

Students from Lafayette Big Picture during their first day - getting to know one another by creating a web.



2011-2012 Kicking off in style!

Welcome back to the weekly Network News! It's the kick off to the 2011-2012 school year and we are so excited to see the amazing things already happening throughout the network.

There were lots of great news articles about the network over the summer. You can check them out on the Big Picture Learning Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/bigpicturelearning> or on the Big Picture website under news and press: <http://www.bigpicture.org/category/news/>

If you have articles or stories to share, send them our way - best contact is Rodney Davis (rdavis@bigpicturelearning.org), and he will make sure they get posted on the website and Facebook page.

It was also a tough summer for some of our schools with the amazing weather we have had. Central Vermont Big Picture, located in the city of Rochester, probably had the hardest luck. The community of Rochester was hit very hard by Irene and several of the school families lost everything. A non-profit has been established to accept donations - the information is listed to the right. If you have a few dollars to spare, the community of Rochester would be very grateful.

Keep sending pictures and news and we will share with the network and look for lots of information to come in the next few weeks to help you kick off your school year!

Have a great week!

Mark your calendar!

Principal Retreat in
Sunny San Diego California!
February 8-10, 2012
More details will be coming soon - but
hold the date!

The Rebuild Rochester Foundation, Inc., is a not-for-profit corporate trust, the sole purpose of which is to provide resources for families in need and for the rebuilding of Rochester, Vermont, USA, in the wake of the devastation caused by Hurricane Irene. The school, the roads, the bridges, you name it, it is either damaged or destroyed. The people of Rochester have been rallying around each other, now it is time for all of us to rally around Rochester. Send or deliver your check made out to: Rebuild Rochester Foundation, Inc. to Rebuild Rochester Foundation, Inc. c/o Margaret McKinley 122 S. Main Street Rochester, VT 05767-9681 or c/o Michael J. Donohue, Trustee 211 N. Main Street Cape May Court House, NJ 08210 Email micdonohue@comcast.net with questions. The time to help is now. Please make a donation today. 100% of proceeds will be used to immediately help families most in need and to help rebuild homes and businesses. Thanks, everyone. Let's help Rebuild Rochester. (Note: Your contribution is not tax deductible. Once we have 501(c)(3) status, we will let you know. Please don't let that stop you. Rochester needs your help now.)

Network Happenings





Co-Corner: D to the E

From Doc

I just returned from a learning journey- 5 days in the desert in Nevada. 51,000 people came together to form Black Rock City. It has been going on for 25 years and I just heard about it. Its a west coast thing. Its purpose is to develop a culture of giving, kindness and art. The artwork takes people a year to develop- all giant structures that are very complicated and technological.



At the end everything is burned in a big ceremony. The main way to get around is on a bicycle- biking 5-10 miles a day over the desert.



There is no telephone, internet, nothing is sold (except ice), people bring everything in and take everything out. There is a spirit that is incredible. This may sound like a 1960's hippie revival, but actually that was probably only 10% of the attendees. 90% were highly educated 30 somethings, lots of engineers and computer workers. As a matter of fact, Google flew in a bunch of employees. The artwork was incredibly sophisticated.

Nobody seemed to sleep- music went all night. It got quiet for a few hours in the morning and then started up again.

Its brilliance to me was how it seemed no one was in charge. The desert was littered with street signs A to Z and 1, 1:15, 1:30- 10. Everyone set up their tent or RV, and a city was built. Most people were in camps with groups of people with a name, my camp name was bubble bubble.

I think for most there, who had families and jobs back home, it was a way to be creative, a way to bust out of their every day life. Everyone was dressed up at all times with weird costumes. I looked tame in my floor length dashiki.

We stayed from Tuesday to Saturday and then on Saturday drove back to Reno and then came home. The days took me out of my everyday work and into another zone. It cleared my head.

I actually love airports- the books the people(it is the only time I have to go shopping). Because of the clearness of my head and the fact that I wasn't communicating with anyone, I bought a ton of magazines and gobbled up everything I could read.

Here is what I read on my 8 hour trip home

Wired Magazine, UTNE, Newsweek(to read about Steve Jobs) TIME(what to eat now) Harvard Business Review(embracing complexity)Success (11 steps to healthy living) Harpers (Getting Schooled, Confessions of an American Teacher), The NY Times and The Wall Street Journal.

The Time and Journal had articles about Burning Man.

There were articles on helping kids learn to focus, an article about the greatest sports books, a piece on the beauty of Steve Jobs graduation speech at Stanford in 2005 (you should YouTube it) and more and more.

I even found a great Teddy Roosevelt quote, "It is not the critic who counts: not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat."

The third year of College Unbound is at night for adult learners. We opened upstairs at Justice Wednesday night with 27 new students (including Danielle Maddox, Lisa Niebels, Eunice Estremera, Casey Thomas and Mike Veiera- 2011 Met Graduate.

We also have a parent of one of our 2011 graduates. Each student is getting a learning plan and having meetings set up at their job or internship. There are 130,000 people who started school and never finished in RI. It has been very exciting working with the adult learners and seeing their motivation.

Peace,

Dennis



From Elliot

"The more scrutinized the less seen."

David Berllinski from A Tour of the Calculus



I'm always at a few schools to celebrate the first day of school. Its always so much fun to be part of the excitement of opening day. This year, I was at MUSE School (photo attached). I haven't been to a pre-school opening day since my own children. There was singing, parents taking photos, and all sorts of making going on. One child confused the outdoor playhouse with an outhouse and christened it. Maybe he wasn't confused at all. I guess function followed form on this one. The opening at MUSE felt more like a camp or a park event than a school, and that's a good thing. In nature there are no straight lines and so it is at MUSE. From the swirling timeline showing the history of life on Earth embedded in the grouped, to the sine waves of the roads and landscaping, it was art showing us science. And from the music to the plays to the stories a wonderful picture was painted that everyone read. This school is about children. It was a nice opening.

After my MUSE trip, I took a plane to Tucson where I met with Bob Pearlman and Ken Kay. Every year I meet with Bob for a day to get feedback on the work

I'm doing for the year. Aside from this 1:1 meeting, we had lots of other agendas from how we fit in with Ken's new group EdLeader21 to policy to what to write about in the next year. EdLeader21 is a group of 75 districts that are making a commitment to 21st Century skills – the 4 C's Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking and Creativity. We decided that we would pitch the idea of a system of alternative schools for these districts to all member districts along with the use of our developing competency-based assessment. It was a good start to a partnership with them. We are going to do a webinar for their members as well as present this idea to the Hewlett Foundation.

This weekend, I'm off to a clinic on healthy foods. I'm hoping that we can figure out how to get healthier food habits developed with our students and staff at all of our schools. We have some very good practices at places like The Terra Nova School in Portland, a la Paul Hudak, and Met Sacramento. We have to figure out how this plays into who we are as a school community.

Next week, I'll be on up in the Bay Area and hopefully getting a chance to spend time with Dale Dougherty. Then, back to San Diego to do some strategic planning around the next 5 years of BPL.

Enjoy the weekend!

Opportunity to Support MET Entrepreneurs

Hello all,

We hope you all have enjoyed your summer. My partner John Novas and I have been working very hard for our next competition. As you may recall, we met during the Big Bang event at the Met School in Providence. We would like to thank you once more for your support of our venture, "Earth Custom Designs".

We are asking for your help. We have entered the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship 2011 Elevator Pitch Challenge. We are asking that you please vote for us at the link below.
<http://www.elevatorpitch2010.com/nominees/entry/anthony-d-john-n>

As a reminder, we make social awareness bracelets that incorporate non-precious stones from developing countries that support the growth of poor villages where the stones originate.

Thank you all for your time and support and we hope that each of you can take one minute, log on, and vote for Earth Custom Designs.

Uniting the world, one stone at a time

Best regards,

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