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LITTLE RIVER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Little River News

River of Drums

Using the name "River of Drums," the Little River Community School just received a \$2400 grant to prepare for an African drum and dance performance and workshop.

This a program that immerses students in the culture of West African drum and dance, teaches them the skills to perform musical arrangements and dance choreography, and offer an African drumming class to their community.

Students will create unique music and choreography that represents the school and a creative concept that celebrates life and shared humanity.

The whole project will be accompanied by Len Mackey, who teaches the West African Djembe Orchestra at SUNY Potsdam

and is at St. Lawrence University as a guest artist. Mackey brings experience from his work with the finest African drum masters.

Together, Little River's teachers will be facilitating cultural and anthropological studies of West Africa and look at the history of music and how African rhythms connect to American forms of music including Soul, Jazz and Blues. The whole school year includes social studies, geography and literature about and from Africa.

In sixteen workshop sessions from October until mid December, the students will practice and prepare for a public performance. The

River of Drums performance/workshop will be held at the Gunnison Chapel on the SLU campus at 7:00 pm on Thursday, December 15.

This event is made possible, in part, with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts Local Capacity Building Program, administer in Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence counties by the St. Lawrence County Arts Council.

By Don Tengeler



Len Mackey; photo by Eli Schechter

Full to Capacity

This fall Little River had a fifty percent jump in enrollment. Nearly all of the students from last year returned and there are a lot new faces. We now have 35 students in grades K-12!

In each of the classrooms we have had to

make slight adjustments, adding a few chairs and tables to accommodate the new students. We also have had to clear out space for small classes in the office and the middle pass through room. It is kind of tight and we are making do with the space

we have.

The downside of this growth is we have had to start a waiting list. In the Middles room we cannot fit any more students into that space and have several people waiting to join us. The Youngers and Olders rooms are also

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Have your child come home happy

- Alternative School, K-12
- 8:1 Student/Teacher Ratio
- Hands-on Learning
- Individualized Curriculum
- Field Trips
- School at Home Options

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My Favorite Things

I grew up here in the North Country and as I reflect back on my childhood, my most fond memories include playing outside all year long, catching caterpillars and frogs, building “secret” hide-outs, dressing in costumes, sledding downhill, skating on the pond, gathering sap, (of course) riding horses, and going on school field trips. I feel that these experiences have great value. But unfortunately many are lost opportunities that kids growing up in the North Country today don’t get enough of a chance to experience.

One of the things that I was most intrigued by when I first learned about LRCS was the fact that it embraced the same

experiences that I loved as a child.

So far this year, LRCS has gone hiking at Stone Valley, canoeing, swimming, picked apples and pressed apple cider at Birdsfoot Farm, and we also went to Upper Canada Village. The Olders have been able to attend Food and Climate Summits, as well as a trip to SLU for the Alexander String-Quartet.

At school, we’ve

been practicing African drumming, dancing, and singing with Len Mackey, ridden horses, and been able to go outside to learn about biology “in the field” (well, sometimes in the stream and woods too).

Additionally, the Younger have walked over to Birdsfoot and helped Dulli harvest onions and potatoes. With all of these activities and events, how could you not get excited and inspired to learn more about the world around you.

One of the biggest reason why I love LRCS - it values these hands-on, not found in the textbook activities. What better way for a child to learn and have fun all at the same time?

By Emily Cambridge



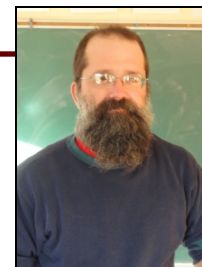
Giraffe mask by Tera Siegfried

“One of the things that I was most intrigued by when I first learned about LRCS was the fact that it embraced the same experiences that I loved as a child.”

Little River Hires a Science Teacher

Leon Sawyko joined our staff this fall to teach Biology with the Olders. Leon had previously taught science for nine years at the Gouverneur Middle School.

The Olders Biology class has two sections including a group of students earning high school credit. The class meets twice a week for an hour and a half.



Leon Sawyko

Blogging

Several of the Middles are using technology to keep the world informed about the happenings in our classroom. Yes, they have officially become bloggers and they are getting really good at it.

We have two teams and each team is responsible for one blog every other week. The teams work together to decide a theme for the week and the posts they will each write. After writing, they send the posts

to me for editing; they revise and I post them on the blog.

Every week, I notice a difference in their writing skills.

They are learning to be concise, accurate and less “clunky,” - a word that Tera assures me is my new favorite word.

We also have Blog photographers; Ethan and Eli consult with their team to decide

what to photograph for each post. As our photographers become more skilled, our blog will have more visuals.

Check it out at: lrsmids.blogspot.com. Leave your comments and let the kids know how they are doing. You can also link it to your Facebook page. They get very excited to see how many people have viewed their page.

By Maria Corse



African spirit mask by Jake Schechter

Youth Climate Summit

The high schoolers from the Olders' class set out for a two day seminar at the Wild Center in Tupper Lake to attend the Adirondack Youth Climate Summit. We learned climate change and came up with a brilliant plan for our school to save MORE energy!

The Olders' who attended, spent the majority of the two days attending workshops and plenary sessions on the causes and effects of climate change and what we can do. A few of these workshops included: Bringing Gardening into Schools, Taking a Leadership Role in Your School's Action Plan, Making a Short Film to Educate Your Peers, and Composting "101".

The highlight plenary session was Mark and Kristen Kimball's. Mark and

Kristen are two hilarious farmers who

created Essex Farm which serves 170 CSA members. Kristen wrote a book about the farm called, The Dirty Life. Gwen had the courage to speak up and ask Kristen, "Why did she marry this GOOFBALL?"

Our action plan is to create insulated curtains for the Middle's room windows and see if we can cut down on our fuel usage. For our action plan to work, we are asking the parents to donate large pieces of scrap cloth that they have available.

By MacKenzie Corse



Little River High Schoolers attended the Adirondack Youth Climate Summit in Tupper Lake. From left to right: MacKenzie Corse, Nora Bradford, Ellie Siegfried, Heron Hetzler and Gwen Smith.

Full to Capacity (Continued)

full, but don't yet have anyone waiting. Given the flow of students we have from one group to the next each year, it is easy to imagine that we will struggle to meet the needs of everyone that wants to join.

A parent committee is beginning to explore the idea of adding on to our building. Just to better accommodate the students we currently have, we will

"A parent committee is beginning to explore the idea of adding on to our building"

need to enlarge our building. We would like to include a large all purpose room, one or two small spaces for small group work and then perhaps we can look at one more classroom to hire a fourth full-time teacher.

Such a project would entail a lot of financial risk and we are seeking input

from the school families and the community at large about the wisdom of this idea and the potential support we might find. To pursue this we would need to embark on a capital campaign and we are in the early stages of learning how we might approach that.



Servil mask by Xiomara Oey-Langen

Do You Like What You See?

Do you like what you see? Please support us with a contribution to our tuition aid fund.

Little River is an independent alternative school and does not receive state funding. Parents pay tuition and we fund raise to pay the bills. We are committed to making the school available to low income families. This year 14 students received a discount that totaled \$11,313. Your contribution helps to make this alternative educational option possible.

Yes, I like what I see. I would like to make a contribution to the school.

__ \$25 __ \$100
 __ \$50 __ other \$ _____

Or contribute monthly:

\$ _____ (please specify)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Mail your tax deductible contribution to: Little River Community School, 1227 CR 25, Canton, NY 13617. Thank you!

Ladybug

There's a ladybug right in front of

me
On the window it climbs
As if it's on an invisible wall
Just gracefully floating

Eben Thacher

The Pencil Ballet

Pencils swaying

writing a story

dancing the tango

to the music of words

loves to dance

paper turns into a ballroom

tracing the music

the hand directs

the pencil wonders, why it ever

took up ballet

Autumn Crabtree

Why I Write

I write cause I think it would be

cool to go on adventures,

like the characters in my stories,

and do things I can not do now,

things only a handful of people can

do

and things people have never been

able to do before.

That is why I write.

Ana Williams-Bergen



Mask by
Victoria Boswell

Thanks

We would like to thank the following

people for their contributions to Little

River: **Erin Dunn** and **Rebecca**

Herrington from St. Lawrence Univer-

sity for volunteering in the classroom;

Paula Youmel for heading up our suc-

cessful Fair Trade fall fund raiser;

Louise Gava of St. Lawrence University

for sharing space in the SLU van to bring

our students to the Climate Summit in

Tupper Lake; the group of SLU students

from the **Community Based Learning**

Project that helped with yard work be-

fore the opening of school this fall; **Dulli**

Tengeler of Birdfoot Farm for organiz-

ing Youngers projects on the farm; **Ian**

Corse for teaching art classes; to the Lit-

tle River Parents that did yard work be-

fore the opening of school, those that

serve on the Buildings and Grounds

Committee for their repairs on the build-

ing, those on the newly formed New

Building Committee and to all the parents

that came out to the sewing bee to make

costumes for the River of Drums per-

formance.



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