 1:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. – Restroom and Clean Up
- 1:30 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. – Rest Time
- 2:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. – Practical Life
(includes some seasonal work as well as every day work)
- 3:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. – Read Aloud

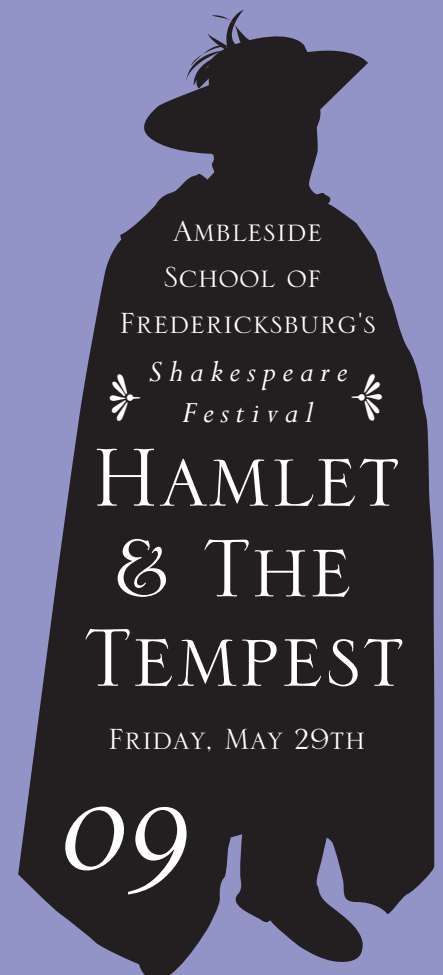
COST: Students are enrolled for the year at a cost of \$125 per month for 9 months. This amount must be paid in full (\$1,125/year) by July 1st for the school year, or may be added to the tuition payment agreement made through FACTS. Ambleside Afternoons are Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays from 12:30 - 3:30 p.m. K-2nd students of Ambleside who are not regular Ambleside Afternoon participants may attend the afternoon class two times per semester with prior permission (space available) at a cost of \$15.00/visit.

CLASS SIZE: This program is available only for Ambleside K-2nd grade students. A class will be formed once six or more students register. The class will be limited to 10 students in recognition of the need for the teacher to train in appropriate habits and a larger class reduces the effectiveness of this training. The class will be filled on a first come, first served basis – requiring a \$75 deposit to hold the child's space in the class. This deposit will be credited toward the Ambleside Afternoons tuition. Should more than 10 students demonstrate an interest in attending, a waiting list will begin (for students 11-15). When there are 16 students registered for the class, a second class will be opened with 8 students in each class. Class limit for each class will be 10 students (total of 20).

MAKING Progress

An appeal was made and our families and friends responded. At last report, the deficit has been reduced to \$12,000. Thank you to all who have supported the work of Ambleside. Please consider how you can help with the remaining deficit:

- Purchase Scrip cards, a percentage of your purchases goes directly to Ambleside: <http://shop-withscrip.com>
- Buy our beautiful Art note cards, \$16.00 for 12 cards, available in the school office or online: <http://amblesidefredericksburg.com/animalfaces.htm>
- Donate securely online to Ambleside at Network for Good: <https://www.networkforgood.org>



A NEW DAY *for* AMBLESIDE

“WITHOUT CHANGE, WE WOULDN'T
HAVE THE BUTTERFLY.”

Dear Ambleside Families and Friends:

Being a part of daily school life allows one to participate in a vibrant community of growth. Just as the rains have recently refreshed the Hill Country, providing thirsty plants with nourishment, Ambleside provides this same refreshment to the mind and heart. Students and teachers gather around a wealth of knowledge drinking in the language and ideas of the past and the present. Whether the young child is hearing the fable of Aesop or the older child grappling with the negative effects of industry on the environment, at school, one experiences the joyful work of the mind.

For the past ten years, as founder, principal, and teacher, this privilege has been a part of my life at Ambleside School of Fredericksburg. Our school is unique in that from the onset it was my desire that at Ambleside teachers, principals, parents and Board members, as well as students, would all be nourished. Through the varied forms of training offered at Ambleside, over 600 educators from twenty-five states and eighteen countries have been informed and inspired.

Bill and I are experiencing a great need for more time to plan, to provide training and to develop resources for all Ambleside teachers and students. Consequently, it is become apparent to both the Board of Ambleside School of Fredericksburg and the Board of Ambleside Schools International that we must take the next step in transition. Thus, this will be the final year that Bill and I serve on the faculty and staff of Ambleside School of Fredericksburg.

We take this step with absolute confidence in the leadership of Janet and the Ambleside of Fredericksburg School Board. We are sure that the very good thing that was founded nine years ago will continue to the great benefit of children, parents and teachers. Of course, you will still see us frequently. We will continue to host Ambleside Internships, serve on the Education Committee of the Board of ASF, and to partner with Janet in providing training to the staff of Ambleside Fredericksburg.

It was ten years ago that I moved to Fredericksburg. It has been a time filled with both challenges and great satisfactions, none greater than seeing the wonderful growth in so many children. Let me conclude by saying thank you to the many friends who have loved and cared for us. This is not good bye but a new day.

May God continue to bless you, your children and Ambleside of Fredericksburg.

Sincerely,

MARYELLEN ST. CYR



Grown-Ups: A Dying Breed

by Maryellen St. Cyr

“... life is no more self-existing than it is self-supporting; it requires sustenance, regular, ordered and fitting.”

CHARLOTTE MASON

There is no argument that this is true for bodily life, but as a culture we have forgotten that the mind too requires the right kind of food. Without it, mind and heart fail to develop in a healthy manner. They become malnourished and growth is stunted (intellectual, emotional, spiritual, relational, and moral growth). This points to one of the great challenges of parenting today – ensuring that the “food stuff” which feeds the minds of our children is the proper kind of food, not diluted, dry, junk food, but that which is noble, inspiring, thought provoking, a good feast for mind and heart. When it comes to mind food, being “not bad” is not enough. The important question remains, “Is that which feeds the mind of my child truly good? Is it nourishing noble thinking, noble feeling, noble acting, and noble character?”

As a young teacher, twenty something years ago, I remember being introduced to Charlotte Mason through her writings. For many years, I read daily about my role as a teacher, exploring the questions: who is this child before me, and what does it mean to educate children? Her ideas took hold of me, became a part of me. I would ponder them deeply, work them out in my mind and live them out in the classroom. As I reflected upon the incongruence of my beliefs and practices, her ideas had transformative power. I began to grow. I began to change. From that time forward, I have been very conscious of exactly how I was feeding my own mind and how I was feeding the mind of children.

When it comes to taking responsibility for the feeding of the minds and hearts of children, we might ask the question, “Where have all the grownups gone?” It is precisely this question that Washington Times syndicated columnist Diana West explores in her provocative recent book, *The Death of the Grown-Up*. She answers the question by examining culture, past and present, recognizing culture’s profound power to subtly shape the character of a generation.

Below are some salient points in Ms. West’s book followed by my reflection:

- In 2002, the National Academy of Sciences redefined adolescence as the period extending from the onset of puberty until thirty. And, we wonder whatever happened to the idea of a child being prepared for adulthood by eighteen or twenty-one at the latest. Culture has changed this and what are the implications?

- American social writer and philosopher, Eric Hoffer, states, “If a society is to preserve its stability and a degree of continuity, it must know how to keep its adolescents from imposing their tastes, attitudes, values, and fantasies on everyday life.”

The traditional understanding of culture was that the wisdom, knowledge, values, skills, tools, and artifacts passed from one

generation to the next through culture. When children and those barely beyond childhood are setting the cultural norms are we losing the experience and wisdom of the older?

- We ask what are the values and virtues of maturity. Surely they include such things as: forbearance and honor, patience and responsibility, perspective and wisdom, sobriety and service, decorum and manners, the wisdom to know what is “appropriate” and when.

- Consider television, song, game, movie t-shirt, or other artifact of the “youth culture” and ask yourself if any of the values or virtues of maturity are being extolled.

- By 1954, sociologists were already noticing that young people had “abandoned solitude in favor of pack-running, of predatory assembly, of great collectives that bury, if they do not destroy individuality... In the crowd, herd, gang, it is a mass that operates without subtlety, without compassion, uncivilized.”

Do young people need a herd, a gang, with whom to relate? Or do they need a community, including the older and the younger, in which to grow? If so, where will they find such a community when every place they go the adults insist upon segregation by age?

- Trouble came when the sound idea of the ‘child centered’ school was combined with a permissive doctrine of extreme self-expression. What followed was the equating of individualism with selfishness. It is one thing to say that the purpose of school is to teach the child, but quite another to let the child dominate the school and the curriculum.

The purpose of growing up is to become less self-centered, less selfish. We begin in the nursery and continue on throughout childhood, teaching children the culture of ought and others.

- Margaret Mead picked up the change or rather the abdication of the adult. In a book published in 1949, she stated: “When mothers cease to say, ‘When I was a girl, I was not allowed...’ and substitute the question, ‘What are the other girls doing?’ something fundamental has happened to culture.” Fundamentally, what happened was that adults, having been launched into their new orbit around children, were suddenly looking to those same children not only for guidance but also approval.

What is the role of a parent or teacher? Is it to inform, guide, discipline, and inspire, all which goes with supporting the shaping of a fine character and worthy life? Or, is it to be a “parasitic” friend looking to the child for approval and guidance?

This is only a small sampling of the kinds of ideas we as grown-ups should digest and live out as we are involved in the very deliberate work of formation, forming the hearts and minds of children and ourselves.

School Calendar

May

- 14-20 Exams, 12:15 p.m. dismissal
- 22 Upper school Field Trip (Art)
- 15 Kindergarten field trip
- 25 Memorial Day holiday/No School
- 27 Chapel: Janet Whitehead
- 28 High School: Nimitz Museum, 10:30 a.m.
- 29 All School dismissal, 12:15 p.m. Shakespeare Festival, 5:00 p.m. at River Road

June

- 1-2 High School Field Trip
- 3 All School Breakfast & Cleanup Last Day of School, 12:15 p.m. dismissal PVA appreciation breakfast
- 8-10 Sixth grade Stanford Achievement Test
- 8-12 Vocal Arts Camp
- 16 Pick up Reports of Progress and 2009-10 Calendar at school, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

July

- 2 Summer strings' lessons begin

August

- 20 Meet the Teacher - All students, 11:00-12:00 p.m. Annual All School Picnic, 6:00 p.m. Lady Bird Johnson Park
- 24 First Day of School
- 27 Summer Strings Concert
- 29 K-Third Grade Parent Strings Orientation, 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

A Great New Tradition: River Road Run

Before the inaugural River Road Run 5K race, Ambleside dad and designated emcee Scott Willmann recited the following prayer:

O God, in the course of this busy life, thank you for this time of refreshment, fellowship and challenge; and grant that we may so use this Saturday morning to rebuild our bodies, renew our minds, strengthen our families and relationships and enjoy the beauty of River Road. Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Amen."

Last Saturday, 186 participants headed down River Road, running in pairs, groups, some holding hands, helping and cheering each other along the way, and all with the common goal of raising money for the scholarship fund at Ambleside. It was the start of a great new tradition. Ambleside families joined many avid runners on a gently rolling Hill Country course that followed the Pedernales River.

Immediately following the 5K was a 100-yard dash for our younger enthusiasts. The children actually ran the dash three times for fun. Exhausted, they enjoyed delicious Whimsicle popsicles provided by Katharine Lott of The Silver Spoon.

Our key partner was **Get Fit Tri Sports**. They donated their expertise, time and resources to make our race possible. We simply could not have done it without Get Fit owners *Chris and Nicky Vaughn*. Our generous financial sponsors were: Edward Jones Investments, Cameron-Brooks, Inc., Gastehaus Schmidt B & B Reservation Service, Fonder Chiropractic, Friendly Natives Nursery & Landscaping and Turkey Ridge Trading Company.

Key businesses who donated services and product included: The Peach Basket, Hill Country Bicycle Works, Das College Haus B&B, Yoga Center, McCabe Rawls Photography, Bella Luz, Morgan_Mohon, Hill Country Septic Service, Dittmar Lumber and HEB Foods.

Because of the great support, Ambleside raised just under \$4,000 for scholarships for those with financial need. Thanks to two Ambleside families who agreed to match the total race proceeds, the Run will raise \$12,000 for our scholarship fund. Amazing for our first year!

A special thanks to all who helped make our newest event successful. Congratulations to all of you. We look forward to hosting the River Road Run every year as a way to build community and sustain our commitment to providing scholarships at Ambleside.

Visit our website at www.amblesidefredericksburg.com for current information.

We welcome your submissions, responses, news tips, or questions sent to: dandharper@windstream.net

at Ambleside Newsletter:

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