FALL/WINTER 2018 – VOLUME 27, NUMBER 2

Renewal



Waldorf students and members of a life-sharing community on stage together in a production of *Iron Hans*, a Brothers Grimm fairy tale

Diversity and Inclusivity in Waldorf Education • Celebrating the Waldorf Centennial • Dirt and Learning in a Waldorf Kindergarten Building Character through Handwork • The Right Time for Competitive Sports • Computer Science in the Twelfth Grade

A JOURNAL FOR WALDORF EDUCATION

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Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education is published by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). Founded in 1991, the magazine is intended primarily as a resource for Waldorf parents and teachers. It features articles about child development, parenting, children's health, the Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy, current research in education, and Waldorf Education in other parts of the world. *Renewal* is published twice a year and distributed throughout North America and around the world.

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Photo by Mary Christenson

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Living Our Principles



In June 2016, the members of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America adopted the *AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools*, seven principles that guide the work of all AWSNA-member Waldorf schools:

1. The image of the human being as a spiritual being informs every aspect of the school.
2. Waldorf schools foster social renewal by cultivating human capacities in service to the individual and society.
3. An anthroposophical understanding of child development guides the educational program.
4. Waldorf schools support freedom in teaching within the context of the school's shared agreements.
5. The conscious development of human relationships fosters individual and community health.
6. Spiritual development in support of professional growth is an ongoing activity for the faculty, staff, and board.
7. Collaboration and shared responsibility provide the foundations of school leadership and governance.*

These principles articulate the most important values that inform the policies and practices of Waldorf schools in North America and are held as a central tenet of our schools' accreditation process. Schools engage in a structured self-study to assess how the principles are living in the school, how the school is addressing challenges in relation to the principles, and what innovations are inspired by these principles. Since the adoption of these principles, schools have been studying and working to strengthen congruence between the values expressed in the principles and school practices.

AWSNA also has been working with these principles, using them, for example, as the basis for our annual Association conference themes. With the aspiration and intention of "living our principles," each year we identified an issue relevant to schools and directly connected to one of the principles, and we organized the conference around that issue. Two years ago we focused on consciously fostering human relationships (Principle 5) and last year we focused on collaboration and shared responsibility in leadership and governance (Principle 7). The 2018 conference, inspired by Principle 2 on social renewal, was titled "Social Justice: Exploring Place, Race, Class, and Gender in Waldorf Education." The 2019 conference, "Responsible Innovation: A Collaborative Approach to Educational Freedom," will focus on Principle 4.

Leading up to the establishment of the AWSNA principles, the members of the Association consciously worked with *principles*, rather than with *standards* or *dogma*. A *principle* is an understanding or value from which different expressions can be derived. A *standard* usually refers to an idea or thing that can be measured. And *dogma* is a tenet that is considered an absolute truth.

Consider Principle 3: "An anthroposophical understanding of child development guides the educational program." In the construct of standards, this principle would have been written in a prescriptive manner, defining the curriculum, pedagogical practices, and assessment methods. If established as dogma, it would have been prescriptive in its articulation of the educational program with the assumption that there is only one correct way to implement a Waldorf program. By working with the concept of principles, we have committed to the underlying values that can find unique expression given the time, place, and people for which the education is manifesting.

As I read the articles in this issue, I noticed that most are explorations of one of three of the principles—numbers 2, 3, and 4. I invite you to review the principles and see if you notice how they serve as foundations for the articles that follow. ʘ

—Melanie Reiser, PhD
AWSNA Director of School Services

*The principles can be found in complete form at: www.waldorfeducation.org/waldorf_education/awsna_principles

Waldorf Education Approaches Its Centennial

One hundred years ago, in November 1918, the horrific carnage and destruction of the First World War came to an end. A few months later, Rudolf Steiner, a well-known spiritual teacher who had lived in Dornach, Switzerland, during the war, visited Stuttgart, Germany.

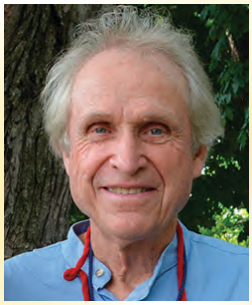
One of Steiner's students in Stuttgart, Emil Molt, asked him: "Is there a way to educate children so that they will become human beings who will not make war, who will be able to live in peace?" When Steiner replied in the affirmative, Molt asked another question: "Will you help me create a school that will educate children in this way?" Steiner again answered in the affirmative.

A few months after that conversation, in September 1919, the first Waldorf school opened in Stuttgart. Molt was director of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory and the school was on the factory grounds. Many of the schoolchildren were children of the workers in the factory. The faculty, all students of Steiner, had been given a crash course in the new "Waldorf" pedagogy and curriculum.

A century later, Waldorf Education is an international, thriving, and growing movement. There are now 1092 Waldorf schools in 64 countries. The greatest concentration is in central and northern Europe, in Germany (242 schools), the Netherlands (103), Switzerland (31), and Sweden (46). But there are schools all over the world, in China (7), Nepal (2), Brazil (35), South Korea (11), Thailand (3), Kenya (2), India (7), Australia (52), Russia (20), and elsewhere. In addition, there are almost 700 Waldorf kindergartens worldwide that are not connected to a Waldorf school, as well as 66 Waldorf teacher education institutes. The first Waldorf school in North America was opened in New York City in 1929. Today there are 124 independent Waldorf schools in the United States, 18 in Canada, and 14 in Mexico. In the United States, there are also over 50 public and charter schools that are a part of the Public Waldorf movement.

Relatively speaking, Waldorf Education is a small phenomenon in the larger world of education. Of the 56 million children currently in elementary and high schools in the United States, about 25,000 are in Waldorf schools.

However, Waldorf Education is a beneficial "leaven" in the world of education in North America. Certain ideas central to Waldorf are finding their way into mainstream private and public education and into the general discourse on education. These include the importance of play in early childhood, the danger of intense academic work in preschool and kindergarten, the crucial role of sleep in learning, the harmful effects of the exposure to electronic media in the early (and later) years, the importance of the arts (including music and drama) in child development, and the connection between early intense competitive sports and athletic high school burnout. In part, the spread of these ideas in the wider educational world is the result of recent research corroborating insights about child development and education that Rudolf Steiner had a century ago. It is due also to the exemplary presence of Waldorf schools in communities around the continent and to the efforts of AWSNA, its leaders, and other spokespersons for Waldorf Education to have their voices heard in the broader arena.



Waldorf Education sees each child as a unique being of body, soul, and spirit, who has come to Earth to fulfill a unique destiny. It seeks to provide the child with the skills and capacities to find and fulfill that destiny. It strives to help the child acquire all the necessary academic skills but also to develop freedom in thinking, compassion for and empathy with other human beings, awe at the beauty of Nature and reverence for it, an inner moral compass, and the ability to perceive and create beauty.

About to enter its second century, Waldorf Education is a vital and evolving approach to education. In schools around the world, the curriculum and pedagogy are being adapted to the local culture, history, and traditions. In North America, much work is being done to make Waldorf schools and the curriculum inclusive and diverse and to help realize the ideal of social justice.

At this centennial, we who are dedicated to Waldorf have much to be proud of and thankful for. And, we can look to the future with confidence that our work will continue to benefit children all over the world. ๑

—Ronald E. Koetzsch, PhD

Alumni Forum

BY AVI BOWIE, MSW, Chicago Waldorf High School, Class of 1998

Please note that Avi Bowie prefers the gender-free pronouns they/them/their *when there is a third-person reference.*

Avi Bowie was born in Chicago and joined the Chicago Waldorf School (CWS) in the fourth grade. Avi describes being enamored with an aesthetic environment where they were allowed to be introspective. Avi attended CWS through the twelfth grade. Avi credits their mother, Colleen Everhart, who worked as a teacher and administrator at CWS for twenty-two years, with instilling in them a sustained commitment and connection to Waldorf Education. After graduation, Avi went to study at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. There, Avi majored in medical anthropology with a focus on community health.

After obtaining their MSW from Columbia University in New York City, Avi focused their career in the service of LGBTQ+ youth and families. Avi developed and managed programs at the Ali Forney Center in New York with and for LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness. In 2014 Avi returned to Chicago where they continued to work with LGBTQ+ youth as Director of Youth Programs at Center on Halsted. Currently, Avi works as a psychotherapist and consultant.

Avi is self-described as a social justice worker/warrior. Avi's passion lies in working toward the collective healing and liberation of historically marginalized groups and individuals through the processes of cultivating compassion, building community, and developing innovative and creative educational and advocacy tools. Avi is a cofounder of Resilience Rising, a Chicago-based consulting group that works with a diverse group of institutions to form collaborative and multidisciplinary action plans to create trauma-responsive, LGBTQ+ inclusive self-healing environments.

Avi lives in the Humboldt Park neighborhood in Chicago with their family.

—R.E.K.

My kindergarten and early elementary years were spent in selective private and public schools where the emphasis was on academic rigor, competition, and success. When I was around nine years old, the ensuing pressures caused my anxiety to peak. My mother, to her credit, recognized that something had to change. She found the Chicago Waldorf School, which provided a much-needed sanctuary. In Garth Riegel's fourth-grade classroom, I was invited, for the first time ever in a formal educational setting, to be a child. My wonder and curiosity were celebrated. My hunger for routine and ritual were fed generously. I was given opportunities to explore and to express myself through movement, art, and play. Stories, verses, and festivals helped me to see and celebrate the sacred in all things. Through smells of beeswax and calendula, touch of wool, felt, and clay, and sounds of rounds sung in earnest harmonies, I was provided a strong sensory education. We learned through experience and exertion.



Avi Bowie in seventh grade

Mine was, in so many ways, an ideal education that I hope to be able to offer my own children one day. And yet, there were aspects of my experience and identity that were not included in the heavily Eurocentric curricula, that were not reflected in the relative wealth and privilege of so many of my peers. Missing were faces and families that looked like mine. Additionally, the contrast between the unpredictability of my life at home and the quiet order of my school environment caused

Photo courtesy of Garth Riegel

me to feel like I had to hide my worries behind a façade of calm. So many parts of me were not given space, and so were relegated to the shadows. I longed for people and lessons that echoed my own experiences, identities, and cultures.

As a biracial, multicultural, queer person, code-switching was my first language. The Chicago Waldorf School was just one more place where I learned, by example, and contextually, who and how I had to be in order to belong. I quickly developed prosocial skills that allowed me to blend in and to endear myself to people wherever I went. These skills have contributed to my ability to navigate dominant culture spaces and thereby experience academic and professional success. On the other side of this success was the near-constant stress of adapting, which resulted in a hypervigilance that, to this day, I am learning to adjust and interrogate. I lived, and continue to exist, in multiple and divergent worlds.

This experience is certainly not unique to me, or to Waldorf schools. As is true for most American students, the centralized narratives that I was shown in school were those of straight, white, cisgender people. I never learned about trans identities. The gender binary was rigid and absolute. I accepted cisnormativity—the assumption that all people have the gender they were assigned at birth—before I had language to examine my own gender journey. The love stories I was told did not reflect any I've ever seen myself as being part of. I was indoctrinated into internalized homophobia before I even knew what the swell of feelings in my little heart meant. My teachers and peers were almost exclusively white. Except for our study of slavery and civil rights, the rich histories and contributions of people of color were almost entirely neglected.

For my entire young life, I strove to mold myself into who and what I was shown, and by extension, expected to be. It was lonely and exhausting, but I also had many protective factors that supported and enabled my resilience. My family, while navigating significant and sustained pain and confusion, was also incredibly rich in love. I had parents who supported me unconditionally when I came out to them—twice—first as gay, and then as non-binary. I've had incredible privilege and all of the concurrent protections that made it possible for me to survive and thrive.

For so many young people those protective factors are not there. Not only do they not see themselves reflected in a positive light in educational curricula or in the media they consume and are exposed to, but they are also denied access to the resources that serve as a buoy. My life was changed, my loneliness eased, when at eighteen I took a class with an educator who, for the first time in my life, looked and loved like me. At nineteen, I made a friend who, for the first time, held racial and gender identities that were reflective of so many of my own. At twenty-one, I learned of two-spirit people who were honored by indigenous Americans and, for the first time, realized that my gender identity was not a deficit, but something that has been celebrated in other cultures for centuries.



Avi Bowie today

What would my life be had I met those folks, heard their stories, learned about those histories sooner? Where would I be had I been able to look into those mirrors as a child? I cannot say. I can only hope that more young people who exist in the margins have access to those reflections. I know through personal and professional experiences that without those mirrors, what starts out as a little voice that begins to question one's place, one's value, one's future, becomes a scream that is impossible to ignore. A child begins to believe that there is no real future for someone like them.

Part of exorcising that loneliness and instilling worth lies in a deepened and sustained commitment to representation. It requires that the adults who strive to inform and structure a child's experience recognize that we have the power to effect change. We must challenge ourselves and our educational communities to create more inclusive spaces and opportunities for ALL young people to see their stories, their identities, their lives, and their infinite possibilities reflected. Waldorf Education can be that affirming space. It can provide a world wherein every child's story, every child's culture, every child's identity is mirrored and celebrated. Waldorf can be a place where every child truly feels a sense of real belonging. ๏

Discovering Joy in Music at a Waldorf School

BY KAZ KAWANO, Alumni Parent, Sacramento Waldorf School

Kaz Kawano, his wife, Mimi, and their sons, Sho and Jun, moved from Hawai'i to Sacramento, California, in 2008 so that the boys could attend Sacramento Waldorf School (SWS). Sho graduated from the SWS high school in 2012, attended UC Berkeley, and is now working for a renewable energy power plant developer. Jun graduated from the SWS high school in June 2018 and now attends California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. Both Sho and Jun are excellent musicians, playing, respectively, the trumpet and the violin. Mimi Kawano completed a Waldorf Education foundation studies course, obtained a California early childhood teaching credential, and is now a special education assistant in the local public preschools. Kaz Kawano is an international businessman with holdings in Hawai'i, Shanghai, and Tokyo.

I grew up in Japan and attended public schools in which there was an emphasis on competition in every activity—academics, sports, and music. Regarding music, I started playing brass instruments in the wind ensemble in middle school. The school's symphony wind ensemble was famous because it always won the national competition. We practiced seven days a week, before and after school and during lunchtime as well. Winning the competition was the most important thing for us. The enjoyment I got from music was in the winning.

When I started dreaming of becoming a conductor and started taking lessons seriously, I thought the same way. I told myself, "I must win in the competition," and, in fact, I did win a couple of awards. But the more I dreamed of a future in music, the more people discouraged me. They said that I should not pursue music in my life because it is hard to make a living as a musician. I stopped dreaming of a musical future and tried not to think about music so much anymore.

In the Waldorf school, all of the arts are presented as sources of joy and enrichment. Music especially is a daily blessing. From the early grades, the children sing every day and also play instruments, at first recorders and then orchestral instruments. The seasonal festivals feature singing and instrumental playing by the children. All of this is done for the pure joy of the musical experience, not to win a competition or to stand out in any way.

My many years of observing my sons in the Waldorf school have helped me understand why I terminated my musical life—I did not know how to enjoy the music. Waldorf has helped me realize the reason for music is the joy it brings. I have learned to simply enjoy music. Out of gratitude, I decided to create a piece of music that would help people realize that music gives us a deep soul pleasure and enriches our lives.



From left to right—Jun Kawano, Patrick Ku, Jonas Poer, Miles Cochran-Branson, Christopher Olson

I chose songs and dance tunes that are typically used at the various seasonal festivals at the Waldorf school—including the Opening Day Rose Ceremony, Michaelmas, and May Day—and combined them into a piece for string ensemble. I called it *Seasons in Waldorfia*.

This past May, five musicians from the SWS high school orchestra and I rehearsed and recorded the piece. The musicians are Jun Kawano (first violin), Patrick Ku (second violin), Miles Cochran-Branson (viola), Christopher Olson (cello), and Jonas Poer (bass). The young men are all outstanding musicians. Each played in one of the Sacramento area's elite youth symphony orchestras as a concertmaster or principal. Jun and Jonas were both winners in the

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Catching a Case of Waldorf Education

BY LISA MAHAR

When I was a college student—way back in the 1970s—away from home for the first time, no one was monitoring my obligation to attend mass every Sunday. Ready to broaden my spiritual horizons, I decided to explore a different place of worship each Sunday, and Harvard Square in Cambridge offered lots of options. One Sunday, I visited First Church, a Congregational church founded in 1633. The church has had exactly twenty ministers in 375 years! Anne Hutchinson's heresy trial took place there. George Washington worshipped there. It is a church with lots of history and much gravitas.

During the sermon the minister made an observation: Most Christians seem to have received an inoculation against Christianity—a kind of "Christian vaccination." This inoculation protects them from contracting the real thing—the lay-down-your-life, turn-the-other-cheek, feed-the-hungry, love-your-enemies kind of Christianity. Forty-five years later I still think of that sermon.

My hope for our Waldorf community is that I, that we all, do not become immune to Waldorf Education, but that we catch a full-blown case of Waldorf Education, a life-guiding, soul-filling case that has a transformative and deeply moralizing impact on civilization.

My work has been in the administrative life of Waldorf schools—leading the administrative team, raising resources, responding to parent concerns, guiding the enrollment effort, partnering with the board of trustees, working closely with parent leaders, and developing long-range plans. I was also a member of our school's college of teachers for over twenty years. I am deeply interested in what makes a school community healthy and vibrant—able to live its mission and vision, serve its students, claim community, and contribute to the well-being of the world, both now and in the future.

With this in mind, I want to share thoughts about a verse that has special meaning to me, a bit about the organizational work of Jörgen Smit, and some thoughts about Rudolf Steiner's four recommendations to the first Waldorf teachers in the summer of 1919. The verse, by Rudolf Steiner, refers to the education of the young child, the elementary child, and the high school student:

Receive the children in reverence,
Educate them in love,
Let them go forth in freedom.

Receive the children in reverence

In our early childhood program, we strive each day to give children the experience of life as "good." We seek to provide them with warmth, nourishment, work, play, and caring adults worthy of imitation. We help them experience that the world is good and right and orderly. The flower blooms, the corn ripens, and each dish towel gets washed in the tub, dried in the sunshine, and folded into the basket. Of course, as adults we know the world is lots of other things besides good, yet our task is to help the young child experience the world as good, to have that foundational experience. And over the decades, hundreds of gifted Waldorf teachers have cultivated the insights and capacities to guide young children.



Waldorf early childhood educators try to give the children the experience that the world—like fresh-baked whole wheat rolls—is good.

Educate them in love

In our elementary school, teachers are stirring their students' hearts with stories of courage, transformation, forgiveness, active conscience, dawning enlightenment, awakening

Photo by Linette Kielinski, Waldorf School of Philadelphia

self-determination, and victories won for freedom and equality for one's brothers and sisters. The teachers are offering experiences every day of beauty in the world of human beings. Our students are learning that the world is a loving place. As adults, we know that the world is many other things besides beautiful and loving. Nevertheless, our Waldorf Education recognizes the authenticity of this message as a touchstone our young people can return to again and again.



Throughout their schooling, Waldorf students hear inspiring stories of heroic, altruistic individuals such as Martin Luther King, Jr.

Let them go forth in freedom

Our high school students are in a daily process of synthesizing their life experience and growing toward their ability to stand independent, free, and self-aware in the world. The Waldorf high school curriculum is designed to support and encourage them in this process. Their teachers, committed to their own personal and professional growth, are partners in this process. The students have an opportunity to develop an inner relationship with human freedom, to discover truth—and by extension untruth—and to discern what to embrace as authentically their own. This striving for a personal, guiding truth is the foundation of real human freedom. As adults, we know that the world is not fully free and true, yet the striving toward this freedom, and the recognition that *my* freedom is entirely dependent on *your* freedom, is the very heart of our human task.

Every day we strive to bring to our students these gifts of reverence, love, and freedom, these gifts of goodness, beauty, and truth.

Jörgen Smit and the Healthy Community

Jörgen Smit (1916–1991) was a Waldorf educator—a class teacher, a trainer of teachers, and one of the founders of the anthroposophical center in Järna, Sweden, which now includes a teacher education seminar, cultural center, hospital, school, biodynamic farm, dairy, and the International Youth Initiative Program (YIP). Jörgen Smit was a warmhearted, compassionate human being who was deeply interested in others. He inspired many young people to pursue careers of service in Waldorf Education and other anthroposophically based initiatives.

Jörgen Smit studied human community and observed human relationships. He developed these observations and experiences into a picture of the healthy human social organism, based on four dynamics of community life. When each of these four dynamics is present and active, and when these dynamics are actively and consciously being balanced and rebalanced, a living, and then a vibrant, community emerges. These dynamics are:

Warmth

This is an atmosphere of welcome, of extension toward the other, of striving for connection. Warmth is interest, curiosity. In a community permeated by warmth, diversity, and its essential companion, inclusion, thrive. In such a community, even challenges are welcomed because they often generate some heat.

Initiative

Proposing and manifesting new ways of doing things demonstrate a commitment to our healthy future. Initiative asks questions and is willing to experiment and take risks. Balanced with warmth, form, and continuity, it is the fuel that moves a community forward. Every healthy community needs to welcome initiative—and from all quarters, including from new teachers and new parents. After all, new community members have the advantage of fresh eyes.

And for those of us who have been around for a while? We should worry when a new idea elicits this inward response: "We tried that and it didn't work!" In community, we all benefit from cultivating the "Hmm . . . tell me more . . ." response to new ideas—regardless of what our inner voice is saying.

Form

Form is the structure of the community and its policies, procedures, and protocols. Form should reflect our values, what is important to us. If we are committed to professional development for teachers, our budget should support it. If we are committed to financial accessibility for all, our tuition policies should make that possible. If we are committed to diversity and inclusion, our outreach and festivals and celebrations should reflect that. Form is, of course, open to transformation, yet it is the golden thread that runs through our school community.

Continuity

Continuity is embracing and continually refreshing what is valuable, what is inspiring, and what works. It is repetition and rhythm, predictability, tradition, and the honoring of history. Continuity is carrying forward what is lively and true. It is giving new ideas time to work.



Jörgen Smit (1916–1991)

When our son Luke was in sixth grade, nothing fit, literally and figuratively. It seemed that he would go to bed at night and come down an inch taller in the morning. That fall, he had a complaint about the Thanksgiving assembly. Every year, Mr. Dziedzic tells the same story about Squanto—how Squanto was a Wampanoag from Cape Cod, how he had learned English from earlier settlers, and how he helped the pilgrims through their first winter in New England. Every year, the same old story . . .

At the end of the day, I asked Luke how the assembly was. "Terrible," he said. "Mr. Dziedzic didn't even tell the Squanto story."

Continuity—it was, it is, it will be. This is a gift for our children, a source of strength and security. Yet we must be attentive, perceptive, awake, and discerning in our continuity.



Squanto (1585–1622), Native American—benefactor of the Mayflower settlers—whose story is an important part of the Thanksgiving festival in many schools

Warmth, initiative, form, continuity—these four elements are guideposts for a community to examine itself. Are all of these elements present? Which element are we especially good at? Does one or another need to be strengthened? How does each manifest in the life of the school?

Rudolf Steiner's Advice to Teachers

Now imagine back to August 1919. In a few weeks, the first Waldorf school will open in Stuttgart, Germany, with 256 students. Rudolf Steiner gives an intensive two-week course of study for the twelve men and women who will be the teachers in the school. Every morning, Steiner speaks on human nature and human development, these talks being later gathered together in the book *Foundations of Human Experience*. In the afternoon, Rudolf Steiner gives a series of talks about teaching itself, later published as *Practical Advice to Teachers*. A century later, these talks remain essential for Waldorf teacher education.

At the end of the course, Steiner gathered the teachers together and said [my paraphrasing]:

> If you remember nothing else from our time together, please remember these four recommendations:
> Be a person of initiative.
> Be interested in all things.
> Never compromise with untruth.
> Never grow stale or sour.

The Waldorf teacher is a person of *initiative*, who looks to the future and avoids complacency. This quality, which Jörgen Smit pointed out as essential in a healthy community, also is central in our deepening personal lives and professional lives.



Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), about the time the first Waldorf school was founded

Next, the Waldorf teacher is *interested* in everything that affects the world and human beings. This correlates with Smit's "warmth." Our interest must be imaginative, even visionary and global. We are educating young people who may live to see the twenty-second century! And we are not just asked to be interested in our students or in our own school. Our interest must extend far beyond our schools into our culture and the times in which we live. This is an interest that looks to far horizons!

The Waldorf teacher *does not compromise in heart or mind with untruth*, but has courage for the truth. This is Jörgen Smit's "form." The teacher strives to help students find their right place in the world—to find their truth and to be able to act as free human beings with courage, compassion, and conviction. We must model this in our own lives.

Finally, Waldorf teachers must *never grow stale or sour but cultivate an attitude of freshness*. This is Jörgen

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Phoenix Rising

The Meadowbrook Waldorf School Fire

BY BETH RIUNGU, MWS Development Director

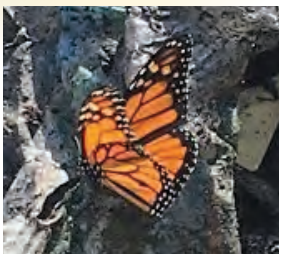


On Sunday, July 29, 2018, an early morning dog-walker noticed a large plume of smoke rising from the woodlands bordering the main road through Richmond, Rhode Island. On investigation, she found flames coming from the roof of Meadowbrook Waldorf School. By midmorning, emergency responders had set up a command center as the school campus filled with trucks from twenty-two stations. The road was closed to allow a relay of tanker trucks to deliver water from a nearby river. For several hours, staff and teachers looked on as the flames moved steadily along the building, consuming the early childhood classrooms and, eventually, the middle school wing. As dusk fell, demolition equipment was brought in to tear down the remaining structure so that the firefighters could finally extinguish the blaze. Work continued into the night, and by morning the school had been reduced to drenched piles of blackened debris.



The exterior doorway to what had been the fifth-grade classroom, the morning after the fire

Most likely, a lightning strike caused the devastating fire. Although three firefighters required hospital treatment, no serious injuries resulted from the incident. As the debris was carefully sifted to see what might be salvaged, other little miracles came to light. Candles made by the students at Candlemas in February, and stored away for the fall, were found safe. Play costumes and the Michaelmas dragon survived. The surrounding forest and play yards were untouched. Tiger lilies nodded beside the kindergarten doorstep, and everywhere Monarch butterflies seemed to promise hope and metamorphosis.



After the fire, a monarch butterfly perched on the debris

Even while the fire was still burning, the search for a temporary accommodation began. This led to the school finding space in a former public school in town with bright, spacious classrooms surrounded by recreation areas, including sports fields, woodlands, and a pond. A massive volunteer effort was organized to make the September 4th opening day possible. Parents sourced classroom furniture and other school necessities, stitched linens, and provided home-cooked meals for staff members who were working around the clock. Alumni families gathered to dye play-silks and make simple Waldorf dolls.

Meadowbrook Waldorf School, founded in 1979 and serving southeastern Connecticut and northern Rhode Island, had occupied the school building for twelve years. During the AWSNA accreditation



Seventh-grade teacher Tricia Wolf Goldman looking for anything that might be salvaged from her classroom.

Photos courtesy of the Meadowbrook school community

process in 2014, it was recognized that the building, despite being beautiful and functional, was not large enough to accommodate the needs of the school community. Ironically, in the months preceding the fire, the school was planning the necessary expansion. Now, with the foundation of the destroyed building as a starting point, the school will be rebuilt and expanded. The new structure will include the essential elements of a community center: a room large enough for the full MWS community with a stage for performances, a regulation-size basketball court, and a commercial-grade kitchen. The improved, new early childhood classrooms will include radiant floor heating and mudrooms. It is hoped that construction



Alumni parents and teachers from the school's pioneer days dye play-silks for the early childhood program at the home of retired teacher Betty Merner.

will begin in January 2019, and that the school will return to its permanent home in January 2020. A development effort—Meadowbrook Rising Campaign to Rebuild—has been started to provide the funds for the improvements.



Current and alumni parents, a student's grandfather, and a seventh-grade student were among the volunteers who built play stands for the early childhood program.

Despite the tragic loss of its home, the school community feels a profound gratitude. The fire caused staff, parents, alumni, and friends of the school to work together selflessly to help the school resurrect from the flames. The blaze also resulted in new connections within the Waldorf and anthroposophical communities, as well as with others unfamiliar with Waldorf Education. As the centennial of Waldorf Education approaches, Meadowbrook Waldorf School looks to the future with confidence and enthusiasm. ❍



BETH RIUNGU *first discovered the work of Rudolf Steiner as a registered nurse. Many years later, she enrolled her two children in the MWS Early Childhood program and became a keen member of the Meadowbrook Parent Association. She is the MWS development director.*

In the past year, a number of other Waldorf schools in North America, like Meadowbrook Waldorf School, have been seriously affected by natural disasters. Each school experienced one or more of the following: temporary closing of the school, damage to school buildings, loss of power, and property and personal loss to members of the school community. The following schools and school communities can benefit from the support, tangible and intangible, of the larger Waldorf community. The listing is certainly not exhaustive.

- Papalotes Puerto Escondido, Puerto Rico—Hurricane Maria
- Cuernavaca Waldorf School, Cuernavaca, Mexico—earthquake
- East Bay Waldorf School, Marin Waldorf School, Summerfield Waldorf School, Waldorf School of Mendocino County, Sebastopol Charter School—all were impacted by the wildfires in Northern California
- Waldorf School of Santa Barbara, Highland Hall, and Westside Waldorf School—all were impacted by the huge Thomas Fire north of Los Angeles
- Malamalama Waldorf School, Hawai'i—Kilauea Volcano, Hurricane Lane
- Honolulu Waldorf School—flooding of high school
- Housatonic Valley Waldorf School, Connecticut—tornado
- The Youth Initiative High School, Viroqua, Wisconsin—flooding of school family homes



Dirt, Play, and Learning in a Waldorf Kindergarten

BY MARY BETH FIFER and JASON SPERLING, MBA

The giant wheels of the dump truck creaked to a stop and the bed tilted up, spilling five tons of fill dirt just outside the early childhood play yard. When all the dirt was out, the truck pulled away, revealing a train of kindergartners, pushing wheelbarrows and carrying buckets and shovels. The children were beginning the process of moving the dirt



The dirt is delivered with a small welcoming committee perched on a nearby fence.

into the play yard and near the outdoor kitchen. The process continued for weeks as part of the outdoor classroom and play-based program at Shining Mountain Waldorf School in Boulder, Colorado.

In academic-based early childhood programs that are teacher directed, children spend the majority of time learning to read and write and completing specific drills and activities. In the play-based approach used at Shining Mountain and other Waldorf schools, teachers facilitate an environment for exploration, imagination, creativity, and discovery. Our play yard is filled with structures designed for this purpose and with natural objects that can be manipulated by the children as they interact with each other and their surroundings. This is all in preparation for the academic learning that happens once they enter the grades. The dirt was an appropriate addition to our play-based curriculum.

We had three primary goals in bringing in the dirt and also establishing an outdoor "mud kitchen":

(1) Build motor skills/develop sensory integration
Balancing, walking, digging, carrying—these activities help build gross motor skills that may go undeveloped if children spend too much time indoors in sedentary activities. Rather than have our adult staff do the dirt moving, we intentionally created an opportunity for the children to engage in a valuable developmental activity themselves. The children fill up a bucket or wheelbarrow as they like, selecting the degree of physical challenge they want and testing their own limits. While the outcome typically includes a good amount of dirt being spilled as a child takes "too much," it is the process of interacting with the physical world that is of value.

Because of school policy, children in the early childhood program are not distracted by social media and electronic toys. Thus the children were



Children transport the dirt into the play yard, working in small groups . . .

immediately interested in bringing the dirt into the yard and were willing helpers. Their growing bodies and their will forces were strengthened in the process.

Photos by Brian Solano

(2) Build social skills

Some experts claim that one of the most accurate predictors of lifelong success is a child's ability to control impulses, to practice self-control and to self-regulate. This capacity can be learned in social environments made available through play-based programs.

Our play-based program is a mixed-age kindergarten with children ranging in age from two-and-a-half to six. The day includes frequent periods of free, unstructured play within the same play space. This leads to rich social interactions between children of different ages.



. . . a place for play and learning where, for example, the physics of digging with a shovel can be experienced.



. . . or alone, and the result is . . .

Our water pump offers one example. Much of the play in the outdoor kitchen requires water for "cooking." The water pump in our play yard was intentionally designed to make the pump action require significant strength. This is beyond the capacity of most of the younger children, so that when they want to get water they have to ask an older child for help.

Some situations involve conflict. Two children may want to use the same spoon; there may not be enough room at the outdoor sink for all the children to gather there; one child may feel that another has filled the water bucket too full. Each such interaction is an opportunity for working through conflict.

(3) Build math and science concepts

The outdoor mud kitchen encourages the learning of math and science concepts. Children use various containers to "cook" potions, soups, cakes, and whatever else bubbles up from their imagination. They measure quantities of dirt and water and discover how different proportions impact consistency and volume.

In the first week, the dirt seemed to enliven the children's imagination and creativity, and we saw unexpected types of play. For example, the children put logs on the hillside where the dirt was deposited and then let them roll down, learning a bit perhaps about gravity and mass. This free exploration of the natural and physical environment in the early years gives children concrete and real experiences of the concepts they will encounter in their later education.

The dirt hill in our early childhood play yard has continued to be a focus for play activity and learning for the children. For those interested in establishing a mud kitchen at their school or home, a Google search will provide many resources. ʘ



MARY BETH FIFER *has a BA and Waldorf teacher certification in early childhood education. She directs the early childhood afternoon program at Shining Mountain Waldorf School and is the school's director of early childhood licensing.*



JASON SPERLING *is a parent member of the school community, an author, and an advocate of getting children playing outdoors.*

For an interview with Mary Beth Fifer on the importance of play in early childhood, visit https://shiningmountainwaldorf.org/articles/we-talk-marybeth-fifer-the-importance-of-play-in-early-childhood/

Once Upon a Time

Re-envisioning the Power of the Fairy Tale

BY PHIL FERTEY, MBA

Fairy tales are among the oldest and most retold stories in existence. They sometimes seem archaic, bizarre, and grossly anachronistic, and yet, from generation to generation, they are read or told with the intent not only to entertain but to convey certain universal messages about human nature—messages such as, "*There is no obstacle that cannot be overcome if we set our hearts and minds to it.*" They are parables for life and for a more just world.

No one knows this better than Ruth Tschannen, the artistic director at Cascadia Society, a Camphill therapeutic community set in an urban neighborhood in North Vancouver, British Columbia, that serves about thirty-five adults ("companions") with special needs.

In December 2017, for the tenth year in a row, Ruth led a collaboration between Cascadia's companions and a number of students from Vancouver Waldorf School. This time, they together staged *Iron Hans*, a Brothers Grimm fairy tale. Iron Hans is a noble king who has been bewitched into an ugly, murderous, iron-skinned wild man living in the forest. Iron Hans overcomes his destructive nature and helps a young prince gain his birthright—and the hand of the beautiful princess. Through this benevolence, the spell on Iron Hans is broken and he regains his original, royal identity.



Eighth graders, companions, and a Cascadia volunteer share a moment of levity.

Regarding the stage production, Ruth says: "One of the highest ideals, and this is a social impulse, is to have the students and the special-needs companions work together. Nowhere else is it done."

And nowhere else *could* it be done, following Ruth's artistic vision, than at a Waldorf school. That is because the fairy tales are presented in eurythmy, the movement art inaugurated over one hundred years ago by Rudolf Steiner. Eurythmy, through gesture and movement, makes the words of the story and the accompanying music visible. Handbells, lyres, and other instruments contribute to the otherworldly mood of these productions. Ruth, who is a therapeutic eurythmist, observes, "Eurythmy is especially suited to fairy tales because the movements and colors stimulate free and lively imaginative pictures."



A student helps a companion with her hair.

As one theater usher stated after seeing last year's production, "It was the most inclusive thing I have ever seen . . . so moving and beautiful." The impact is also profound for all the participants.

Ruth recalls how the first collaboration on a fairy tale came together:

> I have always had a love of fairy tales, and eurythmy lends itself to that imagination. In the first year, we were working on Karl König's favorite, *The Water of Life*. König, an Austrian physician and student of Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy, founded the Camphill movement in Scotland in the 1940s. We worked on that with our companions and co-workers for an entire year, every day throughout 2007. I gradually made about twenty-five silk costumes so that we had enough to dress our companions. People who dropped in and saw what we were doing were so touched.

In January 2008, it became clear that it would take more than the companions and the co-workers to give the scenes their needed form. Ruth had the inspiration that initially one child—and then others—could play key supportive roles. She recalls:

Photos by Phil Fertey

I turned to the Waldorf school, where I collaborated with their eurythmist. Eventually that year, all of grade two joined the performance. After the following year's performance, it was evident that having students and companions collaborate in eurythmy required a bigger stage. One of the administrators at Cascadia thought we should take this compelling work to a professional theater so more people could see what we were doing. We had never dared to do that….

Since those beginnings, Cascadia and the school have collaborated every year on a different fairy tale, including *Briar Rose*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, *Hansel and Gretel*, and *The Seven Ravens*.



The full cast in costume before a dress rehearsal

The Makings of a Symbiotic Relationship

Each year, various classes between grade three and grade twelve take part in these performances. But, unlike in other stage performances, the students are there entirely to support the companions without realizing, at least on a conscious level, that they are actually in a powerful and mutually helpful co-working relationship.

Ruth is clear about the mutuality of this co-working:

> Our people (the companions) see that the children have something they don't have. They appreciate how the children can move and do eurythmy forms. They have that sense that these Waldorf children are in control of their own space, that they can move. Our people are far more static and some can hardly walk. And there the children are, with the gift of mobility and with their mercurial quality. They can guide the companions on- and off-stage and do the elaborate forms that give the scenes their structure. We are more the *point*, and the children, who can move around the companions in a supportive way, are the *periphery*.



Fourth graders and companions in rehearsal with director Ruth Tschannen

But at the same time, the companions have such joy and self-confidence that they also know they can give something to the students. Ruth observes:

> They bring more of the *healing aspect*. . . . The companions all fall in love with the students. They seek out the students who need *them*, who need *their* help. Somehow they have that sense. They know.

According to Ruth, all the children have one or the other of the disabilities that the companions portray, but less magnified, less obvious. For example, the companion who can barely walk and has obsessive-compulsive tendencies may be the one who wants to be the flying eagle. That's where a hyperactive child with perhaps a similar tendency helps the other to come on stage, helps her to spread her "wings" by lifting her arms and guiding her from behind, so she can become the eagle.

This is where the possibility of a transformation occurs, where the periphery eventually becomes the point and the point, the periphery. Ruth avows:

> I trust the process. I trust that the working of these two streams is mutually helpful—for our companions who are supported by the students, and for the children who are helped by the companions to pull in, become more inward, and find the fortitude they need as they face their own developmental challenges.

Seeing the Other's Higher Being

When my grade eight class participated in *Iron Hans* last year, there was a purity, innocence, and joyful willingness about them. It was their second time working with Cascadia in this way, after having been little forest animals in *Hansel and Gretel* in grade three. Every afternoon from September to early December, we walked the forty-five minutes to Cascadia, where we rehearsed

Photo at left by Phil Fertey; photo at right by Vern Minard / Bahti Photography

in their smaller hall for the rest of the afternoon, often joined by children from grade four and the high school. For many students, this was their first experience of working with the companions, but their openness was no less than that of the others.

From the perspective of a therapeutic eurythmist, Ruth suggests that the "higher being" of those with special needs shines out, for it is predominantly still *above* them and hasn't quite come into their physical body. This, in turn, is what touches people, and it is what the children perceive. It is one way to better understand the children's innocence, openheartedness, and total absence of cynicism when working with the companions.



A volunteer and a companion in a moment of mutual acknowledgment

It is this perceiving that makes the symbiotic relationship between the companions and the children possible. But when it comes to adolescents, it's even more powerful and brings to mind the words of the Canadian singer and poet, Leonard Cohen: *Ring the bells that still can ring/Forget your perfect offering/There is a crack in everything/That's how the light gets in*. Adolescents are on the brink of going into the darkness and heaviness of being fifteen or sixteen. Ruth points out a related, undeniable reality:

> The high school students see that our people—who carry such a cross every day, whose shining lights are layered by all these issues—are *happy*. They never complain. This reflects something back on the students' own crosses, the crosses they are carrying of not knowing who they really are, and trying to find out who is living inside of them. It helps them in their own development. Aiding the students in this way is a gift for us and for the people with special needs. Isn't this a wonderful way to involve the companions with the larger community?

Furthermore, there is an opportunity with high school students that is not possible with younger grades. "You can talk with them differently than with the grade eight children. You can have really deep conversations. They're quite open, because the high school students recognize the spiritual background of our work with the companions."

And so this collaboration, which can only happen in its present artistic form in a Waldorf school, is much more social and therapeutic than it may first appear. It re-envisions the power of the fairy tale with a strong social impulse, and it exemplifies a way for people of merely *different* abilities to help one another. In a manner that I have come to expect from Ruth, she reminds us with great clarity of the bigger opportunity that is available to all communities where Waldorf schools and Camphill communities coexist:

> By having the students and companions—the human beings who will create the future—work together, we can create a better society in a more just world, where everyone is honored. That is my wish. ʘ



The Golden Well, guarded by the Prince (in red), is represented by a moving/pulsing circle of eighth-grade students in yellow/gold silks.



PHIL FERTEY *has been a class teacher for the past sixteen years and has recently completed a full eight-year cycle at Vancouver Waldorf School. Phil is a professional development and teacher-training instructor, as well as a mentor to Waldorf teachers. Prior to teaching, Phil spent eleven years in advertising as a writer, creative director, and corporate speechwriter.*

RUTH TSCHANNEN *has lived in Camphill communities her whole adult life. Originally from Switzerland, she trained as a eurythmist in Ringwood-Botton, a Camphill community in England. In 1990 she came to North America and lived in Camphill communities in Beaver Run (Pennsylvania) and Copake (New York). Her interest in the social and therapeutic aspect of eurythmy led to the inclusion of students from Vancouver Waldorf School in the yearly productions of a fairy tale. Visit:* www.camphill.org *and* www.cascadiasociety.org

Photos by Vern Minard / Bahti Photography

Growing for Good

A Social and Economic Initiative of Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School

BY MARY CHRISTENSON

In 2015 Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School in Viroqua, Wisconsin, marked its thirty-fifth anniversary. At the celebratory dinner, it was announced that the school had made an exciting and forward-looking decision—we had purchased the neighborhood greenhouse and floral business, The Flower Basket, an integral part of the neighborhood for forty years. For over a decade, the owners had graciously allowed the school to use some of their unused land for school gardens. So, when they wished to retire, they were delighted that PRWS could buy their three acres, eight greenhouses, and store.

PRWS is a rural school and struggles to gather sufficient resources to run the school and to serve its families. We have always been interested in Rudolf Steiner's ideas about the threefold nature of society and associative economics and how to work with them in a practical way to sustain our community. Steiner held that enterprises in the cultural realm, such as a school, should be supported by enterprises in the economic or business realm. Steiner also held that education and agriculture should be closely related and that this relationship could benefit the community and lead to social renewal. So we had a dream to have a school business that could help support the school and its work in the community. This would allow us not to be financially dependent on tuition income and donations alone.

Our purpose in purchasing The Flower Basket was threefold:

- to expand the school's gardens and outdoor education spaces
- to create a social and economic enterprise that could bring new funding to the school
- to attract new families and create opportunities for interfacing with and serving our greater community

The first year, we operated The Flower Basket as the former owners had, with paid staff providing a full line of bedding flowers, garden starts, and perennial plants in the spring and summer, and a year-round floral department. We also transitioned the conventional nursery operation to low- and no-spray, and added beneficial insects. We started selling houseplants and succulents all year long. In the fall and winter, we added live holiday items—mums, pumpkins, bulbs, trees, wreaths, garlands, and poinsettias. We also maintained the contract to grow six thousand geranium plants for the Viroqua Cemetery.

At the end of the first growing season, we decided to close the cut-flower department and refocus the business. We had had many challenges, had learned many lessons, and had realized that the land was just beginning to reveal its potential to us. Inspired by Rudolf Steiner, we adopted a new and broader vision and mission—*to nourish beauty, educate the community, and cultivate a just and resilient local food system*—and renamed the project Growing for Good. Our focus became education, community, the soil, and the plants.

Education

Growing for Good has greatly enhanced the gardening program at PRWS. It is the focus of the gardening activities for all eight grades. Growing for Good also serves our partner and neighbor, the Youth Initiative High School, when its students have an agriculture study block or need an opportunity for service work. YIHS students helped build raised beds the first year. Our kindergartners spend hours exploring the land and building a relationship with it. For the older children, the garden provides an experience of and lessons in botany, biology, ecology, nutrition, arithmetic, literature, and art.



Gardening is an important element in the curriculum from the early grades.

All photos courtesy of Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School

On Garden Field Days in the spring and fall, the students spend time at Growing for Good and learn about planting, caring for, and harvesting plants. In addition, throughout the year, the garden teacher works with each class teacher to develop projects that support their class curriculum. Past projects include planting garlic for our hot lunch program, a worm project to harvest worm casting fertilizer, compost building and monitoring, bulb planting for May Day flowers, and building a garden shed.



First graders tending geraniums in the greenhouse

The following notes, written by the third-grade teacher about the garlic project, give a sense of what the children experience:

In grade three, students study farming—soils, grains, vegetables, and the cycle of the year. We realized that garlic, planted in the fall, works well within the school-year calendar. This is a large project that requires multiple visits to the garden throughout October. In 2015 grade three planted over 800 cloves of garlic! Students helped prepare the garden beds and sorted and planted garlic. Since garlic likes extra nutrients, we covered the rows of planted garlic with worm castings to enhance the nutrient content in the soil. Once all the garlic was fertilized, students covered the beds with a six-inch-deep layer of mulch to protect it through the winter.

We monitored and measured the growth of the garlic in the spring months, March through May. For fun, we had planted a few garlic cloves upside down and had marked them. The students were curious and wanted to see what had happened. We dug them up in the spring to observe their roots and shoots. Finally, the harvested garlic was used in the hot lunch program. We found we can grow all the garlic needed for our hot lunches. Additionally, we sold seed garlic the following year during the annual seventh-grade plant sale fund-raiser. The Growing for Good acres and greenhouses made all this possible!

Community

In the summer when school is not in session, Growing for Good is an excellent location for PRWS summer camps for children. These camps are open to all children in the community. Also, the public is always free to visit and explore Growing for Good—the garden center, the greenhouses, and the land—to appreciate nature, learn about plants and food-growing skills, and participate in the community life around the seasonal festivals that the school celebrates. We are allocating some garden plots for neighbors to garden.



Fourth graders building raised beds

Care of the Land

We did a study of the property as a whole, to envision its best use as well as to understand the water flows that became problematic in the spring. Under the guidance of a permaculture specialist and former parent, we held a community design workshop. This past spring, we sculpted the land by inscribing swales to catch and direct the flow of water. This will help us determine the next phase of planning pathways, more gardens, gathering spots, and shelters.

In the fall of 2017, we initiated a pilot community composting program to demonstrate our commitment to building soil. With seed funds from the Waldorf Schools Fund—a nonprofit organization supporting Waldorf Education—we purchased a used pickup truck and essential equipment. Our citywide pickup model is based on the successful Atlanta, Georgia, composting program, Compost Wheels, created by a PRWS alumnus. Customers pay Growing for Good a fee to have their compostable materials picked up from their home or business either weekly or biweekly. By springtime, we had diverted over 11,350 pounds of green waste from the landfill and composted it at our facility under controlled conditions. We use worms to finish the compost to assure a high-quality product. Compost will be returned to the participants or used by Growing for Good.



A volunteer from the community gives the geraniums yet more attention.

As we grow the compost business, there is potential to partner with many other local businesses, including a coffee roaster, a brewery, cafés, grocers, and small food producers. Many vegetable farmers in the area purchase commercially produced organic compost from afar. If we can scale up our composting efforts, it may have a significant and lasting impact on the local community.

Microgreens

This past winter we began to grow microgreens, such as sunflower, broccoli, kale, peas, and radish. We started a preorder microgreens program and a four-week CSA of winter greens. The school's organic hot lunch program received a gift of microgreens every Monday to add to the green salad. It was nourishing, physically and spiritually, to have greens growing and available in our Wisconsin winter!



The compost program turns kitchen scraps into nutrient-rich black compost to enhance the soil.

Partnerships

We are forming partnerships with other groups and businesses. Anthroposophically inspired Thoreau College, still in its formative stage, uses greenhouse space to produce winter greens, as it seeks to develop entrepreneurial programs. We have expanded our plant offerings to provide food-bearing permaculture nursery stock and pollinator-friendly perennial herbs and plants. We also rent greenhouse space to individual growers for their specialty crops that they later plant into their fields or nurseries. These various initiatives and income streams support the cost of operations of Growing for Good, so it is not a financial burden on the school.

Thus, with Growing for Good as a base, PRWS is involved in various educational, cultural, ecological, economic, and community endeavors. It is combining its basic task—educating its students—with beautifying and enriching the environment, providing plants and wholesome food to the community, and engaging, educating, and serving the general public.

Of course, questions arise: How can a school take on a large and complex business? How can a school fit a whole new set of educational programs into an already-full curriculum plan? Money, time, expertise, willingness, passion, and vision are all required. At PRWS, a significant donation from years past provided seed money. At all stages of the project, the selfless volunteer work of parents and friends of the school has been essential. Some had valuable areas of expertise. Others were willing to fulfill mundane tasks day after day. Also, the school was able to secure small grants for projects to support children in the outdoors, in gardens and in food-related activities, and in social enterprise.

Establishing Growing for Good has taken almost as much work as founding a new school. But it has been exciting for a well-established school to take on a challenge that has elicited the pioneer spirit of new families in the school. It has given the children their own unique experiences of growing a crop, filling pots with soil, and watching 6000 geraniums grow over three months to fill a whole greenhouse. Soon we may hear them talking about their own entrepreneurial projects! ʘ



The Growing for Good store during the winter holiday season



MARY CHRISTENSON *has an undergraduate degree in social and economic development with a focus on international development education. She is a graduate of Sunbridge College's Waldorf School Administration and Community Development Program. From 1995 until 2018 she led the development work at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School. Newly retired, she plans to devote more time to Growing for Good and to board work. Her key interests include building sustainability into fund-raising efforts in the schools through the application of group process methods, community building, and associative economics.*

The Spiritual Gifts of Handwork

BY ANGELA DAVIS



My journey to becoming a teacher of handwork began with a fascination with knitting. I cannot explain the attraction I had to knitting. Some years ago, I was working as a seamstress in a bridal shop with a woman from Ukraine. Her name was Maria. My children and I once spent an evening with Maria and her family at her home, and she taught us to knit. I remember her warm hands, her smiling eyes, her easy laughter, and the way she gently guided our hands as we learned to knit. While we enjoyed our evening, my confidence in being able to knit waned, and I did not take it up as a practice right then.



All Waldorf students learn to crochet . . .

In time, I became a Waldorf handwork teacher. Through these past seventeen years of devotion to Waldorf Education and the practice of the hand arts, I have learned how very important it is to work with our hands.

In our world today, we keep our minds focused on the next thing to do, on achieving the goals and outcomes we have set for ourselves in our jobs and personal lives. This creates a rushed feeling of disconnection, which does help us cope with the pressures and challenges of modern life. But since we human beings are meant to be and need to be connected to ourselves and to the world, this hectic pace also takes us away from who we are. One place where this connectedness—the experience of our true humanity and the spirit of life—can be found is in the practice of handwork.

The act of making something wearable—be it a scarf, mittens, or a shirt—can be seen as a revolutionary act, a protest against a globalized and unjust clothing industry. The inexpensive clothing we can buy is usually made on another continent by persons who have a standard of living far lower than our own. Furthermore, the clothing industry is wasteful and environmentally unsound. According to the Anchal Project, a nonprofit organization that seeks to improve conditions for women around the world:

> Globally, humans consume about 80 billion new pieces of clothing every year, which is 400% more than the amount we consumed just 20 years ago. With the rise of consumption comes an alarming rate of discarded clothing. The average American now generates 82 pounds of textile waste annually, totaling more than 11 million tons. In addition, the textile industry is the second largest polluter on the planet followed by oil. The harsh chemicals released during industrial dyeing damage aquatic systems and make drinking water dangerous. (anchalproject.org/pages/what-we-do)

In a Waldorf school, first graders learn how to knit, and handwork remains an essential part of the curriculum through high school, with the older students sewing pieces of clothing for themselves. Other handwork arts, including woodworking and metalworking, are also part of the children's Waldorf experience.

As my first graders work on their knitting, their faces are bright and determined. They are peaceful. They are in touch with their own hands, hands that they learn have innate capacities to create, to comfort, to work, to contribute. They learn that their hands are an important part of being a human being.



. . . and to knit . . .

Children who work with their hands are learning something about themselves and about the world. Often, we cite knitting and the hand arts as helping develop numeracy,

Photo at left courtesy of Prairie Moon Waldorf School, Lawrence, KS; photo at lower right courtesy of Boulder Valley Waldorf School, CO

dexterity, focus, and self-control. These are essential to a child's healthy development. Yet there are other, deeper gifts of spirit. In handwork, the children are practicing and developing capacities of soul that will help them become compassionate human beings in the world.

The following are soul capacities that I have observed arising out of the practice of handwork:

Empathy

In holding and using materials that are from nature, we can connect to them in a profound way. In entering the creative process, using our hands to transform natural materials, we enter into a deep relationship with them. In rubbing wood on stones to shape a knitting needle, we are taking a gift of the natural



. . . and to sew by hand, and by machine, as shown here with students sewing their eighth-grade graduation dresses.

world and transforming it into something useful for ourselves or others. In feeling the sheep's wool, or a cotton boll, we are touching creations of the earth. Becoming deeply aware of these gifts, we feel that the world provides us with many good things. We feel cared for. Also, we feel ourselves as part of a whole. This whole includes other human beings with the same needs and wishes as ourselves.

Perseverance

Practicing the hand arts means we will most certainly bump into ourselves and our limitations. We will make mistakes and we will get angry, frustrated, and struggle mightily. One boy taught me much about perseverance. As a teacher, I have to discern when to step in and assist and when to simply allow the learning process. One boy was in tears over his repeated struggles with his handwork. I offered to help move him to the next level, and he said, "No, I need to figure this out." And he did figure it out. This is the learning of perseverance and trust in ourselves, realizing that we can work through our struggles and that they have meaning. In handwork class, students also learn that if they need and want it, there are teachers and students to support us in moving through any struggle.

Forgiveness

Mistakes are a frequent part of any hand arts practice. Students quickly realize that their materials are forgiving, perhaps more forgiving than the students are of themselves. If a child makes a mistake that can't be fixed by any of those clever handwork-teacher tricks, he or she can rip it out and knit or stitch it again. In most cases, there is a second chance.

Sometimes a failed project can be made into something else, can be transformed and redeemed. This involves forgiving oneself for the failure and moving on to create something that doesn't fit our original intent. Here, flexibility, creativity, and improvisation—all valuable capacities—are called forth.



Common elementary-grade handwork projects include recorder cases and colorful knitted hats, sometimes dyed with natural dyes.

Sometimes a handwork piece cannot be salvaged. This, too, involves forgiveness of self. Letting go of something that one has created but that manifests ineptness and/or lack of attentiveness is a good lesson in self-forgiveness.

Practice and Patience

Handwork skills can require much practice before they are mastered. And, once mastered, they have to be exercised again and again in the often long process of creating a piece of handwork. Handwork thus strengthens our ability to practice something and also to be patient—both important capacities in our busy age. Children learn that if they practice something, even something that seems too difficult at the outset, they can master it. In the process, the children learn how to breathe in and breathe out. They learn how to try and try again until they have made something even more beautiful.

Photo at left by Kristine Fiskum, Da Vinci Waldorf School, IL; photo of hat by Angela Davis

Care for Others

In a handwork class, we celebrate each other's accomplishments. When a student finishes his or her project, the rest of the class will sing a song to celebrate and congratulate. After all, it is an accomplishment. In class, students learn how to deal with their struggles and also with the struggles of others. When I was working in the bridal shop, my manager said something to me I will never forget. She said, "You need to ask more questions. No one should have to sit in a corner struggling alone." I took that to heart.



Handwork class can be an opportunity for helping and being helped.

In handwork class, no one struggles alone unless they really need and want to. There are always friendly and supportive helpers. Knowledge of skill is shared freely. Learning to trust, help, support, and affirm each other creates a positive social atmosphere. It pulls us out of egocentricity and into experiencing ourselves as part of a whole. From there, we recognize that we have something to offer to the other.

Handwork is important for many reasons. It teaches us how to be a human being. It teaches us how to connect with nature, each other, and with the spirit that underlies all things. Besides helping us develop a feeling for beauty, a sense of artistry, and a strong will, handwork brings us into the flow of life. It is through our hands that we touch something of ourselves and each other. ʘ



ANGELA DAVIS *was the handwork teacher at the Waldorf School of Louisville for seventeen years. She holds a degree in psychology with major coursework in vocal music and creative writing. As a mother of four children, she has personally reaped the rewards of knitting and handwork. She now teaches at a progressive school, sings jazz, and is developing a website devoted to knitting with children.*

Mahar, continued from page 9

Smit's "continuity." The exemplary teacher is open to new, unconventional ideas and is committed to an ever-deepening understanding of Waldorf Education. And refreshment is close at hand. Spending time in nature and in the practice of the arts can provide this freshness.

These injunctions were addressed to teachers. But they apply as well to all adults involved in the care and education of children and to all members of the school community. Fathers and mothers, school administrators, and other staff can all strive to embody these virtues.

Reverence – Love – Freedom – Goodness – Beauty – Truth – Warmth – Initiative – Form – Continuity – Interest – Courage – Freshness

These fundamental, essential elements are the beautiful pearls on the necklace of Waldorf Education. Cultivating them in our personal and professional lives is our worthy challenge.

Waldorf Education is not for the faint of heart. Committing ourselves to the mission of Waldorf Education in the world requires that each of us use all the tools and resources available to develop ourselves, our students, our colleagues, and our communities. Our wish to move Waldorf Education, with all its vitality, into its second century will require that we each come down with a serious case of Waldorf Education. ʘ



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Photo at top courtesy of Halton Waldorf School, Ontario

Play, Games, and Sports in Childhood

The Right Thing at the Right Time

BY JAIMEN McMILLAN, RSMT, RSME and ADAM MacKINNON

As parents and educators, our challenge is to help our children develop into healthy, happy, free adult human beings. To do that, we have to realize that a child is not a miniature adult, but a unique, developing being who has to go through a process of becoming a mature human being.

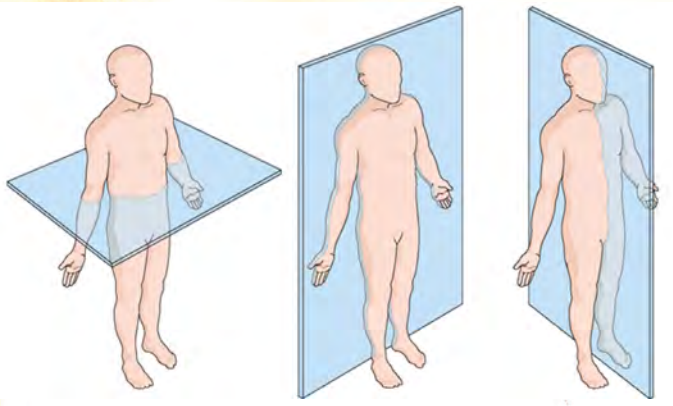
The infant, the young child, and even the adolescent are to some degree "outside" themselves. They are in a process of incarnation, of bringing into their growing and changing physical bodies other dimensions of their being—energetic, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual.

Rudolf Treichler, a psychiatrist who was a student of Rudolf Steiner, held that parents can help children by bringing them "in" in such a way that they can go "out" again freely; "in" enough so that the children are really present in their bodies (fully incarnated), and "out" in such a way that they can come back in. This rhythmical breathing of in and out is necessary in becoming a mature, free adult.

If children are not brought into their bodies in a timely way, they may "hover" on the periphery of life—seeming dreamy, perhaps lazy, or even disengaged. On the other hand, if the outside world drives them in too much, they can get stuck, and then they can't get back out in a healthy way. They may then seek inappropriate ways to get out, such as alcohol and drug abuse.

A predictable, observed daily schedule—with established times for meals, play, going to bed, and getting up—support a healthy "going in" and "going out." Family time—sharing experiences of the day in relaxed conversation—is also good. Screen time with computers, smartphones, and television, especially for the young child, is not helpful. The more time spent in front of a screen, the harder time the children will have in going "out," to enter, for example, into imaginative play or even deep sleep. It is important that parents be role models in these areas.

One way children venture "out" is through healthy movement. As a child grows and develops, there is a deepening relationship to the three planes of space, progressing from the horizontal (transverse) plane, to the frontal (coronal) plane, and finally to the symmetry (sagittal) plane.



The three spatial planes in relation to the human body. From left: the horizontal (transverse) plane, the frontal (coronal) plane, and the symmetry (sagittal) plane.

Birth to Seven—Mastering the Horizontal (Transverse) Plane

Until children are six or seven, they are mainly involved in mastering the first plane of space, the transverse plane, the plane that unites "up" and "down" and involves balance. Play is the work of young children. Their primary task is to find and experience a balance between levity and gravity, and they seek out activities that help them do so. They love to climb—trees, monkey bars, and the like—and to jump down. They love swings, slides, and teeter-totters. For parents, a good general rule is: Let the children do what they love to do in nature or on a playground, even if it may seem to involve some minor risk. It is what they need. Look for their rosy cheeks. When the children create their own relationship with above and below, they are simply joyous. Anything that has to do with balance is helpful learning for them. Balance is the basis of every activity in life.

Adults have to provide opportunities for the children to fall down—even get hurt a little bit, without seriously injuring themselves, of course. The experience of falling is really important. They need to hurt themselves just enough to learn consequences. A little bit of struggle, a little bit of disappointment—even temporary failure—is exactly what they need to find their own feet, and their way in life.

With infants, parents should see that the child spends time on its tummy as well as on its back. This switching of position challenges the child in important ways to deal with up and down. It is also helpful in integrating reflexes. Tummy time will help the infant develop the ability to lift up its (relatively) heavy head.

Even the simplest movement one does with babies, for example, rocking them up and down gently, with subtle hovering pauses, can be a comforting and effective aid in helping them befriend the horizontal (transverse) plane.



For young children, the up-and-down movement of a teeter-totter provides an experience of the horizontal plane.

Seven to Fourteen—Mastering the Frontal (Coronal) Plane

Moving the frontal plane involves fluctuating between the front and back across a central plane. During the second seven-year period of development, children love games that involve forward and backward movement. One excellent game for children during this time is Mother, May I? It exists in variations in cultures all over the world. The aim of the game and the desire of the children is to come forward, but they can do so only when given permission by the "mother." The mother gives instructions, and the other children must strictly follow them. The game is also an exercise in self-control. The children have to ask permission.



The abrupt starts and stops in a game of Tag help children master the frontal plane.

Hide-and-Seek is another perfect game for the frontal plane, as is Tag. Red Light/Green Light is another great activity through which children can learn to rein themselves in within the borders of the frontal plane. The fact that this and similar games are played by children all over the world, even when adults are not around to organize them, shows that, at some level, the children realize that learning to master the frontal plane is important for them. I once had the joy and challenge of teaching a second-grade class that had a pupil who had serious problems controlling himself. I introduced the game Red Light/Green Light, and the boy responded each time with "I hate this game! This is a stupid game." However, one day we did not have the time to play Red Light/Green Light. This same untamed boy came up to me at the end of the class, tears streaming down his face, and said, "We didn't play that game where I have to stop myself!"

The key is to get children moving and for them to learn to control their movements—to be able, by themselves, to stop on a dime. When they can, they have mastered the frontal (coronal) plane.

Fourteen to Twenty-One—Mastering the Symmetry (Sagittal) Plane

The sagittal plane creates the symmetry between right and left and directs the young person forward with intention. In the middle school and high school years, the adolescent needs to learn to focus, aim, and direct his/her force toward definite goals.

Fencing and archery are two activities that challenge young people at this time and can help them move through this stage. In fencing, one turns one's body onto the symmetry plane and seeks to touch the other fencer, with precision, at lightning speed. In archery, one stands still but sends the arrow out along the plane. Basketball is another excellent activity for this period. The adolescent learns to extend him- /herself forward in an arc, directing

the ball toward the basket. The symmetry plane is the plane that demands and develops precision. Mastery of this exacting plane can come only after healthy relationships to the other two planes have been developed. Baseball, volleyball, tennis, and soccer (without "heading" the ball!) are some of the other competitive sports that also develop mastery of the symmetry plane.



Archery requires movement with focus and intention along the symmetry plane.

Timing

Thus, from infancy through age seven, the child is finding balance in the horizontal/transverse plane. The next phase requires that the child learn to find the middle between forward and backward, developing restraint and self-control through an experience of the frontal/coronal plane. Then comes the satisfaction of setting a goal and going after it along the sagittal or symmetry plane. The important thing is that the intensive work on the symmetry plane comes after mastery of the other two planes.

This brings us to the question: At what age should a child begin participating in organized competitive sports teams?

The dominant trend in North America is "the earlier the better." This trend is based on the idea that if a child learns and develops the basic skills of a sport at an early age, he or she will be able to play at a very high level later on.

There are a couple of problems with this hurried approach. One is that, if a child has been playing on a soccer team since age six, for example (not at all uncommon today), then by high school he or she may be burned out and may even have lost all joy in playing. Many high schools are, in fact, discovering that fewer and fewer students are trying out for school athletic teams. They have had enough! There is an emotional element also. Young children may experience losing a game or making a crucial mistake in a game as much more distressing and traumatic than we adults can imagine.

Another problem is that the bodies of young children, bodies that are still growing and developing, are not up to the demands of recurrent practices, repetitive drills, and intense competition in games. Injuries sustained by overtraining in childhood can last a lifetime. Movement therapists are seeing serious injuries among teenagers caused by the overuse of muscles and joints that hadn't developed enough to support the kinds of stresses that competitive sports were putting on them.

The following analogy may give a helpful perspective on having children begin playing on sports teams before they are twelve years old:

"I love butterflies, so I collect caterpillars, and I tape my caterpillars onto kites, and I fly the caterpillars up in the sky on these kites, so that they will fly better when they are butterflies!"

This is obviously ludicrous, but why then are we hoodwinked by the premise and the promise that children will do better at something if they do it earlier and earlier? Why can't we just let a caterpillar be a caterpillar? Why can't we just let a child be a child?

Of course, children under twelve can play baseball, basketball, or volleyball, for example, and enjoy themselves. But engaging in these sports as "play" is much different from being thrust into organized sports events for the sake of competition. When children are playing together and become tired, they'll stop, naturally, on their own, when their body tells them to. But on organized teams, the child has to go until the clock stops or the coach finishes the drills. In playing a *game*,



Organized team sports at too early an age may foster a premature competitiveness.

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Waldorf Education and Social Justice

BY NEIL BOLAND

When I was asked to co-present at the 2018 AWSNA Summer Conference on social justice in Waldorf Education, I jumped at the chance to be able to speak to something that is near to my heart. I also jumped at the prospect of co-presenting on such a topic, which is by definition multivocal and multifaceted. Working with Linda Williams was the absolute highlight of the conference for me.

We both wanted to acknowledge and to build upon work that is already happening in Waldorf schools and kindergartens across North America. Also, we wanted to see if we could raise the awareness of the degree to which social justice issues creep into all of our work and living situations.

> "In the political and legal sphere, each individual has an equal voice simply through being a human being." —Rudolf Steiner

Social justice has multiple meanings, but we defined it like this:

> All members of society are acknowledged as of equal merit, value, and importance. It means that social, monetary, and land resources and rights need to be shared equitably. In addition, no group or groups within society should be privileged to the detriment of others, be that based on gender, class, wealth, resource ownership, culture, belief or nonbelief, ethnicity, sexual or gender orientation, epistemological viewpoint, or other identifying characteristics.[1]

Waldorf Education has its roots in the movement for social renewal, the threefold social order, envisioned by Rudolf Steiner. Waldorf Education is, arguably, the child of this movement that has found greatest success and acceptance in the intervening one hundred years. Linda and I worked with *Towards Social Renewal* and other writings by Steiner that spoke to what we wanted to bring. For me, the clearest statement by Steiner on social justice is:

> In the political and legal sphere, each individual has an equal voice simply through being a human being.[2]

The idea that everyone has an equal voice in society, not just equal rights, just by being human, is powerful, the more so because it is not how the societies in which we live operate. This single sentence is at least as relevant now as when Steiner wrote it a century ago.

It is fair to say that we live in a world in which social justice is not realized. Racial discrimination and attacks, religious intolerance, increasing poverty, the plight of refugees and immigrants, repression by the state, and genocide are all in the news every day. We see the increase of fear, hatred, intolerance, and suspicion around the world. This is, however, not a new thing. Sexism and patriarchy are not new to any of our societies and neither is the affluent minority being able to wield power over the less well-off majority. We grew up in worlds which were, to a greater or lesser extent, homophobic and white-dominated and which saw gender as a binary concept. We grew up in worlds in which the Indigenous inhabitants of the lands we live in were often marginalized, forgotten, and not considered part of current debates.

What we can lose sight of is how this influences what we think, feel, and do. It is difficult to have lived through the past however-many decades and *not* have been influenced by systemic racism, sexism, and the like. These form unconscious biases, which we then can unwittingly carry into our work and so perpetuate. Education cuts both ways. It can empower and liberate, but it can work just as easily to replicate the inequalities and injustices of our societies.

Acknowledging what these biases are in ourselves is the first step we wished to bring up in our talks. As Charles W. Mills writes in his book *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race*:

> My claim is essentially that, for most of the Enlightenment, First World political theory, what seems like a neutral starting point, which begs no questions, is actually already normatively loaded, in that the population of persons has been overtly or covertly defined so as to be coextensive with the white male population. They are the respectable occupants of the building.[3]

A central question we considered when preparing for the conference was: To what degree is this dominance of white male culture prevalent in Waldorf Education today? To what degree are white (male) Europeans



Early colonial painting of the Rev. Thomas Kendall, with Māori chiefs Hongi and Waikato, circa 1820. Christian missionaries played a major role in the colonization of New Zealand by the British.

"the respectable occupants of the [curriculum]" in what is enacted in Waldorf schools? How visible are other faces? How well promoted are other voices?

Hidden Curriculum

This led us to consider what is called "the hidden curriculum."[4] This is a combination of the values you see being enacted by others. Environments in which we have been brought up and educated and in which we live are awash with values. We live with historical racism, complex legacies of colonialism, health and wealth disparities, marginalization of some groups, and gender inequalities. When society in general puts greater value on people of one group than another, this teaches you that that group is held to be superior. If you are not of this group, the effects can greatly undermine your well-being and sense of self-worth. The hidden curriculum is at its most powerful when we are young and just forming our values, but it is a mechanism that operates throughout life. It is the more powerful because it is invisible and unstated.

The hidden curriculum is discernible in many places in a school—in staffing, the distribution of authority roles, the choice of songs, poems, and plays (whose cultures are represented and whose are ignored?), what behaviors are rewarded or reprimanded, whose view of history is being promoted and whose is not being acknowledged, and so on.

Teaching for Diversity

In some of the vignettes at the conference, we heard powerfully how the hidden curriculum in a Waldorf school can affect students from minority groups. There is a need to introduce diversity into the curriculum, and many, probably most, perhaps all, Waldorf schools are already engaged in this work and should be acknowledged. Diversifying the curriculum works toward ensuring that there is "equal voice" given to the manifold groups that exist in schools and in the community. These include voices of women, gay and transgender voices, Indigenous voices, voices of people of color and of different religions, voices of the disabled, voices of different cultures and ethnicities, and voices of the disenfranchised. History can be told in its pain and complexity from different sides; alternative biographies and role models can be offered, and the diversity that is within schools recognized and celebrated.

Beverly Tatum likens choices we make to a moving walkway at an airport.[5] Active racist (or other discriminatory) behavior is the same as walking fast in the same direction as the conveyor belt. This person has identified with the ideology of white supremacy and is actively moving with it. Passive racist behavior is the same as standing still. Through absolutely no deliberate effort of your own you are still moved along without resistance to the same destination as those who actively walk. Some might recognize racism and turn their backs, not prepared to go in the same direction as those supporting or passively accepting it and not wanting to end up in the same place. But unless you are prepared to actively walk in the opposite direction, at a pace faster than the conveyor belt—unless you are actively antiracist—you will still inevitably be carried along with the others.

If we do not want to stand passively on the moving walkway, tacitly supporting oppression, we need to start walking in the opposite direction.

Teaching for Equity

By drawing on the work of diverse authors, poets, and artists, and by representing minority viewpoints in our teaching, we speak to a wider range of students. At the same time, there is a danger of tokenism—inserting a couple of female authors so it looks better or swapping a European myth for an Indigenous one. If you are aiming for equity, it is almost certainly going to take you out of your comfort zone. If you are going to teach *for* rather than *to* a group to which you do not belong, you will need to move so that you are where they are, and not expect them to be the ones to accommodate you. Steiner puts it like this when talking about the working class:

> All those who think *about* the proletariat rather than *with* it have only the vaguest notions . . . notions which . . . can have a harmful effect.[6]

If we want to do something *for* students of color (for instance), we place ourselves, despite our good intentions, apart from the students. If we work *with* them, teach *to* them, we reach out and engage. It is the same with all other groups. Engaging and working with others is going to be what bears reward. This view was also expressed strongly in the vignettes.



Māori and Pākehā (non-Māori) students at the Tauranga Waldorf School in New Zealand present a play based on the Māori myth of Matariki, the celestial being of the Pleiades, surrounded by her six daughters and, in midwinter, heralding the new year.

Achieving equity, or even getting near to achieving equity, levels the playing field within the classroom, but I would argue that this is also not enough. Even if you achieve this to a high degree, it is only with one class, and the issues of social justice we are faced with are much larger than one class.

Decolonization

We live in societies in which there are inherited attitudes we wish to disrupt: racism, classism, sexism, religious intolerances, homophobia, and the like. Teaching for diversity will help, but it will not go as far as is needed to disrupt these ingrained features of society. While celebrating diversity, we may still be contributing to and therefore helping to support a neoliberal society that is, to a significant degree, paternalistic, heteronormative, racially unjust, ecologically damaging, and economically predatory. This, I think, is not something we would like to do. So how do we turn around and walk firmly the other way on the moving sidewalk, actively moving away from systemic injustices and embody, as Peter McLaren puts it, "anti-racist, anti-ableist, anti-sexist, and anti-homophobic pedagogies that respect diversity and work from a post-patriarchal perspective"?[7]

In order to achieve these things, there is going to have to be some change. As Gopal says, "To decolonize and not just diversify curriculums is to recognize that knowledge is inevitably marked by power relations."[8] We have already mentioned power within the hidden curriculum. What then is decolonization?

Our societies have been shaped in countless ways by European colonization. The postcolonization process involves working to acknowledge all of our complicities in maintaining and accepting the status quo and the contradictions and limitations they pose on the achievement of a truly just "decolonial" society. It involves not only recognizing the inequalities of power relationships within society, but actively working toward their leveling—redistributing power and influence among groups within society who are often marginalized, oppressed/repressed, or disenfranchised.[9]

This is long-term work that we may not see come to fruition within our lifetimes. However, for me, it is the only outcome possible if you start walking the road toward embodying Steiner's ideal that each person is to have an equal voice purely because they are a human being. You have to start to dismantle the edifice that helped create this inequality in the first place. To quote Young:

> Above all, postcolonialism seeks to intervene, to force its alternative knowledges into the power structures of the West as well as the non-West. It seeks to change the way people think, the way they behave, to produce a more just and equitable relation between the different peoples of the world.[10]



Student actors wearing traditional Māori cloaks

Lastly, we linked striving for social justice to striving to embody aspects of the consciousness soul, taking Elan Leibner's definition

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Photos courtesy of Tauranga Waldorf School, NZ

Diversity, Inclusivity, and Waldorf Education

A Call for Self-Reflection and Action

BY LINDA G. WILLIAMS, PhD

Principle 2 of the principles that guide the work of AWSNA states: *Waldorf schools foster social renewal by cultivating human capacities in service to the individual and society.* The 2018 AWSNA Summer Conference, held at Washington Waldorf School, took this principle as its theme. Over four hundred Waldorf educators, parents, board members, alumni, teacher education students, and independent researchers gathered to address issues of place, race, class, and gender. These issues were examined in the context of the background, culture, and practice of Waldorf Education at this time in North America. I was honored to share keynoting responsibilities with Neil Boland, Waldorf educator and researcher, who has written and spoken extensively on these issues.

When we engage in conversations about race, class, nationality, gender, and ability, we are also simultaneously examining many different areas of our schools and teacher education institutions. For me, these areas were highlighted in the talks and workshops and in the conversations that percolated throughout the conference. These communications centered around four areas that make up school culture:

1. Professional and personal development
2. Administrative policies and procedures
3. Curriculum
4. Teacher education

Professional and Personal Development

Through conversations at the conference, I learned that several member schools have extended their professional development offerings to include anti-bias training. They have done this through local consultants or national organizations such as the National SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) Project and Undoing Racism. This work seems most effective when a wide range of members of the school community participate, including teachers, administrators, board members, and parents. It also seems most enduring when this work is viewed as congruent with the call for self-development that lives at the heart of Waldorf Education.

Administrative Policies and Procedures

Reflecting on the ways we organize our schools and institutions, and on the means (resources) we bring together for this purpose, can be enlightening when we do this through the lenses of power, privilege, and inclusion. What messages do we send out, consciously or unconsciously, to prospective families and personnel about who we are and how we operate? How are we perceived by those who, with interest, approach us—including persons of color, Indigenous people, persons who do not fit into the sexual binary mold, and families struggling to survive financially? How are the voices of families heard and incorporated into decision-making in the school? How are resources, both human and financial, accumulated and distributed? These types of questions are usually approached, at least partially, through strategic planning and/or accreditation processes. However, they can also be the focus for ongoing study, contemplation, and discussion by faculty and staff.



Waldorf schools are becoming more and more diverse. In Detroit Waldorf School, for example, 26% of the students are African-American with another 6% identifying as multiracial.

Photo courtesy of Detroit Waldorf School

Curriculum

A renewed commitment to a place-based Waldorf Education provides the impetus for rethinking the curriculum in North American Waldorf schools. Steiner himself can be seen as arguing for a place-based curriculum.[1] Recently, Neil Boland and Jocelyn Romero Demirbag described their experiences when working with teachers and staff of Honolulu Waldorf School who explored the notion of place.[2] Place-based education gives us the opportunity to deepen relationships to Indigenous cultures, explore local geography and history, and broaden experiences in the natural sciences. It becomes a foundation through which themes of social justice can be explored through the challenges experienced by and the contributions made by many different peoples. Also, place-based education heightens students' relationships to their home, their locality, and, paradoxically, to the world. Teachers in a given locale or region could cooperate by identifying and sharing diverse source material that will meet the needs of their students.



Inclusive, place-based education in Hawai'i can involve—besides study of the native language, culture, and history—kindergartners at Honolulu Waldorf School growing kalo (taro), a traditional food, in the school garden . . .

Teacher Education

It is important that Waldorf teacher education programs continue to actively promote teaching for inclusivity, diversity, and social justice in their programs and practices. These themes should be explicit and central both in the ongoing programs and in specific workshops.

I also recommend that there be a concentrated, national effort to increase the number of teachers and administrators of color in our Waldorf schools. This step alone—to actively recruit and support teachers of color to become Waldorf teachers and administrators—would significantly increase the diversity of voices at the table.

Conclusion

In these tumultuous times, Waldorf schools across the continent are being called upon to renew their commitment to social justice and social renewal. It is important that Waldorf schools continue to deepen their relationships to the communities in which they live and serve, and remain "woke" to the cultural environment that surrounds us. The primary goal of working toward social justice is to ensure that our schools are safe, healthy, diverse, inclusive, and supportive communities for all children and adults to grow and develop in a healthy way.



. . . the use of native Hawaiian fabrics and instruments in the school's May Day celebration . . .

The 2018 AWSNA conference was a chance to bring together many diverse voices in Waldorf Education. Now is the time to capture this momentum and build upon it. We need to continue to share our experiences through publishing accounts in journals, newsletters, and blogs. Forums in individual schools and at regional and national conferences should feature the experiences of teachers, administrators, parents, and alumni as we reflect upon the many aspects of individual and collective Waldorf school culture.

At the end of the conference, I proposed that perhaps it is time to initiate a "Waldorf Social Justice Institute." This would be a dedicated space with one-, two-, or three-week residencies, a place where we could consolidate resources and trainings, and deepen the work through focused, collaborative research and dissemination. Workshops on unconscious bias, restorative justice, curriculum development, and the arts would be interspersed with talks from students, alumni, parents, teachers, staff, and researchers about experiences in their schools and greater communities. This



. . . and eleventh graders doing a practicum on a farm that uses traditional agricultural and fish farming methods.

Photos courtesy of Honolulu Waldorf School

extended version of our recent AWSNA conference could also include components of teacher preparation and administrative practices.

Whether or not this particular dream comes to fruition, the work toward social justice must continue as we move into the second century of Waldorf Education. Our children are counting on us. ʘ



Students from Haleakala Waldorf School visit Kahikinui, a remote area on Maui, to chant and dance in honor of the place.

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LINDA G. WILLIAMS *was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, and received her Waldorf training at the Waldorf Institute of Mercy College. She has over twenty years of class teaching experience, primarily serving at Detroit Waldorf School, where her current class is in the fifth grade. She also taught for three years at Urban Waldorf School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Dr. Williams received her doctorate from Michigan State University in 2006 and taught literacy development and urban education as an Associate Professor of Teacher Education at Eastern Michigan University from 2006 to 2014. In that year, she returned to class teaching at Detroit Waldorf where she also currently serves as co-chair of the college of teachers.*

Boland, continued from page 28

of the consciousness soul as the "empathetic soul."[11] For me, working toward social justice, toward diversity and decolonization requires empathy and is what you feel impelled to do when you have empathy for the Other. Feeling within yourself how the Other suffers when marginalized, oppressed, or rendered invisible, and not just understanding or knowing it, marks the beginning of change. It is an important step toward social renewal, which lies at the heart of the Waldorf movement. ʘ



NEIL BOLAND *lives in Auckland, New Zealand, and is senior lecturer in the School of Education at Auckland University of Technology. He teaches courses in numerous programs, mainly at the postgraduate level, and is also responsible for courses in Rudolf Steiner Education at the university. As a teacher, he worked in Steiner settings from kindergarten through elementary and high school in Japan, New Zealand, and Germany. Since 1990, he has been involved in teacher education.*

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Photo at upper left courtesy of Haleakala Waldorf School

Building a Tiny House at High Mowing School

BY KENDAL J. BUSH



High Mowing School (HMS) in Wilton, New Hampshire, is a preschool through grade twelve Waldorf school. About half the students in grades nine through twelve live on campus in dormitories. In the fall of 2016, students built an outdoor classroom as part of an elective horticulture study. The timber-frame structure was made entirely from wood harvested on the High Mowing campus. The project gave the students an opportunity to learn about sustainable living while utilizing and developing math, carpentry, and social skills.

That outdoor classroom project helped create interest among the students in "tiny" structures. Sadhana Lake '18 began the tiny house conversation at HMS out of a desire to provide "a space for students by students." Sadhana and several of her peers created a proposal for a tiny house project, which quickly received funding from a generous donor.

The tiny house project caught the attention of Jason Elder '18, William Mussman '18, and Chaz Marie Rodgers '18. The three students offered to spend their 2017 summer vacation constructing the tiny house. With the assistance and guidance of master builder and HMS trustee Phil Brooks and HMS faculty member, horticulture specialist, and trustee Brad Miller, the students put their ideas on paper.



The sturdy frame of the tiny house is composed of timbers made from local eastern white pine.

First, the students envisioned the size, technical specifications, and use of the tiny house, and created CAD drawings of the proposed structure. They visited several local businesses to research options for insulation and heating. Next came the challenge of designing and actually building the tiny house, which was to be the first of three such structures on campus. This first tiny house was built off-campus at Phil Brooks's house on a flatbed trailer and was moved to the campus at the beginning of the school year in September. During the construction, the students experienced the kind care of Phil's wife, Ginny.

Chaz, Jason, and Will spent the summer break working eight- to ten-hour days, six or seven days a week. Project manager Phil Brooks worked with the students, bringing over fifty years of experience building post-and-beam structures to the project. Phil comments:

> It's been a very educational experience, and not only educational but a lot of fun. These kids are so proud of what they are doing. How many juniors in high school get to build their own room and live in it?



Chaz Marie Rodgers '18 and Rye Fought '19 take measurements for the tiny house deck.

About building the frame of the house, Chaz says, "[It was] a lot of work—really hard to make all the mortises—but I could just see the picture of the house in my head at the end."

The tiny house is 24 feet long, 8.5 feet wide, and 13.5 feet tall. It is built on a trailer so that it can be moved. The house is equipped with a small shower, a composting toilet, and a loft area for sleeping. The students were largely responsible for the design and

All photos by Kendal J. Bush

construction of the tiny house, and also for the electrical wiring and plumbing. Phil observes, "So many people today live in a house but have no idea of what makes it work."

Chaz takes pride in what she has helped create: "It's so rewarding and so worth it as each tie went down and each post went up; we made the barrel bolts for everything. It is incredible to know that I took part in making that." Chaz documented the daily details of the project in her blog, *HMS Tiny House*.

Colleen O'Connors, English and science teacher, assisted Chaz with the documentation of the project and the blog. Colleen observes how the project manifested basic principles of Waldorf pedagogy:

> Rudolf Steiner emphasized that, in the early grades, the children should learn to move from the whole to the parts. Twelve is 2 + 10 (or 3 +9, 11 + 1, 5 + 7, . . .), not, at the beginning, 2 + 10 = 12. The first approach allows for seeing relationships—in this case between numbers—for flexibility in thinking, and for seeing multiple possible solutions to a problem. The second way allows for one right answer—which the student either has or not. In the Waldorf high school, this approach is mirrored in the training of observation skills, of observing the "whole" and not forgetting to come back to it, while constantly integrating what analysis reveals into the whole picture. This leads to flexible problem-solving.
>
> Building a tiny house is a truly visible example of how Waldorf educational principles can manifest themselves. Three high school students use their imaginative forces to design a house, use their interpersonal skills to work together, and, with all the rest of the technical support crew, constantly practice problem-solving as their imaginations morph into realities—and then are able to live in a house they built themselves!



Project director and school trustee Phil Brooks and Will Mussman '18 check measurements for the deck posts.

Will recounts how the hands-on experience surpassed his expectations:

> It was the only time I ever had to use the sine rule. I used it to find the swing of the door and I was like, "Oh wow, that was useful!" So it's applying knowledge that you have to a real-life situation as well as a tactile, hands-on experience. You learn so much more about the material than you actually think you would.



Jason Elder '18 uses a chopsaw to cut wood siding for the house.

The students also worked with time management, project management, and people skills. Will recalls:

> We became the builders, the planners, the financial people, and we also became our own advertisers with our blog. We became our own everything, and through the process we learned so many different things.

With a broad smile, Phil Brooks recalls the experience of working with the students:

> They [were] enthusiastic about figuring out the math and how we can make the different roof pitches match. There's a lot of trigonometry and algebra involved in that. I just gave them the challenge and they got to use some of the math they've been learning in school. We also looked at the history of timber framing and how it originated. It goes way back to China. So this was not just building. There were a lot of other skills being developed in the project. And that's what we do at High Mowing. We try to give kids the opportunity to learn.

Jason's greatest takeaway from the project is a sense of accomplishment:

> Even though something may seem like climbing Mount Everest, people can still do that. If I were a freshman and someone said, "You can build a house;

you have that ability," I don't know if I would have believed that. Now I know that I can do things that I didn't think I could do. I think that's very valuable. I think the confidence is a good thing.

Jason and Will have similar views on how the project enriched their lives on a developmental level. Jason recalls:

> The independence helped all three of us grow way more than I could have imagined. And when I went home, my Mom noticed it right away. She was blown away. That was the best thing of the whole experience—the freedom and trust that we were given and how that made each one of us grow.

Will also feels a sense of empowerment through his involvement in the project:

> I feel like I am taken more seriously, at least around this community. Once you've done something like this, people look at you differently. You will be asked about it always, and it's great. I'm reminded of an amazing thing I did.



Chaz Marie Rodgers skim coats an interior wall with plaster/mud.

Once the tiny house was built, Chaz, Jason, and Will were entrusted with the privilege and responsibility of living independently in it. Chaz lived in the tiny house from September 2017 until mid-February 2018. Jason and Will then moved in as roommates for the remainder of the school year. Will states, "It really makes me feel the transition to adulthood. Physically making the move from the dorm to the tiny house was part of leaving the school."

Jason has advice for students interested in such a project:

> I think what would qualify a person to do this is enthusiasm, curiosity, and a willingness to work. It wasn't just during the summer that we worked on it. It started in the fall; it was a full year of work.



Living area inside the tiny house

When asked if this type of program could happen at any school, Jason replied:

> I think it could only happen at a school that promotes individualism and creativity and has an open mind for new things. It turned out with a great product that I think in future years people are going to look at it and think, "Whoa, that's super cool—kids built that here." It adds to the whole dynamic of the school.

Will adds:

> If you believe in it, you should do it! You can accomplish a lot of things if you set your mind to it. We want this to keep going. We want to come back and see three more built. That would be amazing. ʘ

Tiny House blog link:
hmstinyhome.blogspot.com

Tiny House video link:
https://youtu.be/dPC_LCMPJkk



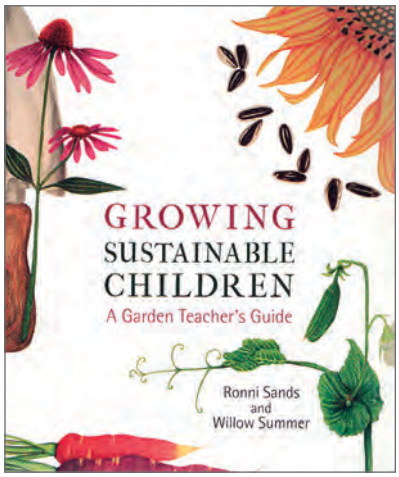
KENDAL J. BUSH *captures the day-to-day preschool through grade twelve Waldorf experience through photos, videos, and stories for High Mowing School's social media and web platforms. Kendal has a BA in communications from Temple University. Prior to relocating to New Hampshire, Kendal traveled the world as videographer and editor working for the National Geographic Channel and NBC News.*

New Book

Growing Sustainable Children
A Garden Teacher's Guide

214 pages • $24.95
Lindisfarne Books/SteinerBooks
Great Barrington, MA, 2017

BY RONNI SANDS and WILLOW SUMMER



Ronni Sands and Willow Summer are both experienced professional gardeners and Waldorf educators. They have written a book that purports to be a "garden teacher's guide." In fact, *Growing Sustainable Children* is an informative, practical, and inspiring resource for anyone interested in gardening and in gardening as an educational tool. Early childhood teachers, class teachers, high school teachers, and all parents will find this book a treasure.

The seven chapters of section one, "The Foundations of Garden Teaching," include a Waldorf-based discussion of the changing consciousness of children from kindergarten through grade twelve, tips on class preparation and self-development, a very accessible explanation of biodynamic agriculture, and an account of the important role biodynamic farmers and Waldorf schools have played in the growth of the school garden movement in North America. There is also practical advice on setting up a gardening program that includes a list of "Essential Garden Tools." Readers who do not know what a mattock is, for example, will learn that it is a "pickaxe-like tool with a flat blade used to dig out roots and to loosen soil."



Under the heading "Seasonal Activities" are twelve chapters describing an appropriate gardening curriculum for every group of children from the nursery through grade twelve. Even the preschool children can learn to weed, bring scraps to the compost pile, and help save seeds for the next year. For each grade from one to twelve the authors list goals to aim for and key skills to be developed. For example:

- For third graders, one goal is to unite strong wills with tools and work, and one skill is to use hand tools, such as trowels, dibbers, and measuring sticks. In the course of the year, the third graders might make berry jam, bake bread from wheat they have grown, and process butter and yogurt from milk.

- For fifth graders, goals include developing a basic understanding of the student's own role in caring for the earth's resources. Skills include plant identification and being able to sit quietly and draw a plant in the garden. Possible projects include drying and pressing flowers and making a broom from broomcorn stalks and a handle of wood cut in the forest.

- For eighth graders, goals include expecting and giving respect. Skills include food production and community service. The students might prepare a meal from their own produce, bring it to a homeless shelter, and serve it there. They might also help maintain the grounds of the school.

- For high school sophomores, leadership capacities and self-directedness are important to develop. Practical skills include fruit-tree grafting and applying permaculture techniques.

The above snippets provide only a glimpse into the treasure trove of practical and useful suggestions in the book.

In our first-world, industrialized culture, separation from nature is a problem for everyone, child and adult. As the authors point out, it is essential that every child have an experience of gardening, of interacting in a productive and intimate way with the natural world. This is important for the development of the child into a healthy, aware human being. It is also essential for Nature herself. Individuals who have developed an attitude of respect, love, and gratitude toward the natural world through gardening and other direct experiences of nature will be able to create a way of life that is sustainable for human beings and also for the natural world.

For parents and teachers interested in sustainable children and a sustainable world, this book is an invaluable resource.

—R.E.K.

Computer Science in a Waldorf Twelfth Grade

BY CHARLES WEEMS, PhD

Earlier articles in this series[1] examined Rudolf Steiner's advocacy for technology education in high school, a ninth-grade course exploring what a computer is, a tenth-grade class about how computers work, progressing to eleventh grade, where students discover why the internet carries inherent risks, and why software is hard to write correctly. In this concluding installment, we turn to senior year, where many students are wondering: Who am I, as an individual and as a member of society?

Many seniors approach this year with a strong shift in focus to what comes after high school, whether it be college applications, time off, or entering the workforce. It is a time of decisions that may affect their life course. Underlying that is a thoughtful, and often anxious, process of both examining their own nature and seeking insight into the needs of the world.

Since the rise of the internet, these questions have become increasingly intertwined with aspects of digital technology. Students are awash in a confusing swirl of the pros and cons of social media, issues of privacy, impacts of screen time, and so on. Many have heard assertions that the brain is just a wetware computer—one composed of organic material—which will soon be overtaken by a superior artificial intelligence; that this will emerge worldwide, instantaneously; and that humanity, as if it had crossed the event horizon of a black hole, will be unable to return from the singularity that lurks beyond it.

In this class, we tackle many of these issues head on, with a reassuring dose of reality and a deep examination of who we are, as individuals and as a society, with respect to our technology. Our approach is modeled on the way that Rudolf Steiner examined recent history, often referred to as Symptomatology,[2] and his seminal philosophical treatise on the nature of human consciousness and free will.[3]

There are many possible ways of structuring the teaching of this subject. In my version of the course, I work with the seniors twice each week for a twelve-week trimester, in periods that vary from forty-five to sixty-five minutes in length.

In the background of the classroom experiences stands an assignment to write a thesis-based essay on a technology of the student's choosing. The students are led through a stepwise process of preliminary research, formulation of a thesis statement, further research, developing an annotated bibliography of sources (which must pass scrutiny for reliability), outlining, and then writing the paper. Learning to factually argue a position on a topic is a valuable skill in any walk of life, but another purpose of the exercise is to fully experience the nature of objective consciousness, which characterizes our current era.[4]

In the first portion of the class we compare and contrast direct experiences with equivalent experiences mediated by digital technology. In each case, we identify subjective and objective differences, and what is gained and lost. We also discuss how the change in technology alters the economics in some of the cases and, in turn, how that changes life for those who are involved in that economy.



Figure 1. *Students compared getting news from a newspaper with reading news online.*

First, we begin with communication. Students send letters to each other, then exchange messages via text and, lastly, have a conversation, in each case using a quote they have chosen to share. Then we compare the experiences of examining a fine-art photograph and a marketing photo that has been Photoshopped. We try reading a newspaper for fifteen minutes and then switch to Google News for the same amount of time (Figure 1). We play solitaire both on a screen and with real cards. We listen to live music, then to a high-quality recording, and then to the lower quality of

Photo by Charles Weems

audio streaming, and hear the compression of dynamics associated with remastering older recordings to be listenable via earbuds. Finally, we look at the online representation of an oil painting at a local museum and then go see the actual painting (Figure 2).



Figure 2. *Students compared viewing the original painting with viewing a digital image online.*

Each experience results in a set of findings. For example, there is more of a tendency to read further in a newspaper than in online news where links can divert attention before an article has been read through. But newspapers are also cumbersome and waste resources. Online articles tend to pack more into the first part and be less thorough. On a news aggregator site, the articles come from many sources, with differences in reliability. Turning to the economics involved, we consider that quality reporting depends on trained journalists who must make a living, whereas it is easy to fill space with biased articles that may be little more than thinly edited press releases. The time to research and write a good article also conflicts with the turnover rate of online news. We then consider what types of people would want to own a news organization and why.

By the end of this process, we are able to identify some common trends in the shift to experiencing the world via technology. One class listed: convenience, lower cost, greater accessibility, less effort, less physical, less real, less value associated with content, less depth of experience but for more people, greater separation from the original experience, more emphasis on content as information, more goal-directed, less about process, emphasis on end product versus artisanship, quantity over quality, and dehumanization. It is clear that technology offers many advantages for convenience, efficiency, and transfer of information. However, at the same time, aspects of experiences that were long taken for granted are now being lost when we don't make the effort to be conscious of them.

Given the trends, the students then identify the motivations that stand behind these trends. This same group identified: greed, laziness, time pressure, scarcity of resources, and population growth.

Following this analysis, we have one more experience. Our school has a farm, so we carefully observe a cow for about five minutes, with the warning that there will be a quiz about the observations. As soon as we return to the classroom, the students are asked to state the cow's temperature, weight, percentage of butterfat in her milk, daily milk output, and food and water consumption.[5]

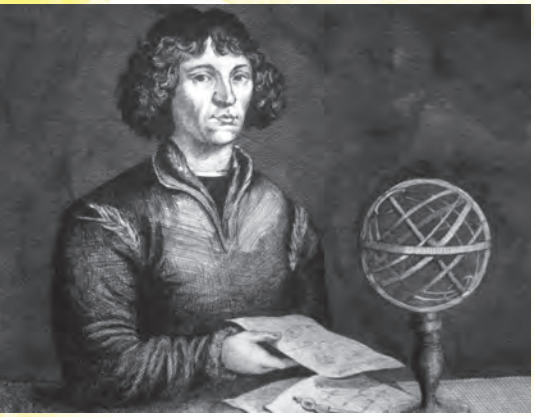
Viewing the cow this way is a shock in contrast to being in her presence as a living being. The dramatic difference illustrates the distinction between subjective and objective consciousness. It also makes clear that when we are thinking mainly in one of these modes, we become unconscious to the other. In observing the cow, the students never think to measure her. In contemplating her measurements, the image of a being dissolves into data.

Each of us is a subject with a unique inner experience of the world. On the other hand, objective reality is the same for everyone because we reduce the objects of the world to repeatable measurements. Civilization was dominated by subjective consciousness until about five hundred years ago. For example, we clung to the Ptolemaic model of the solar system for over one thousand years, because it was based on cherished ideals.

Had consciousness not evolved as such, we would be more subject to superstition and suggestions from authorities. Objectivity opens the door to free will. But at the same time, if it progresses too far, we start to treat humans and other beings merely as material objects, and we lose freedom in another way.

To follow these symptoms back to their origins, we begin with Copernicus, whose *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (*On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*), in 1543, transformed science by asserting that observations were more truthful than ideology. It's worth noting that before *De Revolutionibus*, the word *revolution* had only one meaning: for one body to circle another. Copernicus's book truly marks the genesis of the scientific revolution.

Because Copernicus was educated as a priest, we see how we must trace the trend toward materialism back through the Catholic Church. There it



Nicholas Copernicus (1473–1543), harbinger of a new objective consciousness in humanity

begins with the first council of Nicea, in which the nature of the Christ was established, placing the church as the gatekeeper between human beings and the spiritual realm. Subjective spiritual experiences thus faded, and theology focused on studying scripture to learn the nature of God. Once scripture had been plumbed, the other book of God, natural creation, was opened and studied with the same intense application of logic. Students thus see an example of how modern symptoms can, in some cases, be attributed to specific events, and that seemingly minor choices in history can have great consequences.

Having seen how consciousness can evolve, we reflect on where we might be headed. One option is to become more materialistic, but that leads to cruelty. Another is to reject objective science and retreat to the world of feeling, but that leaves us unanchored in reality. Students quickly see that the only way forward is to become conscious of our consciousness—that it is necessary to consciously weave subjective and objective in balance with each other.

In turn, that requires contemplative practice to develop inner awareness and self control. It also requires outer work to maintain balance in our experiences (nature, art, music, literature, languages, history, culture) and our skill sets (practical and fine arts, math, science, athletics, and so on). Sometimes, at this point, a senior will sit up and say, "Hold on. Is that why we . . . ?" And "Waldorfiness"—the many special aspects of the Waldorf curriculum and pedagogy—begins to make sense.

In the last portion of the class, we turn to considering Artificial Intelligence (AI). But before one considers an artificial something, one should have an understanding of the natural variety. We begin by recognizing that thinking makes human intelligence what it is. We are conscious via our thoughts. But our thoughts weave concepts from the world, and we know the world first through percepts—experiences of the outside world mediated through our senses.

Most of our perceptual experiences lead immediately to conclusions, which are associations of existing concepts with those percepts. But we don't come into the world filled with concepts. So, to experience concept acquisition, we start with a pure percept, for example, see Figure 3. After staring at such an image for a few minutes, most students have an "Aha!" moment. That it then becomes difficult to stop seeing the figure in the image illustrates how every encounter we have, changes us.

From this experience we can reflect on our thought processes in attempting to acquire the concept from the image. That leads to reflection on the thought process used in reflection, and it becomes clear that thinking is a self-referential and self-sufficient activity. Out of everything we experience, our thinking is the one thing we can know completely because we, ourselves, produce it. Because the concept of thinking originates with thinking itself, we see that concepts of things in the world also originate in those things.



Figure 3. *If one stares at this image long enough, a concept may arise to match the percept.*

For example, after a young child plays with a dog for the first time, she or he acquires the concept of *dog*, and has no trouble recognizing most dogs, even of different breeds. Each dog manifests the concept that defines it as a species. Our ability to grasp such concepts is what Steiner calls our intuitive sense. In contrast, an AI system must be presented with a vast number of images of different dogs to synthesize a pattern-matching function that identifies dogs on the basis of key features in their outer characteristics.

Students come to understand that human nature requires us to be separate from the things of the world so that we can be individuals, but that this separation creates a desire to reunite with the world, which we experience as curiosity. Through thinking, we join percepts with concepts to gain understanding, which is a uniting that preserves individuality.

Concepts and percepts do not, by themselves, have meaning. It requires the thinking of an individual to join them in a manner that brings meaning.

Therefore, meaning is a subjective quality and depends on the thinker's nature, including inheritance, development, environment, and prior experience. Here we see a clear distinction between human and animal intelligence, which is that humans must ask each other what they mean. We can also see that part of our nature is to give meaning to the universe.

We then turn to an examination of neurophysiology and how the notion that the brain is merely a complex computer entered the science of mind. We also consider an alternate view that the human being is a holistic, interwoven set of activities: the material body, life processes, autonomic and instinctual processes, and higher cognition. AI seeks to extract the last of these from the whole, and would thus have a much different quality, based not on concepts and meaning but on patterns of measurements of phenomena.

As we near the end of the course, we finally look at the major approaches used in AI research, which divide into two major camps. On the one hand, there are systems that apply powerful mathematical techniques to achieve capabilities similar to those of humans, such as identifying faces, converting speech to text, playing board games, and driving cars. On the other hand, there are systems that try to simulate human neurophysiology and behaviors, in part to understand them (Figure 4).

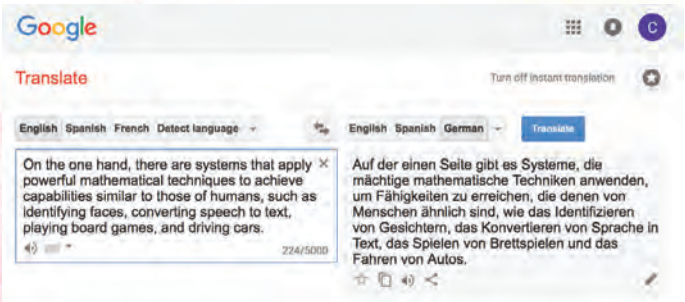


Figure 4. *Example of language translation using Artificial Intelligence*

The first camp, which includes much of the field of "machine learning," builds powerful tools that have great potential for helping humanity by improving efficiency and eliminating dull or dangerous work. But, like most powerful tools, there is risk. Those same techniques can be used by powerful companies or governments to profile individuals by observing their online activities, and thus enable manipulation of a populace to serve special interests.

The second camp, as we see from observing some simple simulations, is challenged to actually build models that are accurate. The first challenge is a lack of understanding of how the brain works. A second challenge is that a simulation of any meaningful portion of the brain requires vast computational resources. And the third challenge is that the complexity of the simulation increases the likelihood that it will diverge from reality after a fairly short time.

The course ends with a review of the differences between the philosophical and materialistic views of thought that we have seen. Much of the materialistic view is based on an assertion that immaterial phenomena, such as consciousness, must ultimately have a purely material explanation. We conclude with a reminder that there are many fundamental aspects of the universe (including the nature of space, time, matter, and energy) that are still unexplained on this basis. That leaves open a huge field of research, possibly necessitating a new stage in the evolution of consciousness to usher in the next revolution in our understanding. ʘ

Notes

1. Prior articles by the author include: "Computer Education in Waldorf Schools," *Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education* 25, no. 1 (S/S 2016); "Computer Science in a Waldorf Ninth Grade," *Renewal* 26, no. 1 (S/S 2017); "Computer Science in a Waldorf Tenth Grade," *Renewal* 26, no. 2 (F/W 2017); "Computer Science in a Waldorf Eleventh Grade," *Renewal* 27, no. 1 (S/S 2018).
2. Rudolf Steiner, *From Symptom to Reality in Modern History* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1976).
3. Rudolf Steiner, *Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path: A Philosophy of Freedom* (Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1995).
4. An honors option to write a science fiction short story involving artificial intelligence gives students a contrasting experience of subjective consciousness.
5. Observing kindergarten children or a majestic tree could provide a similarly shocking experience.



CHARLES (CHIP) WEEMS *is an associate professor in the College of Information and Computer Sciences at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and a teacher of earth science and computer science at the Hartsbrook (Waldorf) High School. He has been teaching at the college level for thirty-nine years and at the high school since it began fifteen years ago. Chip is a member of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the Anthroposophical Society, and the Pedagogical Section of the School for Spiritual Science.*

The International Youth Initiative Program

A Waldorf-Plus Year on the Coast of Sweden

BY ROSE NEKVAPIL

Over ten years ago, a series of gatherings, known as "Connect" conferences, were held in Dornach, Switzerland. These brought twelfth-grade Waldorf students from all over the world to consider the burning issues of our time and to create a network to empower youth to take hold of the future in conscious and creative ways.

Many participants asked for a program of longer duration that would enable young people to become more aware of the complex dynamics and challenges of our time and equip them with the courage and tools to become conscious changemakers in today's world. A large and diverse group of individuals took up this challenge and began a two-year design and planning process to create the Youth Initiative Program (YIP). Today, YIP is a ten-month, anthroposophically inspired, full-time educational program based on a beautiful campus in Ytterjärnam, Sweden, next to a fjord. It is hosted by a team of four organizers and two alumni volunteers who live on campus.



Most of the ten-month program takes place on a campus next to the Järna Fjord, about thirty miles south of Stockholm.

Participants in the program engage in an intensive and varied educational experience throughout the ten months. Guest contributors, who are experts within a particular field, deliver the weekly morning courses. The first block focuses on the outer challenges of our times. It includes courses on the environmental crisis, ecology, economics, politics and governance, and technology. The course contributors, together with the YIP organizing team, support participants in exploring issues such as privilege and wealth distribution, responsibility and freedom, and our interconnectedness versus our separation, as experienced in various contexts.

The second block focuses on inner development and awakening consciousness, since any effort in the world must, if it is to bear fruit, be accompanied by inner striving. The participants engage in biography work and portrait painting, storytelling and physical theater, and inner development practices. These courses support the unfolding of self-knowledge, which includes knowing our boundaries and the boundaries of others, respecting differences, and becoming awake to the individually tinted lenses through which we see each other, the world, and ourselves.

The third block rests on the understanding that to meet the challenges of today's age, we need to be able to work together and value and learn from our differences. It is becoming increasingly difficult to step out of our own point of view and see the world from the perspective of another. However, an understanding of the varied experience of the world is vital to finding solutions to the challenges of our time. YIP offers a variety of courses that equip participants to work with groups of diverse individuals in differing circumstances. Courses such as "The Art of Hosting" equip participants with the tools to host inclusive conversation and to harness collective knowledge.

Participants then do an international internship, an opportunity to travel to and work at a sustainable and forward-thinking agricultural, social, or educational initiative in Egypt, Spain, America, South Africa, Nepal, or the Philippines. There they experience how entrepreneurial principles need to be and can be culturally adaptable and relevant. They also have the opportunity to put their learning into practice in multicultural communities and to expand their horizons while simultaneously developing sensitivity to and appreciation for cultural diversity. Upon their return, participants take charge of their own curriculum in the "initiative weeks," during which they are supported to design their own education, invite contributors of their choosing, and concentrate on developing a personal project.

Finally, the morning courses turn toward supporting participants to transition out of YIP and find their next steps in life. The participants present their individual projects, set out together with organizers on an outdoor experience in the Swedish nature, and then look

together toward integrating their common experiences into their individual futures.

The educational design of YIP sees the value of nurturing and educating the whole human being to support health and balance in the individuals and in their initiatives in the world. The afternoon curriculum enables participants to work with the land in a local farming cooperative with inspired and dedicated young farmers. This exposes them to an outdoor learning environment that engages the will and awakens a sense of awe for all that grows. Further afternoon activities include singing and social art, project development, community meetings, and reflective activities with a smaller check-in group.

Much of the learning that takes place in YIP occurs in the conversations and interactions that take place among the participants. The thirty to forty young people study, work, cook, clean, and live together while exploring the challenges of our modern world. Within each YIP group more than fifteen countries—and five continents!— are represented. Some participants arrive at YIP having completed a Bachelors, Masters, or PhD degree, while others have just completed their final year of high school. YIP participants come from extremely varied economic, cultural, societal, and religious backgrounds where issues ranging from gender equality, wealth distribution, and privilege, to how to cook and clean effectively are seen in very different ways.

Alumni often cite becoming aware of their own beliefs/perceptions through exploring the beliefs/perceptions (different and similar) of others as central to their



Morning meditation

learning experience during YIP. Observing the "Other" in freedom and developing an interest in his/her way of doing and being can deepen our understanding of what it is to be human and help form connections and relationships based on respect.

After completing YIP, participants continue on their life path. Whether they go on to higher education, to work within Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), to establish themselves as a social entrepreneur, or return to their vocation, alumni report that they do so with a transformed sense of how they want to work with themselves, with others, and in the world.

YIP aims to give an understanding of our interconnectedness with each other, with the natural world, and with the events that occur in our changing and challenged society. It tries to awaken in each person a sense of responsibility for our way of living and interacting as well as the will to take that responsibility on seriously. And YIP tries to infuse that commitment with courage and joy in the knowledge that our time on Earth is precious and full of possibility, connection, friendship, and value. ʘ

Kawano, continued from page 6

Northern California Carnegie Competition and played at Carnegie Hall in New York City. In addition, four of them were on the SWS varsity basketball team, which last year had its third consecutive undefeated league season.

Eric Brickson, an SWS parent, helped in the recording of the piece, and Jacob Hosler, SWS music director, helped with directing the musicians. Thanks also to Dr. Evgeniy Sporov for his technical help in the composing and recording processes.

I am planning to make a slideshow video featuring scenes of the seasonal festivals with the audio track. The soundtrack and video will be available to SWS and other Waldorf schools for their use. For more information, write me at kazukawano@hotmail.com



Kaz Kawano—businessman, composer, and proud and thankful Waldorf father

Sacramento Waldorf School reminded me how to relate to music and how to appreciate and enjoy it. *Seasons in Waldorfia* is my gift to the school in return for this favor. I hope that people who have lost their dream in music, art, sports, or any other area of interest can regain their passion, as I did. ʘ

Sacramento Waldorf High School Virtuoso String Ensemble—Links

Seasons in Waldorfia
Movement I. "Opening Day—Rose Ceremony"
https://youtu.be/wpp_pE7lrt8
Movement II. "Michaelmas"
https://youtu.be/Ceq3wYuaVzo
Movement III. "May Day Festival"
https://youtu.be/TdHfzty0XKQ

GreenBee Wildlife Web

Waldorf100 and the Honeybee

The honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) is a remarkable creature. Honeybees exist in communities known as hives—living social organisms made up of between 20,000 and 80,000 individual bees. Of these thousands, one is a queen, several hundred are male drones, and the rest are female worker bees.

The queen lays the eggs that will become the next generation of bees in the hive. Queens also regulate the hive's activities by exuding pheromones that guide the behavior of the other bees. If the queen bee dies, worker bees rear new queens by feeding several female larvae a food called "royal jelly" and making those larvae's cells in the comb rounder and more elongated.

The male bees or drones fertilize the queen during her mating flight. Drones live in the hive during the spring and summer, but they are expelled as winter draws near.

Worker bees are female bees who have not matured sexually. These are the busy bees that are active in the landscape, foraging for food and gathering pollen, nectar, and resins from flowers and trees. Within the hive—which they have built—the worker bees tend to the queen and the young bees, circulate air and scent by beating their wings, clean the hive, and protect it when necessary.

During the winter, the number of bees declines and they cluster together in the hive to stay warm. All winter they live on the stores of their honey and pollen from spring and summer's labor. In the spring, the number of bees increases, and the hive becomes full and active again. Within the hive there is constant communication through scent and sound, and the bees are in constant movement. The beehive has been compared to a human brain, with the individual bees something like individual neurons.

A century ago, Rudolf Steiner, founder of Waldorf Education, had much to say about the honeybee, about its relation to the rest of the natural world and to human beings. Steiner saw the honeybee not only as an essential part of the natural landscape but also as a teacher and inspirer of human beings. Steiner held that observing, experiencing, and working with honeybees can help children (and adults) develop a deep connection both to the natural and to the spiritual world. Among Steiner's many insights regarding the relationship between human beings and honeybees are the following:

"If children are given a sense for the living earth and their connection with it when young [as may be accomplished by their experiencing the honeybee], they will develop into adults who, on the one hand, are more securely rooted in themselves, and, on the other, are more capable of acting as caring custodians of the natural world."



Apis mellifera, *benefactor of humanity*

"We can begin to understand their life if we realize that bees live as though in an atmosphere that is wholly pervaded by love."

"When we look at a beehive we should say to ourselves, with something akin to exaltation, that the whole universe enters us through the beehive, and makes us more capable human beings."

"It is really marvelous the way the bee sees to it that we learn to use our soul to work upon our bodily organs . . . to prepare the soul to work and breathe properly in the body."

Background photo at top: Honeybees fanning at the entrance of a Sun Hive, a hive with an internal frame of circular wooden slats. Courtesy of Wren Christensen

The Honeybee in Crisis

Around the world, the honeybee is in crisis. This crisis largely has been created by human beings. Widespread insecticide and herbicide use, the destruction of flower-rich natural environments, parasites, and other factors have resulted in serious decline in honeybee populations. In a recent year, a third of all hives of domesticated bees in the United States experienced "hive collapse."

The honeybee decline is also a crisis for human beings. Honeybees are the primary pollinators for the fruit and nuts produced in the United States, which make up about one-third of our total food supply. The honeybee products that human beings value and use—honey, nectar, propolis, and wax—have declined in quantity and quality.

—R.E.K.



Bee steward, Wren Christensen, and a Sun Hive

GreenBee Wildlife Web

BY NITA DAVANZO,
Waldorf100 Interim Director



As part of Waldorf100—the observance in 2019–2020 of the founding of the first Waldorf school a century ago—an international initiative called "Bees & Trees" has been launched. In North America, under the auspices of AWSNA, the initiative is called "GreenBee Wildlife Web." GreenBee Wildlife Web aims to raise awareness of honeybees and to help Waldorf schools all across North America establish a "continental park system" on school campuses, public spaces, and backyards in which honeybees and other pollinators can thrive. Schools will be planting trees and gardens and establishing beekeeping programs to help support and rebuild the honeybee population.

Sun Hives and Schools is a project that is part of the larger GreenBee initiative. It is promoting the use of a particular type of hive developed in Germany called the Weissenseifener Haengekorb (Hanging Basket) or Sun Hive. The Sun Hive consists of an inner frame of curved wooden slats covered by baskets woven of rye straw. Proponents believe that the hive, with its organic shape, better supports the life and activities of the honeybees than the more common, rectilinear Langstroth hive. The aim of the project is that schools will use the Sun Hive as a tool to teach children about the true nature of the honeybee and how to care for the Earth as active honeybee stewards. From seed to straw to nest, the Sun Hive can nurture a holistic worldview for school-age children and adults alike.

Wren Christensen, a trained biodynamic practitioner and honeybee steward, is the creator of the "Sun Hives and Schools" project. Wren is willing to travel to Waldorf schools and other interested communities to give talks on the project, share curriculum inspired by the Sun Hive and the honeybee, and provide guidance in creating a honeybee sanctuary. Wren lives in El Dorado County in northern California and can be contacted at: stardustfarmacy@protonmail.com

To follow the Sun Hives and Schools initiative, please visit stardustfarmacy.com.

For more information and to take part in Waldorf100 and the GreenBee Wildlife Web, please visit: WaldorfEducation.org/Waldorf100 ๏

Photo courtesy of Wren Christensen

McMillan and MacKinnon, continued from page 25

children are simply having fun, changing the rules to fit their abilities. In organized sports, the emphasis is on competition, on winning, on overwhelming the other team, and the rules are immutable.

Also, when a child begins to engage in organized team sports, he/she starts to absorb the underlying philosophy of competitive sports. Simply stated, it is "This side is mine, that side is yours. I will defend my side, and I will attack yours," or "We are in a battle and my aim is to overwhelm and subdue you." Instead, why don't we simply teach the children to *play together*, before we put children into set frameworks where the goal is to *defeat the other*? Circus arts can play an integrating role here. In such activities, children can be challenged at every level, and everyone is a winner.

Age-Appropriate Phases of Movement

As children develop, they need to go through the phases of movement activities in a wholesome, age-appropriate way. First, in early childhood, they should engage in imaginative and free play, in nature as well as indoors, pretending they are animals, kings, queens, knights, damsels, and dragons. Outdoor play, especially in natural settings, is very important. Nature is still the best teacher. Then can come such games as Mother, May I? and Hide-and-Seek, which have flexible rules and no "winners" and "losers." Then can come informal team games, with flexible rules and an emphasis on everyone having fun, rather than on competition. Finally, when the child is approaching or in puberty, organized team sports can come into the picture. Eurythmy, Bothmer Gymnastics, and Spacial Dynamics® are separate and unique disciplines that work together in Waldorf schools to address the inner and outer development of the child.



Circus arts provide opportunities for enjoyable, cooperative movement for children and young people . . .



. . . as does eurythmy.

Learning the "ins" and "outs" of the dynamic progression from child, to youth, to teen, to adult, is an exciting journey. Today there is much peer pressure for children to join competitive teams at an ever-earlier age. Parents should insist on their right to allow their child to develop at his/her own pace. Telling a child "Not now, that needs to wait" may be one of the most important parenting decisions mothers and fathers will ever make. Every age comes with an expiration date. Each child is a "caterpillar," not a little adult. Parents can create the spaces and the opportunities for their child to fully benefit from every stage before it is time for them to move on to the next one. The stakes are high. The prize is having a real childhood. ʘ



JAIMEN McMILLAN *has been a teacher of games, sports, and movement for over fifty years. He is the founder of the discipline of Spacial Dynamics, which over the past thirty-five years has become one pillar of the movement education programs in Waldorf schools worldwide. Jaimen lectures internationally on the subjects of education, health, and self-development. He directs Spacial Dynamics trainings on four continents for teachers, therapists, and leadership. Jaimen has coauthored books on sports instruction, movement, healing, and the circus arts. For more information, visit* www.spacialdynamics.com



ADAM MacKINNON, *a parent of a fourth grader and ninth grader at Summerfield Waldorf School & Farm, is the editor of* The Messenger, *the school's newsletter. A former online editor at* YES! *magazine, he manages various publications at Summerfield, including an annual Waldorf Arts Calendar, and also runs his own business coaching new converts to pickleball, one of the fastest-growing sports in America.*

Photo at left courtesy of Lloyd Bryant

WALDORF SCHOOLS IN NORTH AMERICA
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México

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Educational Programs for 2018-2019

Explorations
This new program offers weekend study workshops in the arts at a central "hub" location, supplemented by "satellite" study seminars. Inaugural "hubs" this year are planned in Asheville, NC; Jacksonville Beach, FL; and Bethesda, MD. Further communities interested in hosting a "hub" program should contact the Center for Anthroposophy for an onsite information/orientation session.

Building Bridges
Customized for practicing teachers and leaders in Waldorf schools who are seeking Waldorf teacher education and continued professional development. This streamlined program includes the option of earning advance standing credits in the Waldorf Teacher Education Program at Antioch University New England, leading to a fully-accredited Master's degree in Waldorf Education. Each year, this program is offered in a different host site.

Waldorf High School Teacher Education Program: June 30-July 27
Offered each July, this three-summer program prepares high school teachers in the specialized disciplines of arts and art history, English, history, life science, earth science, mathematics, computer science, physics, and chemistry. A new cycle is launched each year in Wilton, NH, including the option to earn a fully-accredited Master's degree in Waldorf Education.

Renewal Courses: June 23-28, June 30-July 5
Two weeks of five-day retreats in Wilton, NH, for Waldorf teachers and those seeking personal rejuvenation and professional renewal through anthroposophical study, artistic immersion, good food, and fun. Selected courses offered in collaboration with Antioch University New England, including the option to earn a fully-accredited Master's degree in Waldorf Education.

Waldorf Elementary Teacher Education
Three different programs offered by Antioch University New England:

***Year Round Waldorf Teacher Education*—**
Courses held in Keene and Wilton, NH, over 13 months.

***Summer Sequence Waldorf Teacher Education*—**
Three consecutive summer sessions in Wilton, NH.

***Healing Education (Advanced Track)*—**
Two consecutive summer sessions in Wilton, NH, for experienced Waldorf educators and anthroposophical practitioners. Program in partnership with Camphill Academy.

Waldorf Administration and Leadership Development
Intended for those serving as administrators and leaders in Waldorf schools.This streamlined program (two five-day institutes in Keene, NH; one Renewal Course in Wilton, NH) includes mentorship and online group dialogue on assigned readings.

centerforanthroposophy.org, Phone: (603) 654-2566
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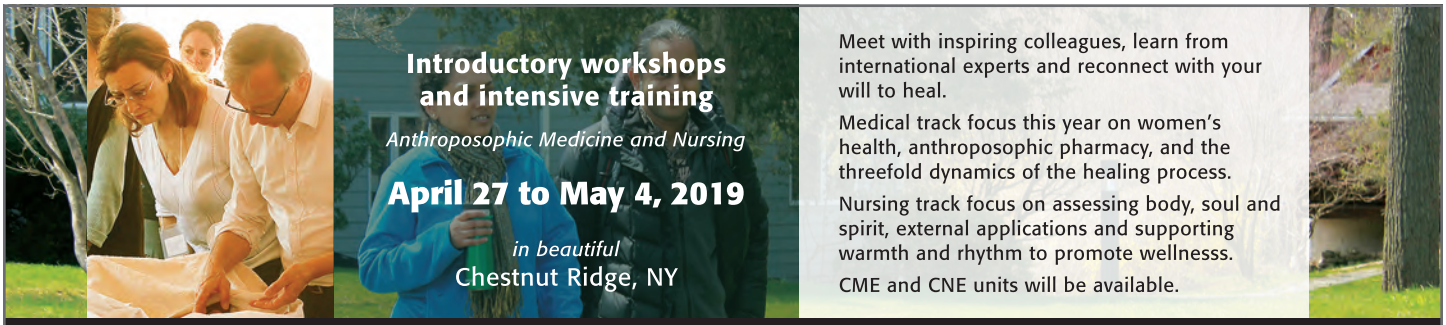
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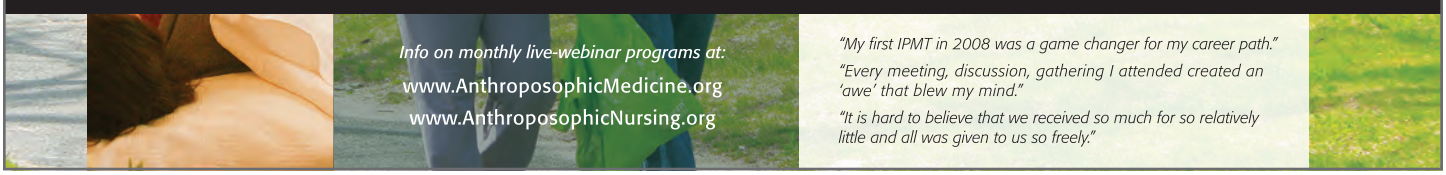
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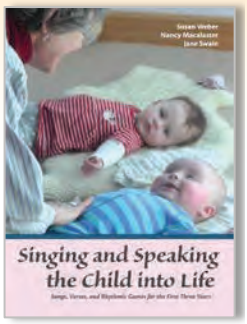
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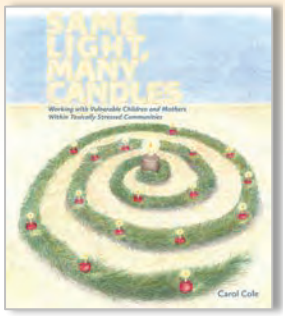
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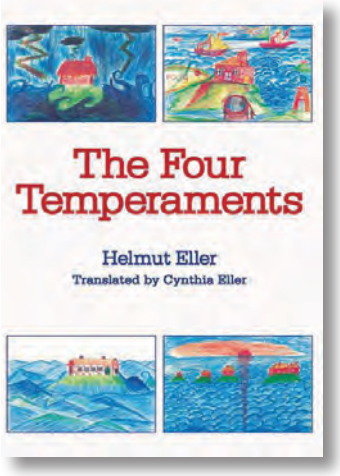
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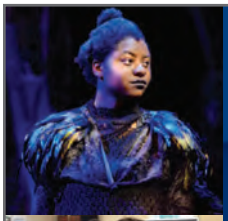
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