

An Overview of Waldorf Early Childhood Education Today
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So much has been developing in the world of Waldorf early childhood education that it is difficult to even compile a Newsletter these days. We had a remarkable conference this past summer in Wilton, N.H., some aspects of which are reported here. Most have to be left out, simply because the event was so rich and full that it does not lend itself well to the usual form of reporting. Instead we have focused on one of the missing parts - the presence of Helmut von Kügelgen whose health did not permit him to attend. He was to speak on the inner life of the teacher and its relationship to the life of the child. We know that he would have shared great inner riches with us, as he always has done, and we have decided to include in this issue a wonderful interview held with him several years ago on the subject of angels. We are especially grateful to be able to share this with you at this time, for December 14 marks his 80th birthday. We will convey the good wishes of our kindergarten movement to Dr. von Kügelgen, but those who would like to send individual thoughts may do so by sending him cards at the International Waldorf Kindergarten Association, 11 Heubergstr., D70188 Stuttgart, Germany. FAX 011-49-721925-747. Although this Newsletter is arriving late, feel free to send belated good wishes.

Another noteworthy birthday is that of Bronja Zahlingen of Vienna. Bronja will be 85 on January 8. There are still many in our movement who had courses with Bronja when she was traveling on a regular basis, and she is remembered with great warmth. Her joy in teaching and her love of children brought magic to us as adults, and particularly today when the work has grown more difficult, her admonitions to smile in the kindergarten and bring joy to the children ring in our hearts. Those wanting to send her greetings can do so at Marktgemeindeg. 42, A-1238 Vienna, Austria.

The Kindergarten Association Board of Trustees held its annual Board meeting in Fair Oaks, California in November and several areas were very fruitfully discussed. One broad area is the expansion of our work to include day care, the needs of children in the first three years, and the needs of children in socially difficult settings such as low income neighborhoods and homeless shelters. These new areas of work call for action, as does our ongoing work with existing kindergartens and new initiatives. Originally our focus was on the child between three and six whose needs were being met in Waldorf kindergartens. Then we became concerned about first grade readiness, and many children remained in the kindergarten until age seven. Then home care programs developed, both half day and full day and after school programs developed in the kindergartens to meet day care needs. More recently parent-tot programs have arisen to help families with children under three. Since the Waldorf Kindergarten Association began in 1983 our work has grown broader, and now it broadens again as many teachers take up kindergarten work in new areas of social outreach. You will find some descriptions in this issue. With all these developments, the name Kindergarten Association sounds rather narrow. We are considering a change to Waldorf Early Childhood Association, but would welcome your suggestions and thoughts. We will try to reach a decision at our next Board meeting in November 1997.
