

## **Questionnaire Response**

### **Lois Hartman, Front Range Waldorf School, Lakewood, Colorado**

*In Fall 1998, WECAN sent out its annual questionnaire and later summarized its findings. A few responses were held aside, however, for they gave such rich pictures of kindergarten life today that we wanted to publish them in Gateways. One was published last spring and we now publish another.*

*Q: Please describe any changes you may have seen in today's children in contrast to those of five years ago or earlier. Consider new capacities as well as problem areas.*

A: The girls are strong and the boys are gentle to a larger degree. They play together easily, playing everything from hunting elk to house. Both boys and girls can switch sexual identity in a play — girls as huntsmen, boys as Little Red Cap or grandma.

Also, food allergies are growing.

*In what ways is your work with children different today than at an earlier time?*

My work keeps getting simpler and deeper — fewer things, more awareness. I never did make a lot of things (my motto is “Us not stuff”), but I keep finding ways to be simpler.

*In what ways is your work with parents different today than at an earlier time?*

Our present school is a cooperative, so the parents participate on a regular basis. This helps them because they also can learn from seeing and listening. There is a lot of interest in parent gatherings for discussion and study groups. Parents want and need to know basic things like how to cook grains, how to eat healthily, how to sew, knit, bake, make applesauce, etc. More and more parents are looking for community and the school is the perfect place to find that. I am more like the grandmother who helps them learn the basics in living, how to clothe and care for their children, how to help each other, how to make space for each other and each other's children. The need is great. I'm also looking for ways to make the education more affordable for everyone. We have a sliding scale and are looking for ways to create a handwork business with the business community.

*Is your work with colleagues different than in an earlier time? If so, please describe the differences.*

The parents are my colleagues now. We must work carefully and with a lot of communication and understanding. There is no competition, but a lot of respect for each other.

*Have you noticed changes in the way you work with the wider community? Please describe.*

We are in a Lutheran church which is very interested in what we do. They have a scholarship program and encourage us in many ways. They offer the space free and have a church representative on the school board. An evening class for women is held once a week, which is attended by mothers, pastor, teachers, church members, community friends. We are looking for more ways to offer artistic work in the community. The church has embraced the Advent Garden, St. Nicholas' visit, and the Shepherd's Play as their own activities.

A community college student came to interview me after a day in class and gave a report to the education class. We hope it leads to more interaction with the Education Department.