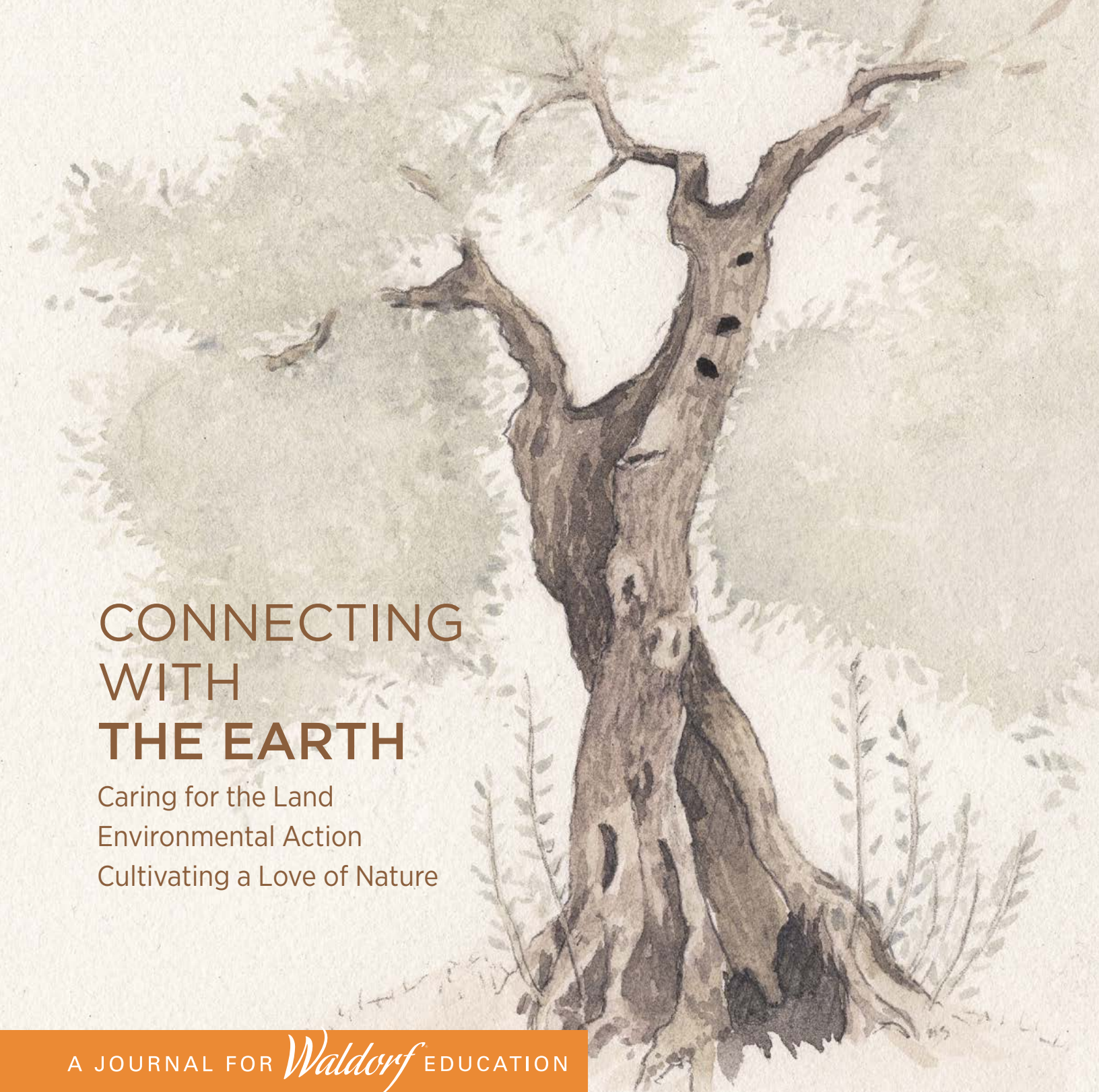


SCHOOL RENEWAL

Fall 2021 | Volume 1, Number 2



CONNECTING WITH THE EARTH

Caring for the Land
Environmental Action
Cultivating a Love of Nature

A JOURNAL FOR *Waldorf* EDUCATION

DEAR WALDORF FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY:

We are pleased to share our second edition of *School Renewal*, a publication for Waldorf school families who seek a deeper insight into Waldorf education.

In this volume we explore the ways in which schools are developing deeper connections with the earth, caring for the land, and cultivating a love of nature. This topic is important to all of us, as it was to Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf education. In his book *The Foundations of Human Experience*, Steiner focuses on human beings' relationship to nature and earth. He emphasizes the importance of teaching students about the natural world as an essential part of their education, and advises teachers to guide students to an understanding of nature and their relationship to the earth as a spiritual endeavor. Steiner states that we can properly understand humans only when we think of humanity as part of the cosmic processes of the natural world.

As we experience first-hand the impact of climate change, Rudolf Steiner's words, spoken more than 100 years ago, resonate profoundly. In Waldorf classrooms, teachers are tasked with ensuring diverse cultures are reflected in their curricula, and that lessons are built on a foundation that addresses the time and place. But that in itself is not enough. Complex and important questions must be addressed. Are we serving and teaching those coming forward to seek Waldorf education? Are we good caretakers of the lands we occupy? Are they ours to occupy in the first place? How do we make reparations? How are we contributing to our local communities?

We are in a new time of challenges, changes, and opportunities. Many schools are actively exploring what it means to decolonize the curriculum and bring awareness and respect for the lands they live upon. They are seeking the imperative perspectives of indigenous communities and communities of color. This is the Waldorf community's task; to deepen our thinking and imaginations of what a Waldorf curriculum could be. When our students feel a sense of belonging, they will feel a responsibility to the earth.

Here, we highlight the ways in which schools are developing a deeper connection with the earth, caring for the land, and cultivating a love of nature. From early childhood classrooms to alum initiatives related to sustainability, you'll see how Waldorf education guides students to freely innovate for the future with purpose and direction.

Caring for the earth takes inner commitment and the will to make change. Waldorf schools and institutes across the continent are looking closely at the diverse communities they serve and the lands they inhabit, and are looking for ways to be good caretakers of the earth. We hope you are enriched and encouraged by these pages, and that you will join us as we move forward into taking up the work of caring for our home, the earth.

Sincerely,
Rebecca, Stephanie, and Melanie

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ON THE COVER

Cover artist Maya Eliisa Shakur is a children's book illustrator, sustainable clothing designer, and lover of plants and animals. She attended the Garden City and Santa Fe Waldorf schools. Shakur is the creator of the brand Studio Mai, and is currently based in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she is surrounded by inspiration in the forms of nature, culture, and the arts. The featured illustration was completed for a vineyard on an organic farm in Italy. View Shakur's work at mayaeshakur.myportfolio.com and follow her on social media by searching for [@bystudiomai](https://www.instagram.com/bystudiomai).



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Miniature Hydroponic Greenhouses Can Help With Food Insecurity

By Nora Goldberg-Courtney



“I felt proud of how the plants had grown and optimistic because my greenhouse could be used to benefit other people.... Because my Waldorf education allowed me to learn in so many different and unique areas, I was well-equipped to complete my project.”

For my Maine State Science Fair project this past winter, I decided to build a miniature hydroponic greenhouse. I grew kale, and the premise of the project was to provide access to vegetables for food insecure families. In certain counties of this state, some families live miles from places where they can purchase fresh produce. Since greens are a necessity to the human diet, this project, if expanded, would provide access to fresh vegetables without the need to travel to acquire them.

I’ve always enjoyed studying plants and I wanted to combine science with community service. I work at a hydroponic greenhouse on the weekends, so I already had some knowledge of plants and how to grow them hydroponically. I grew the plants indoors in trays in a tub of water under an LED light during the winter.

I debated what type of vegetable to grow, but in the end, since this was an experiment that focused on nutrition, I chose kale because of its high nutritional density. My hypothesis was that if three species of kale were grown hydroponically, then out of the three, the *Brassica napus var. pabularia* would have the most prolific growth. That turned out to be correct. Because the kale was grown in water rather than soil, it meant that anyone could grow it regardless of their location.

As the plants grew, I charted their growth and began to prepare for the fair. I created a graph of the different heights, wrote an abstract on the project, and made a quad chart, which explained the greenhouse to the science fair judges. In addition to the judges for the category my project was entered in, I presented my project to many other judges that day because I was applying for five different scholarships for after I graduate in the spring of 2022. The

science fair was online last year, so after a long morning of Zoom calls, I found out that I had been awarded second place in the plant category, and that I had received four out of the five scholarships I had interviewed for! One was a one hundred percent tuition scholarship with a research assistantship. It was very rewarding to see that all of my work had paid off and that I had been able to show my project to people who were just as interested in helping the community as I was.

When I finished my project, I felt proud of how the plants had grown and optimistic because my greenhouse could be used to benefit other people. I also noticed that every aspect of my project had incorporated a skill I learned during my years at Maine Coast Waldorf School. I had to be creative in my thinking about how to grow plants in the winter, and my teachers have always encouraged me to think outside the box. I also used the graphing that I learned in my ninth grade statistics class. Additionally, building the greenhouse itself required woodworking skills, a class I took throughout middle school. Because my Waldorf education allowed me to learn in so many different and unique areas, I was well-equipped to complete my project. I can continue to work on it in the future since I’m hoping to expand upon this experiment this year and maybe develop kits to give to people living in food deserts so that they can complete the same process I did and grow fresh food.

Nora Goldberg-Courtney is a senior at Maine Coast Waldorf School in Freeport, Maine. Her favorite subjects in school are biology and botany. In her free time, she enjoys cross-country running, outdoor track and field, and baking. She has not yet decided which college she will attend next year.

Environmental and Cultural Education for the Body, Mind, and Spirit



Seniors at the Tara Performing Arts High School in Boulder, Colorado, usually travel to Europe for their year-end trip. However, due to the pandemic, the school crafted a car trip throughout western North America, from Boulder to Bryce Canyon, Utah, to Kino Bay, Mexico, north through California and Oregon to Whidbey Island, Washington, then home via the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. The class rode horseback amid wide panoramas, went boating with dolphins, heard the creation story of the Comcáac people of Sonora, Mexico, went rafting, and hiked among the giant redwoods of Northern California. Students reported that the trip was outstanding, giving them a new appreciation for this beautiful continent. Here are photos from the trip and excerpts from journal entries.



"I can very easily say: my mind has been blown. I learned so much, from so many people...I am so glad that this is where I ended up. Having done this I would choose nothing else...I will never forget these experiences for as long as I remember what my name is."

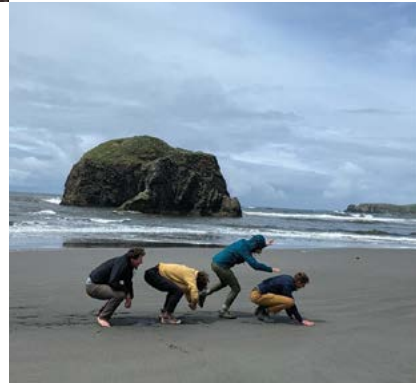


"All my life, science has been something I didn't like. On this trip however, I've discovered a passion for biology and environmental science. All of the people I've met have been amazing teachers. Seeing them inspires and engages me to learn more."

"It hit me at the top of the hill in Kino, staring at the patched blue and turquoise waters. Something shifted making everything feel clear. No more haze filling my head. It might seem strange, but what struck me was the will to learn."



"The redwood forest is the most magical and beautiful place I have had the gift of seeing...When I entered the forest, all parts of (my inner child) and my soul were brimming with joy at the new place my soul felt at home. Pure bliss."



"The sky turned a certain shade of blue, the kind that the heaven's fixing up for you. This world is endless, boundless inspiration—everything and nothing at the same time."



"If only I could see through the eyes of a redwood. I think all questions would be answered in the most gentle and loving way."

From Fashion to Biodynamics: Model Arizona Muse Tackles Global Soil Regeneration with New Nonprofit, Dirt

By Nita June

Once called the “new face of American Fashion,” Arizona Muse is a model who has appeared on the covers of prominent fashion magazines around the world. She also follows her passion for the environment as a global ambassador for organizations like Aveda and Greenpeace.

This year, Muse founded Dirt, a nonprofit that supports biodynamic projects across the globe. Muse attended both the Tucson and Santa Fe Waldorf schools.

Can you share your journey from your days at school to where you are now? My Waldorf days began in the Tucson Waldorf School. When I was ten, we moved and I joined the Santa Fe Waldorf School in fourth grade. Both schools were really wonderful. Then, when I was 16, I was very into independence. I'd gotten a job at a restaurant and I felt like I was really grown up. I decided to leave at 16 instead of graduate, and finished [at another school]. Looking back, I should have definitely just stayed at Waldorf. I think it would have been really nice to complete the full circle; I've come around to feeling like Waldorf is really a fantastic education.

I started modeling [after high school] and I had my son very young. He's 12 already, and I'm 33. Ignorance is bliss was the phrase that applied to me. I didn't understand at all what I was getting into, and so it wasn't scary. It didn't change my life at all, actually. I have lived my entire adult life as a mother, which has been amazing, but definitely presented challenges in my mid-20s when none of my friends had kids at all and I had a three-year-old.

Six years ago I became interested in sustainability, and that led me to activism. Now I'm a full-blown activist, and I'm so proud of that title. It has changed my life to be so passionate about something, communicating about it, and educating myself as much as I can.

The beginning of my activism was realizing that I knew nothing about the clothes that I was helping to sell. I started to educate myself and that led me to realize



PHOTO OF ARIZONA BY HELENE SANDBERG @HELENESANDBERGPHOTO

that all the sectors [of fashion] actually are connected when you get down to the raw materials. For example, fashion uses metal for zippers, buckles, bags, accessories, and jewelry. That metal is mined. The mining sector is incredibly polluting and hard on the environment and mining communities. And all of our natural materials are grown in soil by farmers, so that's cotton, silk, leather, and wool. After years and years of self-educating, I became an educator, and started speaking on panel discussions, and making videos on my own Instagram channel to inspire a more sustainable life.

Now, the fashion industry wants me because of my activism, and that is the best feeling ever, because models really struggle with identity. We're chosen for things based on absolutely nothing that we've done. Now I'm chosen for something that is my doing and I'm proud of it.

What prompted your curiosity around sustainability? Was it a desire for deeper meaning with what you were doing?

I was invited to a luncheon for a charity that focuses on biodiversity, and I was just shocked that this word, biodiversity, had not ever been used in front of me before. That was what prompted this whole journey. And then what tipped it into activism was [the environmental activism group] Extinction Rebellion. The first time I walked with them was just amazing. That was when I realized, “Yeah, I am an activist. This is activism. I don't have to be shouty if that's not my style. I don't have to be anything.” Activism can be whatever you make it for yourself. Now, I really

“I believe that regenerating soil is one of the most important actions to be taken in the face of climate change.”

encourage everyone to find your own inner activist, because it feels so good to start doing it.

Can you speak about how you were led to these different avenues as the founder of Dirt, as an ambassador for Greenpeace, and as an Aveda advocate for sustainability? The Greenpeace Ambassadorship was first, and I'm also on the advisory board of The Sustainable Angle, which is an organization in London that works globally to source sustainable fabrics for the fashion industry, which are really hard to come by. Even designers who wanted to be a sustainable brand would give up because finding the materials was so difficult. Then I was named Aveda's Global Advocate for Sustainability.

Most recently was the launch of Dirt, which exists to regenerate soil. I love soil and farming and believe that regenerating soil is one of the most important actions to be taken in the face of climate change. The most amazing thing that I've done in my whole period of activism is to volunteer on biodynamic farms. As soon as I did that, I was like, “Yes. This is where I belong.” Dirt supports the biodynamic movement which I chose to exclusively focus on because it was created for climate change, even though it was created nearly 100 years ago. The preparations are the thing that sets biodynamics apart. They are an incredible remedy for climate and human change.

Do you feel like any of the seeds of your work were planted while you were at Waldorf? So much so. One specific memory that really sparked a lot of what I'm doing now is my farm trip to Beneficial Farm when I was ten, which was a biodynamic farm right outside of Santa Fe. That was really powerful. Then a whole host of other experiences; the woodworking, the knitting, the books that our family was encouraged to read—all of the education I received that the earth is a viable source of satisfaction and interest.

With your work how have you seen the human element arise? The world can be so siloed in different activist pursuits; social justice over here, environmental activism over here. How have these aspects tied in? The biggest topic right now, finally, is race. And how is it that still someone like me, white, privileged, growing up in a very white environment, could have thought until my middle adulthood, that racism didn't exist anymore simply because it didn't touch me? The beginning of my understanding around this was with indigenous peoples, because indigenous peoples are protecting most of our wild land on Earth and governments are trying to constantly drive them off the land. And yet they still continue to protect it for the greater good, for everybody's benefit.

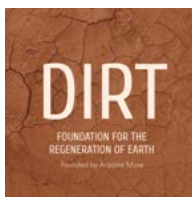
I went to a Biodynamics Association conference hosted by the then-director Thea Maria Carlson where I realized the subtle and delicate, but enormous, need for human diversity to be recognized as equally as bio-

diversity in plants and animals. So, that is a big piece of the mission of Dirt, to make sure that I'm playing my part in changing the system, because this system is so clearly set up to serve someone like me, and so clearly not set up to serve anyone who doesn't look like me.

Another side of farming is mental health; conventional farmers experience extremely poor mental health and sadly their suicide rates are higher than every single national average. This means that people who grow our sustenance are so stressed and depressed that they're killing themselves. Conventional farmers are in a cycle of debt that is unmanageable, because they buy genetically modified seed that they can't collect because it's infertile, and they buy chemicals to spray those genetically modified plants, and they buy heavy-duty machinery that they have to finance. With-in that debt cycle, there's no space for a poor crop, and they're really vulnerable to a bad season because they only have one or two harvests a year.

If you're a biodynamic farmer, you have perhaps 17 harvests a year. You're not so vulnerable to a bad season and your income is much more regular. Biodynamic farms can have a much higher yield, and so this myth that we can't feed the world until we're all conventional is totally inaccurate.

I would love to suggest that people watch the videos I've made about biodynamics. I'm trying to explain things in a beautiful way, because a lot of informational, educational videos are a little bit dull. I explain that everyone can see a plant has a physical shape, and it grows and it needs sunlight and water and the nutrients in the soil. But also, biodynamics sees that the plant inside has something non-physical. We cannot deny its existence, yet modern science can't measure it, so they just kind of go, “Oh, we won't talk about that one.” Whereas biodynamics is like, “Okay, we don't really care that you can't measure it. We're still going to farm that.” Biodynamics farms the life within the plants, and I don't see any other type of farming that does that.



Arizona Muse currently lives in Ibiza, Spain, with her husband and two children. For more information about Muse and Dirt, visit www.dirt.charity

The biodynamic movement is inspired by the work of philosopher and scientist Rudolf Steiner. Steiner's lectures integrated science with a recognition of the spirit. At the center of his teaching were goals to revitalize the earth and to deepen the human connection with it. According to the Biodynamic Association (BDA), “Biodynamics is a holistic, ecological, and ethical approach to farming, gardening, food, and nutrition.”

Nita June is the AWSNA Director of Alum Relations.

Schools Celebrate Waldorf 100 by Initiating Beekeeping Programs

On September 19, 2019, Waldorf education marked its 100-year anniversary. In celebration of Waldorf education's centennial, schools across the globe engaged in social and environmental impact projects. One such project, Bees and Trees, was designed to address the declining bee and pollinator population through the creation of pollinator gardens and responsible beekeeping programs. Countless schools across the globe participated.

Why? The honeybee signals to us that a crisis is occurring on our planet. If we are serious about healing the earth, building a reciprocal and loving relationship with the honeybee is central to that aim. Fortunately, we can all do our part by planting flowers, ridding of pesticides, purchasing honey from sustainable farms, and by responsibly tending to honeybee hives.

Here in North America, Waldorf schools responded to the call. Many were fortunate to receive guidance from Gunther Hauk, Vivian Struve-Hauk, and Alex Tuchman of the Spikenard Honeybee Sanctuary located in Floyd, Virginia. Fifteen schools received scholarships from the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America to attend a biodynamic beekeeping course at Spikenard. Here, representatives from the Emerson Waldorf School, The Waldorf School of Atlanta, and Spring Garden Waldorf School share their experiences and adventures in planning and developing successful apiaries.

Spikenard Honeybee Sanctuary

Join Spikenard Honeybee Sanctuary in our mission to promote sustainable and biodynamic beekeeping through education and experience-based research. Our goal is to help restore the health and vitality of the honeybee worldwide. The farm, located in Floyd, Virginia, is home to 41 acres of flowers, beehives, a farm store, and educational facilities where people come from around the world to learn biodynamic beekeeping and land care practices. Spikenard has inspired over a dozen sanctuaries around the United States and abroad, and has trained thousands of people, including many Waldorf teachers, staff, and parents.

Honeybees are in dire need of humans who can understand their needs and can support them with appropriate beekeeping and land-management practices. In creating a landscape where the honeybee can thrive, filled with the fragrance and beauty of abundant flowers, Spikenard has also been able to synergize aesthetic, sustainable, and biodynamic land management practices which nourish the spirit of all who visit. Our sanctuary is a place of healing, beauty, reflection, learning and inspiration. We encourage you to join us for a workshop, a webinar, visit, volunteer, or an apprenticeship. Go to www.spikenardfarm.org, and donate to help support this essential work for the honeybees, the pollinators, and our beautiful earth!

Students celebrating their accomplishment after building a beautiful biodynamic compost pile.



PHOTOS BY ALEX TUCHMAN



Honeybee meadow; Honeybee welcoming ceremony; Students cleaning hive boxes.

PHOTOS BY R. MARK EICHINGER-WIESE

Chasing the Dream of the Honeybees

By Andrea Eichinger-Wiese and Kristin McGee

Community begets community. And so it was in February of 2019, Gunther Hauk came as an emissary from the Spikenard Honeybee Sanctuary. Through his story, wit, and information, he inspired the Emerson Waldorf School (EWS) community to set about on an adventure, guided only by trust in each other and in the honeybee.

Hauk's workshop was insightful about our essential relationship with the honeybee. Learning that honeybees only make about 20% extra honey, we did not embark on this endeavor for a honey business, but rather to offer a healing place for bees to continue pollinating our gardens and agricultural crops, since toxicity levels have risen for pollinators due to herbicide and pesticide use. School farmer Kristin McGee ordered two "packages" of honeybees to be delivered at the end of March. To prepare, we used what we had available, including hive boxes and equipment from former beekeeping periods at the school. Classes helped clean the old equipment and students moved large stumps uphill to the field for hive stands. Andrea Eichinger-Wiese volunteered to help with the beekeeping and attend the introductory beekeeping classes at Spikenard.

At the end of March, 2019 our bees arrived. They included an artificial queen and three pounds of bees, or roughly 10,000 bees, each. We held a honeybee welcoming ceremony at the farm with poems and songs. Students, faculty, and parents watched while Farmer Kristin and Mrs. Andrea "poured" the honeybees into each hive box. It was wonderful to see those honeybees flying with the golden sunshine reflected on their wings as they went into their new home.

That first year, we had a wonderful array of parents, teachers, and community members come to join in the activities of the hives. For an eighth-grade project, a student designed, painted, and sold honeybee cards, donating the sales back to our school bee fund and Spikenard Honeybee Sanctuary. The third grade created a "Bee Booth" to sell decorated beeswax candles, lemonade, honey sticks, and more for the bee fund, which later inspired "Farm Fridays," a weekly after

school social gathering. The fifth grade came to the apiary during their botany block to view the work of the honeybees as Mrs. Andrea pulled some frames out during the hive visit. Students helped Farmer Kristin broadcast crimson clover in the field.

In October 2019, Gunther Hauk was able to visit again to give a workshop for parents and teachers on the biodynamic preparations which support the health of the whole farm and school grounds. One of the themes in supporting the honeybee is how important the environment is to their wellbeing. Honeybee workers have a three-mile flight radius from the hive, so Mark Eichinger-Wiese, the school's gardener and blacksmithing teacher, readied 60 willow cuttings for border hedges and ordered 200 mountain mint starts. Students and parents transplanted the mint plants into larger pots and eventually out into the field by the hives to develop a honeybee meadow.

Then came the COVID-19 shut down in March, 2020.

All community support came to a screeching halt, with only Mrs. Andrea and Farmer Kristin caring for the colonies and the meadow. Even in this lonely time, we welcomed two swarms. Although we had never caught a swarm before, after the Spikenard classes, we felt confident about how to proceed. One large swarm was at our farm. The other was actually in the front yard of a kindergarten child's grandmother's home.

As we learned slowly how to live with the pandemic, we were able to have work parties with our high school students, offering some outdoor social time mixed with good old work, warming the feeling of isolation. The students planted the willow cuttings, weeded in the meadow, and helped with watering during a very hot time.



Andrea, honeybee mama.

continued on page 8



Emerson Waldorf School second grade preparing the field for 200 mountain mints; HS students and teachers after weeding 200 mint plants!

Honeybees, continued from page 7

Now we are just starting to slowly open up our campus to more parent involvement. We lost three hives last winter, but were given a swarm from another parent beekeeper, and two colonies from Spikenard joined us after school was out. All four of our current hives have natural queens, essential in natural beekeeping practices. Their colony names are Forsythia, Salvia, Clover, and Flora. Our willow hedge is growing, two forage arched beds in the meadow are now under cultivation, and a third is in the planning. Our school newsletter is now called the "Honeybee."

"We realized that with vision and community stewardship of the land, paradise can grow day by day as we nourish one another, even in a pandemic."

Did you know that no honeybee can feed itself? They live only by being fed by others. In this time of isolation, we painfully realized how undernourished we are without one another. We also realized that with vision and community stewardship of the land, paradise can grow day by day as we nourish one another, even in a pandemic.



Andrea Eichinger-Wiese, EWS Bee Caretaker and kindergarten teacher, has taught for 30 years in five Waldorf schools. Andrea and her husband Mark are happy to be at the Emerson Waldorf School in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Their daughter attended Waldorf Schools from K-12, and is currently finishing an engineering degree at UNCA, and understands she has been replaced by honeybees at home!



Kristin McGee is the farm manager and gardening teacher at EWS. She has been with the school since 2013. She served in the Peace Corps as an agricultural volunteer in western Kenya for three years and loves her days filled with digging in the dirt with students.

Garden Sales Give Bees a Home in the Gardening Program

By Miyuki Maruping

Beekeeping was initiated at The Waldorf School of Atlanta several years ago to grow awareness about the importance of honeybees and pollinators. It has now evolved to be fully incorporated into our gardening program. In April 2021 we introduced two nucleus colonies to a newly established apiary in the school garden, the result of months-long work to have the bees in close proximity to the food sources and the caretakers. Our whole community participated in making it happen, from clearing invasive plants and spreading cardboard for suppressing weeds to spreading loads of topsoil, digging a swale to channel water, and installing a hive stand. Having the bees in the school garden has increased their visibility and allowed us to hold them more closely in our hearts. To ensure an ample supply of food sources, we grow a rich diversity of annual and perennial flowers.

To integrate beekeeping into our gardening program, we started fundraisers based on products produced in our garden, which allowed us to buy materials for fencing, the bees, and other supplies. These fundraisers were designed after Social Business, an alternative business model pioneered by Dr. Muhammad Yunus who is also a pioneer of a microfinance movement. The ultimate goal of Social Business is to better the society by reinvesting profits for a cause. Seedlings and healing herbal products are offered with the help of the middle school students, and the proceeds are now reinvested for the enrichment of the beekeeping and gardening programs. We work in collaboration with our math teacher in order to provide our sixth grade students with an opportunity to apply their learning in Business Math into practice.



Miyuki Maruping is a gardening teacher at The Waldorf School of Atlanta in Atlanta, Georgia, and a student of Spikenard Honeybee Sanctuary.

Neighbors Work Together to Create a Community Apiary and Pollinator Garden

By Andrea Haberny

What does it mean to be a good neighbor? Spring Garden Waldorf School in Copley, Ohio, knows the answer because they have shared a special relationship with their neighbor, The Ohio Sportsman's Farmers League (OSFL), for over 40 years.

The community collaboration began almost immediately when the school moved to its current location in 1994—an old Copley elementary school on 12 acres. The Sportsman Club has been on the neighboring 24-acre property since 1940, long before the original elementary school was built in 1961.

The club has made several wooded neighboring acres of land available to school students and teachers for hiking, shelter building, and nature studies. They also allow the school to have festivals and play time in a neighboring field space, and most recently have partnered with Spring Garden to create a community apiary and a pollinator garden. School funds were used to purchase bees, a fence, and pollinator seeds. The Sportsman Club donated the land, placed a “no spray” sign along the bordering ditches, and a tarp to keep the weeds down under the hives. Many school classes helped to spread the seed.

According to Sportsman Club board member, Mark Wasick, “Rain or shine, rarely does a day go by that the students and teachers are not using the grounds and the year-round stream for nature walks and learning about the great outdoors. Club members always maintain a basket at our joint driveway for the collection of gloves and scarves that sometimes are left behind inadvertently by the little ones!”

The apiary is moving forward and the bees are doing well despite the challenges brought by the pandemic. All involved are looking forward to a long future together as neighbors. No matter what happens in the world outside of their combined 36 acres, Spring Garden Waldorf School knows they can rely on their neighbors and are grateful for their ongoing, close relationship.

Wasick agrees. “As with many clubs and similar institutions, the majority of club members are retired or approaching retirement. Numerous times I have, in casual conversations, had club members remark how much they feel rewarded seeing our neighboring students enjoying and learning about nature and preserving it for all, now and in the future.”



Andrea Haberny is a Waldorf class teacher at Spring Garden Waldorf School, Waldorf parent, community chair, beekeeper, and flower and fowl farmer in northeastern Ohio.



L to R: An eighth grade Spring Garden student sits by the Sportsman Club creek testing the physics concepts of buoyancy with her homemade clay boat; Beekeeper Andrea Haberny inspecting a hive frame; Seventh grade students gather seed pods from the pollinator garden so that they can replant and expand the offerings for bees next spring.

Two Waldorf Schools Receive Acclaimed Green Ribbon Awards for Environmental Action

The City of Lakes Waldorf School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the Maple Village Waldorf School in Long Beach, California, have been honored with the US Department of Education Green Ribbon Award in recent years in recognition of their significant contributions of environmental action in their schools and communities. We are proud to acknowledge such an achievement—generally only between 40 to 70 institutions nationwide receive this award each year.

The Green Ribbon Award honors US schools, districts, and institutions of higher education for promoting sustainability practices and resources that all can employ. The three criteria that applicants must show achievement in are: reducing environmental impacts and costs; improvement of the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff; and effective environmental and sustainability education.

Maple Village Wins on Reuse, Recycling, and Sustainability

By Lisa Jordan McCarthy

Maple Village Waldorf School opened in Long Beach, California, in 2007 and was fortunate to start with a mission already in place to have little to zero waste, low energy and water usage, serve whole foods, implement farm to table education, offer plenty of outdoor time and physical activity, and provide students and teachers the ability to balance heart, mind, body, and spirit, while holding a reverence for others and the environment.

Because of these efforts, the school has been recognized as a Green Business by the City of Long Beach, was selected by California State University Long Beach to be the project for their MBA program focusing on sustainability, and was repeatedly accepted into the International Plastic Ocean Pollution Solutions Summit and Generation Earth's Streets to the Sea program. After receiving the California State Green Ribbon award at the Gold Level for two years, Maple Village was the one private school in the state of California to become a 2018 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School.

Through intensive recycling and reuse, Maple Village is nearly a zero-waste school with 95% of trash diverted. The amount of waste produced per person per month has been less than 1 1/2 milk jugs! Because it is a technology-free school with good natural lighting, there is very little electrical use in classrooms and green cleaning supplies are used. Seventy percent of family transportation is alternative after the city of Long Beach created a "Bike Boulevard" on nearby streets, so that school families can walk and bike to school. Because of this, Maple Village has won first place on behalf of Long Beach in the Cool California Energy Challenge for two years.

From a curricular standpoint, Maple Village students were accepted into the International Plastic Ocean Pollution Solutions Summit several years in a row with projects such as "A Second Chance," sewing, collected and selling reusable bags for food banks to replace plastic bags, and writing their own song called "Refuse and Go" about refusing single-use plastics. Middle School students each did



MVWS middle school students present their project at Algalita's International Plastic Ocean Pollution Solutions Summit; MVWS students excited to become a Water Challenge School with Grades of Green; MVWS middle school students sew and sell reusable sandwich and snack bags.



a research project on single use plastic pollution and solutions. Students also entered a project on water conservation called “Warm-Up Water” in the Grades of Green Water Campaign and Generation Earth’s Streets to the Sea program. Conservation suggestions included saving water that is warming up by collecting it in buckets from faucets or shower heads for use with dishes, pets, plants and even flushing toilets to save the tank water.



Lisa Jordan McCarthy is Dean of Education at Maple Village Waldorf School in Long Beach, California, as well as one of its co-founders. She raised three boys in a Waldorf home and has started various environmental projects in the city of Long Beach.

City of Lakes Recognized for Ecological Leadership

By Anne O'Connor

The City of Lakes Waldorf School (CLWS) philosophy is that a child’s relationship to nature is cultivated through direct experience in the natural world. Throughout the year here in Minneapolis, students in our school are outdoors more than any student body across the region—up to two hours a day in upper grades and several hours a day in the early-childhood classroom.

Over the years, CLWS has been recognized for our approach to environmental leadership. Dr. Jane Goodall honored us with a visit to our campus in 2000 and helped plant the now-mature flowering apple trees that surround our play yard. In 2013, we were awarded a Minnesota Independent School Forum STEM grant to enhance our science program and in 2015, CLWS was honored with the Department of Education Green Ribbon Award for our leadership in environmental stewardship.

Aspects of our school and curriculum that helped us receive this national recognition include our 5,000-square-foot rain garden, conceptualized with a biodynamic gardener, which offers hands-on environmental learning, from botany to plant identification to water usage and management. We have reclaimed much of the blacktop in our ample school grounds to create more natural play spaces. We also immerse our students in the outdoors on highly-anticipated field trips, such as an annual seventh grade camping and portaging trip to Camp Menogyn, up by the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness or the sixth grade three-day trip to the Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center.

Additionally, we’ve looked at our building and grounds through the environmental lens, receiving energy efficiency assessments and responding by, for example, updating our HVAC equipment with digital controls. In 2020, we installed a state-of-the-art air filtration system and upgraded our lighting system to LED lights, which uses half the energy. We’ve also increased the storm water filtration capabilities with French drain systems in our play yard. We include families in our ecological education which includes our commitment to compostable dinnerware to ongoing direct education around lessening environmental impact.



Anne O'Connor is the Development Director at the City of Lakes Waldorf School in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

CLWS’s early childhood students spend most of their days outdoors; Art and nature: fundamental to Waldorf education; Observation in the CLWS rain garden; Eighth graders at CLWS sprucing up on earth day.



Farming as the Core of Learning

By Ezra Sullivan

In 2000, a group of enterprising Waldorf educators working in eastern Jefferson County, Washington, joined forces to bring into existence a shared vision: a Waldorf school on a working biodynamic farm. Sunfield Land for Learning now comprises three interdependent realms: a farm, a Waldorf school (started in 2007), and community education programming.

Our farm is composed of 26 acres of forest, 42 acres of fields and pasture, and eight acres of wetlands, originally tended by the *ʔṣemākum* (Chemakum) people. The pastures and wetlands are rotationally grazed by beef cattle, fiber sheep, dairy goats, and laying hens. The cattle herd is essential for making the biodynamic preparations, and the sheep provide fiber that is processed into roving, yarn, and locks for Sunfield School's handwork classes and is sold to local yarn shops. Dairy goats prevent pioneering shrubs and trees from invading our pastures, and provide milk and chevre for the farm staff and interns. The laying hens provide meaningful interaction for younger students with farm animals, while the compost pile and pastures benefit from the chicken manure and the farm staff enjoys the eggs and old stew hens.

We cultivate ten acres in a rotation of vegetables and grazing cover crops. Two acres of fields are cultivated every year for seed-production produce, jack-o-lanterns, and a flower CSA. Our biodynamic certified seeds are sold to Turtle Tree Seed Company and are used in on-farm variety trials with the Organic Seed Alliance, while our produce is donated to regional food pantries.



Early childhood students enjoy eating right from the garden.

The school and curriculum are integrated into the farm. Parent-child classes visit the animals as part of their rhythm. Early childhood students venture out every morning rain or shine into the magical lands such as the ferny woods, the land beyond, the anty woods, the aspen woods, and the land of bridges. When Sunfield students enter grade school they begin a more formal relationship with the farm through a daily Agricultural Arts class. This class brings the whole grade school together in greeting and seasonal song before splitting into groups. Every teacher holds a group: crafters, gardeners, farmers, shepherds, land stewards, chickens, and goat herders. These mixed-age groups rotate through the chores once a month while the first grade maintains chicken chores. The crafters work with whatever is available in season: fiber, broom corn, wreaths, and dye plants. The gardeners work in the vegetable fields and orchards weeding, planting, harvesting, threshing, propagating, and winnowing. The farmers spread compost and wood chips, tend to the cattle, and respond to the seasonal needs of the farm. The shepherds tend to our fiber sheep, and the goat herders milk daily. The land stewards remove invasive plants, propagate native plants for new plantings, and learn about the biological systems on the farm. Our year-round 4-H program gives children the chance to foster a deeper connection and relationship with the farm animals, and eventually tests their skills and knowledge of animal husbandry at the Jefferson County Fair.



A Waldorf classroom's chalkboard drawing; Early childhood rainy day sand pile play; Students share their finds after a daily nature walk.



Katie Boyle, Kindergarten teacher, shares a story in the forest.

Our Community Education Program has sought to serve Jefferson County's underserved rural population over the last 15 years. We have hosted regional high school students, Evergreen College agriculture students, Americorps crews, permaculture design students, and many other groups for workshops in land stewardship. We also host a visiting schools program that offers free field trips to public school students, exposing them to food and fiber activities. Every year from April through October we host farm interns with an option for a smaller group to stay through the winter. The farm provides the interns with a solid foundation in theory and weekly field trips to complement the hands-on work.

“Through earnest cultivation of inner sun forces of love we become empowered to face anything and everything.”

Sunfield Land for Learning has agency. Like every one of us, Sunfield is a complex and complicated being with its own unique wounds, and the medicine, which will further manifest the earth's potential, wishes to be delivered. The student's incarnating consciousness offers a constant flux of cleansing, and the land's rhythms meet them with grounding. Everyday we rise to meet the world, and the issues and obstacles present themselves constantly. Through earnest cultivation of inner sun forces of love we become empowered to face anything and everything.



Ezra Sullivan is the farm director of Sunfield Farm on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington. He began farming in 2010, at the age of 18, in South America. After three years he returned to the US, and biodynamics quickly spoke to him as an approach to agriculture.

A longer version of this article originally appeared in issue #300 of the Biodynamic Association journal *Biodynamics*, entitled “Sunfield Land for Learning in Focus.” You can read the entire article at www.biodynamics.com/content/biodynamics-journal for a \$5 membership fee.

Maine Coast Waldorf School Takes Initiative With Climate Action Committee

In February 2020 the board of directors at Maine Coast Waldorf School (MCWS) took the critical step of acknowledging the need for action regarding climate change by mandating a Climate Action Committee (CAC).

The committee's work is to advise the board on climate change mitigation strategies to lessen the physical and emotional impact of climate change. These involve multiple initiatives, including community dialogues and education, creating sustainable practices at the school, and forging partnerships outside the school.

Despite the global pandemic, the CAC met monthly via Zoom and achieved a variety of goals including:

- the purchase and installation of environmentally friendly canopies for outdoor classrooms.
- the design and construction of a listening bench to provide opportunities for deep listening for community members.
- a comprehensive list of recommendations for building and infrastructure energy efficiency improvements, campus wide.
- guest speakers to our monthly meetings who provided expertise and experience with regard to climate related issues.
- a collaboration with the MCWS Farm, Field, and Forest Committee and the MCWS High School Climate Club in bringing the documentary *Kiss the Ground* to our school community.

During the 2021-2022 school year, the CAC will explore community solar options, investigate investments with regard to fossil fuels, install our listening bench, develop a speaker series on climate issues, and more.

By taking action one step at a time, we are creating hope so that we can continue to meet the challenges that this time of climate change brings.

Helping Humans Rebalance the Earth: A Conversation with Calla Rose Ostrander

By Nita June



Calla Rose Ostrander attended Shining Mountain Waldorf School in Boulder, Colorado, from kindergarten through grade 12 and graduated in 2001. She received her BA from the University of Puget Sound in 2005, where she studied international political economy and environmental policy.

Ostrander works at the intersection of climate change and agriculture, and has spent the last six years expanding compost production and regenerative agriculture across California and the western United States. Before that, she spent eight years developing local climate policy for Aspen, Colorado, and the city and county of San Francisco, California.

What title do you give to yourself and what title do you give to your work? I have worn many hats, and the titles I most often give myself are coordinator or advisor. My work is aimed at catalyzing shifts in our economic, social, and political systems to enhance human collaboration with the large elemental cycles that create life on our planet. Carbon, nitrogen, and water—these biogeochemical cycles support life and if we work with them, we can, I believe, create a society without pollution that is inherently fair.

I often work [in areas like] composting of organic materials, and how we care for soil, land, and watersheds, because these are intersections where large elemental cycles come together with the ways we live and thus are points for intervention and regeneration.

Tell us how you arrived at the work you are doing today. Can you take us back to the beginning? When I was growing up near Haystack Mountain outside of Boulder, we would drive to school and I would see the sky and the horizon and the plains. I got really affected by the air quality; when it was bad, I would get depressed and sick. The English princess Joan of Acre, (1272-1307), was a hero of mine because of her courage and independence, and in third grade, when my family visited Costa Rica, I decided I was going to save the rainforest. Acre's fearless mentality led me to try and understand why adults would do what I perceived as terrible things, and how to convince them not to. In eighth grade, one of the early pioneers of the LEED Green Building System came and gave a presentation at Shining Mountain. I learned about what Paul Hawken and Amory and Hunter Lovins were calling "natural capitalism" and decided economics was the

way to talk to adults. Having a clear vision of what I wanted to do at a young age allowed me to tailor my education and internships so that I could jump straight into work right after undergrad.

Now that I am older, while I still love Joan, my heroes are soil microbes and fungi and those humans who quietly support their communities and heal our relationships with the land.

You spoke a bit about your work with individuals, with companies, with governments. Can you share what projects that you're working on today? I have my own business called Phoenix Rising Resources and I work with folks who are changing the way systems work at the community or regional level.

One of the projects that I worked on over the last year was with the Urban Sustainability Directors Network and Urban Drawdown Initiative. That's a network of cities who all have climate change goals. I helped them create a toolkit with Colorado State University and the Trust for Public Land to guide them in handling their organic waste streams to be beneficial to their communities and the climate. A lot of what we call waste is actually a very valuable resource. As we redesign systems, we have a chance to build in increased economic access, environmental remediation, and social justice. For example, instead of sending your waste to landfill, you can send it to a compost facility or to smaller community compost operations in your city or on surrounding farms. This enhances community access to green space and supports the transition to regenerative agriculture. There's also upstream opportunities to create new jobs and support small businesses. For example, a city could open up a new

“My work is aimed at catalyzing shifts in our economic, social, and political systems to enhance human collaboration with the large elemental cycles that create life on our planet....My work is not necessarily the codification of something, but the figuring out and modeling how it can be done in practice. I think that is uniquely Waldorf.”

market for small waste haulers or farmers to pick up food scraps and animal manures.

Why is this work needed right now? Where is it most needed? The work that centers soil and compost and the way we grow our food and our fibers is really about reconnecting to nature, both our own nature and that of other life forms. Thus, I believe it's needed in all the places where we have lost that connection. For me, it's about a curiosity that's dedicated to finding those places where our reconnection can be positive, healing, and stabilizing for the climate and our human social relationships.

We are in a state of entropic collapse from a climate system perspective. We have destabilized big planetary mechanisms like the forests, continental watersheds, and the atmospheric jet streams that participate in the global climate system. Not only that, but we are also in the midst of trying to reconcile our historical legacy of colonialism and racial inequities after centuries of imperialism. [We] require an intersectional, fierce, and compassionate approach to change the structural paradigms that perpetuate them.

How do you feel your Waldorf education influences your work today? I do not think I could do this work if I didn't have a Waldorf education. I think about the ability to observe, which I really feel I learned in Waldorf; the exercise of sitting down and watching a tree through the seasons, or watching a seed grow and being asked to envision how it's going to grow and then, to think back to when it was a seed. This real observation of a living being, and the cultivation of my own awareness of being with them—I think I must've learned that in Waldorf because most people I work with don't have it.

That's the other thing that I really appreciate about my Waldorf background; I get to be an artist. I can be fluent, but don't have to be a specialist. I can understand different tools, different mediums, and how to work with them. Sculpture or stonework, woodworking or hand work, painting or basketry, drawing and eurythmy; being able to interact with these different forms of creation and expression is what I believe gave me the confidence to work with different disciplines in a space that is not known for its artistry (environmental policy).

That's something I don't see with a lot of people; the knowledge that you're free to be creative or do something different. My work is not necessarily the codification of something, but the figuring out and

modeling how it can be done in practice. I think that is uniquely Waldorf. I'm not here to study how we're going to do it and write a report about it. I'm here to figure out how it gets done, and to find the people who are already doing it and support them.

What are a few key actions that individuals can take to help combat climate change and support our planet's health? Compost! Either do it yourself or support your community to do it. We just set up a little community composting in my neighborhood. There are big cities across the country looking at how to set up composting and that's huge because it heals the planet when we use compost instead of synthetic chemicals in our lawns, gardens and agriculture.

What might be some of your goals for the future both personally and professionally? I feel like I'm living a longtime dream, which was to move back to Colorado and have my own house. My health is a long term goal for me. I had a couple of major injuries in my thirties, which altered both my physical and mental capacity for long periods of time, and now I am committed to living a really strong and active next decade—to climbing these mountains that I can see outside my window.

Professionally, I recently was appointed to a position with the State of California's Natural Resources Agency to work with them and the Department of Agriculture to identify ways to scale up restoration of natural and working lands in the face of fire, drought, and extreme weather. That position is a dream come true—when the work shifts from justification to action, from making the argument of “why” to do the work to “how.” That's when you know things are changing for the better.

To learn more about supporting sustainable environmental changes, Ostrander suggests these resources:

- California Alliance for Community Composting www.thecacc.org/projects
- Institute for Local Self Reliance www.ilsr.org/composting
- Urban Sustainability Directors Network www.usdn.org

Contact Ostrander at callarose@gmail.com.

Nita June is the AWSNA Director of Alum Relations.

Learning Resilience from the Land: Reflections on the Agriculture Program at Corvallis Waldorf School

By Marta Capriles

At our school, nestled in the heart of Oregon's Willamette Valley, it makes sense that the students learn the stories the land has to share. This valley has a long history of fertile soils and abundant plant life. From the rich, alluvial earth brought by the Missoula Floods during the last ice ages, to the careful horticultural tending by the Kalapuya people, to its role as the hub of agricultural production in the Pacific Northwest, this land has much wisdom to impart. This past year has been especially generous with lessons, and one student has been me.

In Waldorf education, we know that in order to fully absorb and digest what we are learning, we must take some space from the subject. This process is often witnessed as the time between school days where students literally "sleep on" what they have learned, returning to school the next day with a more enlivened and personal understanding of yesterday's pedagogical material. For me as an agriculture teacher, this past year was one long journey to a place where I could more clearly reflect on what the land has been sharing.

Corvallis Waldorf School (CWS) has a large school garden that includes annual and perennial fruits and vegetables, grains, culinary and medicinal herbs, fruit trees, dye plants, pollinator gardens, and gathering spaces. Our school greenhouse, rain garden, elderberry circle, willow huts, worm bins, compost piles, and rainwater harvesting systems comprise the rest of our outdoor "classroom," as does our off-grid woodshop and school forest. The agriculture curriculum serves first through eighth grades, and is place-based, experiential, and aligned with major topics studied in the grades classrooms. Basketry, herbalism, greenwood carving, and the making of natural dyes are incorporated throughout the program. Our aim is to teach dynamic and resilient methods of small-scale food, medicine, and fiber pro-

duction that are responsive to a changing climate and the needs of our school community, while strengthening relationships between students and the land. While we enjoy the fruits of our labors, the main yield of the agriculture program is the children's experience itself.

In the spring of 2020, the program was hitting its stride. We had a solid core of family volunteers, a series of stellar interns, and we were heading into a third year of summer garden camps. Then the pandemic hit, school went online, and everything changed. Our school community dug deep and banded together, but we no longer had help with the gardens. Summer programs were canceled, and my access to do basic garden maintenance was limited. Our school restructured and I became a co-teacher for one of the grades classes.

While difficult to step away from the agriculture program, it was actually the perfect time to "sleep on" the lessons the land had waiting for me. Just as our students need that journey to dreamland to digest yesterday's lessons, I was given a glimpse of what happened to the gardens when left to their own devices. Gophers set up camp, and yellow jackets went crazy for the aphid infestation that developed. The dry spots became drier, and voles found homes in newly deserted spaces. Then as we began the school year online, the wildfires blazed. The gardens and greenhouse were covered in ash. This was the time for the phoenix to rise.

As the gardens fended for themselves, it was apparent that many systems were not working the way that I had planned, and some I thought were thriving fell apart. Some needed pure maintenance; others just needed patience and a different outlook. One of the lessons of permaculture is that the solution is within the problem. The gophers and voles were reminding me that our systems need animals integrated as part of the whole—desperately. No ecosystem thrives on plants alone, and without the introduction of the nutrient cycling that livestock gives to an agroecosystem, the animals would introduce themselves. As the year went on, our out-of-balance system slowly began to right itself as garter snakes and herons began to frequent the land, filling an open niche.



Grade 4 tending potatoes; Seasonal Round of the Kalapuya.



Left: Grade 4 native plant study. Above: Grade 2 tending the garden; Grade 3 winter squash harvest; Grade 4 whiskbroom weaving.

The best lessons were the parts of the garden that persisted, even flourished. The plants that withstood the drought, ash, smoke, and gophers were the perennials: the perennials that sent down deeper roots to access quietly waiting groundwater; the perennials that relied on micronutrients stored in slowly decomposing organic matter in the soil; the perennials that created microclimates of shade for other plants, which then created oases that were better suited to retain water; the perennials that shared nutrients via fungi to other plants in need. It was the community-minded perennials that developed long-lasting, multifaceted relationships. “Be more like the perennials,” the land was whispering.

Agriculture is a patient investment, not a showy performance to be repeated each year. Each season is finite, ephemeral, and a tiny piece of the larger span of time, which feels so different when tending perennials versus annuals. I realized I had been asking the wrong questions, so I was coming up with the wrong answers. As I started to ask the questions that were more aligned, I began to realize the true yield is not found from season to season, but is long term. There is much more to this work than teaching how to garden: embedded within are the lessons of interdependence and the necessity of diversity. These lessons take time.

“The work of our time is to reconnect to the land and see ourselves as part of it, not separate from it.”

In preparation for our joyous return to full-time, in-person instruction, I ruminated on how to incorporate these lessons from the land in a meaningful way based upon the richness and intentionality of the Waldorf curriculum. In the younger grades, nature continues to be our main teacher. The first-grade students move as a whole class and experience the oneness and cooperation of the communities around us: the garden, the forest, the pond. In the second grade, as the children begin to build their own role within the whole, we look to plant and animal relationships to help us develop this sense of justice, rightness, and a place for all. For the third- through eighth-grade classes, one shift has been to focus on the “culture” part of agriculture, and to ask, “Whose agriculture are we learning?” We follow our beginning verses with a land acknowledgment that brings a sense of reverence to the children: “We stand on land tended by the Kalapuya people for over 14,000 years.” The work of our time is to reconnect to the land

and see ourselves as part of it, not separate from it. Regenerative forms of land tending—Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), biodynamic agriculture, and permaculture—are integral to this reconnection.

Learning the stories of people that embody resiliency and interconnection now make up an important part of our work. These agricultural mentors range from historical figures to current local leaders—from farmworker activist Delores Huerta as we work the land in grade three, to ethnobotanist Greg Archuleta as we study native plants and the seasonal rounds of the Kalapuya in grade four, to agricultural inventor George Washington Carver as we learn botany in grade five. In the upper grades, we study the work of prominent forest ecologists, Indigenous anthropologists, and the resilient methods of forestry used by Pacific Northwest tribes for many thousands of years. We are learning together to follow the most diverse and complex communities in nature. The phoenix is not only rising, but setting down solid, perennial roots.

Each day, once again, CWS students roll up their sleeves and put on their boots to steward the land while building tangible skills that ground them in the world. The children are catching rainwater, growing their own medicine, building wildlife habitat, threshing and winnowing the grain that becomes next year’s seed, and using the plants around them to make brooms and baskets and spoons. They interpret the stories the soil tells by observing how it holds water and what weeds flourish upon that patch of earth. They stop to marvel at a bee pollinating a flower. As we teach the many lessons the land continues to offer, the children feel the rhythms of the seasons, the plants, and the life on the land because they have lived it during their years at school. They take home what they know and plant those seeds with their families, their neighbors, and their world, now and into the future.



Marta Capriles is the Agriculture Teacher at Corvallis Waldorf School where she also serves on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and the Board of Trustees. She was an outdoor educator and classroom teacher in public, charter, and independent schools in the San Francisco

Bay Area for over a decade before returning to what started her teaching career in the first place: gardening with children. Marta lives in Corvallis, Oregon, with her two children, their flock of chickens, and their herd of guinea pigs.

Five Stages to Cultivating Environmental Awareness in the Early Childhood Years

By Katherine Fulford

How do we nurture the capacity for environmental citizenship in our children's early years? How do we awaken a deep sense of responsibility and resourcefulness to problem solve and sustain their inner equilibrium in the face of the declining wellbeing of the climate?

These are questions we carry as human beings, Waldorf teachers, parents, and community members. One of the most important questions we need to ask ourselves as mentors standing before our children, is what can we do in a conscious and meaningful way to be models worthy of imitation for environmental citizenship? How can we create time and space to nurture and encourage our children without overwhelming them with information and anxiety leading to disconnections between their being and the environment?



PHOTO BY GENEVIEVE LENNOX

The first stage in becoming an environmental citizen arises from a child's natural disposition to connect with the environment.

The young child experiences and perceives their world in complete wholeness, embracing all the sensory phenomena within their environment with minimal filters. Children directly experience all the sights, smells, tastes, textures, and sounds created within an environment, unable to differentiate where their self ends and where the world begins. It is a special time in a child's life where they can experience, connect with, and understand the world as a whole organism within the depths of their being. It is a time when it is extremely important to be mindful of sensory stimulation in a child's environment and of how those sensory impressions affect the child's state of mind and development. Experiencing the natural world allows a child to synchronize and experience their inner rhythms with the rhythms of nature, strengthening their intrinsic connection to their surrounding environment.



PHOTO BY MARIELA PASATIR

The second stage is to honour and appreciate the beauty and magic of the natural world.

By providing abundant opportunities to experience the outdoors, a Waldorf school can help a child cultivate a sense of wonder and curiosity for nature. Creating rhythms and routines that provide time and space to appreciate the natural world without distractions will help nurture openness, gratitude, and presence for the child. Collecting seeds, gathering leaves, digging in the earth for worms, listening to the sounds of the birds, feeling the bark of a pine tree, or quietly watching the bees and butterflies collect nectar from flowers are all examples of simple activities that foster wonder and curiosity in a child about the environment. Being around adults who authentically express appreciation for the simplicity of daily life and the joy of discovering the present moment provides a model for a child to imitate and learn how to appreciate what life presents.



PHOTO BY KATHERINE FULFORD

The third stage is to develop a deep sense of agency that encourages exploration and emphasizes the collective good.

Through self-directed play and having access to open-ended materials connected to their natural environment, children develop practical skills connected to the environment that support collaboration and innovation. At school, often working together in small groups, children create special lands from stones they discovered, create intricate waterways in the sand in rainy weather, design shelters from large branches and sticks, or make mixtures or potions with grass, leaves, petals, and earth. Such outdoor activities allow children to explore possibilities within their own mind's eye and the

Dolls are all mended and washed for the new school year; Preparing the soil to plant with the kindergarten; Appreciating the wonders and beauty of nature.

collective imagination of their peers. Providing time, space, and open-ended materials supports the capacity for creative and divergent thinking to emerge, develops resourcefulness, and strengthens social-emotional intelligence.

The fourth stage is to follow meaningful environmental routines and habits worthy of imitation.

By observing adults actively modeling engagement in the environment and participating in activities in all types of weather and seasons, children learn the importance of human action in relation to the natural world. By attuning themselves to and internalizing the rhythms and routines of the adults around them, children sharpen their perception of nature and deepen their sense of responsibility. Experiencing simple, effective actions, like growing vegetables, tending the garden bed, and reducing waste and recycling, help teach ecological awareness.

Our daily, weekly, and monthly activities and habits have a meaningful impact on how an environment will grow and thrive. Providing children with examples worthy of imitation helps develop a sense of responsibility in creating a healthy world. Such meaningful activities and habits are also connected to nourishment and sustainability, and support our children to observe, participate and learn from their community.

“Experiencing the natural world allows a child to synchronize and experience their inner rhythms with the rhythms of nature, strengthening their intrinsic connection to their surrounding environment.”

The fifth stage in becoming an environmental citizen of the world is to share environmental values both individually and collectively, develop sustainable habits, and work together to accomplish goals to support the health and wellbeing of the environment.

Adults’ environmentally conscious social values, community agreements, and sustainable habits provide a living example for children to learn the importance of working together to support their environs. It is not only the words and sentiments of the adults, but their tangible actions that provide a model to inspire children to develop sustainable ways of thinking, interacting, and being to combat environmental challenges. Elements that are essential for creating such inspiration include thoughtful reflection upon one’s own habits, and the critical observation of the physical natural environment, such as the cleanliness of the school yard and the life forces of the garden.

As we wish to support and inspire alternative ways of thinking in our children to come up with positive and



Sharing a local folk story about the winter time around the fire with the kindergarten. The children help gather sticks, peel birch bark and help prepare the fire for the morning with their kindergarten teachers.

proactive solutions to nurture the wellbeing of the climate, it is important for us to engage in our own reflection by asking environmentally conscious questions of our community. For example:

- How do we support and participate in building and maintaining the school garden and grounds?
- How do our members work collectively?
- How do we as a community make local and seasonal food choices for meals?
- To what extent do our children have examples in their school environment of sustainable, renewable technologies or engagement in low-carbon activities?
- How could we increase our use of recycled, reused, or biodegradable materials?
- To what extent do our children listen to stories, learn about the history of the land, and appreciate wisdom from the First Nations and Indigenous peoples?

It is in our conscious reflections (head), passion and commitment (heart), and meaningful daily tasks and habits (hands) that awaken and develop a deep inner relationship with the natural world. This inspires a deep sense of responsibility and love for the earth to emerge within ourselves and our children. It is essential to allow children the time and space to experience the seasons in all their changing forms, experiment with materials found in their environment, imagine new worlds, and collaborate with their peers in order to plant the seeds for future soulful awareness and action in terms of the environment and climate. Our children come to us with their own unique capacities to address the climate crisis. We must be a community of adults in the present who are worthy of imitation to awaken hope, inspiration, and devotion to support environmental citizenship for the future.



Katherine Fulford has worked as an early childhood teacher at Waldorf Academy in Toronto, Ontario, for 15 years. She has also served as a board member, early childhood manager, and AWSNA delegate, and has a passion and love for eurythmy, story telling, philosophy, gardening and nature.

Growing Our School Garden From Sustainable to “Low-Till” Regenerative Agriculture

By Celia Martin

Many Waldorf students remember being hooked up to a plow in their third grade gardening class and asked to pull so that the moving plow bit into the soil and turned it over. This reenactment was meant to show how humans have been digging into the earth to cultivate the soil to grow crops for thousands of years. Students learned that farmers and gardeners, charged with caring for the earth in a sustainable way, are required to disrupt the vital organisms living in the soil that break down organic matter to feed the plants. But what if there were a better way, a more regenerative way, to grow food so that instead of destroying the soil we are in fact building it up?

I have been the gardening teacher at the Kimberton Waldorf School for 13 years and if there is one tool that I have relied on the most it is my aging but dependable rototiller. Our two-acre school garden is too big to weed by hand, even with the dozens of students that arrive each week for their gardening classes. In southeastern Pennsylvania, weeds grow like an impenetrable carpet over all 30 of our 40-foot beds each spring. The rototiller can move slowly down the rows churning the soil and pulverizing the weeds, chopping them into tiny pieces and incorporating their organic matter, leaving behind an even, weed-free soil surface perfect for planting.

A few years ago, I was rototilling one of the beds while some of my teenage summer employees were working nearby. Suddenly something bright caught my eye and I cut the power to the tiller, staring in horror at the ground. In silence we all stood aghast while a large toad

with a big, pink gash across its back struggled to escape the path behind the tiller. One of the students burst into tears crying, “Why is gardening all about killing? We kill the weeds, we kill the bugs, and now we are killing the toads too!” I felt bad about the toad, but I also thought of it as unfortunate and unavoidable collateral damage. It wasn’t until later that I realized the incident was symbolic of what happens every time the ground is tilled.

That summer, in my search for ways to garden more regeneratively by building more topsoil and increasing plant-sustaining soil life, I read two books that started to change the way I garden—the very humorous *Gardening Without Work* by Ruth Stout, and the much more scientific *The One Straw Revolution* by Masanobu Fukuoka. Both authors advocate for keeping the soil constantly covered with mulch to keep it healthy, moist, and weed free. When soil is bare, the earth will try to cover it with plants (weeds) in the same way your skin will cover a cut with a scab. In places that are so damaged that even weeds cannot grow, the soil becomes devoid of structure and living organisms, incapable of supporting plant life.

We needed huge quantities of good mulch and the best mulch is dry leaves. I called several local municipalities and soon, one was delivering truckloads of shredded leaves free of charge collected in the fall from their neighborhoods. They were happy to have somewhere to get rid of it. Their waste was our treasure, and the students spent many hours wheelbarrowing soft and leafy mulch onto the vegetable beds.



Sixth grade apple harvest; Eighth graders learn about food sources for Indigenous peoples of the past by harvesting and eating pawpaws; High school students plant fall lettuce; All students learn that even imperfect apples make delicious cider; Third graders learn of the native Lenape people while harvesting corn and squash from the Three Sisters garden and sunflower heads to eat and share with the birds. Page 19: Sixth graders harvest butternut squash and deliver them directly to our school kitchen thereby reducing their carbon footprint.



“Because the students have put in the work to sow the seeds, nurture the plants, harvest the crops, and prepare them to eat, every bite becomes precious, something to be savored and never, ever wasted.”

It was immediately evident that the mulched beds retained their moisture and appeared wonderfully fertile. We started to notice more wildlife in the garden such as garter snakes, birds searching through the leafy litter for bugs, and plenty of toads who love to burrow in the soft, moist debris. And the greatest thing of all—fewer weeds! As the soil thrived, the plants flourished, which in turn caused the wildlife to prosper. Our vegetables were more resilient and our crops bigger, better, and more bountiful.

Believing I was doing the right thing, I was still rototilling in the spring not only to eliminate any weeds that did grow, but also to incorporate the last year’s mulch into the soil to increase the organic matter content. However, every time a bed was tilled, weeds quickly returned and, with that unfortunate toad still in the back of my mind, I couldn’t beat the feeling that I was destroying a lot of the organisms that were so vital to soil life. It was then that I started to research no-till agriculture, which was developed in response to soil fertility loss during the Dust Bowl in the 1930s. Conventional no-till agriculture uses chemical herbicides to kill the weeds before using a special implement called a seed drill to drop the crop seeds into a narrow slit opened in the soil. This was not an option for our organic/biodynamic garden. I needed to find a way to eliminate weeds without tilling, chemicals, or expensive equipment.

It was then that I discovered regenerative agriculture and I learned that plowing not only destroys macroinvertebrates such as worms and beetles, but also tiny microinvertebrates, beneficial soil bacteria, and fungi, all of which are vital in breaking down organic matter to feed the plants. Tilling destroys the structure of the soil with its nooks and crannies and passageways that allow water, air, roots, and organisms to travel easily throughout. Once that soil structure is destroyed, the loose particles are eroded away by wind and rain, causing the loss of valuable topsoil that took centuries to build. Plowing is the miniature equivalent of a tornado going through a city, destroying buildings, and killing the residents. Plowing also releases huge amounts of carbon stored in the soil back into the air, which is a major contributor to global warming.

I wanted to teach our students to preserve our soil’s life and prevent it from being washed away. This is when I discovered two more books; *Dirt To Soil* by Gabe Brown, and *The Organic No-Till Farming Revolution* by Andrew Mefferd. I also watched the documentary *Kiss the Ground* and completed a soil advocacy course.

The basic tenets of regenerative agriculture are to disturb the soil as little as possible, to keep the soil

covered with plants or mulch, to build diversity, to keep living roots in the soil, and to integrate animals into the system. Many of these principles were practiced by the Lenape, the native people caring for this land before us. These methods are also in line with biodynamics where we are also concerned with not just sustaining the Earth but leaving the Earth better by our cultivation methods. With these techniques everyone wins; the plants and animals are healthier, farmers grow better crops and build better topsoil, and consumers have more nutritious food. Even the Earth wins by keeping the carbon in the soil where it is safely stored.

Today our school garden is what I call “low-till.” The students and I are still learning how to make all of this work. I do pull out that rototiller on occasion, but rarely. We plant cover crops like buckwheat and vetch to keep living roots in the soil. We grow pawpaws in the garden, which the Lenape foraged for food, and there is a Three Sisters Garden containing traditional Indigenous crops—corn, beans, and squash. The students have learned to use a broadfork when the soil is compacted to gently lift it instead of flipping it over and destroying soil structure. We use occultation, covering the ground with black plastic, to kill the weeds instead of using poisonous herbicides. We weed and water a lot less than before.

Our school garden is now much more peaceful; a thriving place for all living things including plants, birds, toads, and children. Gardening feeds the soul in a way that other classes, including the arts, cannot. It awakens wonder for the natural world and a deep sense of appreciation for our dependence upon it. Because the students have put in the work to sow the seeds, nurture the plants, harvest the crops, and prepare them to eat, every bite becomes precious, something to be savored and never, ever wasted. A relationship has been formed and a bond established. My students are learning that there is a connection between the gentle care we give to the earth and what it produces for us in return. We need to prioritize protecting our most precious resource—the microcosm of organisms that live beneath the soil upon which we all depend.



Celia Martin’s family joined the Kimberton Waldorf School community in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, when her son enrolled in the preschool program in 1999. In 2008, she took over the garden program. She also teaches 11th grade Botany and ninth grade Environmental Studies. Her children graduated from Kimberton in 2014 and 2016.

Lessons From Renewing Our Garden

By Sarah Battles Franklin

Aurora Waldorf School (AWS) in West Falls, New York, has always been committed to providing an education that emphasizes environmental stewardship. Outdoor education engages children and plants lifelong seeds of connection with the natural world. This past year, while many educators struggled to engage students via Zoom during the pandemic, AWS teachers redoubled their commitment to keep learning 100% in person and to spend as much educational time as possible outdoors, in the fresh air. One example is the grade 2/3 gardening curriculum.



Aurora Waldorf School's second and third grade students plant sweet pea seedlings in one of the raised beds that they rebuilt.

After the second and third graders read *The Secret Garden* and felt the joy of discovery that came from reviving a forgotten garden, teachers Krystal Weston and Karen Wittmer saw an opportunity that was, at that time, buried deep beneath the snow. Our students could experience some of that joy and discovery for themselves by taking on the somewhat daunting revival of the old school garden!

Our school's garden is small and inconsistently cared for, primarily because our weather doesn't lend itself to the school calendar! And because the pandemic prevented our annual farm trip, renewing the garden was an ideal way to be outside to experience farming.

In March, students planted seeds to sprout, and in April the classes refurbished raised beds, installed a "bug motel" built by a class father, and built a tool table near the garden.

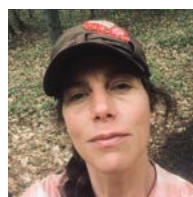
After frost was no longer a threat, the students transplanted their seedlings in May. Bees and butterflies began to visit the opening flowers and soon discovered their fruits. Before school was out in mid-June, the students got to taste lettuce, chives, sage flowers, peas, and thyme from the garden they now loved. Families committed to watering the garden over the summer, and the class received a bountiful fall harvest in September.

"The garden teaches us that the more we put into our work, the more we get out of it, and that many hands working towards a common goal accomplish big things."

In January, the students studied what good farmers need to consider: the importance of pollinators, the conservation of rainwater, composting biodegradable food waste, and healthy soil management.

February was for planning. "We wanted the students to be involved in every step of the process. We asked them what they'd like to grow. "They had lots of ideas!" said Wittmer. "Several families donated money, tools, and materials to make this possible. Our community rallied to help."

This year more than ever, we applaud our teachers' commitment to finding opportunities for excellence within the limitations and challenges presented by the pandemic. "Among many things, the garden teaches us that the more we put into our work, the more we get out of it, and that many hands working towards a common goal accomplish big things," said Weston. "Our school community managed to do that this year, and I'm really proud to be a part of it."



Sarah Battles Franklin teaches kindergarten at AWS. She is formerly a class teacher and parent toddler teacher and is mother to three AWS students. She is also the illustrator of the children's book, *High Flight - Words Have Wings* and is an alum of Green Meadow Waldorf School.

Learning to Shapeshift with the Waldorf Curriculum

by Isabelle Palmore

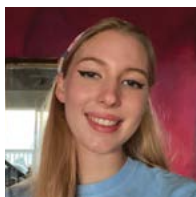
Before I was out of diapers, I discovered my ability to shapeshift. I could become a fairy dancing on the wind, a bunny foraging for food in the forest, or the moon in the sky gazing wistfully down at memories in the making.

Unencumbered by the weight of human existence, I could be free to be me. My recognition of the line between reality and fantasy was often blurred by a childhood of grand adventures with my twin. The dirt under our feet became a rainbow pathway, the brooms between our legs morphed into majestic dragons, and the flowers in our hair grew into illustrious fairy crowns.

As time passed, I inhabited different stories, different characters. I could be Legolas, battling orcs with effortless elegance and integrity. I was the maker in the sand that tormented Paul, or Ender and his crew discovering the meaning of mercy in the face of cosmic misunderstanding. I was Vronsky consumed with the struggle between morality and the human heart.

“I can truly see, experience, and understand different points of view as I unify with the world around me. By discovering the world, I discover myself.”

Each new manifestation represented a new understanding of myself and the world around me. Through my shapeshifting powers, I am able to look beyond the face value of things. I can truly see, experience, and understand different points of view as I unify with the world around me. By discovering the world, I discover myself.



Isabelle Palmore attended the Haleakalā Waldorf School in Maui, Hawai'i from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. She graduated in 2021 and is now attending the University of Hawai'i.

I am the brush that fuels creativity with every glossy stroke of inspiration as I paint a portrait.

I am the iron oxides in red paint giving lips vibrance and cheeks a playful blush.

I am the blank canvas eagerly awaiting the fulfillment of my destiny.

I am the majestic humpback whale taking my breath away as it breaches near my kayak.

I am the peduncle muscle propelling this forty-five ton animal into the air with one powerful movement.

I am the barnacles that cling to the skin of the whale in a desperate attempt to withstand the force of salty water as the whale explosively crashes back into the ocean.

I am the night sky that awes me with its expansive beauty and silent mystery.

I am a binary star system in the depth of space.

I am the red dwarf that slowly fuses hydrogen into helium. I prepare for my final moment that will end in a bright and beautiful supernova.

I am the feeling of excited terror that is experienced at the top of a waterfall just before jumping into a crystal blue pool. I am the adrenaline that courses throughout my nervous system, dilating air passages and redirecting blood to major muscle groups. I am the feeling of momentary regret as my foot steps over the edge followed by the flood of exhilaration and freedom in flight.

I am the rhythmic beat of the drum as my hula sisters and I sway back and forth in unison.

I am the sound wave that moves through the air vibrating the eardrum. I pass through the hair cells in the cochlea that convert movement into electrical pulses sent to the brain where I am interpreted as sound. This is the sound of my home, the sound of connection.

I am my mother's warm brown eyes that emanate wisdom and insight. I am the HERC2 gene. I contain a DNA segment that is the conductor of a symphony of OCA2 gene variations. We play a song of sweet honey that turns the melanin in the eyes up to glow with brown fire.

I am a student.

I sit at my computer with anticipation.

I am a nerd, a scientist, an athlete, and an artist. I work and I play with my whole heart. I am tenacious, courageous, and willing to stand up for what's right. Excitement vibrates through the fibers of my being as I think of my future and the potential of the many shapes I will take to make the world a better place.

I am connection and I willingly stride forward as all that I encounter flows into me and becomes me.

I am.

The Profound Joy of a Wilderness Journey

by Matthew Burritt

As daylight waned over the forest, two owls hooted in duet, filling the valley with peacefulness as the stars shone forth in the darkening sky. This September, eight Santa Fe Waldorf High School seniors and three adult guides nestled down individually in their solo sites, awake and alive to the transition from daylight to evening. The day had passed in quiet reflection, with journals and thoughtful letters by the gurgling stream. The ponderosa pine trees cast sundial shadows that we all chased throughout the day. Night would bring cooler winds and modulated sounds in the grayscale forest.

Santa Fe, New Mexico, is recognized as Oga Po'geh, translated as White Shell Water Place. It was once the center of community for the Tewa and is a place where indigenous stories of past and present are deeply connected to the land where we now dwell. The seniors, class sponsors, and I are in the middle of our 24-hour contemplative wilderness solo, a culminating event in the life of the Santa Fe Waldorf High School Wilderness Program. The program was started in 2001, and by 2004, the first senior class was out on solo with the changing aspen leaves and majestic ponderosa pines. Every senior class since has completed the wilderness solo and I have participated in most of the trips either as a wilderness guide, or as the trip leader. My motivation for leading adolescents on wilderness experiences does not diminish over time but grows and transforms into profound feelings of love for the opportunities afforded to human beings gifted with time spent in wild places, and the Waldorf education that supports and feeds children and adolescents as they grow into the rich tapestry of their being.

At the start of this year's trip, we rode in dusty buses and cars down a rocky track into a paradise of land, the Vallecitos Mountain Retreat Center, inside the Carson National Forest. We stopped before the first pond along the track, and ninth- and twelfth-grade students lurched off the vehicles, stumbled into a grassy meadow, and immediately noticed the sweet smell of the air. With senses heightened, the younger students waited with trepidation, while the seniors smiled with confidence and the luxury of fond memories of a familiar place. The vehicles continued down the track with the gear, while the seniors paired up with ninth-grade students. Together they walked and talked their way past two more ponds to the 100-year-old lodge cut from rough logs, the location for the annual fall wilderness retreat, and the first part of the senior solo trip.

In preparation for the solo, the seniors will spend three days welcoming and orientating the ninth graders to their high school journey. This act of community building becomes the mirror that the seniors use to find themselves as individuals, to recognize where they came from just four short years ago, and where they may be going. For the ninth grader, the wilder-

ness retreat is the first adventure of the wilderness program, an adventure filled with hiking, lessons about self-care, and how to sleep outside, all under the helpful guidance of the senior class with cozy casitas and a beautiful lodge to take the edge off. Once the ninth graders depart, the seniors are consciously led through a threshold experience where they are asked to reflect on their life up to this point in time, who they are becoming, and to ponder their next steps in life. These questions and the solo experience are the apotheosis of the wilderness program, which fosters student connection to themselves and to nature, and allows for a quiet space for students to contemplate their inner and outer journey at the eve of adulthood.

The solo questions that I ask seniors to contemplate during their time in the wilderness are lifelong questions that also resonate within me. They are: Where did you come from? Where are you going? Who are you becoming? What can you leave behind? As possible answers to these questions shift over time and with manifold experiences, new possibilities arise for me both inwardly and outwardly, as I too participate in the solo experience year after year.



A blizzard howled around the great logs of the Yellowstone lodge. It was early June in Wyoming, and the young couple held their one-year-old baby close to ward off the sharp wind. After a week trapped by the snow, the young family was able to leave Yellowstone, to eventually head east and prosper.

This was my first wilderness adventure according to family history. I grew up from that little baby in Yellowstone to explore the woodlands around the Green Meadow Waldorf School in Chestnut Ridge, New York. I found myself in middle school and high school primarily on lakes, paddling canoes through many summer days. Multiple-week canoe journeys through the Adirondacks, Algonquin Provincial Park in Canada, through Mecklenburg in Germany, and an epic Norway/Sweden trip rounded out my early wilderness experiences. My family would also send me out each summer, starting at age seven, for a month of summer camp in



“My motivation for leading adolescents on wilderness experiences does not diminish over time but grows and transforms into profound feelings of love for the opportunities afforded to human beings gifted with time spent in wild places.”

Opposite page: Burritt leading a talking circle on the front lawn of the Vallecitos Mountain Retreat Center. Above: Burritt discussing hiking protocols with freshmen and seniors. Below: Santa Fe Waldorf class of 2022 on a hike before their senior solos.

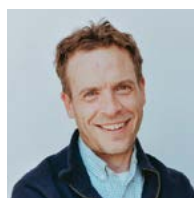
the northern New Jersey woodlands, where I learned to be self-reliant while also feeling incredibly homesick.

I moved back west for my undergraduate degree, entering the Great Books program of St. John's College in Santa Fe. When not studying, I worked in the Student Activities Office during my four undergraduate years, organizing and helping lead wilderness trips for undergraduate students during school breaks. I used my canoeing experience to train as a certified whitewater rafting guide and became a member of the St. John's College Search and Rescue Team. These years were rich for me in learning how to run trip logistics, understanding safety protocols and procedures, and what it means to be a leader in wilderness settings. My journey then took me from the mountains of Santa Fe to the mountains of the Republic of Guinea in west Africa on a two-year tour of service with the Peace Corps as an environmental education volunteer. It was with the children of my village in Porédaka where I learned to love teaching adolescents. Upon my return from Guinea in late 2004, I received an invitation to lead a wilderness trip with the Santa Fe Waldorf School sophomore class in the spring. I have been lovingly entrapped ever since as a Waldorf teacher and wilderness guide.

The strength of the Santa Fe Waldorf wilderness program rests on its team approach where one person runs the trips and class sponsors follow their classes through the sequence of yearly trips. This allows class sponsors to focus on the social dynamics of the class while the details like trip planning, safety considerations, food logistics, gear, and such can be handled by the wilderness team members. Often alumni are invited to participate on wilderness trips as guides, adding another rich layer to the social dynamics of a trip, and helping to train the next generation of wilderness leaders.



I lean back against an ancient sweet-smelling ponderosa pine. I envision the eight seniors at their solo sites and whisper prayers to each of them. I wish them peace and strength and insight as the sun dips lower. I feel grounded by the giant tree behind me. I am reminded of words spoken by Rudolf Steiner, who said in effect that learning about oneself is easier “... in the quiet peacefulness, inner dignity, and charm of nature.” As I listen to the duet of owls, reflecting on the thirteenth time I have been out leading students through their solo experience, I feel at home, aware that human beings are seeking such moments of self-connection as they journey through their lives. We draw from the seven directions of the Native American Medicine Wheel, or Circle of Life, to create balance, growth and self-knowledge. The seniors know that the whole community stands behind them as they travel down the seventh direction, the inner pathway of the human heart.



Matthew Burritt is a high school math and science teacher, the Wilderness Program coordinator and class of 2025 co-sponsor at the Santa Fe Waldorf School in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

POETRY

What can be the role of food in achieving and maintaining peaceful relations with ourselves, others, and our Mother, the Earth?

How can sharing food and food knowledge help Indigenous communities and Waldorf school communities learn more about each other?

Food is a metaphor for life. What and how we eat can mirror how we are living and navigating our lives and relationships. Food can be used in ceremony, celebration and thanksgiving. We sometimes seek the comfort of food in an attempt to reaffirm life and that we want to continue living. As the mass graves of children who attended Indian Residential Schools are being uncovered, we can give thought to those who died from malnutrition and starvation. The nutritional abuse and neglect endured by these young attendees was pervasive and has not been given enough consideration.

I offer this poem as consolation to the eater in us all...



Chandra F. Maracle is co-founder of Skaronhyase'ko:wa/ The Everlasting Tree School (Waldorf-inspired Kanyen'keh- ha/Mohawk immersion) in Ohsweken, Ontario, and initiator of the Tyonnhekwon Onkwaya'takenha:tshera nutrition feature. Maracle has four daughters and lives on Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. She is a member of the *School Renewal* Advisory Board.

STUDENT POETRY

Pacific Madrone

On the outside it's rough with gnarly branches and twigs.
It is TALL. It is STRONG. It is WISE...
It's roots snake deep into the earth,
Curling and entwining with her friends.

Sometimes when you look at something for the first time,
you only see the noticeable things.
When you watch for a while,
and listen to her story
The things you noticed at first
unfold into history.

—by Averie Riddell, age 11

Poetry by the Grade 5/6 class
students from the Whidbey
Island Waldorf School

Pacific Madrone

Oh big old tree, you are so brave and strong.
You fought your way up in a meadow, where the winds were coming on strong.
Oh mighty Madrone, big and proud, you spread your branches wide.
Your bark is smooth, your roots are wide, and your leaves are thin and tough.
Oh great Madrone, you are so big and wide, you are a great sight to behold.

—by Lucca Burley, age 11

EAT THE LOVE

by Chandra F. Maracle

To be Real People
We humans have a need
To feed our bodies regularly
To keep our spacesuits clean and functioning well
As they house our true nature –
That place within us
That comes from another
And will one day take its place among the stars
Illumination
Solace
Know that when we talk about food
We are just talking about life
When we take in that which we call food
We are taking in the forces of our cosmic family.
Eat the Love.
It could have been different.
We could fill up at stations like gasoline
For fuel
Stick a nozzle in our armpit and be on our way.
Or, plug a three-prong in our bellybutton
To recharge our batteries.
Instead
We get to
Gather and pick and chop and slice and sip and
share and husk and grind and stir and salivate
In anticipation...and savor...
This is our inheritance
This is our birthright
So little asked in return
Dance
Sing
Enjoy
Repeat
So before we begin to talk
About food matters, issues and concerns
I acknowledge you, as an eater
One who chooses life
With every spoonful.

Pacific Madrone

Pacific Madrone stretching high
Reaching up towards the sky
It's bark is rough but yet so smooth
In winter they sleep and snore and snooze
In spring it wakes up to the sun
In summer I play in its shade, so fun!
In fall I fall, and get back up,
In a pile of leaves that don't get back up.
All year round in hot and cold
I spend lots of time with Madrone bold

—by Vander Burley, age 11

Sage: A Place to Share Conversations About the Earth and Community

Two years ago, Bella Brodsky founded Sage, channeling her passion for storytelling and social justice into a space to share conversations of importance through a visually pleasing lens. A grassroots print publication, community, and collective that focuses on voices from the outdoors, activism platforms, and creative spaces, the ethos of Sage is about healing our relationship with the Earth, uplifting local communities, and nurturing responsible stewards of the land.

“The ethos of Sage is about healing our relationship with the Earth, uplifting local communities, and nurturing responsible stewards of the land.”

Brodsky, currently at the University of Vermont studying food systems with a concentration in agroecology, grew up immersed in Waldorf communities that held values rooted in conscious slow living. She attended the Housatonic Valley Waldorf School through kindergarten, then attended the Waldorf-inspired Camp Glen Brook since she was nine years old. These experiences taught Brodsky to treat the land with compassion and care, a relationship which she fosters through practicing gratitude, farming and having her hands in the soil, eating locally grown food, backpacking through mountains, canoeing along rivers, and running barefoot through the forest.

What started as a grassroots creative project has grown organically into a book stocked in more than 38 book stores and shops across the United States. Visit www.sagezine.com to learn more.



Poetry by 2020 Grade 7 students
from the Waldorf School of San Diego

In the autumn air
A cold stream runs through the woods
Deer drink from the stream

The aurora glows
The glacier shifts through ice
Ice flows in water

The butterflies soar
A sweltering sun gazes
Strawberry fields.

An egg hatches
New life is abundant
A new life flows through.

—by Lincoln Goddard

I sat watching the raindrops race down the window. They fell on the leaves,
riding them like slides, giggling, and laughing as they fell to the ground.
Seeping under the soil and slipping down the stalks of the plants.

—by Miles Kodama

Butterfly beauty
Fades away, our memories
Should live forever.

The orange leaf falls
Upon a silenced meadow,
To be forgotten

—by Anouk Reynolds

A still pond reflects
A small light glitters
There are fireflies on the stars.

A crack in the world,
Formed by power
A soft fog rolls in.

—by Valter Vilcans

The majestic waves
On a journey of passion
The quest of serene.

The tree is so calm
With their mighty limbs of joy
Beautiful creatures

—by Dash Frazee

Perfect Day
Shining, warming, sun
Beautiful, powerful,
What a gift it is.

Bird
Such beauty and strength
You fly through the world with purpose
You are special.

Winding Creek
Gentle and smooth
Through the woods, you move
Sparkling like a gem.

—by Bella Spriggs

Association of Waldorf Schools of North America®

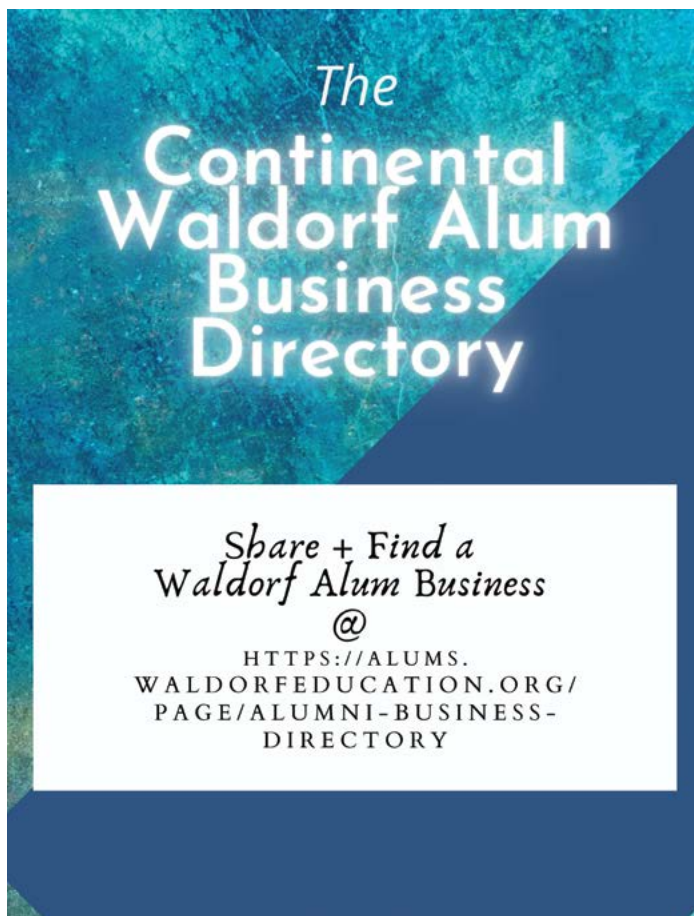
AWSNA MEMBERS

We express our gratitude to the dozens who registered as individual members of AWSNA this past year, with the expressed intent of supporting initiatives related to equity, racial justice, and inclusion. Gifts received make a difference in transforming our work. For more information on how to become an Individual Member, please visit the Individual Membership page on www.waldorfeducation.org, or email Rebecca Moskowitz at rmoskowitz@awsna.org.

AWSNA MISSION

The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America was founded in 1968 to support schools and institutes. Our vision is to strengthen and nurture Waldorf education and to advance Waldorf principles worldwide.

AWSNA's mission is to support schools through collaborative regional work, professional and resource development, accreditation, community outreach, and advocacy.



The
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Waldorf Alum
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PAGE/ALUMNI-BUSINESS-
DIRECTORY



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CONNECT**

SUPPORTING
OUR ALUMS
TO THRIVE.

Find & Connect with Alums Near You	✓
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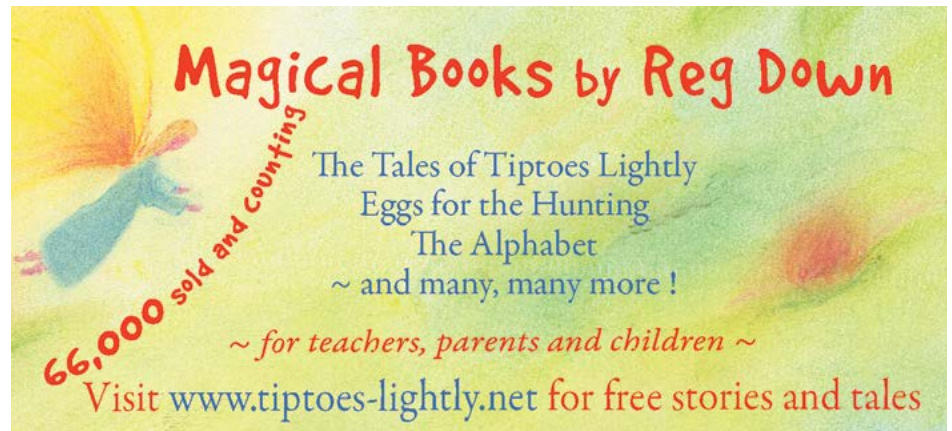
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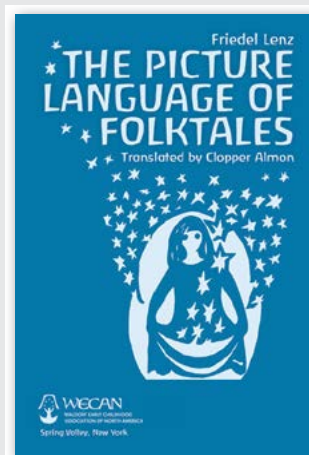
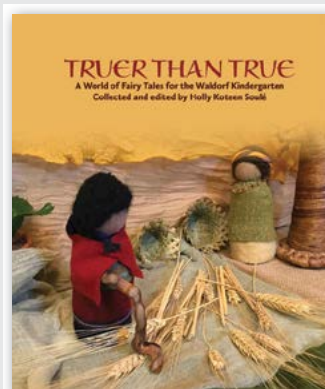


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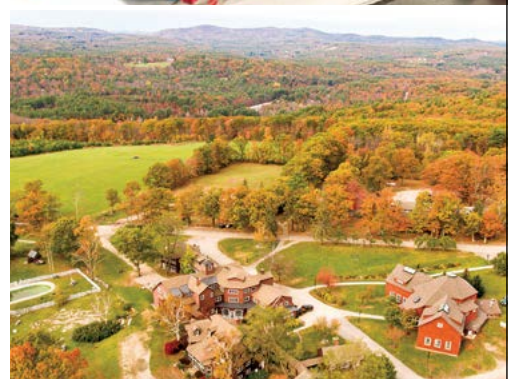
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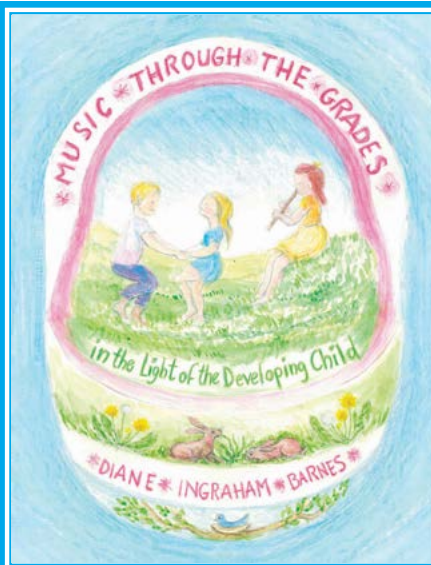


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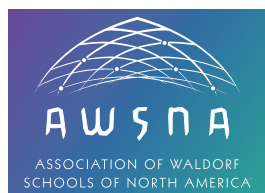
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