

Orchard Valley School

Autumn 2005



We strive to be a school in which the joy of artful learning is vibrant, alive and leads us to embrace a healthy, spiritual and sustainable community.

Orchard Valley Welcomes New Families and Faculty

The new school year has been most enjoyable for us all. I feel especially blessed, as I have had the privilege for the past five years to witness the birth and growth of our incredible school. This fall we have more beautiful students and wonderful parents than ever and, of course, new colleagues to share the journey with.

We have been so very fortunate to have two lovely individuals join the school and teach the children at the Child's Garden in Montpelier. Julie Eldridge is a gentle, hardworking and friendly person who puts great care into all she does. Robert Brown is her capable and cheery assistant who also teaches woodworking and Earthcrafts in the grades. Both are keen to assist our

growing school and have generously taken time to host OVS booths at several farmers markets, to lead study groups and to take an active role in board and faculty matters.

In the grades building, there are three new teachers. Valerie Daniel is a dynamic woman who has brought her enthusiasm, artistry and expertise to our fourth-fifth grade class. Jane Hill, who has taught at Waldorf schools in both Toronto and New York City, shares her wealth of experience as our new sixth grade teacher. As you enter her classroom you will see many interesting drawings and quotes which reflect her thoughtfulness. Nancy Crowe is assisting Jane as the skills teacher for grade six as well as holding the new position of outreach coordinator. Nancy has

been involved with Waldorf for a long time here in north central Vermont.

Travel into the main office and you may hear our new administrator Deb Reed cooking up plans that will benefit the school in any number of ways. Deb brings exuberance, a positive attitude and lots of ideas to the administration.

It has been a highlight this fall to see our new parents, students and colleagues fall in love with Orchard Valley just as



The OVS grade 4-5 won first place at the Tunbridge World's Fair for their pumpkin and third prize for their sunflower.

Orchard Valley School's sixth grade came up with an idea to raise money for all the poor people who were hit by Hurricane Katrina. We buy pizza by the box for \$8 from Positive Pie in Plainfield. There are eight slices in a pizza. We sell the pizza to the kids in the school for \$2 a slice and make a profit of about \$75 a week. The kids like the pizza and it is a good way for the sixth graders to learn business math. This project is an awesome idea because we're helping people and getting great pizza at the same time. It's a great feeling when we hand in our money because we know we're making a change, dollar by dollar.

All the money that we make from selling pizza is donated straight to Habitat for Humanity which in turn helps people who had their homes ruined during Hurricane Katrina. Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization that builds houses for people with low incomes and sells the houses to the people for a very low price. The money will continue to be given until Christmas.

Pizza Friday works like this: there is an order form which goes to each class. We collect the order forms and the money from

each class on Friday. Then our teacher Mrs. Hill gets the pizza. The pizza arrives about 15 minutes before lunchtime. We go from class to class

delivering pizza.

Each sixth grader in our class gets assigned a job or a class to deliver the pizza to. Some of the jobs are: copying pizza forms, collecting forms and counting money. Usually two people distribute the pizza to each class, two people collect the forms and two people make sure

there are enough forms for each class. We put order forms by each classroom door. The teachers fill them out and put them back into their pouches.

The project is a good idea because we get to eat pizza on Friday and the money goes to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. One sixth grader sums up the feeling this way, "When I hand in my money on Wednesday I feel good and know I helped."

Selling Pizza for Katrina

\$750 by Christmas!!

written by the sixth graders



Dear Friends of the Orchard Valley School,

There is so much to be excited about as we all settle into the second year of the Orchard Valley Waldorf School!

In Fall 2004, through the determined efforts of our parent community and friends (many of you included), we were able to open our doors to 97 students ranging from pre-schoolers through fifth graders. We had renovated a farmhouse for our early education programs and transformed a former apple farm into a beautiful grades school, full of hope and promise.

This year, we opened our doors to 108 students, added a sixth grade, remodeled a milk room into a lively new classroom, expanded outdoor play areas, put a much-needed new roof on our barn building, welcomed three new full-time faculty members, a new administrator, a new enrollment coordinator and two part-time faculty members! Hope and promise continue to become reality at Orchard Valley School!

Whew! If it sounds like we have been busy – we have! The energy continues to flow from faculty members, parents, volunteers, and most of all, from our students. As Board Chair, I am

excited to lead a talented group of volunteers towards building a world-class Waldorf School.

If I ever need inspiration in my work as Board Chair, all I need to do is sit in on one of our classrooms and listen to the fourth and fifth grade students re-enact a scene from pre-Revolutionary War Vermont, the first graders recite Shakespeare's "boil and bubble" for Halloween, or the amazing harmonies coming from the upper grades chorus. Or I can simply examine the inspirational artwork on all the walls reflecting, once again, upon the magic of Waldorf and its essential strength, inviting children to engage in their daily lessons at deep levels.

We invite you to visit the Orchard Valley School and experience this wonderful inspiration and share in our excitement for the future.

With warmth and dedication to all our children,

*Pam Van Deurson
Board Chair*

Orchard Valley School

Grace Farm

*Pre K - Grade 6
2290 VT RT 14 North
East Montpelier, VT 05651*

Child's Garden

*Ages 3 1/2 to 6
155 Northfield Street
Montpelier, VT 05602*

Board of Directors

*Pam Van Deursen, chair
Leslie Ward, vice chair
Andy Perchlik, treasurer
Hannah Schwartz, secretary
Meg Scherbatskoy
Gina Hilton-VanOsdall
Mary Stringos
Rob Herrick, faculty
Julie Eldgridge, early ed faculty
Deb Reed, ex officio*

Our Faculty

Child's Garden
*Julie Eldridge, teacher
Robert Brown, assistant*

Nursery

*Nancy Olivet, teacher
Nancy Elaine Buss, assistant*

Kindergarten

*Libby Case, teacher
Clara Abell, assistant*

The Grades

*Jacqueline Gabe, first grade
Timothy Edgar, second grade
Rob Herrick, third grade
Valerie Daniel, fourth-fifth
Jane Hill, sixth grade
Susan Cheyenne, handwork
David Maynard, movement
Christiane Horvath, German,
music*

*Maureen Davis, French
Robert Brown, woodworking
Nancy Crowe, 6th grade support*

Staff

*Deb Reed, administrator
Kathy Clark, admin assistant
Emily Padberg, bookkeeper*

Fundraising Success!! Thank You!!

It is with great pride that we announce that Orchard Valley School met its fundraising goal of \$157,850 for the 2004-5 school year!

The success of our fundraising efforts speaks directly to the success of our school. People and organizations have chosen, through their generosity, to recognize our school for its excellence and to support our vision of its future.

We look forward to being equally successful this year and have already raised \$40,000 towards our current goal of \$100,000! This money will be used for scholarships and capital needs. Our upcoming annual fund drive and various school fundraisers planned throughout the year will play a key role in reaching our scholarship goal for the 2005-6 school year. For all their support during last school year's drive, we would especially like to thank:

Parents who raised \$9,500 for tuition assistance through a variety of fundraising events;

Foundations who granted OVS \$35,800 for capital improvements and \$37,600 for operations support;

Individuals who contributed a total of \$62,450 for capital improvements and \$12,500 for tuition assistance through OVS's annual giving letter.

Additional thanks to everyone who organized fundraisers, contributed to our annual appeal, bought raffle tickets and attended fundraising events.

In particular, we are deeply grateful to the following individuals and foundations whose major gifts made the tremendous growth of this past year possible:

Foundations:

*Ivan and Bernice Burnim Educational
Foundation
Carlson Foundation
Joseph P. And Eileen M. Donahue Charitable
Foundation Trust
S & C Harvest Foundation
Michael Foundation
Susan Z. Ritz/Larsen Fund
Still Point Fund
Turrell Foundation*

Individuals:

*Deborah French
Carol Gatewood
Christa Lancaster
Ron Miller
Hannes Otter
Josiah Williard III
Three OVS school families*

Warmth, Work and Wonder at OVS' Child's Garden in Montpelier

Good morning! Today you may help me cut carrots for our snack," Robert Brown gently sings as each child enters the Child's Garden in Montpelier this autumn morning. Outdoor clothes have already been neatly hung up and as the child ponders the choices, it's time to play with the warm soapy water waiting in the basin. Hands washed and dried, each child settles into an activity, after, perhaps, a wave to a departing parent at the nearby "Goodbye Window."

Rob's partner (in both life and teaching) is Julie Eldridge. Julie, the Child's Garden's teacher, has been smoothing the transition from goodbyes to moms and dads and hello to the new day at school.

Soon the children have migrated from the table to the larger playroom where they begin the play that is the work of the young child. There are houses to be built from play stands and planks, rugs to be mowed and meals to be assembled from the dried corncobs and shells which fill baskets on the shelves.

A hard-working three year old painstakingly carries every chair from the table into the playroom, lines them up in pairs and rows, explaining that she is making a boat. She asks a friend for help, but, alas, the friend is too busy "being a baby leopard right now, sorry." No matter, the single-handed heavy lifting continues. To one side of the



Assistant Rob Brown guides a young carpenter.



Carefully lining up planks for the roof.

room, Julie sits with three children who are sewing bags, which will be used to go collecting on an upcoming walk. In a separate workroom two children are hammering a nail into a large stump, with some input from Rob, "Just one person hammering at a time," he gently reminds them.

Child's Garden has been offering this kind of warm, child-centered pro-

gram to children for almost 15 years. To one who has visited



Helping the animals to visit the nature table

every couple of years or so, it has been a history enriched by the teachers, parents, children and play things that are the foundation of a Waldorf kindergarten. We remember the teacher who made the chairs which have now become a boat, the teachers who lovingly stitched the dollies and animals, the teacher who provided the wooden planks.

As lead teacher, Julie has made her own additions, locating a child-friendly nature table, which encourages the children to play with the items in the seasonal area. Rob takes over the snack preparation, and wood-



"Miss Julie" helps in the sewing corner.

working while Julie is the inspiration for the crafts corner, circle time and the smooth running of the morning. The kindergarten is comforting and spotless, a reflection of Julie's self-avowed love of cleanliness and the children's reflected care for their school. The gentle singing of their teachers leads the children from one part of the day to another, accompanies them through their mid-morning meal, and helps them relax during their rest time.

Julie and Rob came to Orchard Valley's Child's Garden late last summer as a team, fresh from their Waldorf teacher training in Eugene, Oregon. Julie served as lead kindergarten teacher at a Waldorf school in Maine for several years prior to her training which also included Waldorf studies at Antioch New England in New Hampshire. Rob has worked as a musician, woodworker and gardener. The broad interests and talents of this dynamic and enthusiastic couple are evident in the beautiful and child-centered Child's Garden and the inspired and engaged children who are in their care.

When my daughter Grace was born I assumed that I would homeschool her. We lived in Worcester, Massachusetts and I knew for sure that I did not want her going to the public schools. I worked in a busy retail store and a favorite customer had followed my progress of motherhood. Her son, an adult now, had gone to a Waldorf school and she raved about the experience. She met Grace when she was just 3 and after Grace sang her a song, she looked at me and simply said, "You have to send her to Waldorf." As Grace grew, I realized that academically I could certainly provide her what she needed at home, but I was unsure about how to round out her education.

I started to research Waldorf education, mostly through the AWSNA website. I searched for schools in our area. There were none close enough. I pondered and considered homeschooling again. The summer she turned 4, I took Grace to a party at her pre-school. It was a year round daycare as well, but we had adjusted our schedule and taken Grace out for the summer. As we walked into the party, Grace was suddenly the center of the group of children who had missed her for two months. She was thrilled to be part of the group. I realized, as a reserved person I would never be able to make up for her social aspect and daily need for human contact.

At the same time, our family wanted to realize a long time dream of moving to Vermont. Making it a goal to get there for Grace to enter kindergarten, we started the process. I again consulted the web and the Waldorf site. Armed with a map of Vermont, I plotted where the schools were. None were exactly perfect because we wanted to live near Montpelier. However, I didn't look at that time under the 'initiative' section of the website.

When we visited the Wellspring School in Chelsea and witnessed the rhythm and pace, we knew Waldorf was right. It was real life and somehow cozy without being trite. Returning to Massachusetts I consulted the AWSNA site one more time and looked under initiatives. There it was, the Orchard Valley School in East Montpelier. I read the entire OVS website and we visited the

school in February. Grace walked right into the classroom on that cold snowy day and she just fit. It's hard to articulate

Why Waldorf for my Grace? *By Lisa Moriath, an OVS Parent*

exactly how and why. Grace ironed, gathered pine cones in a basket, cooked a meal, played with blocks, cuddled dolls, dressed up in a crown and had a tea party. We parents met Libby, drank tea, talked to



Lisa Moriath as a leaf fairy, one of the parents who helped make the Enchanted Forest so special for our nursery and kindergarten.

other parents, admired the scenery, heard the history of the place and knew that this was what we wanted for our daughter. This grounding of an amazing physical space, educators who truly believed in children, a community committed to honesty and growth. It was truly a bonus that it was in the exact area of Vermont we hoped to move to.

One of the things that I hold dear to as a parent is following my gut instincts for what is right for Grace. I am sure I am not alone when I find it hard to do in a world of 'shoulds'. At this age she "should" be doing this, knowing this, thinking this, etc. Grace's preschool was a good place for her to learn. Many of her friends could write their names. Her teachers never forced her in any way, but Grace started to feel uncomfortable. She simply refused to be part of any writing. As parents we never worried, but I found it harder to 'defend' to people. In my heart this only

lead me closer to knowing that Waldorf was right for her.

What I find frustrating is trying to explain to the larger community of family and friends and people I meet what Waldorf is like and why we chose it. In many ways, I am just

starting to figure it all out myself. I do know that Grace is happy and engaged in her class. Some days, she sings songs all day after school, she talks to me about Prince Autumn painting the leaves, she talks about making bread and playing doll house. Other days she doesn't tell me much, but she sings to herself and there is simple contentment in her eyes. Considering we moved her entire world and from all that was familiar to her, this is amazing. Often I have found myself in conversation with others and I say, "We simply know it's right for her."

After the Michaelmas festival, which was a great community event to be part of, I wrote a long letter to my friend who recommended Waldorf. I ended the letter with a simple, "I know what you mean now."

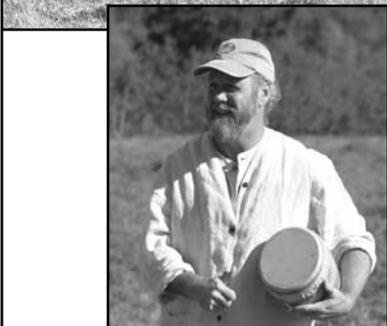
Grace, like all children, is truly magical on the inside. She sparkles with all the wonder and possibility of the world. She has hopes and dreams in her heart she can't articulate yet. They change daily. She is amazed by the little things in life she sees everyday. The daily walks her class takes through the fields, and woods seem to energize her. The easy rhythm Libby has created in the classroom grounds her. The comfortable set up of the classroom protects the most precious thing inside its walls, children who are busy in the midst of being children.

Our journey to Waldorf was an easy one, and it's just beginning. I am excited to watch Grace grow as a student, a human and member of her world. I am excited to see her learn about the world and herself as the years pass. I am grateful we found the Orchard Valley School at such an exciting time of opportunity and growth. The endless possibilities stretch out before us all.

Memories of Michaelmas Harvest Festival at OVS



Michael and the Dragon pageant
Stringing beans
Grinding corn
Games of courage
Playing with friends
Sharing the feast



Social Education in a Waldorf School

When asked on a high school application to list the academic awards he had won, Waldorf student Greg Donahue gave the same answer that every other student in his class would have given. *None.* Not one has ever been given an academic award, elected president of a club, selected to be the star of a show, or voted captain of a school team. Instead, Greg and his classmates have been encouraged since nursery school to move forward as a group. They've built playhouses together, done science experiments together, swept floors together, sung harmony together, climbed mountains together, and acted in plays together—even to the point of learning all of one other's lines. Far from the goals of the "me generation," the focus of a Waldorf school is on "we."

This seeming de-emphasis on individual achievement runs counter to the messages parents and children receive from nearly every other corner of the culture—where the desire to get ahead often means pushing someone else out of the way.

Rudolf Steiner, scientist, philosopher and the founder of Waldorf education, believed that the future of the human race depends on a radical rethinking of the way we educate children. Dismayed by the divisiveness of his own age (he opened the first Waldorf school between the two world wars), he urged those around him to turn away from an egotistical focus on personal fate and instead become "interested in man's destiny as a unity over the whole earth."

In Steiner's mind, the time was ripe for such a change. At the beginning of the twentieth century, he saw the human race nearing the end of an epoch in which the rights of the individual had become paramount. The rugged individualism so prized during this time had devolved into a kind of

isolation in which people were spending much of their work life and home life alone, with a palpable longing for community.

Steiner saw the Waldorf school movement at the vanguard of a new epoch in which differences between races and religions would become far less significant, the quality of empathy more pronounced, and the workplace characterized more by cooperation than competition.

The seeds of this cooperative social impulse are cultivated in Waldorf classrooms from early childhood on. "When one steps through the door," Steiner said, "students feel a certain soul relationship with the teacher," a teacher who has been chosen partly on his or her capacity to understand human nature. During the daily circle/story time, the teacher brings the children together for songs, games, and movement activities that develop the child's consciousness of the group. During playtime, the teacher helps children learn how to wait their turn, work through disagreements, and take pride in a finished project that all have helped to create.

Because all of the children participate in all the activities in every classroom, they come to celebrate and appreciate each other's strengths. Students are taught to support each other and share what they have learned. In adulthood, this translates into a desire to work in teams to solve problems in a way that benefits the group as a whole.

"You'll find Waldorf alumni in almost every conceivable field of work," says Stephen Bloomquist, who has been a Waldorf teacher for more than 30 years, "but what they have in common is a desire to see their work benefit others. They want to make the world a better place."

Far from the goals of the "me generation," the focus of a Waldorf school is on "we."

What these students have in common is a desire to see their work benefit others. They want to make the world a better place."

When the Orchard Valley School faculty began planning for this year, they reflected on last year's somewhat rascally behavior of some students as they awaited the morning bell to the start of the school day. Clearly more form was needed. Should the teachers be stricter? Speak more loudly? The issue was resolved when second grade teacher Timothy Edgar suggested reciting a poem together, a verse to inspire readiness. All agreed and Mr. Edgar's original verse is now used each morning as all the classes line up together and - with their teachers - enthusiastically greet their new school day.

"Breathe the morning, taste the cool, cool dew.

The sun is arising from its nestled place and I'm awake anew.

The day's to begin, sings the wren, so stand up straight and true."

“Blessings on the Blossom, Blessings on the Root Blessings on the Leaf and Stem, Blessings on the Fruit”

As the days shorten on their way to winter solstice we begin to prepare ourselves for this darker time of the year, a season that offers us the opportunity for reflection and gratitude.

As Orchard Valley School families gather around the dinner table, they are often treated to a heartfelt blessing shared by the children, a blessing the adults may never have heard before. A sense of reverence spreads among all and with it a deep sense of gratitude for these youngest members of the family, who have brought their grace to the table.

At Waldorf schools around the world, children learn to recite and sing blessings from their first day in school. At Orchard Valley school, each class builds its own traditions around these songs and verses, for there is always so much to be thankful for!!

*The silver rain, the shining sun
The fields where scarlet poppies run
And all the ripples in the wheat
Are in the bread that I do eat
So when I sit for every meal
And say a grace I always feel
That I am eating rain and sun
And fields where scarlet poppies run*

For the golden corn, for the apples on
the trees
For the golden butter for the honey
from the bees
For fruits and nuts and berries that
grow along the way
We thank you, we thank you, every day.

*We are grateful for this food
For rest and home and all things good
For wind and rain and sun above
But especially for those we love*

Kind hearts are the garden
Kind thoughts are the roots
Kind words are the blossoms
Kind deeds are the fruits

*Warm our hearts, O Sun and give
Light that we may daily live
Growing as we ought to be
True and good and strong and free*

Earth who gives to us this food,
Sun who makes it ripe and good
Sun above and earth below
Loving thanks to you we show
Blessing on our snack, on our family
and friends
And the whole wide world

Bon Appetit! Let's eat!

Alternative Energy Keeps Toes Toasty at OVS!!

Just before Jack Frost began to chill the mild autumn weather of early October, parent volunteers wrapped up their work on our new Tarm™, a clean burning, high efficiency wood boiler. And not a moment too soon, for by the end of the month, the weather began to flirt with winter, bringing cool days and an early snowfall.

Fueled by cordwood, with oil as a back-up, the furnace represents state-of-the art technology and is the source of the lovely radiant floor heating which keeps us all toasty. Piles of neatly stacked wood await the boiler's winter appetite!

Lengthy research and consultation with the Biomass Energy Resource Center in Montpelier, resulted in the selection of the highly efficient Tarm™ chunk wood boiler and water storage tank. This wood burning boiler provides the primary heating source for the grades building, heating the water used to circulate through the radiant floor heating and domestic water system. The oil-fired hot water back-up is used only when no one is available to feed the wood boiler.

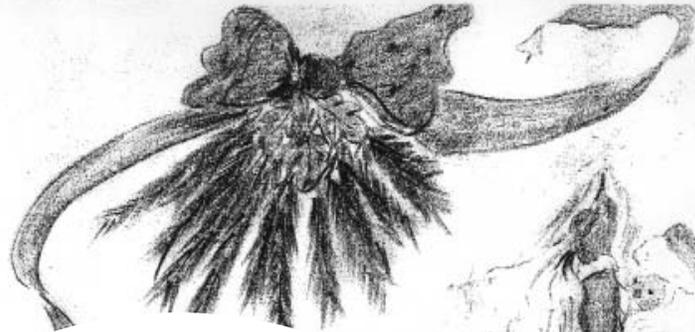
The wood-fired heating system means a great deal to Orchard Valley School. It underscores our pledge to promote environmental awareness by making use of local, renewable sources of energy such as cordwood, and provides our region of Vermont with the successful application of the latest renewable heating methods. Further, it is part of a multi-faced ongoing commitment to greatly reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, and at the same time reduce emissions of carbon and other pollutants.

The wood-fired furnace is one of a number of energy-efficient facilities installed at OVS in the past two years. In the summer of 2004, OVS installed solar panels on the south-facing roof of the farmhouse which houses the early childhood programs. Through a generous, anonymous grant, a system was installed to collect solar energy which is converted to electricity and used to run lights, refrigeration, and appliances.

In the spring and summer of 2004, the grades building was remodeled to provide classrooms, offices, storage space and a multi-purpose room. Renovations to the 4,600 square foot shell focused on environmentally sound energy efficient materials and construction practices. Insulation and energy efficient lighting and windows complemented the radiant heating in the concrete sub-floors. The school purchased a 1000-gallon water storage tank in order to enhance the efficiency of both the heat-circulating and the domestic-use water systems.

Additional solar thermal panels are targeted for installation in the grades building in the future. These panels will preheat the water, further reducing our reliance on both fossil and wood resources. This complete heating system dramatically enhances both the OVS Waldorf curriculum and the school's commitment to environmentally responsible resource conservation and use. It enables us to help build a visible and viable connection to the environment, encouraging students, by example, to develop their own sense of social responsibility and stewardship of our natural resources – so vital to our sustained future.

COMING EVENTS



Winter Fair

Saturday, December 10th, 10-4

Crafted Items by Vermont ARTisans
Handmade Toys and Gifts
A Children's Tent for Choosing Gifts
Puppet Shows
Children's Activities
Books from Steiner Press
Homemade Lunch and Snacks
Holiday Raffle
Live Music



Shepherd's Play

performed by the Orchard Valley Players
United Church of Hardwick
6:30 pm, Wednesday, *December 21*

AND

Barre Presbyterian Church
3 pm, Saturday, *December 17*

Parent Study Group

for parents of young children
Kellogg-Hubbard Library

Eurythmy Evenings

at OVS Mondays,
November 21 -- December 5

Child's Garden's Open Day

December 1

Open Main Lesson

Grades 1-6 at OVS
December 8 AND January 12

Call 456-7400 to register for study group, eurythmy and open days

Thanks to our parent volunteers for their help with this issue
Patricia Rackas, proofreading
Bronwen Moriath, photography

BLUE MOON RAFFLE

Only once in a BLUE MOON do you have an opportunity like this one!

- It is rare to have such great odds of winning while helping such a worthwhile cause as the Orchard Valley School.
- Here's the deal... we are selling 100 tickets at \$100 each and a ticket holder will be entered in a monthly drawing held on the fifteenth of each month. Every month there will be three lucky winners. A \$200 winner, a \$100 winner and a \$50 winner. The winners will be announced in the OVS Weekly bulletin and contacted directly. These drawings will be held for 12 consecutive months. All ticket holders will be entered in all twelve monthly drawings.

We invite you to act today! The first Blue Moon Group is forming now – don't miss out!