



Phædrus

• INFORMATION PACKET •

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A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

Pam Raines and Cory Karpf

Phaedrus is a small, supportive, personalized community where students are helped to grow as individuals to their greatest potential. The process of learning in *Phaedrus* always includes an emphasis on affective as well as cognitive learning. To succeed, a student requires a high degree of self-motivation, and most students enter the program to become more self-directed, inwardly motivated learners.

In the thirty-plus years we have been in existence, we have shown through research and student comments that our students feel very positive about this type of school environment and their learning here. The key to our program is choice and is probably the most important factor in our success. When students choose to do something voluntarily, they become active, not passive, and the center of their own learning experience. Students in our program are fully responsible for their education and *choose* to learn in order to reach their fullest potential. In *Phaedrus*, faculty members serve as facilitators for all that goes on, as well as being more traditional academic resources. Teachers and students work interdependently and take collaborative responsibility for successful outcomes.

Phaedrus engages its members in choosing areas of interest, contributing to the class and programs, performing self-evaluation, and providing constructive feedback to peers. The opportunities provided are myriad. There is opportunity for service, opportunity to discover personal strengths and interests, opportunity to develop closer relationships with peers and adults through a more informal setting and most importantly, opportunity to develop more self-discipline due to responsibilities outside of class and scheduled meetings. *Phaedrus* encourages its students graduate from the program with a greater sense of self, inward motivation, and purpose.

PHAEDRUS

Our Mission

Phaedrus seeks to create a dynamic and supportive setting in which a diverse group of students can succeed as learners and as participants in a democratic school community. *Phaedrus* has a shared commitment to helping all students reach their personal best in both an academic and social setting.

Community Expectations

It is expected that all *Phaedrus* participants— students, teachers, parents and/ or guardians, psychologists and administrators alike—adhere to the following guidelines during all *Phaedrus* experiences, discussions and classes:

- Each member will be an active, respectful participant in the experience
- If a problem or challenge arises, each person will be committed to listening and understanding the issue and then helping to create and implement solutions
- We are all responsible for each other's learning and growth; to this end, each person will provide constructive, meaningful feedback when appropriate
- Participants will be honest in all interactions
- Each person will take full responsibility for his/ her own actions or inactions

Students who are accepted into this program take on full responsibility for not only their own learning, but the growth and experience of the participants in the program as a whole. Active and honest participation by each member is vital to the success of the program. If students do not follow through with their responsibilities, they will be held accountable for their action or inactions. Consequences can include but are not limited to: individual discussions with the faculty teachers or student supervisors responsible for the activity, negative performance evaluations, meetings with the people and Pam and Cory, meetings with the *Phaedrus* team, parent meetings, probation, or removal from the program. At the beginning of the school year, all students and their parents and/ or guardians will be required to sign a code of conduct in adherence to all rules and expectations.

Academic Program

Students

Phaedrus enrolls approximately twenty-five juniors & seniors. These students represent a wide span of academic abilities and interests, as well as a heterogeneous grouping of the larger high school.

Structure

Phaedrus occupies half of a student's academic school day. Students fulfill their science, math, foreign language and elective requirements in Edgemont High School. Students' participation in *Phaedrus* fulfills their English and social studies requirements. All courses are a semester in length.

Students also participate in other components of the program that exist outside of the traditional classroom. Some of these experiences include:

- A 50-hour internship each year. Students choose their own internships based on their passions and interest.
- Participation in at least four Community Service Experience projects during the school year.
- Weekly experiential learning with a speaker or through a trip.
- Weekly communication workshops with the school psychologist which students achieve and create positive group dynamics, self-expression, meditation and leadership skills.
- Creation of a major final presentation.
- Two-four annual special programs of wilderness experience, camping excursions, team-building projects, outdoor adventures, risk-taking activities, physical challenges, and/ or community-service trips.

Academic Rigor

The academic goal of *Phaedrus* is to provide diverse and intense experiential learning opportunities for students in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences (English and social studies). Students are encouraged to challenge and ask critical questions of themselves, their peers, their teachers and their curricula. In consultation with the coordinators, the students are encouraged to take an active role in determining the course of their educational work by developing and selecting courses for each semester.

Generally, students will take approximately three English and three social studies courses during the year. English courses typically require students to complete a minimum of one written piece each week for each course based on daily reading; these written assignments include: analytical, creative, argumentative, thematic, and research-based essays in which students are encouraged to apply knowledge and literary techniques to their own personal style of writing. In social studies courses, students are expected to complete a minimum of one project or presentation each week. These projects seek to develop critical thinking, oral presentation skills, critical analysis of materials, and research techniques to help them develop these skills for the future.

English and social studies courses that have been taught in *Phaedrus* include, but are not limited to:

- **English:** Harlem Renaissance, Poetry, Dreamers and Schemers, Gender as an Issue in Literature, Cultural Identity, Public Speaking, and multiple Writing Workshops.
- **Social Studies:** Political Science, US History and Government, Political Geography, The Holocaust, Man's Inhumanity to Man, and Ethics.

Final Projects

Throughout each year, students in *Phaedrus* are required to research a topic of choice for their Final Project. This project is designed for students to explore and comprehensively research a passion or develop a new one. After writing a detailed proposal and meeting with teachers, students are expected to learn as much as they can about their chosen topics, meet with experts as primary sources, complete an 8-10 page paper, and present their findings to the rest of their peers in May or June. After presenting, they are expected to write a detailed self-reflection letter

including thoughts on their progress and areas in need of improvement. In addition, students must also play an active role during their peers' presentations in class through the use of journals and eChalk discussion boards. Students will be evaluated and held accountable for every aspect of the Final Project and research paper; these evaluations will be sent home and included in their college files in the Guidance office.

Evaluation Procedures

The semester-long classes, final project, and internship/community service components of *Phaedrus* all have written narratives that describe and evaluate the student's performance in that given program. Students are evaluated based on their own potential and abilities. Students will also be given formative evaluations throughout the year based on their progress in the program as a whole.

Leadership Positions

Leadership is a critical element of the *Phaedrus* experience and is embedded into all aspects of the program. Students control the entire program by being active members of the decision-making process. Students are given the opportunity to take on leadership roles as their self-confidence and abilities develop within the program.

Student Job Descriptions

All jobs are to be voted on by the group—nominations will be taken and the nominee will either agree to accept the nomination or decline. Students will base their vote on who will do the best job, not who is the most popular. All supervisors will write articles for the *Phaedrus* Newsletter throughout the year.

Accountability Supervisor (*Senior*) - This person serves as the conscience of *Phaedrus*, who must be trusted by all. This Senior is the liaison between Pam, Cory, other adults (school psychologists, administrators, parents and/ or guardians), and the students. If there are issues or concerns that need to be addressed, students will come to this person in order to seek resolution. This person will serve as a member of the probation committee

Academic Supervisor (*Senior*) - This person is in charge of helping shape and monitor all of the academic classes in the program. He or she will also frequently meet with student whips (leaders of courses) to oversee progress or concerns in current classes to maintain academic integrity of the program. This person sends out all the evaluations and is part of the probation committee.

Internship Supervisor (*Senior, Junior*) - These people are in charge of monitoring, helping and evaluating each student's Monday afternoon internship. Each supervisor must call the internship coordinator and follow up to make sure every student is attending and having a worthwhile experience.

Community Service Supervisor (*Senior, Junior*) - These people are in charge of organizing, monitoring and evaluating each student's community service activities throughout the year. Since each student is responsible for four outreach projects throughout the year (including one fundraising event), it is important that these people be organized and efficient.

Wednesday Experience Supervisor (*Senior, Junior*) - These people help establish, organize and run each Wednesday throughout the year. The job is to make sure that *Phaedrus* has a speaker or trip planned well in advance. The idea is to incorporate outside community members to help enrich our program. These people must be able to articulate what is expected of the speaker each week. This position requires creativity, diligence, and organization.

Thursday Meeting Supervisor (*Senior, Junior*) - These people work directly with the psychologists of our school. They help organize and run group dynamic games, facilitate open time for people to share their feelings, and integrate leadership development skills into each meeting.

Mentorship Supervisor (*Senior*) - This person is in charge of organizing and running discussion groups for mentors/ mentees to get to know each other, maintain a working relationship, and build on this growth throughout the year. Every junior is paired with a senior mentor in the A-school to whom the junior can go at any time to seek help or guidance. The mentor/mentee relationship is meaningful in helping the junior and senior class to integrate, and it is the Mentorship Supervisor's job to facilitate this relationship.

Phaedrus Newsletter Supervisor (*Senior, Junior*) - These people write, organize, and develop articles for publication in the *Phaedrus* Newsletter. This position requires those involved to determine dates of publication as well as content. These supervisors will work with a faculty member to edit articles, create community awareness of current *Phaedrus* happenings, and celebrate recent successes and events in the community.

Final Project Supervisor (*Senior*) - This person works throughout the entire year to help prepare the students for their final project and research paper. They also ensure that students stay on-task with their research and meetings with faculty advisors.

Peer Review Supervisor (*Senior (s)*) – This person(s) is in charge of coordinating and facilitating Peer Review meetings. Peer review meetings are held when a student behaves in a manner that deviates from the morals of *Phaedrus*. These supervisors will randomly select the members of the committee who will evaluate the situation and work toward a resolution. The behavior of student in question will be discussed by all members of *Phaedrus* during Peer Review, and people will give meaningful feedbacks to help the person.

Apprentice (*Junior(s)*) - This person(s) will help Pam and Cory with daily errands and activities.

Sunshine (*2-3 people; Juniors or Seniors*) - These people are designated to help celebrate successes and help people get through illnesses and setbacks. These people organize different special events that happen in *Phaedrus*.

Book Club Supervisor (*Junior or Senior*) - This person helps organize and run the four book clubs during the year. He or she is responsible for making sure all parties are aware of the date and book and any other information that is needed, as well as ensuring that all students attend one book club every year.

Fundraising (*Senior, Junior*) - These people will be in charge of organizing several fundraising events to help charities around the region or globe.

Water Person and Kitchen Supervisor (*Junior or Senior*) – This person is in charge of making sure there is water in the cooler and that the kitchen is clean. He or she must also create a calendar of kitchen duty responsibilities for each member of *Phaedrus*.

Scribe (*Junior*) – This person is responsible for taking notes during Monday meetings in a notebook that is kept in *Phaedrus*. Students who are absent at the meeting are responsible for reading the notes to be informed of the upcoming events.

Whips (member of each class) (*Juniors or Seniors*) – These people are the student facilitators of each class. They are in charge if the teacher is absent. They are also responsible for placing assignments on Echalk each and every night. If people are having problems in the class, they should make the Whip aware of the situation. The Whip should also make sure students and teachers are fulfilling the academic challenges set by the class. All Whips must meet with the Academic Supervisor throughout the year to discuss progress and/ or concerns.

Teacher-Mentor Program

Students are assigned adult “teacher-mentors” to help guide and maintain student progress and growth. These teacher-mentors include school psychologists, who will meet with their assigned mentees throughout the year to discuss the students’ role in *Phaedrus*, their development, and any other issues or concerns the students may wish to discuss. In addition, students also meet with Pam and Cory in order to receive additional feedback and talk to them individually about their progress as well as their areas for improvement. The goal of this program is to talk more specifically to students about their academic progress, accountability and any other personal issues that come up.

Admission Criteria

We look for students that have specific needs and talents that *Phaedrus* can incorporate into our community that will create a strong group dynamic. Students are selected on their desire to join and to become more responsible individuals, as well as other criteria. An attempt is made to create a diverse, heterogeneous group so that many different types of students are accepted. On average, 35-40 students apply annually. To apply, students must complete an in-depth application (nine essays), three interviews, and a review by an admissions committee comprised of Program Coordinators, teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators.

Weekly Schedule

Monday Meeting

Fifth period on Mondays is a time for *Phaedrus* to organize and discuss any business matters. We call these meetings the ‘nuts and bolts’ of *Phaedrus* because we discuss the running of the school and any organizational management issues that arise. A different student facilitates the meeting each week. One person is elected to be the scribe for the year. This person takes notes at the meetings and posts them into the Monday Meeting Folder on eChalk. Students who are absent are responsible for reading the notes in this online folder to ensure that they keep up with important information. Matters such as school trips, fund-raisers, and events for the upcoming week and months are discussed at each meeting. Further conversations may also include, but are not limited to, organizing ethnic Thursdays, discussing upcoming community experience opportunities, reporting on internship experiences, announcing and processing Wednesday Experiences, writing journal reflections for Internship and Wednesday Experiences, and sharing the word of the week.

Internship

Monday afternoons are set aside for students to work as interns in the community. Each student must serve 50 hours per year in an internship. This service must be a community-based experience for the first year. Then, in the second year, the experience will be based on a career experience in which the students can explore a field of interest.

Two community-elected student Internship Supervisors oversee students’ work and progress in their internships. Responsibility and initiative are very important qualities in an internship and it is expected that students will be fully committed to their experiences. Students are evaluated by their internship coordinators twice during the year; this evaluation becomes part of their *Phaedrus* records. If there are any concerns with the internship experience, the student is expected to speak with the Internship Supervisors as early on in the year as possible.

Students will also keep a journal in which they write their reactions and reflections each week; they will also be expected to share their experiences during Monday meetings. The journal will be reviewed by the student and faculty Internship Supervisors. Each student will be expected to write one article each year, based on their reflections and submit it for publication in the *Phaedrus* newsletter. Article submissions will be collected by the Internship Supervisors and given to the Newsletter Supervisor.

Listed below is a sampling of internships held by *Phaedrus* students during the past few years:

- E.S.L. Program, Edgemont High School: Students volunteer to tutor and establish relationships with E.S.L. students.
- Greenburgh Nature Center: *Phaedrites* care for wilderness animals and take touring groups on trails. Others have co-taught a nature class for pre-schoolers.
- Greenville and Seely Place Elementary Schools: *Phaedrites* assist teachers with their classes. They participate in the activities that the students are learning.

- Beth Israel Nursing Home/Home for the Aged and Blind: Students interested in working with the elderly exchange views with people from another generation.
- Westchester Jewish Community Services: Students either help at the Palmer House, which is a home for the developmentally disabled, or visit with elderly people at their homes.
- New Rochelle Humane Society: Students work as aids or attendants helping to take care of the animals.
- Westchester County Medical Center: Phaedrites work in the Child Life Unit of the Medical Center, trying to make the children's visits to the hospital less traumatic by talking and playing with them. Others can help in the Senior Health Faculty.
- Blythdale Children's Hospital: Students work in the physical therapy department or help the disabled children.
- Children's Village: Students work as teacher's assistances in the elementary schools, helping the learning-disabled students in reading, spelling, and special projects.
- Heartsong Music Therapy: Students help mentally disabled children learn and grow by using the influence of music.
- Lord's Pantry: Phaedrites both cook and deliver food to AIDS patients throughout Westchester County.
- WFAS: Students learn about the business of broadcasting through hands-on experience in the actual radio station.
- Westchester Arts Council: Students write grant proposals to create more literary opportunities for students in the area.
- Westchester Business Journal & Scarsdale Inquirer: Students work hard to write and research articles for these well-known publications.

Wednesday Experience

Wednesday Experience has been generally described as "learning outside of the classroom." On Wednesday afternoons, either a speaker comes to Phaedrus, or a trip is planned. The afternoon is coordinated by the Wednesday Experience Supervisors, two students elected at the start of the school year. Learning outside the classroom is a vital part of the Phaedrus experience. Trips are taken around the Westchester and New York Metropolitan area. Sometimes, Phaedrus students themselves volunteer to conduct a presentation on a topic they are knowledgeable or passionate about.

Recent speakers have included:

- Conor Cronin, Peace Corps recruiting and application process
- David Pogee- Republican, NRA member, & Psychologist at Four Winds Hospital
- Dog Shelter Representatives
- Dr. Pantone, Psychologist
- Dr. Pollack, Psychologist
- Eric O’Hanlon, Video Editing and 3D Animation
- Gale Gordon, Toy Drive Consultant
- Holly Osman, Interior Designer
- Jeremy Quinn, Educational Director at Westchester Broadway Theatre
- Liz Schutt, Peace Corps Experience
- Lori Megown, Sexual Identity and Gender Roles
- Mr. Fontana, Jazz artist/ musician
- Mr. Keyson, Art Gallery Owner
- Mr. Williams, Scarsdale A-School Teacher
- Mrs. Allen, The Kennedy Assassination
- Mrs. Anania, Prosecutor and District Attorney
- Mrs. Hercher, Genetic Counselor
- Mrs. Kuklis, Art History and Cuba Presentation
- Mrs. Winkour, World Traveler
- Nancy Taddiken, District Superintendent
- Officer Nick Parika, Detective Work & Forensics
- Owen B., Transgendered Identity
- Pastor Paul Lee, Religious Identity
- Peter Jacobson, Fire Fighter
- Sam Stovall, Stock Consultant

Recent trips have included:

- Katonah museum
- Bodies’ Exhibit
- Bronx Zoo
- MOMA
- The Metropolitan Museum of art

Communication Workshop (Thursday Meeting)

Each Thursday, during 5th and 6th periods, we have a communication workshop. This time involves exploration of personal concerns, communication skills, and problem solving techniques. School psychologists, working with two elected *Phaedrus* student Thursday Supervisors, act as the facilitators of the Thursday groups. During these meetings, we either divide into smaller groups to discuss issues and problems touching everybody’s lives, or we stay in the larger group. This element of our program stresses positive human relations, active listening, conflict resolution, and assertion skills. These sessions are vital to the growth of the *Phaedrus* community.

The Thursday Supervisors will work closely with the school psychologists to prepare meaningful experiences. They will also facilitate conversations as the year progresses. All students are expected to be active participants in these conversations and activities.

Community Service & Fundraising

Students in the program are required to participate in at least four community service projects throughout the year with a minimum of one experience that includes a personal fundraising component. It is recommended that two experiences are scheduled during each of the fall and spring semesters. Students will be required to give the Community Service Supervisors their expected experiences at the beginning of the school year and then follow through with these choices throughout the following months.

Some projects in the past have included: walks for various causes, annual district blood drives, Make-A-Wish Holiday Party, Toy Drives, Seely Spirit Day, Food Patch, homeless shelters, and more. Students also work hard to raise money by fundraising throughout the year.

Special Programs

The entire *Phaedrus* program takes extensive outdoor experiences, both in the fall and in the spring. The idea that education can take place both inside and outside of the classroom is reinforced by these experiences, and these trips also promote a sense of community within the school. These Special Programs count as part of the *Phaedrus* physical education requirement because they often involves rigorous climbing, orienteering, canoeing, mountain climbing, clean-up at parks, painting, among other activities. Although these trips are challenging, all the students have always been able to keep up with the group. Some of our students are enthusiastic outdoors experts; others are tentative, but everyone feels exhilarated and acquires a true sense of accomplishment from our feats. The purpose of these trips is to go beyond our perceived limits, gain a sense of self-confidence, promote community spirit within the school and outside community, and experience some beautiful areas. Every member of the group is required to attend these trips.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is Phaedrus for?

Students in the school are a heterogeneous group. Some come for the opportunity that the school offers to expand educational horizons and pursue in-depth individual interests. Others come because they're dissatisfied with the traditional school program. All students are expected to take part in the decision making process, and act responsibly in designing and participating in learning experiences.

Why did you name the school "Phaedrus?"

For two reasons. One, for the Greek philosopher *Phaedrus*, who played the part of the Devil's Advocate in the Platonic Dialogues, and two, in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, the main character calls himself "Phaedrus." In both texts, the name and character stand for a synthesis of reason and emotion, or head and heart, which we are trying to achieve.

What about discipline?

The goal of *Phaedrus* is self-discipline, the state where students accept the responsibility for, and the consequences of, their behavior. In the attempt to achieve this goal, we have several non-negotiable rules, which all students must accept. Two very important rules are: **no drugs or alcohol during any school function, or during the school day, and no cutting.** Students who do not abide by these rules become ineligible for re-enrollment the next semester, or can be asked to leave the program immediately.

What about community?

The structure of the school is designed to produce cooperation and understanding among the participants. The emphasis is on the creation of a sense of community. A less formal atmosphere enables staff and students to move away from competitive relationships, and towards supportive ones. Through involvement, the school tries to achieve a sense of group togetherness and shared purpose. The directors of *Phaedrus* help the students in the program maintain their academic records, and try to harmonize and personalize each student's educational experience. This process includes setting academic, social, personal, and career goals, and assisting students in choosing courses and individual experiences conducive to attaining these goals.

College Admissions

Most colleges have had many years of dealing with *Phaedrus* transcripts, and they understand that an anecdotal report is in some ways even better in admissions work than a straight letter grade. Nearly all admissions people questioned our students closely on their participation in *Phaedrus* during the personal interview, and they seemed impressed by what they heard. Our students have an excellent record of admissions to college.

Recent College Acceptances:

American U.	Massachusetts, U. – Amherst
Amherst C.	McGill U.
Barnard C.	Michigan State U.
Bates C.	Michigan, U.
Boston C.	Middlebury C.
Boston U.	Mount Holyoke C.
Brandeis U.	Muhlenberg C.
Brown U.	New York U.
Bucknell U.	Northeastern U.
California, U. – Santa Clara	Northwestern U.
Carnegie Mellon U.	Oberlin C.
Colgate U.	Penn. State U.
Colorado C.	Pennsylvania, U.
Colorado, U. - Boulder	Pittsburgh, U.
Connecticut C.	Rhode Island, U.
Connecticut, U.	Rider U.
Cornell U.	Skidmore C.
Dartmouth C.	Smith C.
Delaware, U.	St. Lawrence U.
Dickinson C.	Stanford U.
Emerson C.	SUNY Albany
Emory U.	SUNY Binghamton
Fairfield U.	SUNY New Paltz
Fordham U.	SUNY Stony Brook
George Washington U.	Swarthmore C.
Georgetown U.	Syracuse U.
Goucher C.	Trinity C.
Hamilton C.	Tufts U.
Hartford, U.	Tulane U.
Harvard U.	Union C.
Indiana, U. - Bloomington	Vanderbilt U.
Iowa, U.	Vassar C.
Ithaca C.	Vermont, U.
Johns Hopkins U.	Washington U. – St. Louis
Kenyon C.	Wesleyan U.
Lafayette C.	Wheaton C.
Lehigh U.	Wisconsin, U. - Madison
Maryland, U.	Yale U.