

Foothills Focus



Foothills School provides a vibrant learning community where students develop personal, academic, and social responsibility – leading to a lifetime of discovery.

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Why I Returned to Foothills School

By Lily Yasuda (current 9th grade student)

Why did I come back?

Honestly, I've been asked this question so much in the last year I'm surprised I don't have more specific answer. After attending Foothills for five consecutive years (2nd-7th grade) I can list off a million things that I love about this school.

In what other school in the Treasure Valley do you travel to Yellowstone National Park to study mammals and nature at age 9? Or go downtown for lunch every Friday as a 1st grader? Or go to Italy for 10 whole days, eating gelato and tanning on the beach, seeing some of the most beautiful architecture and museums in the world with your best friends? Those few things in and of themselves are enough to pull me back year after year. But it's not really the amazing trips or phenomenal experiences that make Foothills such an amazing school. (Or, at least that's not what brought me back).

After five great years at Foothills I was feeling ready to move on to a bigger social pool, more friends, and most importantly, preparation for the big leap into public high school. I was completely confident I would be secure

academically, and I didn't worry about making new friends. I went from Foothills (as a 12-year-old 7th grader) to North Jr. High (as a 12-year-old 8th grader) and I can honestly say that my preconceived notions of how I would do in school at North were quite accurate. I made some great friends, I was still getting good grades, and I did have some interesting teachers. But I missed Foothills. And I couldn't quite explain why or what I missed.

Of course I missed my friends, but it wasn't as though I never saw them anymore. I missed the entire idea of what school was supposed to be. Of what I had always assumed school just *was*. It had never occurred to me that teachers just wanted certain answers, or that you were only allowed so many inputs on class discussions, or that being smart was not readily common in all social pools. I missed going to school at Foothills to *learn*—not going to school at North to give the so called "right" answers, or to circle the appropriate letters on scantron tests. I'm not going to claim that I love going to school, or that given the choice I would spend all my

time studying and learning how to bisect angles and memorize state capitals, but when I go to school, I'm there to learn. To be with other people who want to learn and be taught by teachers who want to be there. And Foothills is rare in that the people here really want to learn, and want to be here. Not just because they have good work ethics, or because they are obligated due to parent pressure, but because they are surrounded with teachers who are passionate about what they do, who genuinely care how you feel and how you succeed, and who most importantly, want you to do great things in the world.



Lily Yasuda

Lily is a great leader in our community and we thank her for sharing her unique perspective!

Happenings at Foothills School – Don't Miss 'Em!

STUDENT RE-ENROLLMENT CONTRACTS

The school will be issuing student re-enrollment contracts for 2011-12 on March 4 and they will be due back on April 8 (the Friday after students return from Spring Break). Current families must meet the contract deadline to ensure a space in the 2011-12 academic year; we do anticipate full enrollments in our lower grades. After April 8, open enrollment will begin for new families. If you have any questions about your child's upcoming class, now is the time to ask. The school will have to hold firm to this deadline in order to make necessary budget decisions for 2011-12, as well be fair to prospective families waiting to hear if there's a spot for their child. *We hope that you all will be returning and look forward to a great year ahead!*



The 1st Annual Foothills Variety Show is right around the corner!!!



The Foothills Variety show will be on March 16 at 6:00 p.m. at Prairie Dog Productions (3820 Cassia Street Boise, ID 83705). Please join us as we enjoy a wonderful evening as we support parents, teachers, and students as they share their creative abilities!

Registration deadline to perform – and all are welcome – is March 4.

For information contact Jessica Dean, jdean@foothillsschool.org or call 331-9260 ext. 114.

OPEN HOUSE RECAP

Foothills hosted its annual Spring Open House on February 3, and we had our largest turnout of prospective families to date! **We had 27 prospective families as well as 19 current families in attendance for a fun and informative night!** Thanks to everyone who was able to join us and to those who invited your friends. As always, we appreciate your support!

**Garage Sale/ School Fair!!!!
June 4, 2011**

Hey Foothills Community... We are getting closer to this event and we need your help! If you would be able to volunteer for this event or have an idea for an activity to do at the carnival, please email Anna Tapia at: anna@tapiafamilycatering.com.

We are also taking donations for the garage sale! You can drop off items at the front desk at the school. If it is a larger item that will need to be picked up (appliances, furniture, and recreation items are encouraged!), you can contact Anna Tapia to coordinate a pick-up.

June 4 is the date of this event, mark your calendars!!! We're hoping that with a later date, it might not snow on us this year!

Missed the deadline? If you missed the filing deadline for Financial Aid, you may apply late – but do so immediately and contact Cassie Angelos to let her know you are planning to apply.

CLASS NEWS



The Early Learners Have an Explosive Good Time!

Volcanoes have been erupting in the Early Learners! This is in large part due to the Fairy project in which volcanoes and hot lava have become an integral piece. This interest in volcanoes has been further explored through dramatic play in the science area of the classroom. Some children have been showing their understanding of volcanoes and hot lava by sharing their theories and ideas, either verbally or with their bodies. Some children even use instruments or their voice to answer questions such as, “How does magma shoot out of a volcano?” Luca answered and said, “It makes an ssssss sound and then shoots up!” Leah said, “When hot lava shoots into the sky it drips down the sides of the volcano and turns into a brand new island!” To further extend their curiosity, some children participated in a science experiment that simulated a volcano erupting using baking soda, vinegar and red food dye. We also watched footage of an active volcano in Iceland and an eyewitness video that gave us more information on volcanoes. We will continue to explore volcanoes and try to further our understanding of what the significance of the hot lava and volcanoes means in the Fairy project.

The Primaries Get into the Habit(at)!

The Primaries have begun a new unit of study in science habitats. While the students are doing wonderful hands-on projects during science time, such as creating their own animals from clay and designing their habitats, they are also working on this topic in all subjects. In one math class, students used two-dimensional shapes to create animals and habitats. In another class, students measured fish with one inch tiles then created their own fish, measured it to decide if it was a “keeper” and created a habitat for it. In language and literacy students have cut out pictures of animals and using colored pencils created an environment for that animal they then wrote a story to go along with their picture. Students have also read nonfiction texts about habitats, created story maps about habitats and presented information about habitats to their peers. In Spanish, students will be focusing on vocabulary relating to homes and animal homes. In art and music, students will be using their knowledge to create, design, and entertain. This integration of science across the curriculum creates an environment that allows students to go in depth on the topics they are studying.



The Juniors Becoming Chemists!

Junior students wrapped up the chemistry unit the same way we started – with questions. In the inquiry process, the more we learn about something, the more we wonder about it. Chemistry is the study of matter and how it changes, so students asked about what things were made of and how or why they change. Students asked “How does heat make things melt?” “What is the moon made of?” “What is carbon?” “What are explosions?” “How do trees make oxygen?” “What are atoms made of?” They researched their question, finding three related facts and a visual. They used a rubric to create posters to share the information they had learned and presented their findings to the class. This project integrated science with language and literacy, and gave students a chance to practice their public speaking skills – three birds with one stone!



*Be Respectful * Be Responsible * Be Your Best * Contribute to Community*



The Intermediates Invent Solutions!

The Intermediate Invention Convention capped off a month (plus) of head-scratching, brainstorming, blueprinting, and prototyping. Students eagerly (some nervously) and proudly displayed their Dog-O-Matic doors, Forget-Me-Not shoes, solar-powered book lights, camera planes, Trobots, Fecal-eliminators (any dog owners out there?!?!), Snowball Extreme Machines, Vent Tents, and a multitude of other imaginative and ingenious games and contraptions to solve every day problems. Parents and students from all other dyads provided queries and feedback while touring the convention. Selected by a panel of judges, fifteen Intermediates (including one Junior student) advanced to Idaho Discovery

Center's *Invent Idaho* regional competition to wager their genius against other schools' students. The pièce de résistance? ***Foothills will be represented at Invent Idaho's state competition next month with four students!*** Congratulations to ALL students for their endeavors and a special nod to our state-bound inventors.

The Seniors Prepare for Culminating Spring Trip!

Seniors are currently finishing up preparations for their Spring Trip scheduled for April 10-16. This year we are traveling to Washington State to enrich our classroom studies of ecology and indigenous Northwest cultures. On the coast in La Push, WA we'll meet with members of the Quileute tribe to learn more about their history and culture. We'll then travel inland into Olympic National Park where we'll spend three days at the Olympic Park Institute (OPI) on Lake Crescent. At OPI students will have the opportunity to study the ecology of a temperate rain forest and learn more about the interdependence and symbiotic relationships of the forest organisms. It's an exciting time of year for the students, as they get to travel with their classmates and friends to learn and experience firsthand much of what they have been studying in the classroom.



The Nines Cap Off Government Studies in the Nation's Capitol!

The Nines are off to Washington, DC!!! We are already into the early weeks of the second semester and there are a lot of things going on in the Nines world. Aside from all of the academics, the class is furiously planning their Spring Trip to our Nation's Capitol. What is even more exciting is that the students are doing all the travel inquiries and planning themselves (with faculty and administration support and oversight, of course). With air travel and lodging secured, the itinerary is both focused and flexible. Among the activities anticipated: a visit to the White House (we are currently awaiting security clearance), the Capitol building, various museums within the National Mall (the Smithsonian), National Archives (need to see the Declaration of



Independence and Constitution because we spent several weeks studying these documents), the Library of Congress (our teacher Ray has his books there), and much more. We also have located the muffin store Naomi really wants to eat at, and a few students are looking forward to visiting Georgetown University as they prepare for their college years. To say the least, education in the Nines takes on many forms.

Recent photos of Foothills Students by Anne Cirillo

Former Foothills parent and professional photographer Anne Cirillo is adding her visual sensibility to our communications efforts. Thank you, Anne, for capturing the spirit and energy of Foothills School!



The Importance of Simplicity, Clarity, and Priority

“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?” “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat. “I don’t much care where,” said Alice. “Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat.

Curriculum is perhaps the single largest factor that affects learning (Marazano, 2003). Research supports that students are engaged and learn best when curriculum is connected and covers few topics with richness and depth rather than many topics superficially. With this in mind, the Foothills Faculty have been collaboratively examining the power of simplicity and clarity in what, and how, we teach in the area of math. The main goal is to have all grade levels reach consensus on what skills are absolutely essential for students to learn, and at what grade they should be introduced, practiced, and mastered. Priority is a function of simplicity and teaching the essentials. These **Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs)** refer to the skills, common vocabulary, knowledge, and attributes that students should have upon completion of study of a particular subject. It is important for our teachers to have piercing clarity by not only familiarizing and utilizing the ELOs at their grade level, but have knowledge of grade levels preceding and following their own. This information is gathered through dialogue between the different grade levels – we call this vertical alignment. It ensures that curriculum is not repeated or inadvertently omitted.

ELOs are one way of articulating the learning goals we would like students to achieve. Documenting these goals helps us plan the formative assessments that allow us to determine if the goals have been met. This, in turn, will help us plan the activities, practice, and materials students require to reach the desired outcomes. It also helps students take ownership of their learning goals and monitor their own progress. This Spring, we will repeat the process of developing ELOs for writing.

Moving Forward

By Susan Wolfe, Director of Education

Having spent my entire career in education, it is exciting to be involved in the school improvement process at Foothills. Our Model Professional Learning Community is able to research, define needs, and build capacity for a sustainable 21st Century educational framework with greater speed than in the public sector. As we move forward to improve professional practice, it is my commitment to our families that I will continually share the evolution of our vision. Here is a sneak peak of a few school-wide goals intended to enhance your child's learning experience in 2011-12.

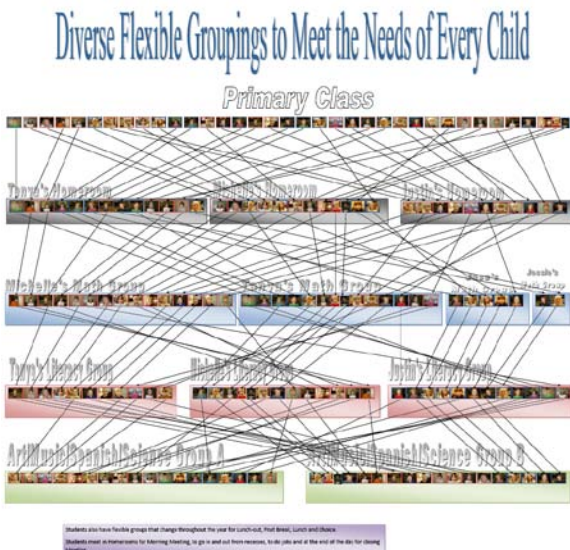


- Expansion of Inquiry Based Project Learning**
 Increased units of study that are designed to freely cross disciplines and involve in-depth investigation of a real-world topic. These seamlessly integrate with technology-rich learning environments where the focus is on the learning experience, not on the hardware and software.
- Increased Digital Learning Tools**
 Incorporation of 21st Century digital tools within curriculum unit design (and, yes, this does mean we are increasing our technology in the classrooms in the coming year).
- Community Partnerships**
 Empowering students to take action and make a difference in their world by increasing community involvement, thus adding depth and real-world application to curriculum design.
- Block Scheduling**
 We're adding a common Language and Literacy Block to our schedule, enabling greater service to the differentiated needs of our students. This will be similar to our current Math Block.

This is an exciting time at Foothills. As a professional educational staff, we're taking the bull by the horns and wrestling with the topics and challenges to make Foothills a model school.

Exceptional Groupings in the Primaries!

One of the tools that the Primaries use to meet the changing and diverse needs of every student is **diverse flexible groupings**. The Primary students are grouped in many different and unique ways throughout the school day, allowing the Primary teachers and specialists to teach to the students in the most effective way possible. Students are grouped into homerooms, math groups, language and literacy groups, art, music, Spanish and science groups, CHOICE groups, and lunch out groups. Some of the groups are heterogeneous and others homogeneous. During the course of one day in the Primaries, students might be in class with five to six different teachers. This allows the students the opportunity to build personal relationships with many teachers while gaining from each teacher's knowledge and expertise. Teachers get the opportunity to work with students at the same academic level in core subjects, creating a classroom in which each child's individual and academic needs are being met. These groupings also provide teachers with the opportunity to differentiate to the unique needs of a smaller set of closely aligned students. Another great benefit is that students are always working with a different classroom dynamic, giving them the opportunity to learn from the perspectives of all the students. These groups also give students the opportunity to inspire their peers and model positive behaviors. The students quickly learn the routines and become accustomed to the transitions. Go online to the Primary website to see the full version of the graphic to the left, as it shows the movement of each child in the Primaries. The website also offers a downloadable article on the benefits of mixed-age groupings.



**Foothills School of Arts and Sciences
 Summer 2011 Student & Family Trip
 w/ Mackay Wilderness River Trips
 August 14 – 19
 Main Salmon River**



Mackay Wilderness River Trips is offering a special experience to Foothills students (Intermediates and higher, unless accompanied by a parent) from August 14-19, on an incredible river trip through the Main Salmon Wilderness. And parents are welcome to join as well! This trip will come complete with professional guides, professional supervision, and is “All Inclusive!”

One of the most sought-after Idaho whitewater rafting trips is the Main Salmon River. The Salmon River boasts the longest free flowing river system in the continental United States. Guests consistently use words like "exciting," "exhilarating" and "unforgettable" to describe their river rafting vacation on this river. The Main Salmon River has huge white sand beaches, great swimming, heavily forested canyons, crystal-clear side streams and abundant wildlife.

Join **Piers Lamb and Emily Williams** (both have degrees in Recreation/Outdoor Leadership & Education) and the **Mackay Wilderness River Guides** for an unforgettable experience created solely for Foothills students and families. Mackay Wilderness River Trips has created a truly original experience designated for Foothills students, and for parents who would like to join the fun.

Date: August 14 – 19, 2011.
Cost: \$750.00 per Student (regularly \$950.00) =(\$125.00 per day)
\$1500.00 per Parent (regularly \$1850.00).

INCLUDES:

- Transportation from Boise to the “put-in” near Salmon, and shuttle from Riggins back to Boise
- Tent, sleeping bag, pillow (all set-up included)
- All meals (gourmet & prepared)
- Drinks
- Snacks
- Professional guides
- 24 hour **EXPERIENCED** Supervision

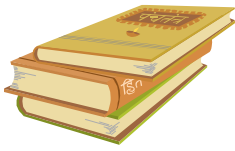
All you need are your clothes and a toothbrush!!!

Check out: <http://www.mackayriver.com>, for more information; or call (208)344-1881.

Call Piers Lamb, Director of Student Life, at (208)331-9260 with any questions about this special Foothills offering.

If you missed it in last month’s Foothills Focus, the Senior students are working to “pay it forward” this Spring as a follow-up to their Fall leadership class. See how you can get involved in one of the projects right here. ►

Don’t forget to check out Lily Zimmer’s Service Project!!! Go to: www.pancansuperhero.org
 All proceeds go toward a research center determined to find a cure for pancreatic cancer. There are also “PANCANSUPERHERO” bracelets at the front desk for a \$2.00 donation.



Beyond the Book Club: ***Foothills School's "No-Stress Parent Reading Group"***

By: Jennifer Trudell (current parent and EL faculty member)

I love to read, but I have to admit I'm not a fan of bookclubs. The obligation of reading books I may not be interested in, and the pressure of yet another deadline tend to take away from the simple pleasure of reading for me. But the No-Stress Parent Reading Group we've got going here at Foothills? This, my friends, is different. Led by several of our fabulous faculty members (Jennifer Trudell, Camilla Barnes-Kelly, and of course, Dan Fisher), the FSAS No-Stress Parent Reading Group lives up to its label. There is no list of required readings. In fact, you don't have to read anything at all, if you'd rather not or just don't get around to it before we get together.

*Instead of selecting specific texts, the No-Stress Parent Reading Group typically agrees to a broad topic for discussion at the next gathering, and members are free to read whatever materials they'd like on the subject. (Suggestions are always available.) When the group gets together, everyone shares from whatever sources they may have found, and the conversation takes off from there, sometimes in an entirely unanticipated direction. Anyone can contribute in a forum like this, and everyone is welcome. In just two meetings, I've been turned on to some riveting reads I might not have found otherwise, and gotten to know other parents in the community I have a lot in common with, but might not have met otherwise because our kids are in different dyads. I've come away from both meetings with not only a lot to think about, but an appreciation of a support network I hadn't known was there before. And if all that isn't enough incentive to try it out, did I mention there was wine? Hope to share some with you at the **next meeting on April 8, at 6 p.m. in the School Library.***

Save the Date! April 13, 2011

Foothills School of Arts & Sciences Presents:
An Evening with Peter W. Cobb



***Five Strategies for Parenting in the Digital Age:
A presentation for Independent School Parents***

"It is hard to keep up with the kids!"

Never before, given the nature of our digital children, has this seemed more true. While parents are alternately awed and troubled by the capacities of their children to adapt to new technologies, they still want and need to know how to best guide their hands, their heads and their hearts. This workshop will help parents gain confidence that they can both help their children become nimble and responsible members of the digital age, and that they can put technology in a perspective that provides balance and care for all dimensions of their children's learning and growth, and do so as essential partners with schools. If you'd like to learn more, visit www.cobbandassociates.com.

Please note: Foothills School will release at 1 p.m. on April 13 to provide our faculty with an afternoon session with Dr. Cobb. AfterCare will be available beginning at 1 p.m.

Foothills Fabulous Faculty



Foothills School is full of dedicated and talented teachers, and one of those teachers is Music Director, Jessica Dean. Jessica has been teaching at Foothills for the past three years. She has many passions and talents and music is just one of them.

Jessica grew up in Greenleaf, Idaho, and attended Vallivue High School where she immersed herself in every musical opportunity she could get her hands on. She was the lead drum major, was in Jazz Band, Marching Band, and Pep Band, just to name a few. Jessica then decided to continue her musical pursuits at Boise State University where she received her B.A. in Music in 2003. During her time at BSU, Jessica once again dove into every possible musical opportunity the university had to offer, including the orchestra, concert band, jazz band, and other chamber ensembles. While in her second year of BSU, Jessica decided that she wanted to pursue another area that had always interested her – healing touch. In 2002 Jessica graduated from the Idaho School of Massage Therapy, and several years after that travelled to Costa

Rica to study the art of Teaching Yoga at The Nosara Yoga Institute. She currently teaches yoga classes for both adults and kids.

When Jessica isn't working at Foothills, you'll find her playing with her band "The Tropical Cowboys" in many of the local venues. As a matter of fact, "The Tropical Cowboys" will be playing this coming Saturday, March 5, at The Sunray Café on 13th Street in the North End. Jessica will also be sitting in on some jazz with Rex and Beverly this coming First Thursday, March 3, at The Reef. If this isn't enough for you, Jessica will also be playing in a Celtic band at the Piper Pub and at Liquid on St. Paddy's Day, and will be working on a Latin/Portuguese music project for a Portuguese celebration in Wendell, Idaho, in April! Jessica loves anything outdoors and is an avid rock climber, backpacker, and a word class traveler – journeying independently to Spain, Ghana, Thailand, Laos, Costa Rica, and Peru. She will find herself in France, Holland, and Bali this summer!

Jessica is very busy getting ready for the Spring Performance which will be held on May 4, at 6 p.m. in the SPEC Center at BSU. This year's production is "A Tour through Broadway," and will take the students through the history of Broadway before putting on their own Broadway production. She is currently working hard with the new Glee Club that meets every Friday morning at 7:30 a.m. There are currently 15 kids in the club who will soon be engaged with a possible Service Learning Project that includes teaching the songs and dances they have learned to refugee children. This project is still in the development stages and details will be available soon.

There are many other projects on the horizon, and Jessica along with many talented Foothills students are working hard to make them amazing! We are very fortunate to have such a passionate Music Director and look forward to every performance. Jessica Dean, a great performer and a dedicated teacher!

Annual Campaign Climbing Higher!

We appreciate the leadership of **Hollis Brookover** and **Milt Gillespie** as they serve as parent chairs for the 2011 Annual Campaign. As you've heard so many times before, tuition does not cover the full cost of a Foothills education and our fundraising efforts are important to the school's operating costs as the year winds down. **This year's goal is 100% parent involvement in the campaign** – at any level comfortable for you and your family. Please watch your mail for this year's campaign information!


PARKING REMINDERS

Please remember to park "kindly" during pick-up and drop-off. Please pull your car forward as far as possible to ensure that there is enough space for the next car behind you.

In addition, as the weather improves and many of us begin bicycling to school and work, please remember that riding in front of the school is dangerous. We ask our cyclists to dismount at the end of the block and walk your bike to a designated bike stand.



FOOTHILLS MARCH CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 No School - Parent Teacher Conferences	4 No School - Parent Teacher Conference	5
6	7 	8	9	10	11 CHOICE #1	12
13	14	15 Executive Committee Meeting @ 12:00 pm	16 Foothills Variety Show 6-8 pm @ Prairie Dog Productions	17 Finance Committee Meeting @ 12:00 pm	18 CHOICE #2	19
20	21 Senior Parent Meeting @ 4:00 pm	22 Board of Trustees Meeting @ 4:00pm	23	24	25 CHOICE #3	26
27	28 No School- Spring Break	29 No School- Spring Break	30 No School- Spring Break	31 No School- Spring Break	April 1 No School- Spring Break	
Coming Soon...	<u>April 5</u> One Day Without Shoes!	<u>April 8</u> Re-enrollment contract deadline	<u>April 13</u> Early Release at 1:00 pm			
SPRING TRIP DATES FOR K-9 STUDENTS:	<u>April 10-16</u> Senior Spring Trip- Olympic Peninsula	<u>April 23-29</u> Nines Spring Trip- Washington D.C.	<u>May 8-13</u> Intermediate Spring Trip- Oregon Coast	<u>May 9-12</u> Junior Spring Trip- Albion, ID	<u>May 24-26</u> Primary Spring Trip- Cascade, ID	