

Elisabeth Moore-Haas

February 7, 1943 – October 14, 2023

Elisabeth Moore-Haas, enthusiastic, devoted Swiss early childhood educator and teacher trainer, passed from the earthly realm into the spiritual world on October 14, 2023. She is remembered here in North America for her work in the 1980s and 90s, when she travelled to teacher training institutes, visited kindergartens, and lectured at conferences. The power of stories, storytelling, and the wisdom of fairy tales were among her deep interests, which she shared as keynote speaker at one WECAN February conference. In 1989 she presented at the first major international WECAN conference along with other Waldorf Early Childhood master educators from Europe. She worked intensively with the “Mood of the Fifth” in music and circle games. The “Star Money” circle game she shared has been played in many North American kindergartens and early childhood programs ever since. Nancy Foster especially remembers Elisabeth bringing the impulse of this music to North American programs.

Colleagues observe that she was particularly dedicated to work through imitation. She saw the teacher as the role model whose example would create a warm, free space in which children could educate themselves through active imitation and free play. She carried this impulse for imitation forward in the early 1990s. She fulfilled the dream of becoming both a pedagogical eurythmist and a therapeutic eurythmist, skills she shared in many kindergartens and schools. Many children imitated their ways to health through her guidance.

Elisabeth had answered a call from Dr. Helmut von Kügelgen, director of the teacher training seminar in Stuttgart, to open a program in Switzerland as another part of her work. This began in 1977, and Elisabeth carried the program for over 30 years. The motto of this training center in Bern was “All education is self-education, and we, as teachers and educators, are actually only the environment of the self-educating child.” She also carried the richness of her knowledge to Japan, New Zealand, and Australia, as well as to many European countries, such as Poland, Croatia, and Slovenia.



Group photo from the 1989 Early Childhood Conference in Wilton, New Hampshire. Names marked with an asterisk* indicate those who have crossed the threshold. Back row: Johanna Veronica Picht*, Monique Grund, Janet Kellman, Susan Howard, Freya Jaffke*, Marjorie Thatcher*. Third row: Elisabeth Moore-Haas*, Joan Almon*. Second row: Charlotte Dukich, Werner Glas*, Helmut von Kügelgen*, Bronja Zahlingen*, Margret Meyerkort*, Ann Pratt*, Patricia Livingston*. Front row: Alice Stamm, Nancy Foster, Carolyn Hodnett*

Elisabeth’s sister, Marguerite Haas, offered these words: “When we look at Elisabeth’s life, we are almost overwhelmed by what a person can achieve, accomplish, and experience in just one lifetime. This strength and intensity was not always easy for others to bear. But her strength of will, her powers of memory, and her moral courage will remain admirable memories for us all. Her work lives on and radiates through all trained kindergarten teachers—around the world! What live on in those who knew her are her great powers of the heart, her ability to love.”

Elisabeth is remembered by American colleagues as “unforgettable . . . with those wonderful Swiss apple cheeks” that appeared when she smiled—which was often. ♦

These recollections were drawn from contributions by Susan Howard, Nancy Foster, Ann Stahl, Marguerite Haas, Jacqueline Walter-Baumgartner, and Claudia Simčič.