

Gateways

Newsletter of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America ♦ Issue 73, Fall 2017

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From the Editor

— Nancy Blanning

Everyone loves stories, no matter our ages, no matter our situations. Children clamor for stories—“Read me a story.” Or better yet, “Tell me a story.”

Children are deluged with tales, read or told from storybooks and interpreted into other media. Many are intellectually instructive. Some are amusing, some ironic, many exaggerated and stereotyped. Others are moralizing. Each may have its time and place, depending on the age and situation of the child. Yet there are fundamental questions to apply to all stories. Is the content of this story true? Do the characters, the images and deeds portrayed in this story nourish human development in soul and spirit? Does the story offer enduring pictures of goodness, beauty, and truth that the child can grow with? When we apply these criteria, we narrow our field of story choices and call upon ourselves as educators to be deeply discerning about what stories we offer and how we bring them.

In our confusing times when young children are exposed to so many superficial, materialistic, and morally ambivalent images and messages, the quality of story becomes even more important. The right stories can heal. They can comfort and reassure. Stories can make us laugh at the comical foibles and naïveté that illustrate simple hearts with pure intentions. Stories instruct us in courageousness and selflessness, where problems are solved and prizes won by honesty, commitment, and dedication to the good.

With all of this in mind, this issue of *Gateways* is dedicated to stories and storytelling. Susan Perrow, Australian author of *Therapeutic Storytelling* and *Healing Stories for Difficult Behaviors*, was the keynote speaker for the February 2017 East Coast WECAN conference. She travels the world offering workshops for teachers and therapists to enable them to write their own healing stories. The theme and wisdom of her presentation inspired us to revisit story in *Gateways*. This issue features the first part of her presentation, addressing Imagination. She discusses what this means conceptually and in very practical terms for teachers. Susan humbly and generously shares the experiences and insights that have graced her own path as storyteller. She invites us take our own steps

to open our own Imagination on the story journey.

Other contributors focus upon more specific powers of story and storytelling. Nancy Mellon—author, therapist, and story expert from the West Coast and friend of Waldorf education—speaks to how true stories, particularly fairy tales, can be an antidote to the effects of children’s exploding exposure to screens. She encourages us to boldly understand the darker images in the fairy tale as forces in human life and society that must be overcome. She sees dramatizing or “acting out” a tale at story time as powerful medicine for the children of our time.

Laurie Clark, long-time lead kindergarten teacher, has always loved fairy tales and has studied them deeply. She discusses the power of the truthful images these tales portray when we tell them from our own thoughtful understanding. She describes how acting out a story after it has been heard a few times engages the children’s will and captures their attention. Many teachers report that it is increasingly difficult for children to simply listen to a story. Acting out the story may also be a healing avenue to reawaken the capacity for listening.

Early childhood educator Debora Petschek focuses on the story of Cinderella. She shares research she did in finding versions of the Cinderella theme across centuries and in many, many different cultures and geographies. The similarities of the stories confirm the universality of these story images across time and in diverse religious and ethnic settings.

Pioneers honors two dear teaching colleagues who passed the threshold this year. Annie Gross, former teacher at the Toronto Waldorf School and beloved WECAN board member, passed the threshold last February. Annie held a deep and dedicated concern for the healthy social life in our collegial and school communities. This is a topic you will encounter further along in this issue. Kundry Willwerth, early childhood teacher best known to us all for bringing the Ellersiek hand gesture games to North America, also passed onto the spiritual world in early June. Reminiscences of Kundry’s interesting and varied life are inspiring. Our early childhood work on this continent has been enriched by both

Annie's and Kundry's contributions. We are deeply grateful for all that they brought to our work.

You will find a new section next—**Reading the Signs of the Times**. Rudolf Steiner urged us all to pay attention to the trends, the themes, and the distresses of our times. Recently there have been incidents of social and professional discord in our school communities. We all have challenges and practical matters to handle. But the foundation of our existence as an educational and social impulse depends upon how we honor and appreciate each other's contributions to our work. We must address how to work respectfully and collaboratively for the good of the whole. Please read this section and join in this conversation of how we can support a healthy and healing social life.

For the Classroom lightens up our reading pleasure, sharing two movement imaginations from WECAN's recently published translation of *Let's Dance and Sing!* by Freya Jaffke. The labor of harvest and the work of tradespeople remind us of how important it is for growing children to imagine and enact human activity—not technological activity. There are playful, very fun moments in these imaginations, too.

Stories presented as puppet plays are always special moments for the children. And ease in setting up and presenting the puppet play provides joy to the teacher as well. Rachel Ladasky, nursery teacher with dedication to puppetry, shares design and instructions for a puppetry table, created with her carpenter father. The table is simple, practical, easily portable, and beautiful.

Book reviews feature *Let's Dance and Sing!* by Freya Jaffke, mentioned above, and *Baby Bare*, a new book by movement therapist Stephanie Johnson. The Jaffke book is a treasure of authentically translated

games that we received in snippets over the years from “across the pond.” In this new translation, we finally have the full imaginations available. Frau Jaffke also gives practical, wise advice from her many years of guiding circle in her classroom. Ms. Johnson, Waldorf parent and author of *Baby Bare*, makes it her mission to bring the importance of self-directed movement for infants and toddlers to new parents. Self-directed movement builds up the critical neurological foundation the human being needs to have a satisfying life. *Baby Bare* is very accessible, makes a compelling case for why infants and toddlers should not be rushed ahead in their development, and helps us to understand how movement and brain development are intimately intertwined. This book is highly recommended for all early childhood educators, no matter the ages of children in our care.

This issue concludes with **International News**. The IASWECE council met in South Africa last spring. Louise deForest shares her impressions and Stephanie Allon speaks on behalf of the council itself.

We hope that the fall issue of *Gateways* will enliven and expand your interest in and understanding of story. The children need us to potentize every possibility we have to bring them healing, encouraging, nourishing imaginations. We received more articles regarding fairy tales and storytelling than we could include in this issue, and look forward to sharing the remaining contributions in Issue 74 next spring. We can take Susan Perrow's call to awaken our forces of imagination in many ways. The next big question we want to address is how to bring warmth and healing to the social life in our school communities.

With warmest wishes for this school year,

~ Nancy Blanning

The Healing Power of Story Language

— Susan Perrow

WECAN February Conference 2017, Spring Valley, NY

As a respectful way to begin this conference in Spring Valley, I wish to pay tribute to the indigenous people who once lived on this land. It is a traditional practice to do this in my own country, Australia. I also want to honor the stories that have been told here and all across the North American continent for thousands of years. Then to carry this further, I want to acknowledge the cultural stories and folk and fairy tales from all over the world that together we bring with us as a foundation for this wonderful, rich topic of “The Healing Power of Story Language.”

Tonight I will look at story language in a broad way, beginning with some examples. Then I plan to dance with and explore the questions: “What is the imagination?” and “How can we strengthen and nourish our imaginations so we can readily use story language with the children in our care?”

Story or picture language can be as simple as a single word or phrase in a sentence. A trip to the dentist for my son to have a tooth filled proved this. The dentist said to my son, “You need to have a silver star put in your tooth to keep it strong.” The previously reluctant child widely opened his mouth to receive the “silver star” (despite the warning added by the dentist that it would hurt a bit). This was my first introduction to how powerful picture language can be. In the kindergarten at tidy-up time, we do not say to “clean up” but to “take things to their homes.” When teaching children to do up their shoes we may talk about butterfly wings when making the bow. A Chinese parent in one of my online courses encourages her seven-year-old to be a “lightning rod” whenever she is feeling angry (feet together and arms stretched up high). This has brought a new stillness to a usually aggressive and destructive time.

Such picture language can be extended into verse and song with repetition, rhythm, and rhyme. Some

examples: “Here is the boat, the golden boat, that sails o’er the silvery sea . . .” “Slowly, slowly, creeps the snail, all along the garden trail . . .” We can even have language to support the pictures that have no meaning but give a sense of movement or humor: “Hickory, dickory, dock”; “Humpty Dumpty.”

Therapeutic stories are examples of a more formed and complex use of story language. Early in my teaching and writing career I experienced an immediate need for a therapeutic story. One morning a four-and-a-half year-old boy, who was usually very settled in his play, arrived in a whirl. The night before the family’s house had burned half-way down—the family had escaped in time but stood in the garden watching the destruction until the fire engines arrived to put out the fire. The mother explained to the boy that they had insurance to cover the loss; they would be able to rebuild and all would be well again. The mother had thought the child would understand, but he was not consoled—she had been talking to him in a rational adult way. That day, before home time, I came up with a storied explanation. I told a story of a mother rabbit and her bunnies who lived in a burrow in the middle of a grassy field. The bunnies loved to run and play in the long green grass. The mother had to leave her bunnies for a brief while and went away. When she returned, she saw that a fire had burned the grass. She wondered if her bunnies were all right. She found them safe asleep in their burrow. She climbed in with them, and they all slept a long time. When they awoke and looked out, they could already see little green shoots beginning to grow again. They watched and waited until soon the green grassy playground was back to how it was before the fire.

When the child heard the story, he asked if I could please tell it again the next day. Then, when his mother arrived, he ran to her and said, “Mummy, everything is going to be all right!”

Another example concerns a six-year-old boy in a mainstream school who would not write the letters

in class but only wanted to draw pictures. The teacher shamed him, and he was so upset that he broke the pencil. The teacher put him outside the room and called his parents. His mother was attending my therapeutic story seminar that weekend and wrote a story which she then took to the teacher. The story was read to the whole class. The story told of a broken pencil that, when it was mended, had a special song it liked to sing when it was used to write letters (the story included the song). This transformed the child's attitude. When the child came home from school that day, he wrote a beautiful letter "A" and asked if his mother could hear the pencil singing—then he sang the song for her.

Now for a light-hearted example. A three-year-old girl refused to sit at the table when I was invited for an afternoon tea party. The mother was distressed and embarrassed by the child's lack of cooperation. The mother tried reasoning with the child but to no effect, then looked to me for help. I cupped my hand to my ear and said that I had just heard that the table was inviting everyone to a party. I named all the items on the table—cups, plates, flowers, cake, biscuits, fruit, etc. But the table was sure that one friend was missing. By this time the child had stood up from her place of refusal and was patting her chest to show that she was the missing friend. Then she sat at the table to join the party.

Communicating with children in "their" language is an important way to ensure that children can have a full childhood. Of course, I am not meaning "baby talk" here—I am referring to the language of story, the language of song and rhyme, the language of the imagination - this is the natural language of childhood.

Margo Sunderland, the Director of the Centre for Child Mental Health in London, is passionate about story language. She sees this as an important but under-used therapeutic modality. She claims that story is the language of young children and that literal rational language is often sensorially too dry—like "dead little words" to them. Of course, there are certain things that need straightforward language: "Turn off the water quickly—it is too hot"; "hold hands as we cross the road." But there are many times when, by using the language of the imagination, we are doing children a great favor—we are reaching into their world instead of expecting them to stretch up to our adult world!

Another wonderful "imagination" project is happening in Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, led by Dr. Kieran Egan. With funding from the Canadian government, he has established a research school to develop story-centered curricula for children in British Columbian preschools and schools. He understands from his research that the imagination is the most effective way to reach and teach children.

Slowly we are finding our way back to imagination. Dr. Albert Einstein, more than 90 years ago, understood the balance between imagination and rational thought when he famously stated, "Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere."

Waldorf has had this wisdom for almost one hundred years. In *A Modern Art of Education*, Rudolf Steiner describes graphically the imbalance of teaching intellectualized concepts without using imaginative "living pictures"—he gives us the image of someone with a plate of fish in front of him, cutting away the flesh and consuming the bones! (pp. 139-40.)



What is the imagination? Dictionaries give main definitions such as: "the faculty of forming mental images of what is not actually present to the senses; the ability to imagine things that are not real; the ability to think of new things." However, these are quite limiting and "dry." They speak conceptually of something that is not conceptual. If we want to understand a butterfly, we really have to move and dance with it, not capture it in a net.

From different cultural and poetic viewpoints, I want to dance with this question. I have been fortunate to travel widely since my books have been translated into many languages. I have been in Africa and Asia. I have had time to soak in some different cultural understandings and have found a deep reverence in each country and culture for story and the imagination.

During three years working in East Africa, often when I would meet someone new and tell them that I wrote stories, the Kiswahili response would be: *mawazo ni mwanga katika usiku*—imagination is a light in the night. Or *hadithi mwanga usiku*—stories light the night. In Southern Africa, the San people (Bushmen) have no word for imagination. For them "story" is all-encompassing. They have a saying: "A story is like the wind. It comes from a far off place

and you feel it.” They would “story” their children on long treks across the desert and savannah—no literal and rational talk (just another thousand steps – let’s count! or a promise of a treat when we get there!). The Bushmen would carry the walk through the imagination—there would be stories of that rock, this bush, the clouds, the lizard and more! Story is so important to this culture that it has been documented with incarcerated Bushmen that they have wasted away mainly because they have missed their connection to story.

Similarly, in my country, Australia, “story” in indigenous culture embraces everything—connectedness, all life, nature and community. It goes back thousands of years to the Dream Time, which is the aboriginal understanding of the world, its creation and its stories.

In China, when I have posed the question in my seminars, “What is imagination?” the common reply has been that in Chinese culture it is difficult to define but could most fittingly be compared to the TAO, the invisible force behind all things; stillness and movement; the balance of all things; the heart force of nature. “After all, if trees and flowers could talk they would speak in stories,” one participant commented. Another, who had studied ancient Chinese painting, spoke of the empty spaces in each painting. He believed that the blank spaces were left for the imagination.



Crossing now to our English culture, there are many arts from which we can draw to explore this question. But in the time constraints of this talk, I want to come to this specifically through poetry. Poets through the ages have worked to elevate the importance of imagination over logic, and have deeply respected the sacredness of image and metaphor.

Many years ago, in my quest for a poetic understanding of the imagination, I made an exciting discovery. It shone out of an essay on “Matter, Imagination and Spirit” by the English poet and philosopher Owen Barfield. In his writings, Barfield depicts two realities—the spiritual and the physical, the “hidden” and the “everyday.” But he gives motivation to us as adults, for he suggests a bridge between the two, a way of traveling from one to the other. This bridge or connection between matter and the spirit is the “imagination”—beautifully depicted as a rainbow bridge of imaginative activity. This is

the realm of the story, the realm of metaphor, the realm of symbol.

With this in mind, let us now look at the question: Why does story language (story, poetry and song) seem to be such a natural language for children? In light of Barfield’s ideas, the answer seems quite simple. It is because children have only recently crossed the rainbow bridge. For them this imaginative world is so near, is so real.

When one of my sons was asked at the age of six, “Why do you like fairy tales?” his answer was “Because they think about what I think about.” This childlike wisdom has helped build another link in my chain of understanding of the imagination—for a child the imaginative and spirit world could be as real as the physical everyday world, and children seem to have the ability to cross back and forth like butterflies.

The poet William Wordsworth, in his “Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,” captures beautifully how close our little children are to the spiritual world—“ . . . trailing clouds of glory do we come from God who is our home. Heaven lies about us in our infancy!” He laments this loss of connection to spirit as we grow older—“at length the man perceives it die away, and fade into the light of common day.”

Imagination is an interesting phenomenon. In human development, we mostly grow stronger physically, socially and mentally, but often weaker in connection to the spirit, weaker in our imagination. Most adults have to work hard to keep their imaginations flowering—they have to tend their imaginative gardens. Children have this naturally but for many of us our connection has faded.

Wordsworth’s poetic lament seems related to this phenomenon. Something splendid fades, something vastly wondrous shrinks. This is the challenge for us as teachers: how do we re-develop, re-nourish, and re-strengthen our imaginations so that we can work with children using the language most familiar to them?



As a long-time student of anthroposophy, I have been particularly interested in Steiner’s thoughts on developing the organs of spiritual perception—Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition, the three “I”s (spelled with a capital “I”). But I can openly confess I have not achieved these lofty stages of development! As Steiner himself has warned us, it is a long, hard, arduous task.

However, while we plod slowly along this path, I think it is important to be aware of and honor what I am going to refer to as the little “i”s – the imagination, inspiration, and intuition belonging to our everyday life, to our everyday humanness. We sometimes get a sensing from somewhere. Sometimes we feel that something greater is working through us. Sometimes we receive gifts, grace from the spiritual world. We sometimes even say, “An inspiration has come to me!”

I am sure that the big “I”s and little “i”s are connected, but from my personal experience this broader awareness has given me creative courage to write my stories.

Here are some personal examples, beginning with some experiences of the little “i” of intuition. One goes back 30 years—before the founding of our Steiner school in Byron Bay. A little voice “told” me to go outside and retrieve a registration package for the starting of the school. I had tossed it into the recycle bin because it looked as though the founding of the school was not going to happen. Getting those papers out of the recycle (minutes before it was emptied) was life-changing for the school’s future, as they gave access to a higher funding category. Today, in my story writing, I have had several “intuitive” gifts that have helped with writing some of my stories for trauma—for example, *The Rose and the Thorn* for the Norwegian tragedy and *The Flowered Kimono* for post-tsunami Japanese families.

We have probably all had personal experiences of being touched by the little “i” of inspiration—watching a sunset, walking in nature, looking at a great work of art, reading a poem. Such experiences have inspired much of my writing. Nature and the arts have been an inspiration in all cultures throughout history. In his autobiography *And There Was Light*, Jacques Lusseyran wrote that when he was imprisoned in Buchenwald during World War 2, poetry was one of the rare things that prevailed over cold and hatred. Poetry tied earth back to heaven; linked the real and the impossible; inspired courage against all odds.

As for the little “i” of imagination, this can penetrate and enrich our daily life and work in so many ways, with children (as per the examples given at the beginning of my talk) but also with adults. Susan Laing is an Australian artist and psychologist who effectively uses imaginative language in her work with her clients. Recently she counseled a woman

who had been grieving for six months over having had to have a C-section. She asked her; “If you were trapped in a room with the door stuck, what would you do?” As the woman answered, “Of course, climb out the window.” She smiled and her grief dissipated.

A doctor friend of mine keeps a collection of figurines on a tray on his desk (people, animals, trees, fairy tale characters). They are a point of lateral reference for his patients to start connecting with their own unique condition in a metaphoric, imaginative way.

Many cultures talk quite freely in pictorial, imaginative language. In Kenya, wise sayings are written into kikoyis (sarongs). One of my favorites, that was often helpful at a school meeting when the agenda seemed off track, was “It’s no good polishing the floor if the roof is leaking.”

I encourage you to share and write down your own experiences of the three little “i”s. You may be surprised to find, like I have, that they shine their sparks of light into our everyday life more often than we may have realized.

However, even though these little “i” gifts sometimes light up our lives, how can we nourish and strengthen them? Particularly with our “imagination,” how can we find ways to let it shine brighter and more often?

I would like to finish with seven tips that may help:

Read. Read many children’s stories. Immerse yourself in the images of folk and fairy tales.

Listen. Let Mother Nature speak to you. Nature has so much to share. Walk in a forest, on a beach, in the park. Sit in a garden or on a balcony amongst the potted plants.

Observe. Ideas for metaphors for stories can come from the most unusual places, such as a dust pan and brush as a metaphor for cooperation. It is surprising what we can pick up through observation. Observation can also help to inform our stories: How does a wombat carry her baby? How does a snake shed its skin?

Walk. Poets and philosophers have attested to how walking can loosen our thinking. Bruce Chapman was a traveler from the last century. He walked across Australia and up South America. He believed that if you walk enough you do not need religion. There is much potential in walking.

Play with story motives. Use story cards (see attached chart) and randomly pick two and use these

to craft a story. Almost every story has a beginning (introduces the problem), a middle (wrangles with the problem) and an end (problem resolved). The random approach can help your imagination to flutter and fly.

Give it time. Sometimes we need to sleep and dream and sleep some more.

Give it a go (an Aussie saying). When you have created a story or game or song or rhyme, use it with the children. Strive for it to be as polished as possible, but accept that nothing is ever perfect. Be encouraged by the lyric from Leonard Cohen's song "Anthem": "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."

Working with these pointers can help us with writing therapeutic stories. However, this genre of writing is not about recipes, it is not like a cooking class. In my books you will find a framework that has helped me—working with "metaphor," "journey," and "resolution." But most of the effort has to come from you—playing, exploring, trying and re-trying, using your three little "i"s, slowly plodding along the path of the lofty "I"s!

There are so many circumstances and situations today with children that can be helped with a uniquely crafted story using a particular imaginative journey and specifically chosen metaphors. I believe it is our task as teachers today to take up this challenge, and even if our writings may only be a "stammer" compared to the beauty and depth of a fairy tale, I encourage you to "stammer" away.

Editor's Note: You can use the following collection of words ("motives" or "prompts") to help you create stories in a variety of ways. You might meditate upon the collection while considering a particular issue you wish to address, choosing a few elements that seem to provide meaningful metaphors upon which to build. Or you might choose three disparate elements and meditate upon how they connect into a meaningful tale. Or, as you are working on a story, you might refer to the collection of words for inspiration when you get "stuck." The elements are all iconic, familiar fairy tale motifs—you should also add words of your own. ♦

MOTIVES FOR STORY WRITING

(a small selection for random story making exercises—add more squares for your own ideas)

TREE	BELL	DOOR	PRINCE	HORSE	TEAPOT	ROPE	FLOWER
SPADE	FEATHER	CAT	MOON	POT	BEE	CAVE	CHAIR
BEAR	PATH	KEY	WAND	STICK	GRAND-FATHER	NECKLACE	GRAND-MOTHER
STONE	GOLD	HUT	FARMER	HAT	RING	GLOVES	DOLPHIN
CRYSTAL	BAMBOO	SHOE	BOY	SILVER	SHELL	PEARL	MIRROR
GIRL	TREE	BUTTERFLY	TURTLE	RABBIT	DRUM	STAR	CASTLE
COAT	PRINCESS	BIRD	RIVER	FROG	ELEPHANT	KING	MOUNTAIN
FISH	TABLE	FOX	BOAT	LION	DANCER	QUEEN	CLOCK
BEACH	GARDEN	FIREFLY	ANT	NEST	KANGAROO	SUN	WALL

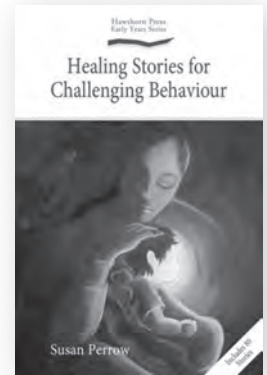
Susan Perrow is a writer and consultant who works with teachers, parents, and therapists, and runs seminars on therapeutic story-writing and storytelling worldwide. Her travels take her from China to Africa, Europe to America, and across her own sun-drenched land of Australia. Her publications include *Therapeutic Storytelling* (Hawthorn Press 2012) and *Healing Stories for Challenging Behaviour* (Hawthorn Press 2008).

Resources:

- IERG: the Imagination in Education and Research Group, www.ierg.ca
- Susan Laing, *Conscious Creative Courageous Living with Children*, www.creativelivingwithchildren.com
- Jacques Lusseyran, *And There Was Light* (Sandpoint, ID: Morning Light Press, 2000)
- Rudolf Steiner, *A Modern Art of Education* (Great Barrington: Steiner Books, 2004)
- Margot Sunderland, *Using Storytelling as a Therapeutic Tool with Children* (Abington, UK: Taylor and Francis, 2001)

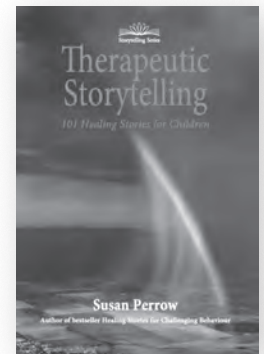
Healing Stories for Challenging Behaviour

Discover the power of healing stories with Susan Perrow. Explore how stories can help to shift out-of-balance behaviour, find the right story for your situation, and learn how to create your own stories, or adapt others to suit. Includes 80 stories, and detailed explorations of therapeutic storytelling as a method.



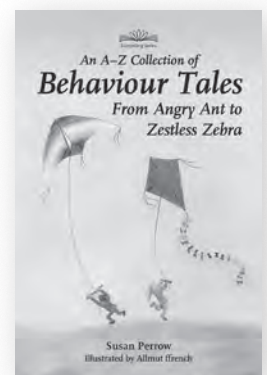
Therapeutic Storytelling: 101 Healing Stories for Children

Dive into this rich treasury of therapeutic stories, with tips and guidelines on telling and using; including stories for traumatic individual situations and community/global events, developing your own story writing skills, and drawing on tales from around the world.



An A-Z Collection of Behaviour Tales: From Angry Ant to Zestless Zebra

A new, beautifully illustrated collection of 42 tales to address common childhood behaviours. Each one specially written by the author, this is a book to treasure and return to. Includes a section of ideas on extending the stories with songs, games, puppet shows and more.



The Power of Real Stories in the Age of Screens

— Nancy Mellon

Once upon a time, stories were told by human voice, one person to another—parent to child; friend to friend; child to child; storyteller to the village, family, or wider community.

Today, accustomed to screened and virtual versions of stories, most adults are surprised to learn that most of the wonder and joy that children experience as they listen to tales comes from having an adult fully and warmly present to narrate them.

Children listen alive to stories with hands and feet and growing bones. Well-structured, flowing narrative spoken by a warmly present adult nurtures children from head to toe and deep within. Whether from a sacred tradition such as the Koran or Jataka or from traditional folk or fairy tales, warmly spoken tales nurture children's cellular well-being. As well-balanced stories sound through them, stories can encourage good digestion. Running through blood and muscle, they can heal and awaken curiosity and joy and powerfully sparkle and dance both adults and children to life. They move us naturally into play activities.

Thankfully, many parents and teachers, seeing how children become passive and mesmerized by screens, commit to regulating their children's use of devices and TV time. Yet, like the hungry "wolf" at the door, too often parents use their own devices in front of children and ignore the very rules that they have set. Vigorous research, such as Cris Rowan's in *Virtual Child* and Mari Swingle's in *i-Minds*, thoroughly detail the hazards of turning children and families over to screens. Years later, if not immediately, the effects of flickering images may erupt as nerve dysfunction or breathing and character disorders. At the very least, framed viewing isolates children and puts a chill on their immersion into the real world of human warmth, struggle, joy, and play.

Everyone responsible for the wellbeing of young children these days is reckoning with the effects of these potent devices. This very moment, vast numbers of children are glued to a small tablet watching Disney's newest alterations of *Beauty and the Beast* or *Frozen*, which was adapted from Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen*. Amidst the thickets of

hyper-screened entertainments and instant access to huge menus of old and new versions of tales, which stories best help to build character and resilience today? How can we intentionally bring stories to counter the hypnotizing power of technology?

In "The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids," seven vulnerable little kid goats are left alone at home by their mother. "Do not open the door to strangers while I am away," the mother warns as she locks the door behind her. Then the wolf comes to the door, cunningly disguised as their dear parent. The confused little goats open the door and all but one are consumed by the wolf. Although we may protect real wolves in their natural habitats, does not that famished story-Wolf reside in all of us? Folk tales like "The Three Little Pigs" and "The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids" speak symbolic wisdom to both adults and children about unlimited openness to the lures of the material world.

As children sense the wisdom of "The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids," they enjoy acting it out. To prime play, parents and teachers can narrate the story several times, find a blanket, a watery blue silk ready to cover the villain, and a matronly sewing basket with imaginary scissors, strong needle and thread. Before the start of play-acting, I often encourage the children to prepare the grand finale to this tale by carrying some previously collected hefty stones to place in a circle that represents the well.

Depending on the children's ages, play-acting roles may be fluid or assigned. Children may want an adult to safely be the mother and wolf. The kids in the cottage "baaaa" their good-byes to their mother as she goes off to market, basket in hand. When the wolf's knock-knock-knocking is heard at the door, caution is sensed but eventually goes unheeded. The instant the door is opened, the story-Wolf enters to wrap the troupe one by one into the wolf-belly blanket.

When Mother Goat returns home, she senses what has happened like so many parents who know instinctively how to respond in emergencies. She discovers her one surviving kid and tenderly frees him from his hiding place. Then she motions to him to bring her sewing basket. Taking the imaginary

scissors, she ceremoniously snips open the beastly belly blanket to release all her other beloved children. In the playful hush, children then load stones instead of kids into the wolf-blanket. Mother Goat, with equal ceremony, pretends to sew up the belly. Then she quickly changes roles to become the Wolf, heavily awkward, waking up with a terrible belly-aching thirst. The children push and carry the blanket of stones to the well and ceremoniously cover the villain with the watery cloth. Now circling round and round the stones they sing from their hearts: *The wolf is dead, the wolf is dead.*

How different are the faces of children aglow with joy as they embody stories in this way, compared to the faces of children who, drawn into a story, are hunched over screened devices? Does making a physically robust drama out of conquering the Wolf nourish imagination and intellect? Yes. Vivian Gussin Paley, a prolific early childhood educator, encourages story dramatics every day in the classroom. After only a few weeks in her realm, every child plays freely. She often makes daily tasks, such as clean-up time, into stories. To children replaying Hurricane Katrina, she gave the image of “putting on [our] big rubber boots” such as helpers from the National Guard might have worn as they worked with us to make our world clean again. Like Nell Smyth, author of *The Breathing Circle* and *Drama at Heart*, Vivian inspires communities of actors in her classrooms, strengthening the wise imaginings that even the most protected children need to develop in order to meet today’s storm of technology.

During an interview entitled “Storytelling in Young Children’s Development,” Vivian Paley spoke of a fundamental plot line. “Let’s go back to ‘peekaboo,’ the beginning of story . . . [I]t’s the infant who begins the story. Where is that nice smiling person? Gone. Will she come back? I’m afraid. Ah, here she is, back again.” This is the beginning of the child as narrator. Story scenarios give a safe way to imagine “What if’s.” What if the mother and baby peek at one another? What if there’s a big wind and it looks like a hurricane? What if the bad guy comes? And so on. What if the children put away their phones?

In the interview, Paley continues: “Every new class of little children . . . are here to play and to find out where they belong in a group and how that group creates a community.” Relating the play of children

imagining themselves sisters, she says, “If you look at everything that’s going on in kindergartens and in some preschools . . . you can bring children from all levels of society and background, rich and poor and middle, hearing English at home [or not], and you put them into an environment where there are playful scenes that they all imagine, dictate, and act out, you are hard put to say which child is in special education, which is in a regular classroom, and which young child is in a gifted classroom. . . . All the children, even the children without spoken words, for one neurological or experiential reason or another, imagine the story acted out . . . and can be helped to put it on with their own classmates. It is the leveling and uplifting activity and we can’t do without it.”

The life of every child is filled with an immense array of moral dilemmas. The world’s great fairy tales portray dangerous realities and entities to be met and diligently, creatively transformed. Maria Tatar’s *The Hard Facts of the Grimms’ Fairy Tales* helps us to understand the transformative power of story. Snakes, frogs and toads crawling from the mouth of a wicked girl may be puzzling to a child who wants to love and protect frogs and snakes, yet be a useful picture of anger. Recently I met a woman who grew up in an abusive household and whose favorite plaything as a child was a long soft snake with amber buttons for eyes; night and day it was her protector. Wise stories, such as Perrault’s “Toads and Diamonds,” expand symbolic vocabulary while embodying inner dramas of growing moral awareness.

What if your most trustworthy, beloved adult loses connection with you through being compulsively bonded to a mobile phone? Fairy tales give us classic pictures of children who are abandoned, orphaned, neglected, and even abused. While we are upset by these pictures as heartless and cruel to our modern sensibilities, obsession with phones and screens is creating a modern community of neglected, disconnected children.

Those of us who cherish children’s connectedness to life in all its sensorial richness are sounding the alarm about the agenda of commercialism’s slithering snake that brings phones into our homes and the wolf’s rapacious greed for material consumption. We insist that family and school provide generously protected time and space that is completely free of technology yet includes its reality. Well-guided, engaged story drama helps everyone to do their jobs:

children to grow into well-balanced, imaginative adults; caring adults to more fully recognize the real needs of growing children; and stories to work their eternal magic. ♦

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Resources:

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- Mari K. Swingle, *i-Minds: How Cell Phones, Computers, Gaming, and Social Media are Changing our Brains, our Behavior, and the Evolution of our Species* (Gabriola Island, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2016)
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Moving into the Fairytale

— Laurie Clark

There is a big difference in whether or not one has a child grow up with fairy tales. The soul-striving nature of fairy-tale pictures becomes evident only later on. If fairy tales have not been given, this shows itself in later years as weariness of life and boredom. Indeed, it even comes to expression physically: fairy tales can help counter illnesses. What is absorbed little by little by means of fairy tales emerges subsequently as joy in life, in the meaning of life- it comes to light in the ability to cope with life, even into old age. Children must experience the power inherent in fairy tales while young, when they can still do so.

~ Rudolf Steiner, *The World of Fairy Tales*

Fairytales are a most wonderful experience and bring many unique opportunities to the young child. These remarkable stories unfold through images, one picture after the next, revealing a truthful soul adventure that corresponds to our lives in the deepest sense.

The fairytale unfolds to reveal that when challenges are met with courage and selflessness in the journey of life, the will to do the right deed with good will always prevails, even if it is the most difficult choice that can be made. The stories offer deep truths enclosed within images of characters facing challenges and thereby gaining resilience. This is a kind of nourishment for the soul of the child. Children savor the bravery and valor of the heroes and heroines in the story. Often, these characters seem the least likely to succeed in their endeavors. They are frequently portrayed as simpletons or unwanted stepchildren. These characters' heart forces of self-sacrifice, which enable them to do what is needed to accomplish the noble deed, enable the child to cultivate trust and confidence in human nature.

These stories carry archetypes that come from the spiritual world. When the teacher can penetrate and

understand the images in the story before telling it to the children, the story carries a powerful certainty. When the child asks, “Is that story true?” the teacher can answer with conviction that indeed, it is truer than true.

As the teacher tells the story, many children are fully able to listen. But not all children can fully devote their sense of listening to the story. Many children today have a hard time focusing. They lack the attention needed to engage in the spoken story.

The world is very noisy. Radio, television, constant phone conversations, sirens, leaf blowers, and music in stores are some of the many sounds that can overburden the child’s sense of hearing. Digesting what is being heard and becoming aware of where sounds come from takes focus and practice for the young child. The many loud sounds competing for the child’s attention can overwhelm her ability to distinguish and understand what she is hearing.

Challenges with auditory processing and auditory discrimination are quite common in children. Even children with normal hearing can have difficulty making sense of what is being said and perceiving where sounds are coming from. When there is background noise (auditory clutter), the child may have trouble picking out the one voice that is telling the story amid the other sounds in the classroom.

The screens that many children are exposed to play a significant role in their inability to focus in on listening. Their sense of sight is consumed by screens, weakening their ability to listen fully without the moving picture to accompany and depict what is being heard. Habitual use of tablets, computers, televisions, and smartphones can hijack children’s capacity to make their own imaginative pictures through the sense of hearing. The child is accustomed to screens making the pictures.

One thing that we can do for these “hearing-sensitive” children is to give them an accommodating visual to support the development of their listening skills. Adding a few visual props to our storytelling can support and entice the sense of hearing to participate. The visuals invite the child’s attention to the story and help her focus on and participate in the world as a listener. Throughout the year, the visual props can slowly be removed and hopefully, the sense of hearing can be strengthened.

Some children have a difficult time paying attention and focusing on the story because they

digest the world in a kinesthetic way. They experience the world most successfully when they are able to move. And for heaven’s sakes, sitting still even for a short time can be extremely challenging! Tapping, wiggling, bouncing, swinging their limbs, and using their sense of touch is appealing and gratifying for these children. They have excellent “physical memory” and are best able to process and attain a sense of well-being when they can “do” whatever is being presented. For these children, “playing” (dramatizing) the story with the class is helpful. They are then able to participate fully because they can “move into the story.” This way of experiencing the fairytale can be very satisfying for these movers and shakers who are in our care.

Puppetry adds a whole other dimension to stories. A veil is lifted from the table and, underneath it, a magical world is revealed. The movement of the puppets and the added visual of the characters is extremely satisfying for most children. Kinesthetic children imitate the movements inwardly, and the visuals appeal to the “hearing-sensitive” children in the class.

Another way to present fairytales is to do a circle adventure together as a class. The movement sustains the experience of the story as the group moves together through the various adventures that the story holds. The opportunity to include movements that integrate the child’s sensory system can be included to enhance the experience. The group moves “with” and “into” the story in community while doing movements that are therapeutic and fun.

There are many ways that the world of fairytales can be brought to the children. These stories are a source of nourishment and bring deep satisfaction, enriching the child’s development and sense of well-being. ♦

Resources:

- Rudolf Steiner, *The World of Fairy Tales*, translated by Peter Stebbing (SteinerBooks 2013)

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Cinderella

— Debora Petschek

What is it about “Cinderella” stories that allows the motif to live in so many cultures? What universal archetypes does the story work with that have found resonance all around the globe?

While working on a marionette performance of the story of “Yeh-Shen,” the “Chinese Cinderella,” I recalled several other versions of this story that I had read. I began to wonder about the origins and meaning of the Cinderella story and how it migrated across the globe. What is it about this story, more than any other that I am aware of, that speaks across all cultures? Are the archetypes so strong that versions of the story arose simultaneously around the globe? To my knowledge, this is the only fairy tale that has versions in virtually every corner of the planet.

My research found that there are anywhere from 350 to 1000 different Cinderella stories. Many of these are just regional variations that were adapted to the culture where the story was being told. For this research, I limited the criteria that would qualify a particular story as a “Cinderella” story. Each story had to have a kind and hardworking young maiden (or lad in some cases) who is on her own as an orphan, servant, or motherless princess. The main character suffers cruelty at the hands of those who direct and control her. The character is assisted by a supernatural helper, such as an animal, tree, doll, and so on (we are most familiar with the Fairy Godmother and her magic). The maiden or lad performs a “task” that only she or he can fulfill. She is rewarded in the end.

Fairy Tales as Images of Human Development

In *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*, Roy Wilkinson writes, “The reality of the fairy stories lies in the fact

that their content portrays soul experiences, cosmic truths, the process of the individual’s development, the elemental world, folk wisdom and apocalyptic imaginations. These ‘reports,’ however, are not couched in conceptual language, but in imaginative pictures. A whole world of spiritual scientific knowledge is contained in them” (p.7).

Wilkinson summarizes very succinctly what I learned about the meaning of fairy tales in the course of my research. Fairy tales are part of every culture’s oral tradition. They originated in a time when humans were more connected to the spiritual world and could “see” and “hear” its realities. These tales speak directly to a person’s heart and soul, bypassing the intellect, and are a reminder of how things used to be and where we came from. Rudolf Steiner describes fairy tales as astral experiences that affect one’s soul in a spontaneous and elementary manner.

Fairy tales also teach us to be brave in the face of adversity, to not be afraid to rely on friends and helpers, to strive and never give up. They show humor and fill us with a desire to strive towards what is true and beautiful and good. They guide us on our journey toward becoming free human beings by planting seeds of moral strength and allowing us to develop a firm belief in the power of redemption and transformation.

Fairy tales are especially apt and important for young children, who are still very connected to the spiritual world and whose intellect hasn’t yet engaged. They still think pictorially, so these stories speak directly to them. They “understand” the spiritual messages and images on a deep level. They have no trouble relating to the ancient wisdom imbued in these stories. And these images, in turn, nourish the etheric, formative forces of the child, providing a counterbalance to the hardening forces modern children encounter from quite a young age.

The Cinderella Story

This story has a long and rich history. The first known version is from Egypt and dates back to the time of the Christ event. In the 5th century BCE, the historian Herodotus wrote an account of Rhodopis, a Greek maiden from Thrace, who was captured by pirates and sold into slavery. She was taken to Egypt in the time of the Pharaoh Amasis. She served in the same household as Aesop and was eventually freed by the brother of Sappho, the lyric poet.

Around the 1st century CE, the historian Strabo adapted this historical account and wrote the first known version of what was to become the Cinderella Story. In this account, the slave girl Rhodopis is given a pair of dainty gold slippers by her master. As she is washing clothes by the river one day, having laid her slippers aside on a rock to keep them dry, an eagle swoops down, carries one of these slippers away, and drops it into the lap of Pharaoh Amasis.

This is the first known version of a story that is all about uniting with one's higher self and reconnecting with the spiritual world. Through a new awareness which awoke in human consciousness at this time, humans were also given the ability to become conscious of the spiritual world, an ability that had become lost as humanity descended into materialism.

It is interesting that in this story, spiritual help, in the form of an eagle, arrives without being summoned; in other words, unconsciously. It is as if humans needed to be made aware that the spiritual world is there to help. The marriage between Rhodopis and Amasis is also not consciously sought after in the story, but comes about as a happy surprise. I imagine that this was what the experience of connecting with the spiritual world felt like when it first became available to humanity.

The next known versions were recorded in China around 900 CE and in India around 1000 CE. In the Chinese story of Yeh-Shen, the spirit world reveals itself to the girl in the form of a wise old man who mysteriously appears and informs her of the magical properties of her fish's bones. In other words, help from the spiritual world still needs to be offered from above, but the fact that it is available for the asking is becoming more conscious. In the Indian version, recorded not too many years later, the availability of spiritual help is revealed by the magical (spiritual) helper itself, in this case, a water snake. A version recorded around this same time,

in Arabia (part of the Arabian Nights collection), has the heroine discovering the magical properties of her "helper" on her own. Steiner's discussion of folk tales mirroring the evolution of humanity is reflected in the above timeline.

From these jumping off points, the story "travelled" all over the world, whether literally along trade routes, or spiritually, in that similar versions arose independently in various corners and cultures of the earth. There is an example from South America from the time of the Incas, before the arrival of European explorers. Other major pre-Columbian civilizations (Mayan and Aztec) may also have had a Cinderella story in their lore that was lost in the mists of time. It is interesting to note that these older versions portray a heroine who is self-reliant, devoted to family and ancestors, and willing to make her own future.

The earliest European version described is "Rashin Coatie" from Scotland, recorded in the 1540s. This was followed by the Italian version, "La Cenerentola," in the 1600s. The best-known version, adapted by Disney into a film, is the French "Cinderella" by Charles Perrault, dating to 1697. Here Perrault introduces the fairy godmother, the pumpkin and the mice, and the glass slipper. In a sense, Perrault's version anticipated the "Disneyfication" of the story, since it was written more for entertainment and did not stay true to the oral tradition.

The other best-known version, "Aschenputtel," was recorded by the brothers Grimm in 1812.

Interestingly, the version that travelled to North America with the pilgrims eliminates all "magical" elements. There is no magical helper or lost shoe. The Cinderella character is rewarded for her hard work and kind heart. It is as if the spiritual world is working internally and in secret, in recognition of the Puritans' sensibilities around the "occult."

There also exist several "Cinderlad" stories, where the spiritual seeker is male. In these, as in the female counterparts, the Cinderlad is mistreated by those in authority but is helped by a magical animal helper, most often a bull. He is revealed when he performs a heroic deed that saves either the princess herself or the community in which she lives.

My research revealed many different interpretations of the Cinderella story:

- In his book *The Uses of Enchantment*, Bruno Bettelheim describes "Cinderella" as a story

addressing sibling rivalry. He states that the degradation of Cinderella by her stepsisters reflects the inner feelings of a child caught in the throes of this rivalry. The hearth and ashes are the nurturing, safe heart of the home. Turning these into symbols of shame reflect a child's outgrowing the magical time of early childhood and starting to separate from the mother. The magical helpers symbolize the deep connection the child retains to its early nurturing and how this continues to "assist" the child later in life. The "losing" of the slipper and the later "finding" of its owner indicates an individual's desire to be seen as she truly is. Bettelheim's interpretation is rooted in the material world and arises from a psychological point of view, however, which does not consider the threefold human being as understood through Waldorf education.

- In his lecture series given in 1897, John Thackray Bunce claims all Cinderella stories are derived from the Hindu legend of the Sun and the Dawn. Ushas, the dawn maiden (Cinderella), is grey and dull when away from the Sun (the Prince), who is ever seeking to make Ushas his bride. Ushas is obscured by clouds (stepsisters) and night (stepmother), who try to keep the Sun from her. I found this interpretation really interesting, as Steiner describes folk tales as descriptions of spiritual events that humanity was once able to see when still connected to and aware of the spiritual word.
- Samuel Denis Fohr, in *Cinderella's Gold Slipper*, describes fairy tales as representations of the formation of the earth, the descent into materialism, and the break from the spiritual world. The death of a mother and her replacement with a cruel stepmother reflects this break from the cosmos and the emergence of a world that treats its "children" (humanity) with indifference or even cruelty. Cinderella is forced to perform menial tasks that are intended to keep her from searching and finding the connection to the spiritual world. These "tasks" focus entirely on materialism; spiritual pursuits fall by the wayside. The magical helpers come from Divine Spirit, revealing themselves when called upon. Cinderella represents the human's spiritual aspect and the stepsisters and stepmother the materialistic side. Tending and caring for the magical helper signifies spiritual practices. By dancing with the Prince at the ball, connection to the higher spiritual self is achieved through Cinderella's modesty and purified nature.
- In explaining the Grimm's story "Aschenputtel," Roy Wilkinson equates the death of the mother to the loss of ancient spiritual wisdom. By visiting her grave, Cinderella acknowledges that the spiritual world still has an influence, even if it is difficult to perceive. The stepsisters and stepmother represent the negative forces that are trying to cut off all connection with the divine. They are only concerned with materialistic endeavors. By asking her father to bring her a twig from a living tree, Cinderella is cognizant of the soul spark within her and wishes to nourish it and see it grow (the twig grows into a beautiful tree). The little white bird symbolizes blessings from the spiritual world. The trials and tribulations Cinderella endures are symbolic of the path of initiation, where the seeker must learn to distinguish the essential from the transitory (separating lentils from ashes) and her three successive ball gowns represent stages of enlightenment along the path. But as the soul is not yet fully conscious of these stages, Cinderella must return to her rags. Fitting the shoe is indicative of the soul finding the right balance between the earthly and cosmic forces; marriage to the Prince symbolizes the true ego uniting with the purified soul. The stepsisters are blinded as all those who follow a strictly materialistic path become blinded to the next world.
- In *The Wisdom of Fairy Tales*, Rudolf Meyer also analyses the story of "Aschenputtel." He describes this Cinderella story as a striving by the human soul to make itself worthy of connecting with spirit. It is a path of initiation, of uniting with one's higher self, beginning with the death of the mother (the loss of primal wisdom) and her snow-covered grave (the onset of spiritual winter). The stepsisters represent the Luciferic forces of pride and vanity and the Ahrimanic forces of hard materialism. Cinderella is caught between them, retaining a spark of recognition for the ancient wisdom that has not failed (daily visits to her mother's grave). She nurtures this wisdom and coaxes it to grow (hazel branch grows into a tree). The little white bird that perches in the tree's branches grants her all her wishes just as spiritual grace descends on those who go deep into their souls and search the divine with honesty and integrity. Cinderella's task of separating lentils from ashes is a test for the spiritual seeker to distinguish the essential from the non-essential, to exercise judgement in discerning the eternal

from the transient. Donning the ball gowns, going to the party and returning to her rags is equivalent to the journey the astral body and the ego make every night into the spiritual world during sleep. There the soul meets its higher self, where a union is sought. Everything returns to “rags” (unconsciousness) upon awaking, but the feelings engendered by the night’s experience linger. When the true Cinderella rides off with the Prince, the soul is beginning to unite with its higher self and is raised to the level of inspiration. The two stepsisters, who try to win the Prince through deceit, are blinded by doves pecking out their eyes. One cannot attain entry into the spiritual world by cheating; first, the lower realm of the senses must be overcome. This story instructs us in the way to spirit, and the pitfalls that await those who try to take shortcuts or force their way in.

With all these interpretations in mind, I read over 55 versions of the story, from as many different lands as I could find. It came to me that this is a story about perseverance in the face of adversity and that the spiritual world is always there to help; one need only ask. All will be resolved in the end, no matter what the actual outcome. For me, the shoe symbolizes the spiritual journey of the heroine, and its beauty reflects the pureness of her heart or striving. Marrying the Prince pictures a symbolic connection to one’s higher self. It is a story to reassure humanity that while we are still in the depths of its materialistic existence, there is a way back to the spiritual world. ♦

Resources:

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Annie Gross: A Tribute to Warmth and Humility

— Ruth Ker



Annie Gross, beloved Early Childhood educator in Canada and former WECAN board member, crossed the threshold on February 5, 2017, after a valiant journey with cancer. Her joy in life and her compassionate social concern for “the other” remains as a legacy and inspiration while the spiritual world rejoices to have her back.

On February 5, 2017, someone very special quietly passed over the threshold from her home on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, Canada, lovingly surrounded by her husband and two children. This is the way that Annie wanted it. Her husband, Desmond, attuned to her needs, devotedly supported her careful preparation of friends, family and professional connections for her leave-taking. It was on October 5, 2016 that Annie realized her striving to reclaim bodily health was becoming a journey to the spiritual worlds instead. She accepted this with faithful resolve and began to prepare for this new

direction. She remained her thoughtful, selfless, determined and loving self until her passing, and it is likely that her developed will accompanies friends and family and the Waldorf movement still.

As a member of the Social Science Section of the School for Spiritual Science, Annie was passionate about the social aspect of Waldorf schools, and her striving to bring warmth and depth of understanding into human interaction accompanied her wherever she went to mentor and help others. Her years of mentorship and WECAN Board membership happened at the end of a long career as an educator

of young children. Colleagues from the Toronto Waldorf School remember her as a light-filled presence in their work, “a strong champion of the Early Childhood faculty, helping the faculty to be recognized as equal partners.”

Annie was born in 1949 in England to Jewish parents who had fled Germany and Austria. Later, as a graduate of the London College of Fashion, Annie enjoyed a successful design career in the United Kingdom, and also enjoyed this work later in South Africa where she was to meet her devoted husband of almost forty years. Annie’s and Desmond’s gifts and passions led them across three continents to pursue their different careers and dreams, often working together.

Her initial encounter with Waldorf education came when she researched educational options for her first child, leading to his enrollment at the Waldorf school in Johannesburg, South Africa. Smitten with the education and with anthroposophy, it was not long before Annie became the Class Parent.

She began her teaching career in England in 1986 at the North London Rudolf Steiner School, with her husband also joining the faculty as a class teacher. Wishing to join family in Canada, in 1990 they both joined the faculty of the Toronto Waldorf School. In addition to her early childhood classroom work, Annie went on to actively support the school by participating in various committees in a variety of capacities. On leaving Toronto to enjoy the quieter life on an island on the west coast of Canada, she

continued to advise, mentor and evaluate early childhood educators.

Annie had a deep love and respect for anthroposophy and for Waldorf education across all grades. She touched the lives of many students, parents and friends with her wisdom and understanding of Waldorf education. One of her phrases was “for the other.” It was her life’s work to learn and share what she knew about anthroposophy with those that inquired.

Annie was always learning and open to new realizations in life. Her unadulterated warmth, generous and sincere regard for ALL other human beings was genuine and non-judgmental. When she and her husband left teaching for other pursuits, she brought her warm interest and positivity towards being a potter and later opened a successful baking company with her family, “Bite Me Cookies.”

As well as being an accomplished Waldorf educator and mentor, Annie was a fabulous cook and baker, an excellent seamstress, and a fervent knitter. She loved poetry and music. She was above all devoted to her family and her greatest regret at leaving was to not be able to be present for her grandchildren’s lives and those of her family.

It’s a privilege to honor someone who has been such a fine example of faithful longing for a healthy social future. Annie has inspired us all to accompany her on her journey and passage and will, no doubt, accompany us from her new “home.” We miss you, Annie. Thank you for your loving example. ♦

Honoring the Life of Kundry Willwerth

April 28, 1932 - June 1, 2017

— Gudrun Willwerth & Lynn St. Pierre

Kundry was born in Heidelberg, Germany as the second and youngest child in her family on April 28, 1932. Her father was a doctor and her mother a nurse who ran a medical practice out of their home. Kundry and sister Christina grew up as children of anthroposophists and members of the Christian Community.

Kundry was seven years old when World War II broke out. Recovering from tuberculosis, she spent the war years in the country at her nanny’s family farm and was sheltered from what was going on. After the war, she attended a preparatory high school that taught Latin and Greek and even Hebrew. Graduating Gymnasium, she took a year

at the seminary of the Christian Community but ultimately decided against becoming a priest. Her parents hoped for her to study medicine, but Kundry was ready for new adventures. At the age of twenty-one, she traveled to the United States and went to university in Missouri. She fast-tracked through college with high mathematics skills and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1954. When money ran out and she could not continue with a Master's degree, she took a job in applied mathematics in Washington, DC, where she lodged at the YWCA. On a sightseeing tour of the city with one of the other girls from the "Y," she met the tour leader, Lyn Willwerth. Because he had grown up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and had learned Pennsylvania Dutch from his classmates, he spoke German. This opened the way to a connection between the two. In 1957 they became engaged and they were married in Germany the next year.

Kundry and Lyn settled in Auburn, Alabama, where Lyn was pursuing his postgraduate studies. Their first child, Gudrun, came along a year later in 1959. They then moved to Chicago where their next two children were born: Adam in 1961 and Ilian in 1962. Their fourth child, Roland, was born much later, in 1973, when they were living in Spring Valley. Meantime Lyn and Kundry were active in the Anthroposophical Society and the Christian Community. From Chicago, the family moved to Sacramento, California, where Kundry got her first teaching job in the Waldorf kindergarten. This became the start of her life's work in Waldorf early childhood education. A further move took them back east to Spring Valley, New York, and early childhood work at Green Meadow Waldorf School. Kundry brought her creativity and innovations to her classroom. Instead of graham crackers and milk for snacks, she cooked soup and baked bread with the children. She got rid of all the toys and used stones, pinecones and pieces of wood as building blocks. She also had some frames built that the children would cover with colored cloth to make houses,

ships, dollhouses and whatever else they imagined and created together. She once said that all children really need is blocks and a sandbox and they will be able to play endlessly. Today her way of holding a Waldorf kindergarten is the norm.

The family lived in Spring Valley for nine years, and there Kundry had berry bushes and her first large vegetable garden. She preserved the produce, making jam and syrup with the children's help while Lyn read aloud to them all, sitting around the kitchen table.

In 1977 Lyn and Kundry bought the farm on Webb Road in Cortland, New York, close to Ithaca and Cornell University where Lyn worked in the agriculture department. What prompted this move? Lyn wanted to farm and Kundry wanted culture. They worked the farm and vegetable garden and pressed cider from the apple trees each autumn. Kundry processed the milk from their cows, making butter, yogurt, and cottage cheese, which they sold at the farmers market. Kundry continued growing the garden through all their years in Cortland, and after Lyn's death in 2009 she started a CSA, growing vegetables and berries for herself and five others using biodynamic methods. She invited the Waldorf school to help make cider each fall.

Nearby colleges in Cortland and Ithaca meant that there were always concerts and plays to attend, especially when family and friends visited. Music was an important part of Kundry's life. She played both lyre and recorder. Daughter Gudrun can still see her mother practicing the lyre while the family's baby parrot sat on her head or on the lyre frame and plucked at the keys. The family always played recorder at Christmas, and Kundry played in a recorder ensemble during her last years. But singing was perhaps the most important musical expression for Kundry. Inspired by a visit with family in Germany, when Kundry and Lyn came home, they established a morning ritual of singing folk songs in two- or three-part harmonies before breakfast. They also sang in the car on road trips and at Christmas and Advent. Lyn and Kundry

always sang in the community chorus and church choir wherever they lived. Kundry continued to sing until the end.

Lyn and Kundry also started a puppet theatre called Magic Garden Puppets. For several years they performed at the Renaissance Faire in Sterling, New York. Other yearly performances were a Christmas performance at the 1890's house in Cortland, and at the Ithaca festival each June. Kundry made the puppets herself and put a lot of effort into making faces with great detail and figuring out how to make them move as realistically as possible. In this she found creative expression as a true textile artist. Besides puppets, of which she designed various types, she created banners for the puppet shows and tapestries for all her grandchildren. She also experimented with quilting tea cozies, felting, making dolls, and knitting animals. Her last project was a set of knitted egg warmers made to exactly resemble various breeds of chickens.

Kundry started a small Waldorf kindergarten, Hillside Children's Garden in Ithaca, out of which the Waldorf initiative movement in the area was born. She published a book of translated pentatonic songs and another book of her circle games, both of which became part of the curriculum in the Waldorf kindergarten teacher training.

A big moment came in 1992, when Kundry attended the international early childhood conference in Dornach, Switzerland, where she wanted to take a practical workshop. She

chose Klara Hautermann's Ellersiek gesture workshop in German and fell in love with the games. She wanted to bring them back to her classroom, which meant translating them into English. Thus began her twenty-five years of dedication to translating the large body of work created by Wilma Ellersiek. She completed five books and most of the sixth book on elementals, which will be completed by colleagues. Over the years, Kundry gave countless workshops and training courses not only in the United States but in Germany, Mexico, Brazil and Switzerland. Kundry presented at numerous kindergarten conferences around the United States and continued teaching and training teachers until her final year. Kundry prepared and mentored two teachers in the Ellersiek work who became "certified" by the former International Ellersiek working circle in Stuttgart, Germany—Heather Van Zyl from Australia and Lynn St. Pierre in the United States.

Kundry passed on June 1, 2017. Her life and her life's work have inspired thousands of Waldorf educators who had the privilege of working with her. She lived her long life full of the arts and in service to the Waldorf early childhood world. She was remarkable with her bright light, endless energy, strong will, and terrific sense of humor. Her work lives on in all of us who work with young children and have been inspired by her joyful, playful presence. She will be with us and with the children always. ♦

Reminiscences of Kundry Willwerth

— Ingrid Weidenfeld



Kundry Willwerth with Marionettes from Haydn's Opera, *Philemon and Baucis*. Photo by Randi Anglin

I met Kundry about fifteen years ago at a hand gesture games meeting in Europe. For me, Kundry was always *the* representative of the games in the United States. She represented this work in the best sense of this word. She worked with the originator of these special games for children many times, not only on translation but also tirelessly practicing and refining the gestures. With untiring commitment, she and her husband worked to keep the original character of the games alive in the translations.

It was very interesting for me to read the correspondence between Kundry and Wilma Ellersiek (found in Mrs. Ellersiek's estate), which was always about translation. Kundry was tireless in taking Mrs. Ellersiek's seemingly endless critiques to heart and again and again searching for new possibilities for translation.

Kundry visited me several times when she traveled to Germany. The meetings were always cheerful and the conversations were intense and interesting. Each time we practiced some of the games. I especially remember the meeting in 2012 because together with members of the hand gesture games circle, I played the "Shepherds' Play" game. Afterwards, Kundry said very seriously, "I want to say something. This is exactly as I have always imagined this game, fluent, round, without gaps, with no interruptions. Yes, this is just how it must be, and I am very happy to have experienced it here."

Kundry had been working for nearly a year on the translation of Mrs. Ellersiek's final book, on games about elemental beings. It was unfortunately not yet published in Germany while Kundry was still alive. (Note: it is planned for publication in German and English in 2018.)

With Kundry's passing a very dear person is gone. She always worked for the welfare of others. She has a permanent place in my heart. She surely has a permanent place in the hearts of many. It is good to recall these good memories of her. She has gone into the spiritual world and from there she will surely send us her help. Let us think of her with light-filled thoughts. ♦

Ms. Weidenfeld is editor of Wilma Ellersiek's books of hand gesture games in German.

Reading the Signs of the Times

Seeking the Healthy / Healing Social Life

— Nancy Blanning, on behalf of the WECAN Board

When the first Waldorf school opened in Stuttgart, Germany in 1919, Europe was emerging from the devastation of World War I. Germany particularly was in shambles and facing huge challenges politically, economically, and socially. Emil Molt, owner and manager of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory, approached Rudolf Steiner and asked if he had ideas for a new form of education that would help to prepare future generations for a more humane, socially generous future. So the first Waldorf school was opened for the children of the factory's employees. The founding of the school was a profound step toward building "the healthy/healing social life" based upon principles of liberty, brother/sisterhood, and equality. Today, Waldorf education approaches its hundredth anniversary. As we look at the spread of Waldorf initiatives all over the globe, we can feel deeply grateful that this approach to education is benefiting so many children. Waldorf education is finding expression in diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and political settings, truly demonstrating its universal appropriateness for the developing young human being. This is a "sign of the times" which we can celebrate.

Rudolf Steiner noted that we should observe signs of the times to sense trends in all aspects of life, not only that which is positive. While we can celebrate the success of anthroposophically inspired education, we also see disturbing trends that dim our optimism about human progress in self- and group development. Nationalism again seems to be on the rise, countries stepping away from cooperation and mutual support to be much more self-interested and self-protective. We are surrounded by daily rhetoric of disrespectful, blaming, accusatory speech that calls awareness only to our differences, not to the universal characteristics that make us a human family. We are surrounded by commercialism that wants to persuade us that happiness is measured by our material possessions. And we are becoming

screen-addicted so that our companions are our devices, not the human beings sitting beside us. Individuals are becoming more and more isolated from one another. These are the sobering signs of the times we see around us.

In our school communities, we are striving to achieve something higher and better than the general trend. Yet we cannot avoid being affected by what is happening in the world. Disconnection and strain are creeping into our school relations. Teachers, administrators, parents, and boards of trustees find themselves at odds with one another, each striving to serve the school yet unable to find the common ground of mutual respect and appreciation for each others' contributions. Questions around hours of work, equity of salary, and value of each person's contribution to the children's care and education are popping up in school communities across the continent. The form of discussions around these topics is increasingly from a financial perspective or a "who works harder" questioning that neglects human and social considerations.

If Rudolf Steiner were with us today, we imagine he would exhort us to use our most creative and generous thinking, feeling, and willing to commit to a path toward social renewal and health. This is a matter that the WECAN board is addressing with sincerity. Complicated situations in school communities show that the need to work for creative solutions is accelerating. As the WECAN board has begun its study and conversation to envision constructive approaches to meet these challenges, we ask for input from all of you. We call for you to share examples of how you have found ways for clear, respectful communication with one another. Please share your examples of how teachers—lead and assistant teachers in classrooms and early childhood faculty colleagues—are working to create and sustain respectful, collaborative relationships. Please share how your communities are developing the same

kinds of relationships with parents. Please share what has helped encourage collaboration and respectful discussion on difficult topics among and between teaching faculties, administrators, and boards.

How we communicate and relate to one another honorably and respectfully is an urgent challenge of our time. We all know how important this is for the health of our school communities and for

human communities in general. Thank you in advance for joining in this conversation. Please send your submissions, comments, and insights to gateways@waldorfearlychildhood.org and include the subject line "Sign of the Times." We eagerly await your contributions to this collective, collaborative thinking. The content of this research and conversation will be shared in future issues of *Gateways*. ♦



from *Walking with Our Children: The Parent as Companion and Guide* (WECAN 2017)

For the Classroom, Inside and Out

Excerpts from *Let's Dance and Sing!*

— Freya Jaffke
with brief descriptions by the Editor

Freya Jaffke's book, *Let's Dance and Sing!*, includes classic images of workers doing the chores and crafts that have filled human, practical activity for generations. Each of these crafts or professions provides an

archetypal picture of human work with the materials of earth that sustain our lives. It is important—and a great deal of fun—for the children to enact these different movements as part of our human heritage.

"Rhythmic Games for Harvest Time" begins with workers going into the field to gather the grain. The grain is scythed, bound into sheaves, and loaded on the wagon to be driven back to the barn with a dramatic rainstorm thrown into the mix. The book continues with more imaginations of threshing, milling the grain, and baking a pie.

Rhythmic Games for Harvest Time

Note: A different version of the following circle can be found in *Dancing As We Sing*, edited by Nancy Foster (Acorn Hill/WECAN)

*With happy stride and scythe in hand,
We go to mow the meadow land. REPEAT*

Walk clockwise while shouldering the scythe.

*Silvery scythes twinkling,
Golden sheaves sinking,
Spikey crowns, stems straight and tall,
The sun has ripened them all. (TITMANN)*

Walk rhythmically while "mowing with the scythe."

*We tie the sheaves,
We bind them tight,
We tie, we tie,
In the bright sunlight.*

"Tie a bundle of stalks"; alternate lifting first the right arm and then the left.

*We build a house of sheaves,
Where we can hide with ease, REPEAT
We swiftly slip right in,
And peek outside again.*

Lift the sheaves with both hands and put in place.

Crouch down and indicate a peephole with the hands.

While sitting in the house of sheaves, we are sometimes surprised by a thunderstorm.

Say each line twice, knocking on the floor each time:

*It's sprinkling ... It's sprinkling ...
It's raining ... It's raining ...
It's hailing ... It's hailing ...
It's rumbling ... It's rumbling ...
It's thundering ... It's thundering ...
It's lightning ... It's lightning ...
The friendly sun is shining again.*

Gently tap index fingers together
Gently tap all the fingers together, one after the other
Knock finger knuckles together
Clap with palms on the floor
Drum with fists on the floor
Quickly dart in the air with both index fingers
Form a sun with both arms

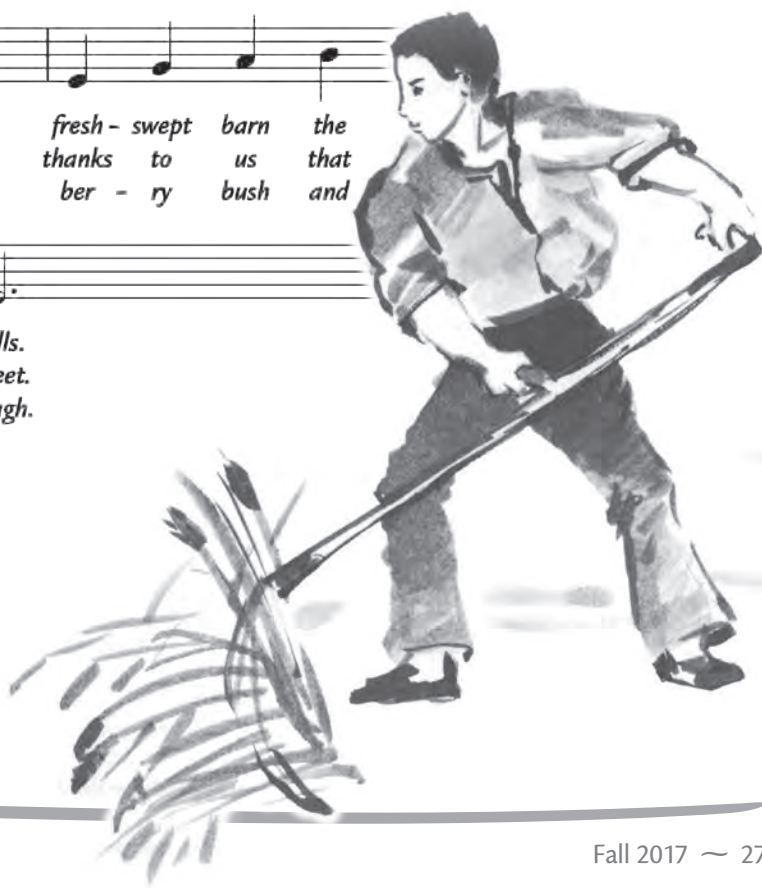
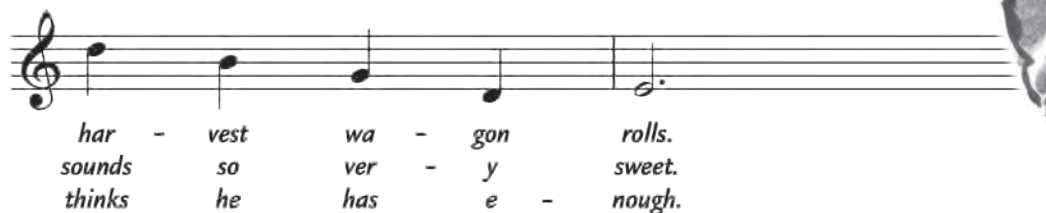
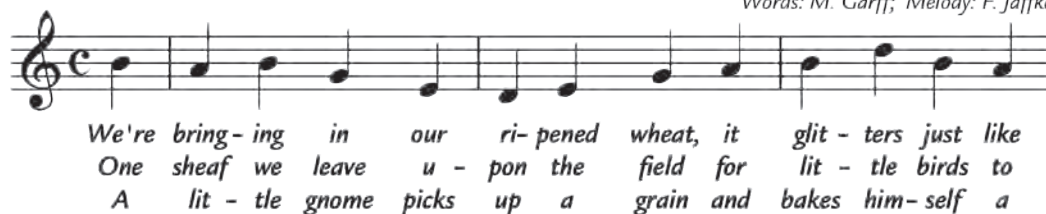
If it is a heavy thunderstorm, the movements become strong too; small storms go with gentle movements.

In the distance, we hear the farmer's wagon coming.

*We load up the wagon with the golden crop,
REPEAT
And when we are done, we climb up on top.*

A few "farmhands" stand to the side of the group "in the wagon" and catch the sheaves as they are tossed up. Everyone "jumps up."
Holding the reins with both hands, we walk and trot, taking the wagon back to the barn and singing:

Words: M. Garff; Melody: F. Jaffke



“The Merry Tradespeople” presents work of all kinds through a lively and amusing song. The cobbler, tailor, cook, joiner, baker, painter, fisher, and even a “jumper” sing about their work. Gestures to show large and small, short and tall, fat and thin, and so on, invite a playful experience of contrasts that give a “breathing” quality to circle time. ♦

The Merry Tradespeople

Melody: F. Jaffke

The musical score is written on a single staff in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the staff, with some words split across lines. The first verse is for a cobbler, and the second is for a tailor. The score ends with a double bar line.

*I am the cob- bler Lea-ther-fine, I make fine shoes:
I am the tai - lor Ti - mo- thy, I sew fine skirts,
Great big shoes, ti - ny shoes, high - heeled shoes,
Quite full skirts, quite straight skirts, quite long skirts,
flat - soled shoes. I am the cob - bler
quite short skirts. I am the tai - lor
Lea - ther - fine, I make fine shoes.
Ti - mo - thy, I sew fine skirts.*

3. *I am the good cook Catherine, I cook fine soup:
So much soup, a little soup, very sweet soup, sour soup.
I am the good cook Catherine, I cook fine soup.*
4. *I am the joiner Jeremy, I make fine stools:
Great big stools, little stools, high-up stools, down-low stools.
I am the joiner Jeremy, I make fine stools.*
5. *I am the baker Pretzelgood, I bake good bread:
Great big loaves, little loaves, long loaves, short loaves.
I am the baker Pretzelgood, I bake good bread.*
6. *I am the painter Brushinhand, I paint fine walls:
Great big walls, little walls, long walls, short walls.
I am the painter Brushinhand, I paint fine walls.*
7. *I am the fisher Catchalot, I catch fine fish:
Quite big fi sh, quite small fish, quite fat fish, quite thin fish.
I am the fisher Catchalot, I catch fine fish.*
8. *I am the little Springfield, I jump so well:
Quite big jumps, quite small jumps, quite long jumps, quite short jumps.
I am the little Springfield, I jump so well.*

With each verse, a different small group of children goes to the middle of the circle and does the movements that go with that verse. Naturally, all the other children do the movements along with them. For the last verse, “little Springfield,” everyone jumps around clockwise in a loosely formed group.

Creating the Perfect Puppetry Table

— Rachel Ladasky Nielsen



A few years ago, after finishing puppetry training with Suzanne Down, I came home brimming with excitement and new ideas for how I would do puppetry, both with the children in my nursery classroom and in my newly forming personal business endeavor. What I needed most was a good puppetry table.

While I am able to make many of my ideas come to life out of wool roving, I am less able to create things out of wood! So, as I have done all of my life when I had an idea and needed something built, I went to my carpenter father and asked him to build me a puppetry table. As always, he was happy to build what I needed; as always, he needed more information. This is where my creative know-how dropped off and his stepped in. I said it needed to be “about this big” (gesturing with my arms outstretched to my sides and sweeping them out in front of me), kidney-bean shaped, knee-high, and light enough to transport in my small, 4-door hatchback.

My dad smiled and we went to his garage where he sat me down on a bucket and laid a piece of plywood out on some stools in front of me. He had me scoot

in close to the plywood and reach my arms out to my desired length, which he marked with a pencil. Then he made lines rounding out the corners and making a little indent at the center of the back where I would sit. Next, he measured the height of my knees while I was seated comfortably and said he would think about how to best make it easy to set up, take apart, and transport. I left him to it.

Within a week, he had finished. It was exactly what I wanted! I have been using it regularly at school, where it fits nicely in a closet without taking up much room. It is very easy to set up and take apart, and it fits easily in my car. It is the perfect size and height for table-puppetry and it’s great for small marionette shows as well. When Nancy Blanning saw it, she thought it was fantastic and asked if I would be willing to share the design. Here it is! Keep in mind that the height and width are intended to be completely customizable—you can adjust them to your needs. This table is unique and most useful in the design for the legs, which provide its ability to fold up and be easily transported.

Materials:

- One 4' x 8' sheet of 3/4" plywood
- One 8' length of 1" x 2" pine stock (or something similar)
- Two 12" piano hinges (or one longer hinge cut to size)
- Two 4" bolts with washers and wing nuts
- Wood screws, tools, etc.

- 1) **Cut the plywood in half** lengthwise, to make two 2' x 8' pieces.

- 2) **Make the tabletop.** First, determine the width of your table. Have a helper measure your armspan, fingertips to fingertips with your arms stretched fully open. Cut one of the 2' x 8' pieces of plywood to that length, then round off the corners, and make a small indent in the center where you will sit (see Fig. 1).



- 3) **Make the legs.** First, determine the height of the table. Sit on a stool you would use while doing a puppet show and have a helper measure the distance from the floor to the top of your knees. Add 1 inch to the result. Mark and cut two pieces of this height and 1 foot in width from the plywood remaining after cutting the tabletop.
- 4) **Connect the legs to give the table stability.** Cut a piece of plywood 3' x 1'; this will serve as a brace between the legs. From the bottom of each leg, measure 2 inches and mark it. Using these marks as a guide, attach the legs to either end of the brace using the piano hinges (see Fig. 2). The brace should be attached to the legs 2 inches from the bottom.
- 5) **An additional stabilizer for the brace.** Cut a 3' length of the 1" x 2" pine stock and attach it to the middle of the bottom of the leg brace, as shown in Fig 3 (the piece of pine stock is marked in red).
- 6) **Make the mounting cleats for the legs.** Place the tabletop face down on the floor or workbench and position the leg assembly against the bottom side of the table. Mark the placement of each leg. Cut four 12" lengths of the 1" x 2" pine stock; you will position the cleats as shown in Fig 4. Attach with screws.



7) **Bolt-holes to lock the legs in position when the table is set up** (you can see the placement of the bolt at the top center of the leg in Fig 2). With the legs in place, drill holes through the full width of each set of cleats and legs. Make permanent marks at the tops of the legs (such as “R” and “L”) to remind you which leg goes in which cleat. Note that it will take several times placing and removing the bolts before the holes smooth out.

8) **Finishing touches.** My dad routed and sanded the edges of my table and sanded the top as well. This isn't necessary, but it does keep silks from snagging. I have left my table unfinished, but you could seal or paint yours to your liking.

When the table isn't in use, the legs fold flat and the legs and top are easily stored in a closet. Enjoy plenty of puppetry time with your handy new table! ♦

Rachel Ladasky Nielsen is the lead nursery teacher at The Denver Waldorf School. In addition to her classroom work, she has combined her passion for puppetry, storytelling, and needle-felting into her own business, Star Meadow Story Arts. Rachel has a M.Ed. in Waldorf Early Childhood Education from Antioch University New England.



fig. 3

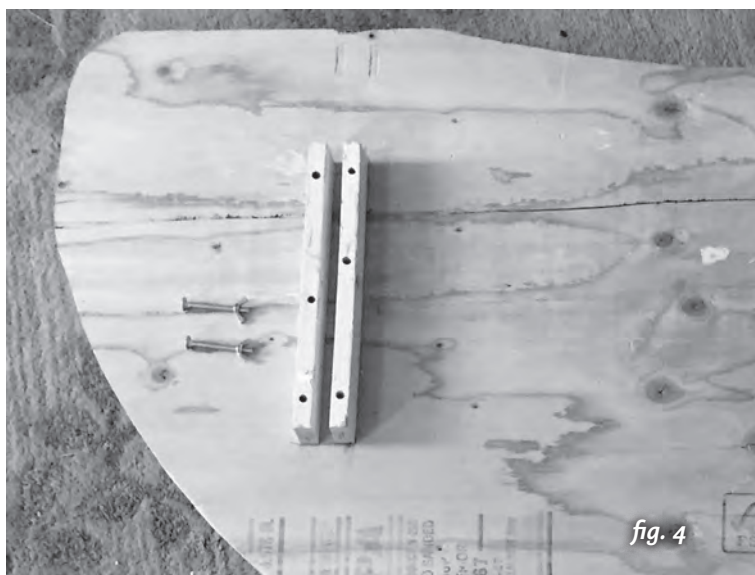


fig. 4

Book Review

Baby Bare

by Stephanie Johnson

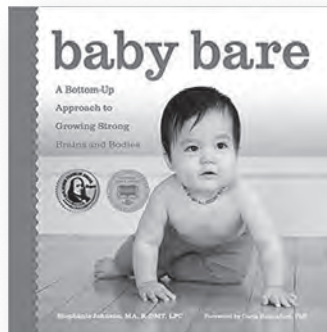
Wise Ink Creative Publishing (2016)

Reviewed by Nancy Blanning

Baby Bare, a new book by movement therapist and counselor Stephanie Johnson, is a wonderful resource on development for Waldorf early childhood teachers and parents.

Stephanie is deeply steeped in understanding the importance for little children—especially from birth to eighteen months—to have freedom of movement to unfold their own developmental timetables. In this age when everything is hurry-up-fast-or-you-have-already-lost-the-race, hers is a voice of calm reassurance. She explains that the best start we can give babies for healthy brain development, smooth body coordination with efficient movement, success in future academic learning, and social and emotional stability comes from allowing them to go uninterrupted through the unfolding of the wise movement sequences embedded in their bodies at birth. In short, they need abundant floor time to learn the geography and coordination of their bodies.

Discovering hands and feet and bringing hands together at the midline is an essential first accomplishment. Rolling will then come along as the first locomotion and give more experience of spatial orientation and body geography. All this prepares the ground for “lizard crawling,” the often overlooked and underrated but critical integrating preparation for crawling on hands and knees. Crawling then will lead to stable sitting with strong torso strength, standing,



and finally walking. The longer a child takes—even “revels”—in each stage, the stronger will be the child’s healthy foundation for meeting life’s future tasks.

Ms. Johnson is well versed in neurology and brain development. She shares the picture of what she calls “growing from the bottom-up.” She describes the triune brain—the first and most basic level called the hind-brain, then the mid-brain, and finally the cortex. In the hierarchy of brain development, the hind-brain is the first director of basic life functions, reflex movements, and such. Everything this section oversees in development will become automatic so the child will not need to think about how to do these things at later ages. The hind-brain is active and matured when the baby is on the floor like “a lizard.” What the baby accomplishes in movement in the “tummy up” or “tummy down” position will become automatic for life. Stephanie emphasizes how critically important it is that the baby not be rushed through this phase. Torso strength, coordination of arms and legs in different patterns, eye-tracking, and eye-hand coordination are but a few of the important accomplishments solidified during this time. And everything else that will be accomplished in future brain development depends upon how strongly this foundation grows. The hind-brain is offered here as an example, but this principle holds true as development ascends to the mid-brain and finally to the cortex.

Baby Bare draws attention to aspects of our modern life that put our children’s healthy development at risk. Pushing a child to sit, crawl, or walk before she does it on her own will interfere with her body’s own wise plan. Restraint in car seats and other sitters, walkers, bouncers, and the like thwart the free, intentional movement that trains the body and builds the brain. Over-stimulation of the senses, screen

exposure, and prematurely awakening the child's intellect also rob the time and forces needed to create the essential healthy foundation that the rest of the brain—mid-brain and cortex—require to unfold their special gifts.

This book is completely compatible with the wisdom that Waldorf early childhood educators hold as our own foundation and that we so earnestly want the world to understand. *Baby Bare* is a resource and ally in its commitment to our children's healthy future. Primarily written as a guide and support for new parents, the book is very readable and accessible in concepts and language. It gives practical suggestions and examples—illustrated through gorgeous photos of amazing babies of many races and skin tones—and it encourages parents to be calm, sensible, and loving; and to follow their baby's lead, resisting the societal mania to push and rush ahead.

Baby Bare is well researched and provides a clear vocabulary for us to understand and

describe this picture of “movement building the brain” with parents. It is ideal for sharing in parent-child classes. It is also an important read for Waldorf early childhood teachers who work with preschool and kindergarten-age children. More and more children are coming to our classes with incomplete development, sensory issues, movement awkwardness, poor coordination, and social challenges. The foundation for each one of these domains lies in the movement achievements and brain development of the first eighteen months. Reading *Baby Bare* and coming to understand what could have happened and didn't will give us insight into the children in our care and how we might back-track with them to strengthen the foundation that did not get finished.

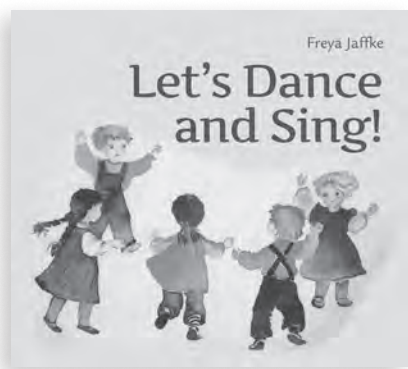
Thank you to Stephanie Johnson for this resource. Writing it was a noble deed on behalf of young children. For further information about this book, go to www.babybare.net. ♦

Let's Dance and Sing!

by Freya Jaffke, translated by Nina Kuettel

WECAN (2017)

Reviewed by Nancy Blanning



It is a joy and privilege to celebrate the publication of master early childhood teacher Freya Jaffke's *Let's Dance and Sing!* (*Tanzt und singt!*) in English by WECAN. Some of these songs and games came to North America years prior to the new translation with teachers, such as Ronna McElowny, who apprenticed with Frau Jaffke in Germany. After Freya Jaffke gave a

weeklong workshop in Spring Valley, New York, in 1987, Susan Howard's late-night translation wizardry produced the first photocopied version of “Rhythmic Games for Harvest Time,” part of which you will find printed elsewhere in this issue of *Gateways*. The rhythms, the playfulness, and the engaging language were hallmarks of these first renderings. And now the complete collection of these delightful games and songs is available as a fully-illustrated paperback book.

This new volume contains an assortment of rhythmic games for the seasons: harvest, lantern time, winter festivals, spring awakening, and summer. Games and dances for “anytime” with gnomes and giants as well as hardworking tradespeople also populate these pages. There is inviting material to enrich daily circle times.

In addition, this book is graced with Freya Jaffke's practical suggestions on how to structure and conduct the circle time itself. She is known

for her common-sense insight into the essentials of the Waldorf early childhood classroom and wise perception of the nature of young children. There are many gems included in this section, which may seem self-evident upon first reading; a bit of consideration to her statements reveals the depths of her practical wisdom, gleaned from decades of working with young children. For example, in discussing the teacher's gestures during circle, she observes: "Every movement we use in a presentation should be performed with inner participation. The children need to sense that we are engaged with our whole being. It is also beneficial if the movement originates from exact observation of a human task or work activity, the characteristic movement of an animal, or some process in nature, which will make it seem compelling and real."

She also emphasizes the importance of the teacher's speech: "It is possible to express the character of something by placing special

emphasis on the consonants, for example with words like rumble, scurry, rustle, or hop. If you are unsure of the text or have not thought it out in advance, the children will have a tendency to start misbehaving. Total familiarity with the verses and poems frees you from depending on a written text and instead allows you to concentrate on the children. It will immediately cause the children to feel protected by you and they will joyfully join in with the activity."

Regarding the children's speech, she advises: "We always allow the children to live in the game without *requiring* them to speak or sing along. They are not consciously aware of whether they are singing or speaking along with us, provided we do not call their attention to it."

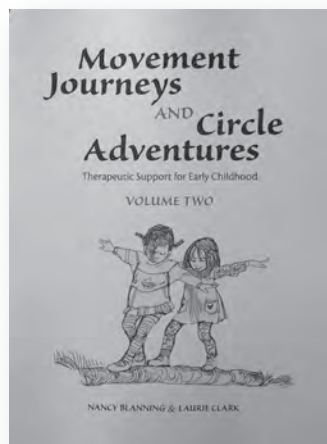
Let's Dance and Sing! and its companion WE CAN volume, *Play with Us!* now create a full body of classroom material, only tantalizing hints of which we have had in the past. Both volumes are now available through WE CAN Books. ♦

Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures, Volume 2

by Nancy Blanning and Laurie Clark

Reviewed by Ruth Ker

Once again Nancy Blanning and Laurie Clark have collaborated to produce a rich collection of early childhood treasures. This book, *Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures, Volume 2* (and the first volume as well, in my opinion), needs to be on every early childhood educator's shelf. Both volumes are full of timeless resources, innovative games, circles and important movement journeys for our work.



Nancy and Laurie, who are both still working with the children of our time, show an intimate understanding of the value of meeting the children wherever they are in their development. Working with the wealth of material in these books can help the educator, in a fun-loving way, to bless the children with rich experiences that foster development through movement; meaningful, purposeful content; and fanciful imaginations.

Many of us have worked with Volume 1 for a number of years, and Volume 2 follows the same path of expertise. Whether it is a seasonal game, a new poem or circle that "will be perfect" for a particular child or group, or fresh ideas for circle equipment, Volume 2 will be sure to improve your practice.

I'm hoping that you will take the time to peruse this resource as soon as you get a chance. The children in your care will be fortunate to partake in the result of your efforts. ♦

International News

IASWECE Council Meeting, South Africa, April 3–7, 2017

— Report by Stefanie Allon for the IASWECE Council

For the first time, a Council Meeting took place in the Southern hemisphere—in Cape Town, South Africa, a place of great cultural and social diversity, where the power of the elements is intense. The time is one of political activity, calling for renewed change. Louise Oberholzer from the South African Federation of Waldorf Schools gave insight into the nature of the country and the development of Waldorf education there.

Beginning in the 1960s, a Waldorf founding movement established seventeen schools, along with kindergartens. Among them are eleven schools in the region of Cape Town, one in Natal, and five in the north, in the area of Johannesburg. By 1991, the end of Apartheid had brought equal rights and freedom for all. Since then the question of how to deal with this freedom has been an issue, especially in the education of children. Mary-G Häuptle, the representative from South Africa, reported that in the last twenty years

more and more educare centers in the townships want to work on the basis of Waldorf education, and the small Waldorf schools there—being the “younger stream”—also want to become part of the Waldorf movement.

The Centre for Creative Education, founded in Cape Town in 1993, offers government-approved training courses based on Waldorf education. The training for educators is particularly taken up by kindergarten teachers who come from townships and who with great initiative have been founding kindergartens there. Council members were able to visit the kindergartens at Constantia and Imhoff Waldorf Schools, as well as several kindergartens, schools, and baby care projects in the Khayelitsha and Manenberg townships. With deep respect and humble admiration, it was seen how the educators there create healing oases by living up to original values of caring and sharing in a surrounding of prevailing poverty and potential violence. ♦

Waldorf Around the World: South Africa

— Louise deForest

Spring of 2017 was a significant moment for the IASWECE Council to meet in South Africa. The political activist Ahmed Kathrada had just crossed the threshold, leaving South Africa carrying his longstanding question, originally stated in 1994, regarding the end of apartheid: *What have you done with the freedom you have gained?* Kathrada was imprisoned at the same time as Nelson Mandela and is considered a giant in the movement for freedom. His story is told in

the newly published book, *Conversations with a Gentle Soul* (PanMacmillan 2017).

Alongside this echoing question there was, and continues to be, active political unrest as more and more people are unhappy with the perceived corruption of the current leadership. Calls for country-wide strikes were common while the Council was there. I saw handmade protest signs leaning against walls in many private homes. President Jacob Zuma, in power

since 1994, has been charged with multiple improprieties involving corruption, misuse of state funds, and immoral personal behavior. While some of this has been resolved, one feels throughout the country a rising impatience with the status quo and deep questioning of the future of this beautiful and often troubled country.

Waldorf education was born into this racially tense country in 1957, and there are now seventeen schools in South Africa. This land is wildly diverse with unpredictable weather. The vegetation is so diverse that South Africa claims one floral kingdom all its own. In some places, the sun is so strong that the plants are small and delicate; in others, where the climate is misty and damp, plants are large with broad leaves while in still others, the ground is completely sandy and hardly anything grows. There are five Waldorf schools in the north, eleven in the western Cape, and one school in the east. There are still no schools in the middle of the country.



The Waldorf school movement has not significantly grown in recent decades; it is very hard to find trained teachers or even people who are willing to go into training. Another challenge is with the government; for the last twelve years the Michael Mount Waldorf School, in Johannesburg, has been working on behalf of all the Waldorf schools to get government acceptance of Waldorf education. The man who has been carrying this work described it as taking one step forward and two steps backward. At the moment, the government acknowledges a responsibility to accredit alternative schools, but they can only do one school per year. They have committed to accrediting the Waldorf school first, which will take a year and cost up to 150,000 rand (almost \$12,000), but this commitment has

come and gone before. While people are hopeful, they are also somewhat skeptical.

One wonderful development has been the Centre for Creative Education, founded in the 1990s, which trains local women and helps them create childcare centers in the townships. Several Council members visited these childcare centers in the townships around Cape Town and Johannesburg. They were shocked to see how bare these childcare centers are yet also inspired and awe-struck by the all-encompassing warmth of the women who run them. Having nothing at all, they give soul warmth to the children, and that is enough.

In looking toward the future, the South African Federation of Waldorf Schools is asking itself how it can support these township programs and the teachers who remember the goodness of their own childhoods and want to give that, and the richness of their own culture, to the children in their care. The Federation is also reevaluating what works in the schools and what doesn't, in light of the questions of what freedom means and how the hard-won freedom from the years of apartheid will be used. It seems to me that this is a question that rings ever more loudly around the world in these times and is one which we must all individually and collectively address. ♦



Calendar of Events

Conferences

November 10-11, 2017, Rudolf Steiner Center Toronto, Toronto, Canada. **Waldorf Development Conference: Parents and Teachers Working Together in the Age of the Soul Consciousness.** We will explore the parent/teacher relationship based on the intentional practice of the three pillars of building effective, healthy communication; discuss ways to build trust, strengthen understanding and empathy, and create transparent conflict-resolution processes; and, against the backdrop of anthroposophy, see how self-development can create a foundation for parent/teacher that supports the developing child. Keynote Speaker Carol Triggiano. For more information visit www.rsct.ca and follow the "Development Conference" link, or contact the office at (905) 764-7570 or info@rsct.ca.

November 10-12, 2017, Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oaks, California. **The 8th Annual Early Childhood Symposium. The Five Golden Keys of Early Childhood: Protecting the Child and the Teacher's Etheric.** Join us for a weekend of singing, puppetry, workshops, and inspiration. Keynote speaker Helle Heckman is the founder and director of Nøkken, a Waldorf daycare center in Denmark for children from ages one to seven that has served as an inspiration for Waldorf kindergartens and nurseries worldwide. Workshops include wet felting, parent work, aftercare, birth to three, therapeutic movement, and more. Movement groups as well as discussion groups will include singing games and circle work. For more information visit steinercollege.edu/childhood-symposium, or contact the College at (916) 963-4000 or rsc@steinercollege.edu.

November 10-11, 2017 Sunbridge Institute, Chestnut Ridge, New York. **The 50th Anniversary Weekend Conference: Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Present, Envisioning the Future.** The Keynotes

will be "Higher Education and Spirituality" with Robert McDermott, PhD, and "The State of Waldorf Education," with Linda Williams, PhD, followed by the Panel Discussion with Drs. McDermott and Williams and others. For more information, visit www.sunbridge.edu and follow the "50th Anniversary Weekend Conference" link, or contact the Institute at (845) 425-0055 or info@sunbridge.edu.

Personal and Professional Development

January 26-27, 2018, Sunbridge Institute, Chestnut Ridge, New York. **Waldorf Weekend.** A weekend workshop on the foundations and fundamentals of Waldorf Education from early childhood through high school, with Sunbridge Director of Education Anna Silber. Open to all and designed to provide an in-depth and experiential survey of the basis and the basics of Waldorf Education. Explore the Waldorf curriculum from early childhood through high school, discuss Rudolf Steiner's insights in human development and the anthroposophical underpinnings of the Waldorf impulse, and enjoy hands-on artistic activities such as music, movement, and drawing. For more information, visit www.sunbridge.edu/event/waldorf-weekend-2 or contact the Institute at (845) 425-0055 or info@sunbridge.edu.

November 18, December 9, and January 20, 2018, The Early Childhood Teacher Education Center at Sophia's Hearth, Keene, New Hampshire. **Weekend Workshops.** Topics will be "Understanding Children's Behaviors through the Lens of Constitutional Types as described by Rudolf Steiner" with Jane Swain, "The Pikler Approach for the Child from Birth to Seven" with Susan Weber, and "Supporting Primitive Reflex Integration for early childhood and the elementary grades" with Jane Swain. For more information, visit www.sophiashearthteachers.org/weekendworkshops, or contact the Center at (603) 357-3755 or info@sophiashearth.org.

The Early Childhood Teacher Education Center at Sophia's Hearth

Fall / Winter Workshops, 2017-2018

for details and on-line registration, visit sophiashearthteachers.org

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WITH JANE SWAIN

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28
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Fall and Winter Workshops:

November 10th-12th - Early Childhood Symposium, Rudolph Steiner College, Sacramento, CA

February 9th-11th - WECAN East Coast Conference, Green Meadow Waldorf School, Spring Valley, NY

and other surprises.....

★ **Summer 2018 East & West Coast Intensives** ★
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Watch for details this autumn!

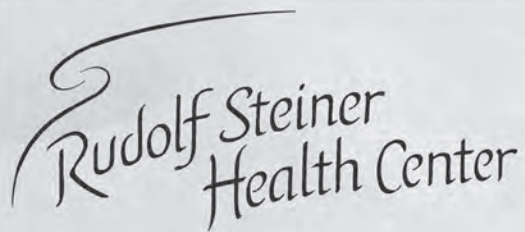
Looking ahead ~ Summer Conference 2019 ~

Laurie Clark - Keynote Speaker – the Sacrament of Working with the Young Child
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ISSUE 32 Autumn/Winter 2017

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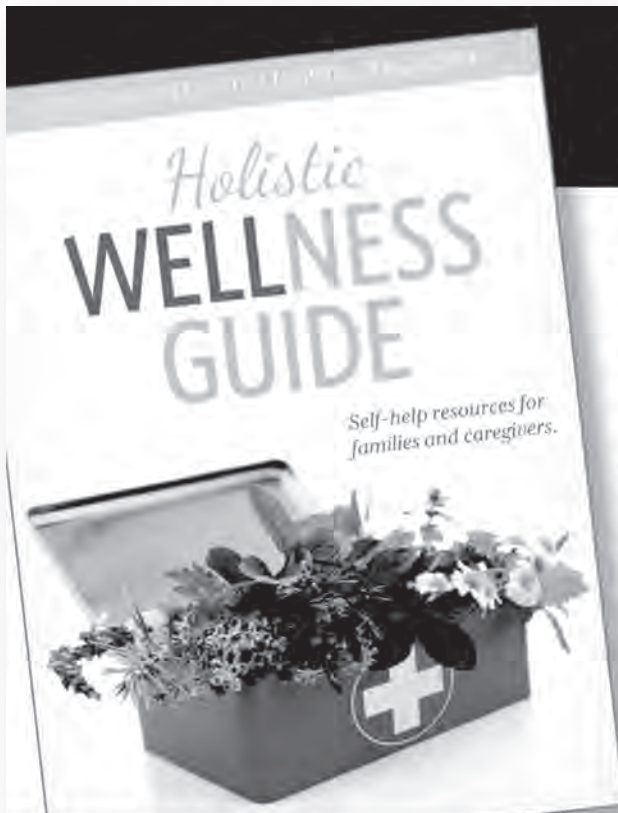
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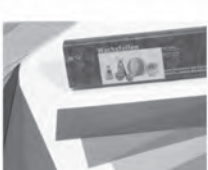
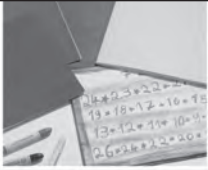
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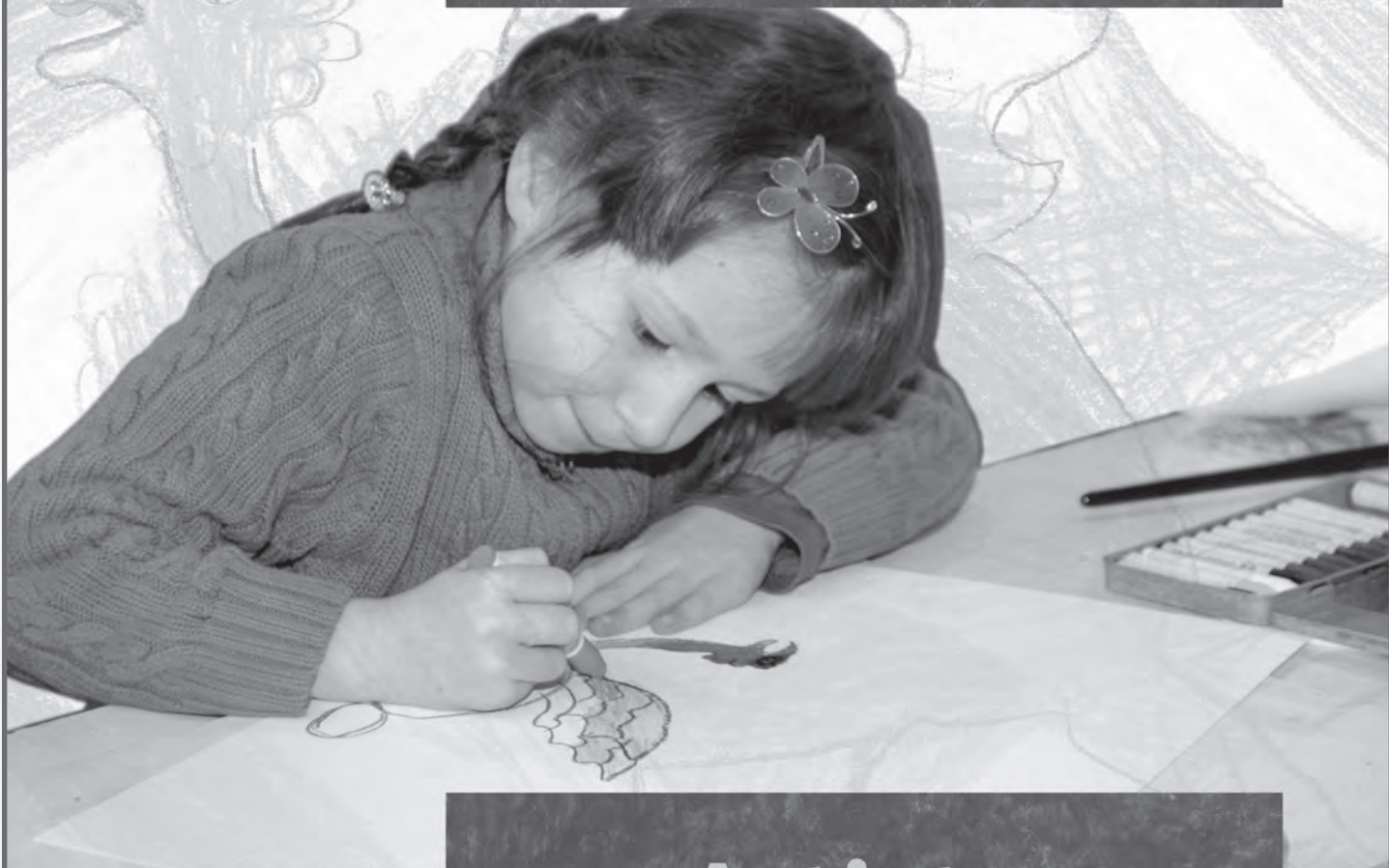
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Promoting healing and transformative ways of working with natural materials.



Applied Arts Program:
Handwork Teacher Education

Sheep to Shawl:
One-Year Course

Workshops

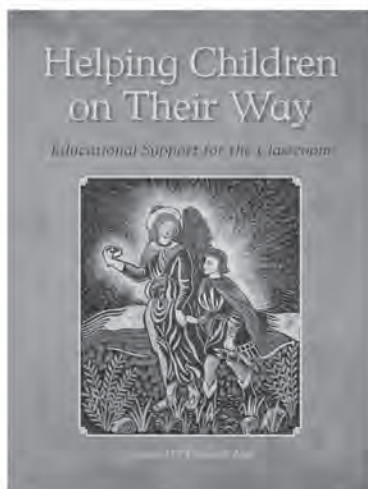
Summer Renewal Course

Sheep and Wool Festival

"Today more than ever, the crafts have the mission to reconnect the human being to the Earth and her substances, bring healing to the senses and soul, and foster the creative capacities of the human being."
— Renate Hiller

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NOW AVAILABLE FROM



WALDORF® PUBLICATIONS!

Helping Children on Their Way

ELIZABETH AUER

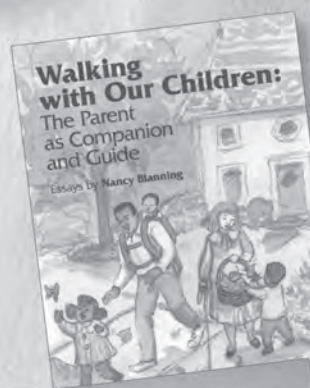
A long overdue compendium of essays for teachers and parents from seventeen experienced educators on how to help children who seem beyond reach. Edited and illustrated by class and remedial teacher Elizabeth Auer with great artistry and sensitivity. This is essential reading for all involved in raising and teaching children!

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Available Now



Walking with Our Children

Nancy Blanning

This series of essays compiles seven years of parenting wisdom by veteran early childhood educator Nancy Blanning. Personal anecdotes, ideas for simple home and family activities, and wisdom on guiding young children's development.

• Perfect-bound, 75 pages. \$14.00



Toy Making

Gun Lee Blue

All adults can make toys, the simpler the better, and less "perfect" is even better! It is the love and attention that went into the making of the toy that really stand the test of time. Craft beautiful dolls, knitted animals, and other playthings that foster creativity and imagination.

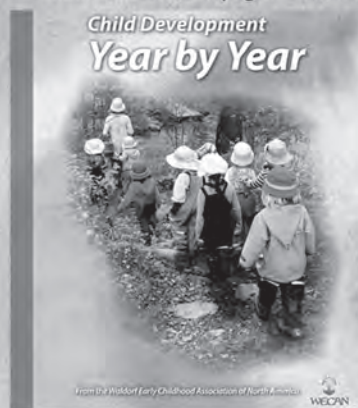
• Perfect-bound, 84 pages. \$22.00

Child Development Year by Year

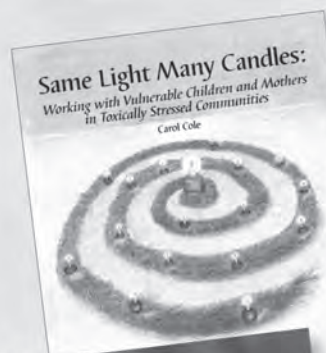
edited by Holly Koteen-Soulé

This simple, friendly pamphlet discusses how Waldorf early childhood education meets your child at each year of life from birth through age seven. We hope it's just what you've been looking for! Each article includes references to material providing deeper treatment of related topics and bibliographical lists for further exploration.

• Saddle-stitched, 20 pages. \$10/bundle of 5



Coming Soon



Same Light Many Candles: *Working with Vulnerable Children and Mothers in Toxically Stressed Communities*

Carol Cole

The story of Sophia Project, which served 112 homeless children and their mothers in Oakland, California, through Camphill ideals and the Waldorf early childhood approach.



The World of Fairy Tales

Daniel Udo de Haes

Out of his wisdom and experience, Dutch educator Daniel Udo de Haes offers his perspective on how to enrich and guide early childhood development through fairy tales.

Singing and Speaking the Child into Life: Songs, verses and rhythmic games for the child in the first three years

Susan Weber, Nancy Macalester,
and Jane Swain

This collection by experienced Waldorf early childhood teachers offers tried-and-true material designed to gently guide pre-school child development.

The Games Book

Ruth Ker

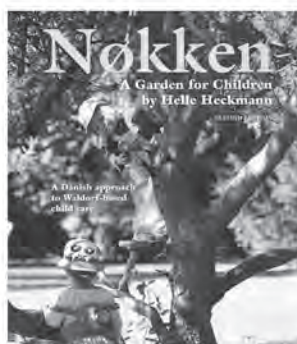
A wealth of traditional and original verses, songs, and games for early childhood circle time or home play, collected through the collective and extensive experience of the author and her colleagues in the Waldorf classroom.



WECAN

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ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

www.waldorfearychildhood.org



Also coming this fall. . . **WECAN Parent Resource Guide**

For over thirty years, the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America has been creating resources for the classroom and the home. Our publications include a wealth of research-based articles; lectures from national and international conferences; translations; collections of stories, songs, verses, gesture games, and other activities; and original works from individual authors. The *WECAN Parent Resource Guide* was created for families new to the Waldorf classroom as well as for those seeking to deepen their understanding of Waldorf Education. We hope you will enjoy and share it!

