**Bilingual Pen-Pal Club**

Starting in October, students at Runkle will have the chance to partner with students in El Carmen de Viboral, Colombia as pen-pals! Interested students will meet once each week after school to prepare letters in both English and Spanish to send to their pen-pals in Colombia, and will also receive help in reading the bilingual letters they receive. This is a tremendous way for our students to build reading and writing skills in Spanish and help students in another country learn English, while at the same time learning about Colombian culture and building global friendships. When we are not busy writing letters, we will also work on additional projects related to the Spanish language and the cultures of the Spanish speaking world.

If your student is interested in participating, please read the details below, sign, and return the bottom portion of this slip. For more information, please see reverse or visit [RunkleSpanish.weebly.com](http://www.RunkleSpanish.weebly.com) .

**Who:** Interested students at Runkle in grades 4-5 will be partnered with 4th and 5th grade students at the Campo Alegre School in El Carmen de Viboral, Colombia. Spanish-speaking parent volunteers are also welcome – please let me know if you are interested! *See reverse for more information about the Campo Alegre school and their projects with the Marina Orth Foundation.*

**When:** The Runkle PenPal club will meet after school once per week on MONDAYS from 2:30-3:30. The first meeting will be held on Monday, October 5, 2015, and we will continue the project thru November (the end of the Colombian school year). We will hopefully begin a new session after the winter holidays for students who wish to continue.

**Where:** Room TBD

**How:** Students will most likely be writing letters by hand, which will then be scanned and sent electronically to their PenPals. Students may also have the chance to Skype with their PenPals or use other online tools for communication in the future.

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**Please sign and return to Ms. Paun (room 105) or classroom teacher by October 5, 2015**

□ I give permission for my student \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
to join the Bilingual Pen-Pal club. After the club ends at 3:30, he/she will:

□ be picked up by a parent/guardian
□ go to Runkle Extended Day
□ take the METCO bus home

□ I give permission for my student to participate in live video conferencing with their Pen-pals via Skype during meetings should this be possible.

Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name and Phone Number:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**What is the Campo Alegre School?**

The Campo Alegre School is a rural K-5 school in El Carmen de Viboral, Colombia, an agricultural town located about one hour outside of the city of Medellin. This small public school has partnered with the Marina Orth Foundation, which provides both English and Technology classes to students, teachers, and adults in the community. In 2012, the Campo Alegre School was recognized as the top rural school in the department of Antioquia.

This school also has a personal connection to the Runkle! Prior to moving to Brookline, I had the opportunity to work as an English teacher in this school in 2013. For the pen-pal project, we will be working with my former co-teacher, Susana Urrego and her current 5th grade students. Working with these students at Campo Alegre was an amazing experience for me, and I look forward to connecting my current students at Runkle with my former students in Colombia to build an international learning community.

**Will our students write and receive letters in English or Spanish?**

Both! Students at Campo Alegre are native Spanish speakers who are learning English, just as our students are learning Spanish. Students in both groups will write a portion of their letters in English (giving our students a chance to model authentic English writing to help their pen-pals learn) and a portion in Spanish (giving our students a chance to practice what they know and read authentic pieces of text in Spanish). This will be a true partnership between the schools, with students in both groups learning from each other.

**What level of Spanish does my son/daughter need to have to participate?**

All students in grades 4-5 are welcome to join, ranging from students who are new to Spanish this year to those who may already speak fluently at home! I will help students with sentence-starters and vocabulary to help them express themselves in Spanish as needed. Any student who is willing to put in their best effort is welcome!

**Does my student need anything else to participate?**

Students should be prepared with writing utensils and a folder in which to keep their letters and drafts.

**What else?**

I anticipate that most of our work can be done within the meetings, but some work may need to be finished at home (such as finishing a rough draft or copying an edited rough draft to a final copy, adding illustrations, etc.). Writing to pen-pals will be lots of fun, but we must also keep in mind that our pals are relying on us to complete the letters in a timely manner so that the exchange can continue!

To learn more about the Marina Orth Foundation and its work at Campo Alegre and other schools in the area, please visit <http://www.fundaorth.org/>. If you have any further questions about the Campo Alegre School or the pen-pal club, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you!

Shenandoah Paun
K-4 Spanish Teacher, Runkle School (room 105)
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