

# SEPTEMBER HAPPENINGS

19 MAIN ST. BENNINGTON 603-588-2131 WEBSITE: [bes.convalsd.net](http://bes.convalsd.net)



## WELCOME BACK ~ PIERCE SCHOOL 2018-2019



### New Roles ~ New Faces

Mrs. Kathie Morrocco: Principal/Title 1 Director

Mrs. Judith Parsons: Title 1 Teacher

Ms. Madison Pineau: Music Teacher

Mr. Scott Britton: PE/ Health Teacher

Mr. Andrew Shultz: Art Teacher

*The School District needs your assistance and input. The School District is looking for parents who can dedicate up to 8 hours weekly to examine how we might operationalize a proposed consolidation that will appear as a warrant article for the community to consider on the 2019 warrant in March. If you are interested please forward your name to Kathie Morrocco, Pierce School Principal.*

### Events

September 10 ~ PTO Meeting 6:30 in the Library ~ All are invited to attend.

September 11 ~ Voting at Pierce School

September 14 ~ Assembly 9:00

September 19 ~ Open House at Pierce School 5:30-6:30 Come and meet your child's teacher, tour the school and more. For anyone who would like to chaperone field trips or volunteer at Pierce School, Denise McLenon will be present to assist with the necessary documentation and fingerprinting required to become a Designated Volunteer.

September 25 ~ The Lions Club comes to Pierce School for the eye screening

September 28 ~ Assembly 9:00

### September Specials:

9/4-9/7 Library Media; 9/10-9/14 Health/PE (sneakers required); 9/17-9/21 Music; 9/24-9/28 Health/PE (sneakers required)

### Reminders

~~~ **For student safety**, Pierce School asks for your help in order to update information your child's records. Please complete and return outstanding 1st Day Packet paperwork as soon as possible. Thank You

**Pierce School opens** its doors at 8:20. Upon arrival, students report to the multipurpose room for Walking Club until 8:40, the start of the school day. In the event that a student arrives after 8:40, parents are asked to come into the office with the student to sign in.

**Dismissal** Parents who are picking children up are asked to sign their child out on the clipboard in the lobby before entering the multi-purpose room to wait for dismissal at 3:25.

**PUP**- Pick up Patrol is available as a way to notify the school about changes to your child's dismissal plan, and for absences, late arrivals and early dismissals. (Adding any lunch program needs in the notes for late arrivals. Insures your child is included in the lunch count.) Please make dismissal changes for the prior to 2:30, before the cut off time. After 2:30, please call the school with dismissal changes as needed.

## Other News

**Voting** ~ Voting will take place at Pierce School on September 11th. To vote, please enter the building through the door adjacent to the parking lot into the multipurpose room. As a reminder, that unless a Brown Bag lunch has already been requested, please send your child to school with a cold lunch to school on the 11th.

**The Grapevine Before and After School Club** The Grapevine is working toward making the Before and After School Club a reality for Pierce School students. There is a staffing position open for the program. To apply contact the Grapevine at [www.grapevinenh.org](http://www.grapevinenh.org). If you are interested in having your child participate, contact Lisa Hennessey at the Grapevine to register. 603-588-2620 or [basc@grapevinenh.org](mailto:basc@grapevinenh.org)

## Helpful Links:

Lunch Account: [k12paymentcenter.com](http://k12paymentcenter.com), -

Free and Reduced Lunch Program: [lunchapplication.com](http://lunchapplication.com) (Fill in one application for all children in family.)

Extended monthly calendar on website: <http://bes.convalsd.net/events/month>,

Thoughts At the Beginning of a New School Year based on

Insights Gleaned from *Happiness is a Choice You Make* by John Leland

Robin Gregg, School Counselor

September 2018

At the beginning of each new school year, teachers often discuss hopes and dreams with our students and each other. One thing I hope this year is that I can incorporate insights gleaned from a good book, part of my summer reading, into my work at school..

*Happiness is a Choice You Make* (subtitle: *Lessons from a year among the oldest old*) by John Leland (New York: Sarah Crichton Books/Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2018), describes a year during which the author got to know six "oldest old" New Yorkers. The book extends Leland's *New York Times* magazine series, "85 and Up." The author anticipated hearing stories of loss, pain, infirmity and disappointment. Instead, he encountered optimism, gratitude, and joy. These six individuals experienced many of the losses, pain, illnesses and challenges that Leland expected, but they all balanced those experiences with resilience and a generally positive attitude toward their remaining time, even as they recognized their mortality.

The reader gets to know and to appreciate Fred Jones, Ping Wong, John Sorenson, Helen Moses (and her partner Howie Zeimer), Ruth Willig, and Jonas Mekas. Each of them offers significant lessons for living happily. In combination, their stories and attitudes provide inspiration and a counterpoint to the negativity and cynicism so prevalent in today's world.

The following ideas comprise the primary messages I received as I read and thought about the lives of the six elders in the book:

Pay attention to small pleasures and focus on the present moment.

Fred Jones states, "Happiness to me is what's happening now. Not the next world; it's not the dance you're going to tonight. If you're not happy at the present time, you're not happy." (p. 29) He fully enjoys small things, like eating some ice cream.

Ping Wong, too, enjoys the present, playing Mah-Jongg with other residents in her assisted living home and tending the flowers on her windowsill. Wong says, "I never think about the things I can't reach. I know my time is limited so the only thing I have to do is enjoy myself." (p.28)

Have purpose.

Helen Moses chooses to spend her time with the people she loves the most in her life, her daughter, Zoe, and her friend, Howie, another resident at the nursing home: "I'll take care of him," she says. (p.57) S

Fred Jones says, "My purpose is to live, be happy, enjoy life, talking...Have a good time with friends. Go to church on Sunday. Associate, go out to dinner once in a while." (p. 121)

3. Don't fret about things that you cannot change.

Jonas Mekas describes his inner happiness: "You have a certain kind of peace and balance in yourself, and you are not anxious about what will happen the next minute or the next day. You let it go and you don't worry." (p.33)

Ruth Willig notes, about her move from her apartment to an assisted living residence, "I'm trying harder...I'm not giving up...I do look out at the water when I wake up. It's pretty. So I can almost call it home." (p. 192-3)

4. Focus on your happy and pleasant memories and experiences, rather than the sad and difficult ones.

John Sorenson focuses on his happy memories, rather than the sadness of the loss of his partner of sixty years. (p.57) He also focuses on the present (#1, above), saying, after listening to an opera on the radio: "I hadn't heard singing like that in a long, long time. It made me feel very much alive. When she [the soprano, Sondra Radvanosky, in Verdi's *A Masked Ball*] finished I was on a high for a week." (p. 150)

5. Practice Gratitude.

At age 89, Fred Jones has minimal mobility and a bad heart. Close family members and friends have died. His story, though, is one of joy, laughter and gratitude. "Life is pretty good," he said while temporarily in a nursing home after a hospitalization (p. 114.)

Ruth Willig sometimes questioned the purpose of living so long. One day, when thinking along those lines, she noted that she was alive to share her grandson's excitement about participating in a mock congress at his school: "I think, look at my grandson, look what he's doing. So I'm excited about that." (p.193)

At age 92, Jonas Mekas, who lived through the Soviet occupation of Lithuania and imprisonment by the Nazis before coming to the United States, continues to explore the films that he created, to write, and to inspire young writers and artists. At a book reading in a café in Greenwich Village he quotes from his unfinished manuscript: "Have you ever thought about how amazing, really amazing, life is?" (p. 230)

*Happiness is a Choice You Make* serves as a powerful reminder to practice mindfulness and to focus on the positive. As we begin another school year, we can learn from the "oldest old" and strive to choose happiness. As we teach our students and our children self-monitoring skills and strategies for self-regulation, help them tap into their own strengths, and foster their resilience in the face of their challenges and struggles, we can serve as powerful role models by living the lessons from the elders in this book.