

SPECIAL BEST OF EDITION CONFLUENCE

Summer 2017

News from the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education

2011-2017



HIGHLIGHTS OF SEVEN YEARS OF CONFLUENCE AS Waldorf Education Approaches its 100th Year

AT THE DAWN OF A NEW CENTURY

Waldorf education emerged from the ashes of World War I in 1919. It has been described as a healing antidote to the consciousness that led to that devastating conflict at the dawn of the 20th century.

As we approach this centennial anniversary, we share highlights in this *Best of Confluence* edition with stories from some of the 50 plus Public Waldorf schools stretching from Oregon to New Mexico, California to Pennsylvania, Wisconsin to Florida.

Waldorf education has become a global movement with public and independent schools in over 60 countries. In the United States the first independent Waldorf school was established in 1929 in New York City and the first public attempt was made in 1991 in Milwaukee, WI.

After the Yuba River Charter School opened in California in 1994, the number of public schools proliferated and began to spread back eastward. The Alliance for Public Waldorf Education was founded in 2006 and *Confluence* began publication in 2011.

IN NEED OF HEROES ...

The summer cineplex hit, *Wonder Woman*, is one way American cultural is reflecting on the 100th anniversary of World War I (1914-1918.)

This story of “superhuman” power emerging to “save humanity” is an interesting tale worth contemplating here at the dawn of the 21st century, along with the other recently popularized mythological heroes.

A world-wide centennial celebration of Waldorf education is in the making that will take place through-out the 2019-20 school year. Reflecting on the centennial, its meaning and achievement, as we prepare to enter a new school year has led the Alliance to review its history and place in the international educational movement, and share highlights as recorded in *Confluence*.

Waldorf education stands for the dignity, freedom and creativity of each human being. Those are the potential “heroes” of the future, who will have the strength of will to “do what is right,” in spite of the odds, to evolve humanity.

JOIN THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The Alliance is a member of the North American 100th anniversary planning sub-committee that will offer updates on events and celebrations taking place in the United States as we draw closer to the anniversary. Please feel free to contact us for more information.



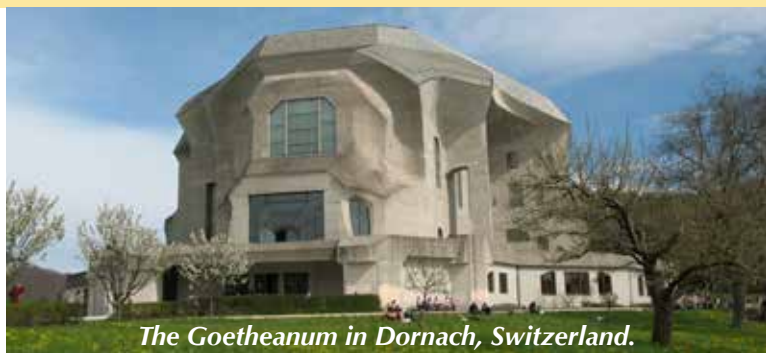
100 th Anniversary of Waldorf Education

The first Waldorf school opened its doors in Stuttgart, Germany in September 1919. Today, Waldorf education is a global movement with schools in over 60 countries. Alliance member schools, have the opportunity to join a worldwide centennial celebration scheduled to occur throughout the 2019-20 school year. As a first taste of what is to come, please enjoy this video on Waldorf education and share it with your communities.



Waldorf 100 – The Film

TO LEARN MORE: The video documentary can be distributed to your school community via your website at [Waldorf 100 – The Film](http://Waldorf100.com).



The Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland.

Dornach 2012: A Window into Global Waldorf Education

BY WILL STAPP

This April, a thousand Waldorf educators from some 50 countries gathered at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, for the Ninth World Teachers' Conference. The global conference, with plenary sessions instantly translated into six languages, happens only every four years. It was a testament to the vitality and global scope of Rudolf Steiner's educational vision. I found it deeply renewing across the entirety of my being...heart, head and hands.

The Goetheanum is a magnificent, multi-story concrete structure designed by Steiner after his first wooden architectural masterpiece burned down. It sits on a grassy and wooded hillside overlooking Dornach. One approaches the site via narrow roads that wind through quaint, 600-year-old farming villages reincarnated as upscale suburbs of Basil, which is just a 15-minute tram ride away. Swiss cowbells clang from nearby pastures, and stone ruins of medieval castles and hermitages peer from the wooded ridges above.

Throughout the week, spring showers washed the air and gave way to grey-violet spectrum clouds with an occasional patch of blue through which a gentle sun lit up the blossoming apple trees, multi-hued tulips and yellow dandelions that danced across the grassy slope leading up to the main building. Walking paths wound past workshops and bio-dynamic farming fields, and linked houses and buildings designed by Steiner in what has come to be known as his dynamic "Dornach Style."

The Goetheanum's main hall is a 1000-seat theater with towering sculpted columns, rainbow colored-stained glass windows, and topped by a domed ceiling covered with fabulous murals. The rest of the building includes galleries, meeting rooms, a cafeteria and bookstore, and houses the various departments of the General Anthroposophical Society, including the Pedagogical Section, which in turn shepherds the theme for 2012 was "Teaching: When the Future is Now—How the Self Finds its Way." Essentially, the conference explored the mechanisms by which Waldorf educators can support the part of the human being that identifies itself as "I" develop into a mature, individuated, yet socially conscious, adult. It pointed directly to the how and why of Steiner's assertion that the way the teacher brings and balances his or her lessons has a direct impact on the health of the students.

See "Child Growth and Education" by Tomas Zdrzil, for a thought-provoking treatment of this subject, which was preparatory reading material. An excellent piece for faculty study, this article can be found at Pedagogische Sektion, World Conference 2012, Preparatory Reading.

The conference plenary sessions featured both educators and scien-

tists who approached the theme from various perspectives. While they were all mind-expanding, one whom I found particularly interesting was Maximilian Moser, who is the head of the Institute for Non-Invasive Diagnosis, in Austria. Dr. Moser did his post doctorate work at the University of Virginia and is a specialist in what he calls chrono-biology, which Waldorf educators might call—you guessed it—rhythm. His basic conclusion? Outer rhythm supports healthy inner rhythm, and disturbances in rhythm have a measurable negative impact on health.

Among other things, Dr. Moser detailed the optimal, restorative 4-to-1 heart-to-breath ratio that is achieved in deep sleep. He has done research into the impact of lifestyle, including screen time, on disrupting such sleep patterns. Moser cited a Minnesota school study (Wahlstrom, 2002) with the finding that later starting times for school days had a positive effect on wakefulness and decreased depressiveness and discipline problems in the students. However, it did not establish an impact on academic performance.



As president of the Board, Will Stapp led the formation of the Alliance until 2011.

Moser has established that chronic disturbance in rhythm can lead to pathology, including breast cancer rates for shift workers and stewardesses. He also did a study on the impact of eurythmy on accident rates for construction workers. The study found that eurythmy twice a week had a positive impact on the sleep patterns of the construction workers and reduced accident rates by 32%.

You can imagine that the hardhats were a bit skeptical at first, but reports were that they actually started enjoying the sessions as time went by. Due to the reduction in accident rates, the sponsoring insurance agency has adopted the program for many of its member construction companies.

Moser's web site is <http://www.humanresearch.at>. It has some 30 translated articles including "How Homer Helps Your Heart," which establishes the restorative quality of hexameter verse on health and breath rates, again the optimal 4-to-1 ratio. Teachers and administrators could dig deeper into these studies for parent education materials that back up the health-inducing mechanisms at play in the Waldorf approach.

Besides the plenary sessions, there were also daily working groups and artistic sessions. I participated in a working group that began—and I do mean only began—to address what is universal and what is local or culturally specific in Waldorf education. This session was facilitated by Martyn Rawson, one of the editors of "The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum," a tome in the field and one that would benefit any public school Waldorf educator. Twelve years after its initial publication, Martyn is revisiting this book's essential questions, with the goal of a revised edition.

One eye-opener in this arena was a question pertaining to festivals. In the U.S. and Europe, we have a tradition of festivals aligned with the cardinal points of the seasons as they manifest in the northern hemisphere. But in Australia, New Zealand,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Dornach 2012: A Window into Global Waldorf Education

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2 South America and much of Africa, the seasons are reversed. Should they stick with the European festival calendar in which the children's visceral experience of the seasonal/planetary orientation of a festival is the opposite of what was experienced half a world away, such as a festival of light in the middle of summer or a harvest festival during the rush of spring? Many of the downunders think not, but not all of them, so you can imagine there is a bit of a row in faculty meetings over this one.

One thing we could all agree on is that Waldorf education is artistic and includes involvement with the transformational and expressive qualities of the arts for both the students and the teachers (not to mention parents and administrators). Consequently, the afternoon sessions included many options from which I chose speech work. Steiner and his wife, Marie, who was highly trained in the theater arts, collaborated on the development of these speech exercises. Initially, the exercises were designed for the actors of the plays they co-produced in Munich. Later, the exercises were introduced to the teachers of the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart.

My experience with speech work is limited. I found it quite invigorating and can only speculate that some of our public-school teachers have also only had cursory exposure to it. I imagine that our school students would benefit greatly from the teachers' further study and/or regular faculty practice in this area. It is extremely valuable for bringing the oral tradition to life in the classroom, and staying away from the drone of uninspired recitation. Plus, it's fun! I would not hesitate to recommend the workshop leader, Sibylle Eichstaedt, as a resource. I know she is working on a new translation of the exercises, does continuing education work on the U.S. West Coast in the summer, and has speech resources available. You can email her at creativespeech@mac.org.

Of course, the artistic highlights of the daily schedules were the evening performances by Waldorf students from around the world. The twelfth grade from Summerfield Waldorf High School in Santa Rosa, California put on an outstanding production of Thornton Wilder's "By the Skin of Our Teeth." A *joi de vivre* and breezy lightness filled the hall as the Brazilian TerraNova students, 18-23 year olds, took to the stage with their Verbo Fundamental (the fundamental logos) eurythmy performance. They stretched the boundaries of what many may have come to view as the eurythmy art form, using humor, grace and agility to interpret the literary and musical works of a host of South American writers and composers.

Who could believe the rhythmic stamina of the Taiwanese Mittwoch School ninth graders as they performed the sacred tribal line dances of their island's aboriginal Amis, as taught to them and led by a tribal elder, Asaw Palaf Langasan? Word has it that the class was a bit scratchy and anti-social at the beginning of the year, but that the work on the dances and the time spent on sewing the fantastic traditional costumes brought the class into a deep unity. The pure will of the chanting and dancing was mesmerizing, and even the concrete columns of the great hall seemed to undulate along with them. It was easy to imagine the troupe transported into archetypal realms beyond the senses by dancing all night alongside a fire, under the stars. The audience rushed to



Ninth grade dancers from the Taiwanese Mittwoch School.

the stage at the end of an hour and a half of this remarkable, trance-inducing performance, and we danced together until finally being shoed away by the ushers.

There was much, much more at the conference, including a heart-warming on-stage thank you to Christof Weichert, who led the Section from 2001-2010 and was a class teacher in Holland for 30 years. Christof was instrumental in the design of the conference as well as the Early Childhood Conference that preceded it the week before. He is known in some of the charters and independent schools in the U.S. for his work with teachers in reinvigorating child-study practices. Christof passed the tiller of the Section to Claus-Peter Roh and Florian Osswald. It is my understanding that a film about the conference is in the works.

One of my biggest take-aways was a renewed appreciation of Steiner as a committed, practicing artist. Evidence of his evolving and prolific architectural, sculptural, painting, performance and social artwork infuse the area, both inside and out. He set much in motion artistically, and much of it is still moving forward. This "aha" reminded me of the importance of consistently coming back to the full humanity we experience in artistic practice, both as children and adults.

Finally, an essential, but unstructured aspect of the conference was getting to know colleagues and comparing notes from around the world. This included the ongoing conversations about what was universal and what was local—between sessions, at mealtimes, and in the late-night cafes. One thing became more and more apparent as I spoke with colleagues from countries including South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Italy, Brazil, the Czech Republic, England, Finland, China, Taiwan, and then some, is that state funding for Waldorf schools is typical around the world, and that the privately funded model, upon which the movement was founded in the U.S., tends to be more of an exception rather than the rule. However, state funding does not always equate with state control. For instance, the German schools are publicly funded at about 60% of operating costs, but remain highly independent organizations. In Holland, what were originally highly independent but state-funded schools are now seeing more and more state intervention and standardization, including testing. As a public movement, we have more work to do to see ourselves in the context of a global effort, and to understand the challenges and accomplishments of our colleagues around the world.

As far as I know, only two American public school representatives attended: Kalen Wood, from SunRidge Charter School in Sebastopol, California, and yours truly, attending as President of the Alliance. Many of our global colleagues have questions about and critiques of our public school movement, but very little direct experience of it. Let's invite them here to see it for themselves, and then four years from now, let's make sure many more of us show up on the world scene. I can assure you of being deeply refreshed from a drought of this jewel-encrusted chalice, and a dance with friends with arms encircling the globe.



Allegra Alessandri: Waldorf High School Pioneer

BY EUGENE SCHWARTZ

As a student at the Sacramento Waldorf High School in the 1980s, Allegra Alessandri was taught by a number of dynamic teachers. She went on to graduate from Pomona College, and moved to Washington, D.C. for a management-training program at the Smithsonian Institution. In 1987 Allegra became the youngest Waldorf high school teacher in America at the recently founded Washington Waldorf High School, where she taught English and history for two years. Recognizing that she needed more life experience, Allegra travelled, improved her Spanish, and taught for a while at the American School in Venezuela before returning to the United States to earn a Masters in English Literature at Georgetown University. Allegra's management studies and experiences within mainstream American intellectual achievement were to prove essential for her next steps in pioneering Waldorf education.

In December 1994, the San Francisco Waldorf School recruited Allegra to teach its seventh grade, which the school hoped would become the first ninth grade of its new high school. Utilizing her foundation in management and her broad educational background, Allegra was able to help found the San Francisco Waldorf High School in 1997.

A decade passed while Allegra administered the school and taught humanities. The San Francisco Waldorf High School's remarkable trajectory, satisfying as it was, served to heighten another dilemma faced by Allegra—and, indeed, by the entire Waldorf movement. The San Francisco Waldorf High School, like every well-enrolled and established independent Waldorf school, must depend on the largesse of well-endowed families; it provides a unique education to children who, by and large, are privileged—but what about the great majority of students in California and North America who suffer in high schools that treat them like so many ciphers? Allegra felt called to support the availability of Waldorf education for all students, regardless of financial means. She began researching the fertile public Waldorf movement in the North Bay Area and collaborated in the early visioning of what eventually became Credo High School in Rohnert Park.

Allegra was completing a doctorate in educational leadership at the University of California at Davis when she was invited to help found the first public Waldorf high school in the United States. It would go far beyond the scope of this short introduction to describe the lengthy, legalistic, politically charged, and often thankless task of bringing Waldorf education into the American public school system. (That story is told in Allegra's dissertation, "Parent Leaders as Agents of Change.") Suffice it to say, however, that Allegra succeeded. In

2008, the George Washington Carver High School of Arts and Sciences opened in Sacramento, the city where Allegra had her own first experiences as a Waldorf student.

Allegra and the intrepid group of teachers she assembled were not allowed to start with a clean slate. Indeed, they were given the mandate to "take over" a failing high school in which gang issues, drug problems, and episodes of violence were the order of the day. Not only were these Waldorf educators expected to bring order into chaos in the qualitative sense, but also as public school teachers they were accountable to quickly demonstrate quantitative success as well by raising student scores on California state tests from depressing lows to acceptable highs.

Although Carver High School was given a beautiful facility, the collapse of California's economy cut school funding and left the school with little support for its operating budget. And although Carver High School had several faculty members with years of experience in Waldorf high schools, the opposition of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America to public education deprived Carver of the broad collegial support that a new Waldorf initiative might expect.

To give up would have meant that Waldorf methods "don't work" in underserved neighborhoods.

To give up would have been saying: Waldorf does not have the power to transform our society.

In spite of these considerable limitations, under the inspired leadership of Allegra Alessandri, Carver High School has had extraordinary success. Within three years, the school had the highest increase in both standardized test scores and in attendance of all schools in the Sacramento City Unified School District. But test scores and attendance records are only the quantifiable tip of the iceberg. Anyone visiting the school grounds is immediately impressed with the social harmony of the students (in a city known for its ethnic, racial, and gang discord), by their interest in one another, by the beauty of their creations and by their obvious joy in learning. And through it all, when you speak to Allegra about the school and the profound challenges implementing Waldorf methods in the public high school, you feel her passion and enthusiasm and pure joy in the process. She remains positive—even jubilant—about the future. The challenge has not broken her spirit; rather it has strengthened her knowledge that Waldorf education can renew society. Her work at Carver is instrumental in changing the way the district leadership views success, accountability, teaching and learning, and even what school looks like.

"In the first couple months on the job," Allegra recounted, "a student asked me, 'Why are you always smiling?' I nearly burst into tears because I was so miserable and frustrated and fearful that this whole project would fail. I managed to maintain my smile and tell myself that I had to answer this person truly. To say, 'I love my job!' would have been a blatant lie. It might have been closer to the truth to say, 'I am so happy to have moved my family, uprooted my husband and his successful design business, and left one of the finest schools in the country for this

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Growth and Development

BY BETTY STALEY



Spring has arrived. As I walk around my garden I notice plants at different stages. The newly planted gardenia is fragile and needs attention. The azalea has deep roots and its cluster of coral blossoms attracts my eye. The lilacs are in their rhythm—just beginning to open their buds; they are like reliable friends, steady, not too flashy, predictable, and always welcome. As I think about the member schools in the Alliance, the garden metaphor makes sense. Some of the schools are deeply grounded; their roots are firm; they are strong

and well planted. Other schools are more fragile. They are growing and they need love and care and attention so that they will bear fruit in the experiences they will offer their children.

As we reflect on the theme of this issue, Growth, it seems appropriate to dwell further on this metaphor. A child grows in his or her physical body, adding inches and pounds, muscles and bones. We expect that to happen with each additional year of a child's life. Changes in proportion occur. Boys and girls in a class grow at different rates. We can see differences especially if we compare first and third graders, fourth and sixth graders. A school grows by adding students or grades. As it increases, new challenges arise to meet these changes. Is the classroom large enough? Does the school have enough teachers for the number of grades?

The Alliance for Public Waldorf Education has grown in membership. More schools are joining to become part of our organization. This kind of growth will help the Alliance create avenues of support for its members and make Waldorf education more well known. It is heartwarming to feel this growth.

However, there is another word that is used when speaking about growth that has greater complexity and meaning. That word is development. Development is more than adding inches to a child's height or numbers of classrooms to a school. It describes expanding or bringing out potentialities or capabilities. Development has to do with revealing or unfolding gradually; evolving. In considering development we are getting closer to our work as Waldorf educators.

Both growth and development rely on the mystery of time. If we watch time-lapse photography of a plant, we can wonder at the beauty of the seed moving through stages to blossom and to seed again in seconds. Yet what we are seeing is not true because time and rhythm are eclipsed. As each stage is reached, the plant arrives at a new capacity of life—verticality, sprouting, budding, dropping seed. It is not only a matter of increasing in size. Time is needed for each stage to come to its fullness before a new one is expressed. At each stage something new is revealed.

It is similar with children. We observe them at different times of the year, and we can measure their growth. Yet we cannot see them growing. As they pass through particular challenges, such as the nine-year change, we experience their development. When children come through this stage, they are different. They see the world differently. They have new capacities for understanding themselves and others. Thus we educate them in a different way than we did earlier. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 6](#)



In the garden at Carver High School, Sacramento, CA.

Waldorf High School Pioneer

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4 misery!' But sarcasm was not the medicine I needed to deliver. I thought, smiled, and desperately searched for the truth, which eventually came to me: 'I love working with teenagers. I have committed my career to working with high school students.' While my answer was partly an evasion of the truth, the girl seemed to relax. She seemed to realize that I would not leave or abandon her and the school. She seemed to hear the deeper truth, which was: I will not give up on you.

"To give up then, in the depth of despair, would have been to give up on the promise of Waldorf education to transform public education. To give up would have meant that Waldorf methods 'don't work' in underserved neighborhoods. To give up would have been saying: Waldorf does not have the power to transform our society.

"Within a couple of months, major transformations began happening. I stood in the school's main quad—as I did every break time or passing period, on guard, alert, preventing the next fight or theft. And I felt the whole school spinning and spiraling. I thought, 'This is the astral. It is so powerful here that I feel as if I am on a very small boat on a turbulent sea, in the middle of a hurricane. What, I wondered, am I doing here? I reflected back on my conversation with the girl about my smile, and I knew then that what we were doing was adding homeopathic drops of love—truth, beauty and goodness—and the astral gyrations of the high school where the astrolabe, spiraling and spinning that potent medicine.

"In this homeopathic way, Waldorf education provided us the wisdom and practice that has transformed a culture of failure into one of success, achievement and above all: truth, beauty and goodness."

Time will tell, but a visit with Allegra Alessandri at Carver High School can give one the feeling that this school has come of age in what the scholar Ida Oberman has called the "American Crucible." And perhaps the staggering needs of American public schools may serve as an alembic, extracting by degrees the essence of the Waldorf high school. The Sacramento City Unified School District, which currently educates 700 Waldorf students each year in grades K-12, is currently studying how to grow the Waldorf methods throughout the 45,000-student school district.



Woodland Star Charter School English Learners class, in Sonoma, CA.

Growth and Development

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6 It is this mystery of development that characterizes Waldorf education. The way we teach depends on where the child is in his or her stage of development. The child needs time to develop at her own pace, and adults need to be patient and honor the time that is needed. In horticulture, the term forcing refers to inducing a plant to produce its shoot, leaf, and flower ahead of its natural schedule and out of its natural environment; this yields the quick beauty of a narcissus blooming in December, but it makes for weak plants. Forcing children's learning before they are ready, pretending they are at a different stage than they are, is dangerous. It robs them of the time needed for healthy, strong development. We cannot force knowledge; we can only awaken capacities for knowing.

We also need to honor the mystery of time and development within ourselves as teachers. We do not become Waldorf teachers overnight, or even in a few years. By patiently observing and contemplating, awakening our feelings, stimulating our will, and bringing living thoughts on how to meet an individual child, we teachers develop new capacities. These changes unfold gradually, subtly, and then one day we realize we are understanding the child in a different way than we did in the past. We begin to grasp what Rudolf Steiner meant when he said that education is an art. We cannot go back to the way we were before we understood these things. Even when we try to explain it to others we stumble over our words. Yet the experience within our souls is deep and sure.

Time is the mystery in everything alive. The Alliance of Public Waldorf Education is entering a new phase. Membership is increasing, and something else is happening that has to do with development.

The Pedagogical Committee of the Alliance is newly formed. Its task is to pay attention to the nurturing of capacities, with the unfolding of Waldorf pedagogy. We hope to be able to work on several levels. As we find our way, we need to pay attention to the different needs that schools have. Some of the tasks we are contemplating include: providing access to a deepening understanding of the educational indications of Rudolf Steiner; providing opportunities for mutual sharing on pedagogical issues; broadening pedagogical contributions at conferences; holding dialogues on specific educational questions that arise in public schools; and serving as a clearing house for various training opportunities, workshops, and meetings.

As we find our way, we need to pay attention to the different needs that teachers and schools have. We want to be true to the spirit of Waldorf education and to the children who are in the classrooms. We reach out to those who would like to join us in this work. Let us know how you can help.

Ways to Engage with the Alliance

CONFLUENCE

Confluence is a twice-a-year online news magazine published in the Fall and Spring. To receive the newsletter in your email inbox subscribe at <http://www.allianceforpublicwaldorfdeducation.org/sign-up/>

HAPPENINGS eNEWS

Happenings eNews is a periodic newsletter distributed approximately nine times a year that you will also receive in your inbox when you sign up for **Confluence**.

MAILING ADDRESS

Alliance for Public Waldorf Education
Post Office Box 1007B
West College Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

EMAIL

alliance.public.waldorf@gmail.com

WEBSITE

Visit the Alliance website at allianceforpublicwaldorfdeducation.org for a listing of member **SCHOOLS**, to find back issues of our **NEWSLETTER**, see our **JOBS** listing, learn how to **JOIN** the Alliance, and view other **RESOURCES**.

FACEBOOK

Friend us and follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/AllianceforPublicWaldorfEducation/> to stay in touch.

BLOG

Follow our blog at <https://allianceforpublicwaldorfdeducation.blog/>

SHARE YOUR NEWS

Let us know what's happening at your school. Contact us at alliance.public.waldorf@gmail.com or call the Alliance's Administrative Coordinator Victoria Temple at 707-628-4322.



Participants in the Community School for Creative Education-sponsored seminar on emergency care for children facing trauma.

Waldorf-Inspired Trauma-Informed Care

BY IDA OBERMAN, Ph.D.

In April, Oakland's Community School for Creative Education hosted a four-day seminar by Friends of Waldorf Education's Managing Director, Bernd Ruf, and Emergency Pedagogy Manager, Malte Landgraff, from Karlsruhe, Germany. On their way from Kenya, where they were offering Waldorf-inspired emergency care to children in one of the country's largest refugee camps, to help children in China's earthquake stricken Chengdu, they came to offer a four-day training in Oakland: "Trauma-informed Care—A Waldorf-inspired Approach."



Ida Oberman

Mr. Ruf and Mr. Landgraff worked with Community School's organizing team so this training could help deepen the work of the school and strengthen its bonds with its district, county, and Waldorf partners. Under Mr. Ruf's guidance, participants jumped rope, threw balls, played drums and sang. At the same time, in rich, two-hour lectures, Mr. Ruf took participants through Steiner's *Study of Man* in light of most recent brain, neurological and behavioral research, ably aligning one with the other and therefore equipping proponents of Waldorf education with a frame and language that holds meaning well beyond Waldorf circles.

The outcomes were quickly felt. Staff, parents, members of the local faith community, and local district and county educators came and stayed to learn more. Given Oakland Unified School District's current focus on trauma-informed care and caring school communities, and district, city and county grappling with the need to meet the children where they are emotionally and socially in order to offer a pathway to academic success, the resonance was palpable. Here was a coherent strategy that had been tested for nearly 100 years. The work of Community School was

deepened. Bonds with partners were strengthened. All participants joined in the shared task to embrace head, heart and hands in order to build schools as safe places to learn and flourish.

Bernd Ruf's recently released book on trauma-informed care (*Truemmer und Traumata 2012*) is forthcoming in English. And better yet: Mr. Ruf has offered to return to Oakland to offer further help. We hope that with more lead time more members of the Public Waldorf community can participate. Stay tuned. For more information, visit www.communityschoolforcreativeeducation.org. There you will find a full power point presentation of the four-day seminar and three relevant articles by the presenters.



Bonds between Oakland's Waldorf-inspired charter school and its district and county partners were strengthened at the conference.

Robert Anderson

On Aligning the Common Core Standards with the K-12 Waldorf Curriculum

INTERVIEWED BY CHIP ROMER

Last spring, the Alliance board commissioned an ambitious project — to align the new Common Core Standards to the Waldorf kindergarten-through-twelfth-grade curriculum. The project was overseen by the Pedagogical Committee of the Alliance board, of which Allegra Alessandri, Ed.D., principal of George Washington Carver High School, is the chair. Robert Anderson is the lead author, working closely with Liz Beaven, Ed.D., Dean at Rudolf Steiner College.



Bob Anderson

The document, which will be available from the Alliance this fall, has four parts:

1. Part One is a grade-by-grade overview of Waldorf education and the developmental nature of the curriculum.
2. Part Two consists of a descriptive narrative of each Waldorf grade level and a series of tables in which the Common Core Standards in language arts and math are laid out in comparison to the Waldorf curriculum.
3. Part Three is Alliance recommendations for the Waldorf-appropriate grade-level placement of all the Common Core Standards—drawn from the tables in Part 2.
4. Part Four is the handbook that describes how to use this document.

The research for this project involved working with teachers from a wide variety of Public Waldorf schools from kindergarten through high school. The goal is to ensure that the document is useful and relevant to teachers in the classroom and also helpful as a resource for school districts. Mr. Anderson reflected on the process.

CR: Forty-five states have now adopted the Common Core. What are the origins of the new standards?

RA: A team of university educators designed the Common Core with the intention that every graduate of public high school be college ready—meaning that all students can proceed from twelfth grade directly into a four-year college without any need for remediation. The testing is designed to assess Common Core competency by the end of eleventh grade so that, if necessary, remediation can occur in twelfth grade, not in college. This is particularly alarming to mainstream teachers, where in California, for example, only 31% of public high school graduates are currently qualified to apply to the University of California or California State University systems.

CR: As a Waldorf educator, do you see aspects of the Common Core that need taming?

RA: Unfortunately, yes. I have four principal concerns. First is that the primary impulse for the new standards is external, driven by the colleges and their needs—not internal, driven by what is best and most appropriate for students. Second is that there is no consideration given to child development; each student is seen and addressed as an untrained “little adult” who only needs training to become an “adult adult.” The Common Core sees kindergartners as fledgling critical thinkers, not as the wondering inhabitants of the world of imagination that Waldorf educators know them to be. Third involves the intention that “Smarter Balance” Common Core assessments will be administered by computer; this assumes that schools and students have no impediment to technology, and requires even third-grade students to type their responses and competently move a cursor through data to highlight correct answers. A practical subset of this concern is that only about one-third of U.S. schools currently have the computer resources to administer testing in this manner. This leads to my fourth concern, which is that the Common Core has already spawned an \$8 billion industry of software and packaged curriculum options, ongoing interim digital assessments using the same format at the Smarter Balance assessments, whole suites of new products

The primary impulse for the new standards is external, driven by the colleges and their needs—not internal, driven by what is best and most appropriate for students.



Enjoying outdoor activity at the Woodland Charter School in Grants Pass, OR.

Robert Anderson on the Common Core Standards

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8 by the tablet companies, and a flood of professional development workshops and activities around the Common Core.

CR: That sounds like a scary four-headed dragon! Is the Alliance project effective in taming it?

RA: As Waldorf educators, we must be vigilant to ensure that the interests of industry and higher education don't eclipse the interests of children. We must continue to put the best interests of our children first. The Alliance document intends to honor the Waldorf developmental model and has 150 pages of tables where we recommend repositioning the Common Core Standards to later grades, where they are more developmentally appropriate. We still expect excellence in the K-8 standards by the end of eighth grade, and we still expect our students to test relatively low prior to fifth grade. Fortunately there will no longer be second grade testing.

CR: You have clearly articulated your concerns. Is there anything that makes you hopeful about this issue?

RA: I am inspired by the way the Alliance and several of its member schools pooled resources and collaborated to make this child-centered response to the Common Core available to all Public Waldorf schools and others concerned with developmental appropriateness. I am hopeful that Alliance schools will continue to stand together in our commitment to developmentally appropriate, child-centered education. And—especially if state departments of education opt to retain pencil-and-paper testing—I am optimistic that public Waldorf middle and high school students will outscore their mainstream counterparts in Common Core assessments, demonstrating that a developmentally based, arts-integrated, experiential curriculum is a win-win for students, schools and universities—for society at large.



Waldorf educators must be vigilant to ensure that the interests of industry and higher education don't eclipse the interests of children.



COMMON CORE ALIGNMENT PROJECT

The Common Core Standards have been adopted by forty-five states. The Common Core will be fully implemented in most states by the 2014-2015 school year and include new assessments designed by the Smarter Balanced Consortium, which require all testing to occur on computer tablets or laptops. Other changes include a new approach to math at the high school level. Districts are deciding between the traditional math sequences of Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, or to move to the Integrated Math model that is more typical of European and Asian schools.

The Alliance's Pedagogical Committee has worked closely with Bob Anderson on the Common Core and Waldorf Curriculum Alignment project since January. Mr. Anderson visited several Public Waldorf charter schools, both elementary and high school, to review the standards in both the Common Core and Waldorf curriculum. The project—a 400+ page document reviewing and cross-referencing the standards—includes full narrative descriptions of each grade level. The documents are introduced by an overview of Waldorf curriculum written by Dr. Liz Beaven. The Alliance will be taking up the issue of technology use in the early grades and how to meet the assessment requirements.

The document is finished and on the editor's desk. Mr. Anderson, Dr. Beaven and Dr. Alessandri will present several workshops at the **Alliance January Conference**.

The document is currently being distributed to all member schools.

You can read more about the common core at <http://www.corestandards.org/>

And more on assessments and find sample items at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/>

FOCUS OF THE WINTER ISSUE

SOCIAL MISSION



Eva Cranston leads a conference workshop on singing in rounds with grades three and above.

Something's Changed

BY WILL STAPP, ALLIANCE PRESIDENT

Something's changed. It was palpable this January as we gathered from around the country at the Alliance's annual conference and dug deeper into the question of our social mission. Attendance was bursting, up 20% from last year. Five schools were recognized for opening their doors this school year alone, many from the East Coast. We've spanned the continent!

Martyn Rawson and Stephen Sagarin, keynote speakers with substantial international and American independent Waldorf credentials, both underlined creativity, flexibility and the importance of grappling with the essentials as we meet the children who stand before us. At times throughout the weekend, even the construct of independent and Public Waldorf education seemed to evaporate, and we became just a gathering of educators wrestling the zeitgeist of the times and the whisperings of our collective future. Unlike past years, Stegman Hall stayed full until the very end. Many, including myself, were hesitant to leave. It was a moment requiring a profound pause... So what has changed? I think we have just emerged from a rite of passage. In traditional societies, rites of passage are coming-of-age ordeals through which uninitiated youth must pass in order to achieve adult status. They are also cultural processes in which the next generation discovers its particular spiritual gift or vision, which, when brought back to the tribe, allows for renewal and growth. Yes, it appears to me as if our Public Waldorf movement, in many ways the unacknowledged—some say illegitimate—offspring of the American independent Waldorf school movement, is coming of age.

Rites of passage are typically conducted under the sanction of tribal elders who hold and transmit the heritage. Yet, many of our public school communities have grown up in relative isolation with scarce contact with elders and little recognized claim of birthright. For many, Rudolf Steiner College has served as the primary living linkage to the pedagogical and spiritual heritage that inspires/feeds/supports our work. A few schools are lucky enough to have supportive relationships and guiding lights from the independent schools in their areas. For others, these relationships have been fraught with tension and antipathy.

I do not think that it is a stretch to say that our public movement was birthed by a smattering of visionaries, rebels and refugees from the independent movement who took up the social-missionary mantle described by Stephen Sagarin in his *History of Waldorf Education in the United States: Past, Present and Future*. Access and economics were prime motivators. Yet, with thin lifelines to the heritage, many schools wound up in the precarious position of self-initiation. Consequently, we have stumbled on more than one occasion in the attempt to discover for ourselves what it means to live out Steiner's educational impulse, while at the same time navigating the pressures of federal, state and local school district requirements.

During the quest, we've been challenged by both Dan Dugan and by AWSNA. We have also hurt ourselves with our too-often superficial understanding of Steiner, un-processed organizational eruptions of shadow material, and the inability to recognize—and then admit—what we didn't know. Still, over time and with the luck and vitality of youth, our movement has persevered and deepened. Our trials and tribulations have only strengthened the clarity of our shared vision of providing a soul-nourishing safe harbor for children and families from broad walks of life.



Alliance President Will Stapp at home during lambing season.

Now, our school communities are starting to reach out, learn from one another and work together. As a movement, we are transitioning from a primarily individual-school-community consciousness and freely joining together as a larger body, which allows us to enter the larger social/political sphere of education with the status of an adult. A young adult perhaps, but an adult nonetheless. We're becoming somebody, both nationally and internationally.

An important sign that we are growing up is the work on the Levels of Membership process through which we are collectively committing to schools supporting schools in the pursuit of high-quality programs.

For those of you who were not able to attend the workshop on this effort at the Alliance conference, this includes evolving towards regional groupings that will allow economy in a peer-supported quality-assurance process.

The guiding Levels of Membership document is being edited to incorporate feedback gathered at the conference and is set to be adopted by the Alliance board in March. Next year will serve as a pilot, with two site visits in each region. The gleanings from the pilot program will be folded into the Levels before the Alliance formally rolls out the process in 2015-16.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Martyn Rawson

on International Perspectives on Waldorf Essentials

INTERVIEWED BY WILL STAPP

*Martyn Rawson is an international Waldorf educator and advisor based near Hamburg, Germany, where he is a college professor in the Waldorf Seminar, and teaches art history and English in the upper grades at Elms-horn Waldorf School. His research interests are curriculum development, quality development, practice-based research, portfolio and pedagogical support. Martyn has published thirteen books, including co-authoring the **International Waldorf Curriculum**. See YouTube for a sample of his lectures.*

Will Stapp: One of the concerns of U.S. public Waldorf teachers is the question as to whether or not teaching is sustainable. Would you comment on the notion of economy in preparation?

Martyn Rawson: The thing about economy has to do with skill, capacities and knowledge. Beginners have to put far more effort into their preparation. They are spending a lot of time finding appropriate material and are basically feeling uncertain. One of the things that can help, of course, is regular mentoring so that people have a confirmation that they are on the right track. Once your feet are under the table and you are established as a teacher, you are probably taking additional responsibilities in the school. That's when economy of preparation becomes very important.

WS: So how would you approach it?

MR: Two elements come to mind. Waldorf education already has a substantial body of knowledge. There is curriculum material that actually provides reference points for most things. There is also a lot of information out there so you don't have to reinvent the wheel: collections of poetry, texts, recommended stories and things like that. You just need to get hold of it.

Of course, that doesn't help you make the right choice for your class. This is where the contemplative side of preparation enters the picture. This means developing practices such as the habit of sitting down quietly, reviewing the lessons you just taught, reviewing the day and your own responses...you felt pleased, you felt frustrated, you felt disappointed or unsatisfied...that is the initial step. Then, tune into the mood of the class or the energy levels that were present in the activities and identify things that didn't go the way you expected. This typically leads to insight. Essentially, the contemplative practice regularly done enables you relatively quickly to intuit the direction your teaching needs to go.

Personally I've always found it quite helpful to go for a walk, but you can even do it while shopping. Some find it helpful to sit and light a candle and be inward or meditate. Everybody needs to find his own way of doing it, but basically you are in your own mind space, and out of that quite often come little fragments of clues, a sense of "that might be worth looking at." Then you have to follow it up.

In effect, you are building your capacity for forming a professional judgment, which you don't have that much time to ponder. You have to go for it. And the more sure-footed you are, the better it is. You can do it in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Participants at the Conference break-out session on Steps of Membership formed regional support groups.

Something's Changed

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10 A second indication is the excellent work being done on pedagogical support, both the **Waldorf-Common Core Curriculum Alignment and Handbook** and the emerging **Formative Assessment Project**, an effort that will continue to build steam throughout the spring with a final publishing date set for the fall.

A third is the emergence and stabilization of our flagship high schools, George Washington Carver School for the Arts and Sciences and Credo High School, both in Northern California, and Desert Marigold School in Phoenix, AZ, which is our first school to offer a full K-12 program. As we learned from our keynoters, the gifts of our work in early childhood and grades have the opportunity to blossom and come to full fruition in the high school student. Clearly, the high school is our cutting edge and perhaps our most significant potential contribution to broader social renewal. We will need to have more of them.

Our growing maturity is quite apparent in the emerging effort to stand together for our developmental approach and curricular freedoms as articulated in our charters. An example is our recent move in California to make the case for a perpetual pencil-and-paper alternative to the early-grades' Smarter Balanced Assessment. It appears as if there is a three-year window before the pencil and paper option is eliminated, but I urge you not to count on it. I say keep building the collective momentum; let's be way out in front on this one.

We've survived self-initiation and are re-engaging with a living heritage that extends way beyond these American shores. I'm relishing the experience. Certainly, young adulthood has its own set of trials and responsibilities, one of which will be the ongoing renewal of our commitment to continue to grapple with Steiner's thinking about education and his vision of human development...this is key to what makes us Waldorf educators. I am also pondering the nature of our unique gift. Are we bold and inspired enough to reach beyond our schools and our movement? Are we willing to give something back that helps renew and redirect American education as a whole?

Waldorf Essentials

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11 a slightly different way at the end of one week to plan for the next one. I often used Sunday afternoons to block out the main steps and supporting detail, and then fine-tune it over the course of the week. There is a sense of artistic satisfaction that these things often work out...you start with a rough sketch, add detail and then finer detail over time to finish the piece.

The other aspect of course is that you need to talk to people. Talk to colleagues, advisers and mentors. The experienced teacher will be able to ask the right questions more quickly. That's a kind of economy in preparation, and it's energizing. The more success you have in teaching the more energy you have and therefore the more you can teach.

WS: As you travel around the world, do you find that faculties are achieving the type of openness with each other that Steiner recommended so they actually bring their teaching challenges forward and get some help with them?

MR: I have experienced that it can work really well, but I think that a lot of faculties get tangled up in issues that block them from sharing pedagogically. When someone comes along and says let's really focus on child study or some other type of intelligent pedagogical activity or deepening, then people can really get fired up and enthusiastic. There is a certain amount of expertise required to organize effective study meetings or continuing professional development meetings, but it is not rocket science. You can do it if you clear the other stuff out of the way.

There are other approaches, like playing to people's strengths. For instance, if someone has introduced a new main lesson, or repeated one that has been successful, then get them in to talk about it. You get to see that person in another light, in their professional capacity, which is typically invisible because you don't have time to go into their classroom and see them teaching. This expands the knowledge in teachers who haven't yet gotten to that grade.

It is a real task of school leaders to create spaces and to encourage people to share their experiences and expertise. Have someone other than the presenter manage the time and process. That is hugely helpful, especially when it is done in a friendly but firm way that is not going to irritate people. Very simple, but very effective.

WS: What were your impressions of our Public Waldorf movement on your visit here?

MR: My visits to schools left me with a profound impression of Waldorf education as I am familiar with it going on in a lot of other places in the world... creative teachers, active students, a lot of fine artwork going on. I got to look at some main lesson books...very good standard.

My conversations with school leaders and others around left me with the impression of an active movement committed to Waldorf education and a lot of areas of competence and expertise—like accountability, management and leadership and student assessment, which probably have to do with being public schools. There is obviously a depth of experience. So I have a very positive impression of a thriving, bustling Public Waldorf movement.

WS: Do you have any words of encouragement for our public movement here in the States?

MR: Well, I think you are doing tremendous work, and I think you have got a lot of major challenges because of the direction of public education, not



"Each child (person) deserves to be seen, heard, accepted, and understood" which has "practical consequences for teaching and learning," as well as "practical implications for school leadership and management."

just in the U.S., but all over the world. There is managerialism, standardization and testing and a lot of things like that that are actually counterproductive from the Waldorf perspective. As I said in my talk at the conference, your movement needs to move up a gear to establish a kind of collaboration that will allow it to harness its resources to tackle those things at another level. Firefighting can only be done locally, but fire prevention is more of a regional or movement-wide approach. If you are all having to engage with the same type of external structures, then you need well-briefed people with time and resources to deal with that on behalf of the movement.

WS: Where do you see Waldorf education going in the next 20 years?

MR: I think the private-public challenge is going to happen in lots of places because I think the general trend is towards a kind of privatization. Lots of countries are moving in this direction. It's part of the devolution of direct state control of healthcare and education that is a general trend across the world. In China and India there will be a booming of private education and in a sense that will roll the wheel back a bit; they will have to go through a much longer process to arrive at socially accessible schools that foster social justice. So again we will have a kind of two-track movement.

WS: As a Waldorf teacher, teacher of teachers and advocate, where do you find your renewal?

MR: I go to California—and if that is not an option, to my garden! No, really, every person has to find his own way. I find a lot of energy from arts and the ideas of other people. I periodically dip into the ideas of Steiner and find that extremely rewarding but it's not my exclusive source.

See Martyn Rawson's slideshow on "**How to Create and Recreate Curriculum**" at http://www.allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Rawson_Action-Research.pdf

Why Do We Do What We Do?

AN INTERVIEW WITH **CHRISTOF WEICHERT** BY WILL STAPP



CHRISTOF WEICHERT

WS: Do you have any advice for teachers who are looking at the conventions of Waldorf education, questioning some of their relevance for today's children, and perhaps yearning to grow beyond some of the habits that have formed over the years?

CW: My advice is that as teachers we spend time at every faculty meeting with the question: Why do we do that? You have to ask whether things became habitual in accordance with the archetypal advice or not. Then, you will make some outstanding discoveries that the intent of the original advice was quite different from what we made of it.

Look precisely at what was intended. If we have that precise look, then we ask our self, is that what we need in our time? Mostly, it is. I am deeply convinced that Steiner made this curriculum not so much for his time, but for the times that are coming now. So check out why we do what we do.

I'll give you a simple example. We are always talking in grade three about the house-building block. Now if you look at the original advice, Steiner said we should bring the children in grade three to an understanding of—or in contact with—the archetypal professions around the place where they live. Now, house building is an archetypal profession, but if you live on the coast, fishing is as well. A baker is an archetypal profession. A farmer is an archetypal profession. It is not only about house building!

I see in many schools that the foreign-language track is a kind of side dish. Steiner advocated his school model on two pillars—main lessons and foreign languages. That was the distinguishing quality for him. So, in foreign language teaching we are far behind what was intended. Now you see, out of research, refreshment comes.

Another unhappy habit that teachers can barely hear is that Steiner said in the lower grades, one through three, we can teach quite soberly reading, writing and math skills, in an almost programming way, but in the later years, from grade five on, is when we have to infuse our whole teaching with imagination.

WS: You are suggesting using a much more direct approach to the building blocks of grammar, mathematics and such in the very early grades? That would be news to many.

CW: Precisely. If you see a teacher who has this soberness, then you see the children blooming. But the habit of schools in grades one through three is that the teaching is overburdened with imagination as if it were a kindergarten. Then, from grade four on it should be precisely the opposite.

I am deeply convinced that Steiner made this curriculum not so much for his time, but for the times that are coming now.

WS: How do you understand Steiner's indication of more direct instruction, or soberness, in grades one through three? What do you think he was getting at?

CW: That early learning is basically a habit, and the more soberly you approach that early on, the better the results are later.

WS: What would that sober instruction look like to you in one through three?

CW: Sober looks like you really teach, that you are in a process of a higher speed of learning than is done now. I have seen main lessons where the real teaching takes three minutes out of 120, or classes in America where they did the alphabet the whole first year. That is because of this misunderstood gesture that everything has to be wrapped with imagination. But, if you bring too much imagination, the children get fuzzy. The archetype is that the alphabet is done around Christmas of the first year and then the reading and writing starts. Steiner said that you should teach out of the reality of life, and so you would use endless comparisons, but you are not building artificial worlds of dwarfs and whatever in the first three grades.

WS: So the imaginative piece has more to do with building the actual capacity to form mental images as opposed to imaging a fantasy world?

CW: Precisely, and in that respect we have to do a certain amount of clean-up. If you do it in a positive way it will benefit you because the academic results will be a lot better. Then, in the higher grades your teaching really becomes a real dynamic piece of art.

WS: Say more about that. What would a dynamic lesson look like?

CW: I'll tell you, that is the essence of Waldorf education. Steiner said that we teach within an artistic process. And what is an artistic process? Look at a piece of music, for example: you have the exposition, which foreshadows what is going to happen. Then you step down from that procession. You calm it, perhaps look what we have done until now... this and this and this. Then, you make another leap, and then you calm down again and process it. It's a dynamic use of time, just like a piece of music. If you do that, then the experience is that of expansion and contraction. It is shaped by very precise use of oral qualities, visual qualities and interactive qualities, and they have to be in balance. You should always have an eye for what refreshes the children and what tires them. If the children get tired, you

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



Rhythm Heals Stress

ADAM BLANNING, M.D.

Stress wears us down. And today, probably more than ever before, we are all stressed out.

This shows up in our frenetic lifestyle, through the fact that we have so many laborsaving devices and yet so little time, and through health problems like disordered, non-restful sleep and adrenal fatigue. How can we change this? How can we reduce stress hormones for our children and ourselves?

One method is to adopt an “anthroposophic lifestyle.” A Swedish study published in November 2010, consistently demonstrated that “infants from families with an anthroposophic lifestyle had significantly lower cortisol [stress hormone] levels” on saliva tests compared to other families (*Psychoneuroendocrinology* (2010) 35, 1431-1437). This was true for all three samples that were obtained at different times of the day—as cortisol naturally rises and falls—and was also graduated, as those with an “anthroposophic” lifestyle had the lowest average levels (8.8 nmol/l), those with a “partly anthroposophic” lifestyle mid levels (11.3 nmol/l) and those with a “non-anthroposophic” lifestyle the highest (14.9 nmol/l). This study is important because it indicates that we can consciously influence our body’s level of stress, but it also begs the question: what is an anthroposophic lifestyle? The study’s answer: trying to create an environment with a lower degree of exposure to stress.

Cortisol is widely recognized as a stress hormone, but its physiologic effect is subtler and slower than that of adrenaline (epinephrine). Our nervous system, which guides the secretion of both hormones, is similarly differentiated into faster conscious-sensing (more on the adrenal side) and slower, more sleeping activities (like cortisol). There is a three-fold division to the nervous system:

1. THE NERVES OF OUR HEAD AND SENSES are quick and flexible, able and willing to respond to things at a moment’s sensing—we could call these our “on” nerves, as we are properly precisely aware through them during all our waking hours. They are most accessible, and are also related to our thinking activity, responding moment to moment.

2. THE NERVES OF OUR SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM, active in “fight or flight” (think adrenaline), live in a middle realm, closely related to our feeling life. When these nerves are very active we can become acutely aware of their effect through things like a faster heart rate, deeper breaths, sweating, and emotions of fear, rage, or lust, responding minute to minute. CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Why Do We Do What We Do?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13 change into another mood or another activity so you and the children are in kind of a flow.

WS: In your recent book you describe it as a living lesson.

CW: That’s only possible if there is real engagement. If I am not really engaged in what I do, then I get tired, and at the end of the day, I am worn out. Lots of teachers are worn out at the end of the day and complain that it is such a heavy task. If you are engaged—and you’ll find that in the third chapter of *The Study of Man*—if you engage yourself in what you do, you stay alive. You stay fresh.

WS: You have touched on teaching as a path of inner development. What are your recommendations for teachers working their own inner development as they are moving forward?

CW: I would recommend that they learn to exist on two levels at the same time—that is a consciousness issue, and because it is a consciousness issue it is also a little bit of a will issue. When you are teaching, you teach and at the same time you observe what happens with your teaching.

WS: You observe the effects of your teaching on the children?

CW: I observe the effects, and if the effects are not what I wanted, I don’t shout at the children, I change my teaching. That is a major inner capacity. If you observe the children and they get bored you say I probably did the wrong thing and you change it to something else. Then you have engaged yourself in the process of living education. I highly recommend it.

Something I do is refresh myself with ongoing study of Steiner. Every day I read two or three pages and it gives me the energy for the day. That’s not a holy duty; it’s a desire to be in contact with big ideas that I am trying to realize. If you only live out of the physical, stop teaching, go fishing.

There are, of course, more possibilities. Find ways for social health in your teaching community. Make sure that people work together. Make sure that people look at each other. This means that people go on the path of being interested in each other. When that happens, we make the school together. Not what I do, not what you do. I tell you, students immediately feel whether teachers are working together, if they have what I call professional friendships. The professional friendships start with the interest in one another. How he is doing it like this? In my travels here in the U.S. I have seen several moments of education that were totally new to me, and I’ve been in education more than forty years. It made me so happy to see that in others!

Christof Wiechert is former leader of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland. He was also a Waldorf class teacher for some thirty years in the Netherlands. Christof’s latest gem of a book is *Teaching: The Joy of Profession*. It was recently translated by Dorit Winter and is available from the bookstore at Rudolf Steiner College.

Rhythm Heals Stress

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

3. THE NERVES OF OUR PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM are most hidden, and unfold their activities in the quieter activities of digestion and metabolism. Their activity works hour by hour, day by day. Here we are in the realm of cortisol.

Being too busy, having too many things competing for our attention, makes our nervous system out of balance so that the “on” nerves of the head and senses predominate. Rhythms help counter this, by allowing other parts of our nervous system to be more active. Let’s look at how this can be true for both someone who is very awake (perhaps bordering on hyper-vigilant) and someone who is dreamy and slower to wake (perhaps bordering on being uninvolved or oblivious).

FOR THE OVERLY-AWAKE CHILD OR ADULT:

- If my inclination is to pay attention to everything all of the time, that is an exhausting process, especially if things are changing all of the time.
- When there are some things that are consistent, then I don’t have to pay attention to them all of the time. Even if it is at a low level, having to pay attention to things all of the time is a drain—think of how tired you are when you travel, or when you start a new job and everything you do is new and you have to learn everything from scratch.

- When there are consistent routines, then the consistent aspects don’t have to be paid attention to in the same way. This gets us out of our head, and allows the slower, less-conscious and more metabolic parts of our body to work. This is particularly helpful with eating and with sleep.

FOR THE DREAMY, SLOW-TO-WAKE CHILD OR ADULT:

- Rhythm gives the person a chance to warm into an activity.
- When it takes you a long time to get started, either because it takes a while for impressions to settle in, or because you just really need time to fully awake before being able to fully

participate, then there is the risk that an activity may already be over by the time you are really starting to get engaged.

- If the routine is consistent, your body will start to prepare for it on an autonomic nervous level, without necessarily having to be conscious about it—meaning, your body gets to know that it is time to get up, or time to eat, or time to be active. And when you are supported by your body’s physiology, then it is much easier to be more quickly awake and participating with the “on” nerves.

SO WHAT ARE THE PILLARS OF GOOD RHYTHM?

There are three main areas, long acknowledged by anthroposophic medicine, and which were recently reinforced by a study of obesity rates in U.S. preschool-aged children (*Pediatrics* 2010 Mar;125(3): 420-8). It examined the prevalence of obesity in relation to exposure to three household routines for preschool children:

1. Regularly eating meals as a family (at least five nights of the week)
2. Obtaining adequate sleep (at least 10.5 hours per night)
3. Limiting screen-viewing time (less than two hours per day)

Exposure to these three routines was associated with a decreased prevalence of obesity, from 24% for those children exposed to none of the routines (perhaps no consistent rhythm), down to 14.3% for those exposed to all three (still high, but a reduction of 40%!).

WE CAN EXPAND ON THESE THREE ROUTINES TO SAY THAT FOR ALL OF US, AT ANY AGE:

- Eating meals in a consistent rhythm helps our whole digestive process. We learn to know when it is time to digest, and when to rest. We maintain a more even blood sugar level which helps avoid snacking and eating too many high-carbohydrate foods.
- We need adequate sleep. Sleep before midnight better matches our own physiologic rhythms, so there is truth in the saying that an hour of sleep before midnight is worth two after midnight. Choose a consistent bedtime!
- Children do not need to see any media (period). If we look at overall development, it is not that not exposing them to media is depriving them of information, but rather that media steals so much time away from all the healthy movements, play, and activities that young children need!

For adults, too, less media and screen time is very important. Cutting out screen time will help you go to sleep easier, find the time to read a good book, and foster conversation with the loved ones around you.

Rhythm heals stress. Be kind to yourself and foster your rhythms!

SIGN UP FOR DR. BLANNING’S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER:

<http://www.denvertherapies.com>

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS:

<http://www.youandyourchildshealth.org>

THE ALLIANCE FOR CHILDHOOD!

Research and advocacy on behalf of our children.

<http://www.allianceforchildhood.org>



Children, teens and adults all benefit from regular family meals, adequate sleep and limited screen-viewing time.



Conference participants experience a Spatial Dynamics exercise.

The Sevenfold Will

BY EDMUND KNIGHTON, PHD

A desired outcome of education is that students impart purpose and direction to their lives through right use of moral will. Foundational to human experience is the theory of sevenfold will, which situates the student between three “animalic” and three “angelic” influences and agents of change. What practical applications in the classroom will aid teachers in testing the hypothesis that sevenfold will exists?

Imagine a student standing before you. Immediately beneath her feet exists Desire, which can rise to the level of Ideas. The layer beneath Desire is Impulse. And the core beneath that is Instinct. The three layers above our student are, first, Wish, then Intention, and finally Resolve.

The three layers below are composed of sedimented or crystallized intellect from the past. The layers above are composed of right-brain-mediated fluid intelligence from the future that is both artistic and creative in nature. When this intelligence influences Desire, Desire is raised to the level of Idea; we have grown beyond our limbic brain. Ideas grow toward ideals if we raise them toward the level of imagination and then release them to be informed by something greater than our ordinary intellect from the past.

1. INSTINCT

The first level of will is expressed physically as instinctual, primal, base. Without primal instincts we would not survive. Instinct is the bedrock and represents core genetic material. Instinct is forced upon us from the outside, although less strongly than it imprints

animals. We can override instinctual responses, but the result is often trauma, which animals do not experience in their natural habitat.

Healthy instinct is akin to common sense. In Waldorf education, we distinguish twelve senses. Common sense could be the thirteenth sense, required before undertaking self-development. Our feet remain firmly on the ground, and no matter what comes toward us, we feel centered, calm and collected. We cultivate common sense through protocol or process in order to develop pedagogical instinct.

One example is the use of a verse. We quiet ourselves, unruffled by external events. We take a moment to expand space and time between students’ actions and our reactions. In this space, pedagogical instinct can root itself. Goethe grounded himself through walking recitation, which enabled him to empty his thinking, feeling and willing in order to be imagined through inspired thought, and intuited thought from the future. Pedagogical instinct accumulates bi-directionally from constant integration of bottom-up and top-down processes, layer by layer.

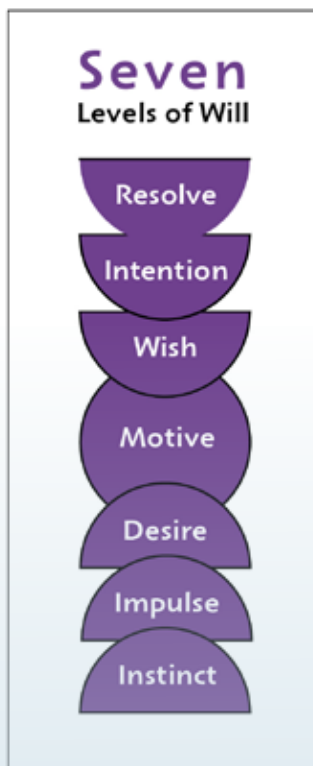
Instinctual pedagogy requires proper nutrition, adequate sleep, engaged relationships and 20 minutes of daily cardiothoracic exercise. Will flows more slowly through a stagnant body fluid or medium of muscle. When we integrate moral ideals into our simple instincts, then pedagogical instinct becomes the capacity of the wisdom of the body to guide us to moral action based on those ideals.

2. IMPULSE

The second level of will expresses itself through the habit-life as Impulse. Impulses may be both desired and undesired habits. Impulses are invisible, inward, unified and uniform throughout life. When the habit-life begins to control instinct, then instinctual will becomes a drive. Our habit-life lives in our body, completely forming and permeating it, imperceptible to external senses. Unseen habits urge us toward visible behavior.

3. DESIRE

The third level of will, Desire, is the last level shared with animals. When we semi-consciously grasp an instinct-impulse with Desire, this Desire can evolve into the will of social relationships. Unlike the lawful consistency of Instinct and Impulse, which lies largely outside volitional control, we can create and abandon Desires from moment-to-moment.



The Sevenfold Will

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16 Desire is subject to the whims of the individual. Repeated Desires may become characteristics of a student's personality, but other Desires that arise and fade may not. This is why it is essential to observe students without judgment—which is a challenge, because students' Desires often contain strong feelings, and those feelings draw teachers away from observation and into feeling-judgment. Desire arises as I metabolize Instinct and Impulse, and initiate an incentive to inwardly understand a motive.

4. MOTIVE

The fourth level of will is Motive. Animals do not have motives. Motives are Instincts, Impulses and Desires that we approach in full consciousness. More on Motive will be said in connection with Wish, below.

5. WISH

The fifth level is Wish. We become aware of Wishes when we do something that arises out of a Motive and then think about it and say to ourselves, "I could have done that much better." In contrast to concepts, which arise out of past memory and antipathy, Wishes arise from imagination. This imaginative cognition resulting from Motive must not be confused with the mental representations arising from past cognitions at the level of Desire. Such mental images are sometimes called imaginations, but the opposite is the case: they are only the shadowy husks of will. The conscious person at the Motive level stands midway between these two "imaginations" and mediates between them. At the level of Desire, imagination is our intellected reflection of the will; it is our idea of the will rather than the actual activity of the will. It is the will stamped into the past, into memory. When we regret an enacted Desire and Wish it had been different, we only weaken our capacity to be led by the future. This is egotistical and selfish: I only want to do something better in order to become a better person. But when we regret an enacted Desire and Wish to do it differently in the future, we move toward strengthened intentions and resolves. Now, I Wish to be different in order to increase my ability to serve others.



EDMUND KNIGHTON

The way to maintain a living feeling of will at the Desire level is to refuse to allow yourself to fulfill a particular Desire, and then observe the results. You will notice the strong Desire moving toward a subtle Wish—but for something quite different than you had imagined. In contrast, imagination at the Wish level streams toward us from the future. We open ourselves to ambiguity; and when we do this in front of a class, we face the natural terror that no Inspiration may come. Inspiration arises in the teacher only when a solid foundation in imagination has been established at the level of Wishing to do better. It goes without saying that the teacher has also painstakingly prepared a lesson plan and is willing to let it go. We ask what it is that resounds in us as a Wish. And we wait for an answer. If all goes well, then we establish a relationship with Intention, and its accompanying Inspiration.

Because one cannot directly make students learn to use their wills, the teacher models the separation of feeling from willing in herself, for her students. If successful, then as adults her students will be able to freely choose to connect affect to cognition, instead of being impelled to action based on sentiment.

6. INTENTION

The sixth level is Intention. It arises in us when we elevate a subtle Wish based on past regrets into a Wish that is cogent, clear and concrete. Intention occurs when I do not allow myself to be self-satisfied; my intention to do better is ever alive in me. If I can raise this intention away from my twelve senses and free it from sensory-bound perception—even for a moment—then Intention rises to Resolve.

7. RESOLVE

The seventh level of will is Resolve. Conscious repetition of any activity cultivates the will of Resolve. Unconscious repetition cultivates feeling. Teachers must bring both to students in the form of art, chores, a disciplined feeling and thinking life, etc. But only when Intention is freed from the body does it become a Resolution. What is the process for freeing Intention from the body? The answer lies in the philosophy of freedom (i.e., intuitive thinking). When we free our thinking from the body, intent becomes decision. Freedom respects autonomy in others; the will always lives in freedom, which is sense-free thinking

Because one cannot directly make students learn to use their wills, the teacher models the separation of feeling from willing in herself for her students. If successful, then as adults her students will be able to freely choose to connect affect to cognition, instead of being impelled to action based on sentiment. Lastly, the teacher consciously links her will to her thought life in order to invite the student into taking initiative in life.

In sum, we educate the will in a manner opposite to the way we educate the intellect. Will education is largely nonverbal, right-brain-to-right-brain attuned, practiced through conscious movement and arts-based activities. Wordlessness, conceptlessness and even senselessness are necessary. The teacher practices emptying herself of all sensory reaction, inwardly and outwardly, while standing before her students. Such whole-body listening opens the path to the first step in the mutually fructifying experience of being led from the future by the wills of the students who stand before you.



Bente Goldstein's compassionate candor and clear insights about the nature of the will, and how it is helped or hindered in children, resonated with her audience.

Developing the Will to Meet the World in the 21st Century

FIVE REASONS WHY

CHILDREN NEED CHORES

1. To teach them "other-centeredness."
2. To turn their "attention-arrow" outwards.
3. Because tending to needs in the world pulls them "out of themselves" and in the long run makes them happier.
4. To give them good habits for life.
5. To practice being responsible, so they become responsible.

FIVE REASONS WHY

CHILDREN NEED TO BE BORED, NOT ENTERTAINED

1. So they can find their inner fount of creativity. (It takes about three days of complaining, usually, that's all.)
2. Since everything is more fun when the kids invent it themselves!
3. So they can get a chance to find out who they are.
4. So they can practice being the directors of their own lives.
5. Because it is only by practicing taking initiative, that they develop a strong capacity to take initiative.

THE WILL EDUCATOR'S CHECKLIST

1. Who was active in the lesson? (Child, teacher, or device)
2. Which part of the child was active? (Head, heart, hands)
3. To what extent did the children live outside themselves in their senses? (Senses need to be used in order to develop)
4. Which aspects of their surroundings did they notice and appropriately respond to? (Building wherewithal)
5. Did they practice feeling the viewpoint of someone else? (Human, animal, plant, stone — growing other-centeredness?)
6. Was there room for the children to take any initiatives today? (Practicing initiative in play and work)
7. Did I help someone stick to a task longer than he/she felt was natural today? (Drawing out the will)
8. Did I give appropriate consequences for an inappropriate event that will help the child stay within boundaries next time? (Finding a harmonious social relationship to surroundings)
9. Did I help someone finish a task today? (Building the 'I-can-do-it' self-image)
10. Where did I 'steady' or 'believe-in' a kid today? (Children need to be seen)
11. Which habits did I work on today in the children? (Children's habits of doing are the only thing an educator can work on)
12. Which of those habits are now becoming capacities? (Building a 'carpet' of good habits forges motivation for life)
13. Where in the child were those capacities being developed; head, heart, or body? (Capacities develop where the child is active)
14. In which instances did I draw forth something in a child to balance him or her? (Make them not just be good at one thing)
15. Which things did the children succeed at today? (Motivation and self-confidence building)
16. Was I able to be flexible in goal-setting in order to optimize the children's experience of 'I can do it'? (Children's sense of accomplishment builds their sense of self-motivation)
17. Which of my colleagues did I support today? (Concretely building 'the Village' for the children)
18. How did I show that support for another grown-up? (Did I make myself heard by that person)
19. You fill in with more.....

Eurythmy in Waldorf Schools

BY CYNTHIA HOVEN

The art of Eurythmy is taught in the Waldorf schools throughout the world as a core specialty subject, serving as an integral part of the Waldorf curriculum from pre-kindergarten through high school. It is one of the ways in which Waldorf education can be said to be a multi-modal learning experience. Eurythmy addresses the core value of strengthening the will and addressing a sense for beauty and esthetics in countless and manifold ways

Above all, eurythmy is an art form. Eurythmy takes its place alongside painting and music as an artistic experience for the child. What is unique about eurythmy, however, is that the medium for the art is the body itself, and our gestures. It is thus one of the most powerful tools of Waldorf approach, and Rudolf Steiner counseled that no school should be without it.

In eurythmy, we experience that with our gestures we can be artists and express the inner dynamic of poetry, with its wonderful cadences and its play with sound. With our gestures we can also express the inner life of music: its beat, rhythm, and pitch, its phrasing and dynamic, the musical tones and intervals. We work with dramatic, lyric and epic content, as well as with color and form.



CYNTHIA HOVEN

From the very first days of the Waldorf school movement, Rudolf Steiner asked and expected that eurythmy be an integral part of the curriculum. Eurythmy is intended to be offered to the children one period a week through grade 3, and twice a week from then on through 12th grade. There is a specific learning journey in eurythmy that accompanies the developmental stages of the growing child, paralleling with elegance the curriculum carried by the class teacher. By the time the children are in high school, they can perform eurythmy to complex music compositions and exquisite poetry. Along the way, however, there are many profound and complex learning experiences that the children must pass through.

Eurythmy supports the development of an extraordinarily healthy relationship to the body. The children learn to feel in their bodies:

- Spatial orientation and profound coordination
- Geometric forms and the logic inherent in them
- Rhythm and proportion
- Polarities of all kinds: lightness and heaviness; contraction and expansion; large and small
- Agility in the feet and expressivity in the hands
- Social collaboration and coordination
- Sensitivity to where they are and to where others are in space
- A real sense of the liveliness of language
- An experience of the non-verbal wisdom of music.

Eurythmists have learned through their training how to develop fun, engaging exercises that help the children develop these skills, individually modified and developed according to the needs of the class.

What does it take to be a eurythmist?

A eurythmy training is a 4-year, full-time training.



Conference participants began each morning with eurythmy.

What movement exercises can a class teacher do?

A class teacher doesn't have the width and breadth of insight into the etheric experiences of eurythmy to bring formal eurythmy exercises to the children. However, if you don't have a eurythmist in your school, you can learn from a eurythmist some important elements that you can modify for your class. For instance, you can learn to do exercises to help with body geography, spatial orientation, mirroring exercises, moving the forms of form drawing, concentration exercises and the like. However, the exercises built on doing eurythmy gestures for sounds and for music are not advised. Instead, you can work on learning to do wonderful, eloquent, ensouled movements as they teach poems and story.

Can a school do without a eurythmy program?

Surely it is possible, but if a school is fortunate enough to have an inspired and competent eurythmist who can relate to children, faculty and staff, everyone will agree that they would never wish to be without a full eurythmy program!

For more insights into the background and philosophy of eurythmy, and video recordings that show how to develop your own personal eurythmy practice, you can visit Cynthia's website and <http://eurythmyonline.com/>, or contact me at info@eurythmyonline.com.



The Credo Rose Eurythmy Ensemble offered a powerful presentation at the Alliance conference in 2014.

Threefold Governance in Action

AT WINTERBERRY CHARTER SCHOOL, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

BY SHANNA MALL, PRINCIPAL
and MEG EGGLESTON,
PEDAGOGICAL CHAIR

Twelve years ago, our community began a journey that would prove to be life changing for all involved. We were a group of mothers reading books, loving our children and families, and sharing the vision of what the future was asking of us. It all started with the question, “Is Anchorage, Alaska, ready for a public school inspired by Waldorf education?” What was birthed as a result of these words is Winterberry Charter School, now ten years old and serving 260 students in K–8.

In the beginning, our development group naively believed that if you build a school students will come, and everyone will be happy and at peace. Unfortunately, we had no knowledge regarding the stages of organizational development. We couldn’t have explained founders, pioneers, or sustainers to save our lives! Each of us felt moved by the call to action in that specific place and time. We worked feverishly to make certain our school would not only be born, but also find a place where growth could be sustained. So it went for at least the first year. We moved through tension and strife with individual personal convictions—leading, in the end, to disconnection.

In January of our second year, we decided to seek mentorship from our movement’s elders. Through this choice we were able to solidify not only who we were as individuals, but also who we were being called to become as a collective. For the first time in our history, we truly understood that we were involved in something that was so much bigger than any single one of us.

Winterberry Charter School began the process of developing two elements critical to our success—our process of operating through consensus, and our threefold governance model. The consensus model, as applied to our school, came out of work that was offered by Rudolf Steiner College through their administrative workshops. The three-body work came from the impulses of Rudolf Steiner regarding threefold social order, manifested

recently through the work of MIT professor, Otto Scharmer (Theory U), and practiced by our school mentors, George Hoffecker and Donna Burgess.

As presented clearly and succinctly in the article entitled, “The Threefold Social Organism: An Introduction,” by Stephen E. Usher, Ph.D., our school community clearly identified our threefold structure as:

1. The Winterberry Faculty Council (WFC) holds the pedagogical impulse of the school along with the responsibility for guiding the culture of our charter school as we move through the course of each year, including traditional festivals.

2. The Winterberry Parent Guild (WPG) holds the economic life of the school through fundraisers and celebrations that are not festivals.

3. The Winterberry Charter Council (WCC) holds the legal domain, including adherence to our charter document, fiscal responsibility, and navigating any legal issues facing our school.

When our community is faced with a major decision, we begin by identifying the sphere where the final decision will most likely have the biggest impact. Once this has been identified, our community is able to work through the threefold process one body at a time, with the collaborative end goal being a final prototype that is reflective of all three spheres of our school. Depending on the nature of the issue facing our community, this process can take anywhere from a few weeks to months or longer. For festivals, for instance, WFC guidance typically holds a lot of weight, and such prototypes typically move quickly through the threefold process. Changing our school site, in contrast, took many months, but through this process, led by WCC, we were able to move from our original site into another design-build location in less than one year!

Throughout this process, our community uses the consensus model to guide the quality of our conversation. This includes the following agreements:

“Assume goodwill from all involved. Create for yourself a new, indomitable perception of faithfulness. What is usually called faithfulness passes so quickly. Let this be your faithfulness:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



Scenes from an open house event at Winterberry in Anchorage, AK.



Free Breakfast in the Classroom AT KONA PACIFIC SCHOOL

BY CHRIS HECHT

The morning began as it always does in Anna Tosick's classroom at Kona Pacific Public Charter School with speech exercises, singing and chanting. But before the pencils, papers and books appeared Monday, the eighth-graders sat at their desks enjoying a free healthy meal consisting of a frittata, rice, fruit and milk.

Kona Pacific became the first public school in the State of Hawaii to serve breakfast in the classroom to all students at the start of this school year, regardless of their ability to pay. The new program, a partnership with Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, launched on Monday, August 18, feeding 230 students.

Universal breakfast in the classroom, where all children eat a nutritious breakfast for free in their classroom at the start of the school day, is an important development in public education that is quickly gaining momentum in many communities across the country. It has been shown to support academic achievement, improve children's health and well-being, help struggling families and those who must commute a long distance to school to save time and money, and reduce the stigma of school breakfasts served "only for poor children."

With the support of Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, Kona Pacific piloted a universal breakfast program in a few classrooms in May of the 2013-2014 school year. In the pilot program's three-week time period, teachers observed profound results in terms of students' ability to focus and participate in class, as well as increased attendance and punctuality.

Kona Pacific will be working with Appleseed and additional project partner Adaptations, Inc. in the coming school year to expand the project into every classroom on campus, and to double the amount of locally grown food used. The project will be the subject of an academic research study on the benefits of universal breakfast in the classroom for a range of educational, health, and behavioral indices. The project will serve as a model for the rest of Hawaii, which is currently ranked 45th in the nation for breakfast participation by low-income students. The project aims to take full advantage of the largely federally funded school breakfast program, and improve the health and academic achievement of students to lay the foundation for a lifetime of success. ■

Chris Hecht is the Executive Director of the **Kona Pacific Charter School** which is located on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Threefold Governance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20 You will experience moments.... fleeting moments.... with the other person.

The human being will appear to you then as if filled, irradiated with the archetype of his spirit.

And then there may be...indeed will be...other moments, long periods of time, when human beings are darkened. You will learn to say to yourself at such times: 'The Spirit makes me strong. I remember the archetype. I saw it once. No illusion, no deception shall rob me of it.'

Always struggle for the image that you saw. This struggle is faithfulness. Striving thus for faithfulness, we shall be close to one another, as if endowed with the protective powers of angels." — Rudolf Steiner

Here is our consensus process in action:

Unity: Ask yourself, "Is the spirit of the action moving in the direction of the shared values?" Aim for unity, not unanimity.

Discernment: Standing Behind the Principle vs. Personal Preference Ask yourself, "Is having my strategy adopted important for the nature of this particular decision, or is this more about steering the decision in a direction that is closer to my own personal preference?" Clearly identify if this is about principle or preference before adding to the discussion.

Stand Aside / Step Aside: This typically happens when a person realizes he is too attached to personal preference and is only holding the group process back. Once a person stands or steps aside, he is agreeing to let the group move forward. In doing so he agrees not to undermine group decisions. The aforementioned behaviors uphold the integrity of the body and its agreements.

Blocking (secular term) or Standing in the Way (Quaker term): This technique should rarely be used; it has been estimated that a person who uses consensus consistently in her everyday life should use this no more than six times in a lifetime! In terms of an organization, it should only be used when a particular decision would lead to a probable disaster for the group as a whole. It should only be used to ensure the survival of the group or if the proposed action can be shown to conflict with group's shared values. The blocker bears responsibility to group and process to identify a valid reason for blocking and should provide evidence to support the decision to block.

As a practice, our bodies begin meetings with a reminder that we are committed to being together in this consensus process. In doing this we have found that our shared governing has deepened in a way that we never could have imagined when we first began this journey. Together we have created a culture of collaboration that continues to leave all of us fulfilled as the key leaders at Winterberry.

Engaging with the Power and Purpose of Instruction Linked to a Theory of Child Development

BY ANDREA AKMENKALNS



Diane Friedlaender

Andrea Akmenkalns: Hi Diane, it was a pleasure to participate in the post-conference presentation that you and Kyle Beckham gave at our January conference about your study of the Public Waldorf schools in Sacramento—Alice Birney, A.M. Winn and George Washington Carver High School. I'm hoping you can share some of what you learned from your research with *Confluence* readers.

Diane Friedlaender: Sure. I have to say I went into this research feeling fairly neutral about Waldorf as an approach, knowing only a little. I have experienced alternative education myself, so I definitely had an affinity to a more whole-child approach and to thinking more broadly about the goals of education.

The biggest impact for me visiting Alice Birney School was seeing how incredibly powerful it is to link instruction so tightly to a theory of child development, and how purposeful this connection enables the education to be. Whether one agrees with every aspect of Steiner's theories is less important than the sense of intentionality and purpose that teachers get through the link to child development. This connection offers teachers incredible scaffolding and support to understand what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how they are doing it. It's really powerful. And it frees teachers to improvise within that, in a way that is personally meaningful to them, drawing on their own interests and strengths.

I've done a lot of research that has looked at looping but not for so many years. It was really interesting to see how long-term looping gives teachers the freedom to be truly child centered and to allow the children to develop in their natural trajectory. That was really impressive.

AA: What are the other things that stood out for you?

DF: Another thing that really struck me was the teaching of speech as its own discipline and its own art form, which recognizes the beauty of language. It seems that one of the things that graduates of Birney took with them was confidence in their voice, their opinions and speaking up for themselves.

Another thing that struck me personally—because I have a daughter who is seven—was Waldorf's holding on to the magical and imaginary, definitely through second grade and into third. I think that the imagination is actually where kids naturally are, but we tend to stifle that the second they walk into [mainstream] kindergarten. Having school be congruent with where kids are, at that age, is really profound.

I was struck by the comfort and homelike environment of the classrooms. Kids have water glasses at their desks; there are real dishes, not disposable; kids can wear slippers; they can get dirty. The things you can do at home, you can do at school. I think this makes school less harsh and spirit crushing. This opens students to actual learning because they are not spending energy protecting themselves, trying to understand how to fit in a foreign place. Those pieces are huge and something I wish my daughter could experience.

AA: What are some of the impediments for people who aren't in the Waldorf world, to being open to and embracing Waldorf? What are the challenges you experienced and saw at Alice Birney?

A conversation with Diane Friedlaender, Ph.D., Author of the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE) Report on Public Waldorf Education



Diane, with research collaborator Kyle Beckham, were invited to share the findings of their SCOPE research to the January 2016 Alliance Conference.

DF: There is definitely a sense that Waldorf is a model designed for middle-class white families. It would be a hard sell for the low-income Latino population. This is probably the number one impediment. There is a sense that low-income families and families with limited educational background are reluctant to take any perceived risks with their children because they sacrifice so much to be here in this country and to have their children have a better life than they do. The idea of playing in the mud and having a more alternative model feels very risky to some families. There is so much need for education about what is healthy for children.

AA: What are some of the recommendations that you made to address these issues?

DF: One of the things that we suggested was expanding the curriculum to be less Euro-centric and more inclusive of other traditions. There are so many universal themes in folk tales and histories that I don't think it would be very challenging. I think Waldorf is incredibly well set up to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

Interview with Diane Friedlaender

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

do it. You have the whole framework; you just need a few more stories from parts of the world where your students come from. The other piece is that the arts curriculum could be more world-based. There are some amazing contemporary artists who could be drawn into the curriculum in really powerful ways.

Another aspect is intentional outreach to diversify the school by connecting with families. You can't be selective in who you admit, but you can be very targeted in how you recruit. Engage in meaningful conversations with families about what resonates with them and what doesn't. You can do some focus groups with them, share the model, and get some feedback on what they are looking for. That would be very interesting.

There might also be some resistance around the need for parent involvement and what's expected at home. I know at A.M. Winn School they seem to have let go of having much influence over what happens at home.

A suggestion that my colleague, Kyle [Beckham], brought up was the modernization of mathematics instruction. At Birney, math was the most challenging, instructionally. How it was taught at the middle school level was pretty traditional—students were even using textbooks. It's challenging to make math instruction more inquiry based. Compared to how the humanities or science are taught, we didn't see the same kind of curiosity and exploration in how math was taught. Math seems like an area for professional learning support. There have got to be a few Waldorf teachers out there who have figured it out and can share with others.

I think a huge challenge is the level of teacher training and competency that Waldorf requires. The commitment to training and being self-reflective of oneself as a human being and as a teacher is a lot to ask. So, that

is a scaling-up challenge—how many Waldorf schools can we have with the level of investment that teaching it requires? And, if you are going to do multiple-year looping, there are equity issues—some kids are going to have a vastly different experience than others unless you have to really consistent quality in your school.

AA: Right, and we are asking teachers to be mathematicians, humanities experts, artists and musicians....

DF: Yes, and engage in their own personal reflection...

AA: And understand their students deeply...

DF: And their parents...

AA: And meet Common Core Standards...

DF: Right! So it's a crazy thing. It would be so great to find ways to better support Waldorf teachers, like more time for planning and collaboration. It would be great for teachers to have supports so they don't feel like they are doing it on their own. Often that means more time, just time. It would also be interesting to think about pipelines for teacher training. How do you capture some of the [Waldorf] graduates? They would be the best Waldorf teachers because they have experienced it!

AA: Final thoughts? I was intrigued at your presentation when the conversation turned to what you referred to as this "window of opportunity in the post No Child Left Behind era." Will you say something about that?

DF: We have maybe a couple of years right now when we have more progressive funding and we have this new, broader, way of talking about outcomes for students through the LCAP. The state hasn't figured out all the restrictions yet, so it's a prime time for schools and districts to organize themselves and advocate for a more whole-child approach and a broader range of measures to demonstrate that students are thriving. Now is the time to mobilize and identify some good measures that can be used to demonstrate different kinds of growth besides cognitive.

AA: This has been great, Diane. Thank you!

DF: My pleasure. Feel free to contact me anytime. I'd love to stay connected to this work.

Scenes from Alice Birney School, a K-8 school in the Sacramento Unified School District (CA), that opened its doors and heart to the SCOPE researchers. ▶



Teaching the Teacher

BY LIZ BEAVEN

Teacher preparation has been very much on my mind in recent months so I am delighted to have this opportunity to share a few thoughts on this topic.



Several recent events have contributed to my focus on the teacher. First, the recent release of research from the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE). The research team concluded that one of the essentials in the undoubted success of Alice Birney School—and, by extension, an essential for the success of any Public Waldorf school—was a “committed, qualified, thoughtful faculty” that had made a significant commitment to the school. The researchers noted the demands of additional, specialized teacher education and ongoing professional development—demands that were willingly embraced by the Birney teachers. Second, the March meeting of the Alliance Board identified teacher preparation and professional development as key strategic areas for research and development. Our Path to Membership emphasizes the importance of a school having a majority of “trained Waldorf teachers;” it is essential that we fully understand what this means. Third, an article by seasoned educator Donald Samson describing the joys, challenges, and realities of providing Waldorf teacher education for his teachers at Juniper Ridge School in Colorado.

Despite the extraordinary pressures placed by society upon the teaching profession, those of us who know students, classrooms, and schools from the inside out understand that there is no more rewarding work, and that teachers are the “magic ingredients.” A teacher can truly change the course of a child’s life—for good or ill. Our highly qualified, dedicated teachers are essential to the continued development of Public Waldorf education, forming the very heart of healthy school communities. If we are to have growing numbers of Public Waldorf schools that will positively impact the lives of increasing numbers of diverse students, we must have a steady supply of enthusiastic, committed, well-prepared teachers.

In most states, a credential is required for teaching in a public school. The demands for attaining this are significant, reflecting the public interest in education. We know the list: a bachelor’s degree, professional graduate studies, methods courses, understanding of district, state, and federal requirements, pedagogy, ethics and law, special education, English language learners, performance tests... Add to this the knowledge and sensitivity required to teach in a diverse modern classroom, the new demands of Common Core for a more creative approach, the pressure of high-stakes assessments, the impact of factors beyond the teacher’s control yet present in too many classrooms, such as poverty or hunger, and the extension of a teacher’s professional duties far beyond the classroom, and we fully understand that teaching is not a career for the faint of heart.

Most of us take on the rigors of teaching out of love for the work,

enthusiasm for young people, and a desire to have a positive impact, to make a difference. Those of us who then yearn for an alternative approach and follow the call of Public Waldorf education do so knowing that additional education will be required. This need for additional, specialized preparation gives rise to critical questions: What is truly essential to help someone along the path toward becoming a Waldorf teacher? (A path that, from my perspective, does not have a fixed endpoint but is a lifelong journey of learning and discovery.) What must be learned, unlearned, and relearned as we embark on this journey?

At this stage of the evolution of Public Waldorf education, the essentials may vary depending on the teacher. We currently have three major groups of teachers: experienced, credentialed public school teachers who seek an enlivened, authentic approach to their profession; those educated and experienced in Waldorf pedagogy who have decided to work in a public school setting (based on my earlier research, these teachers are usually motivated primarily by concerns for equity and access); and, mediating the two, a smaller but growing group who hold both state credentials and Waldorf certificates. Each has differing needs for preparation for Public Waldorf education.

Given the small numbers of teachers who possess both conventional and Waldorf teacher education and the growing numbers of Public Waldorf schools, we are faced with the reality of schools “growing their own,” working with credentialed, experienced, passionate teachers who are drawn to Waldorf education and finding accessible, affordable Waldorf teacher education. This will be a fact of life until we have more teacher education programs in schools of education that are founded in the core principles of Waldorf education AND meet the requirements of state credentialing, attracting those who aspire to teach at the very start of their careers, allowing graduates full freedom of choice of place of work, and providing our schools with newly-graduated teachers who are thoroughly grounded in Waldorf education.

The “traditional” model of Waldorf teacher preparation encompassed up to a year of “foundation studies” followed by an additional year of teacher education. This traditional model is now quite rare, with many varieties of part-time programs becoming the norm. As the model evolves—and must further evolve to appropriately meet the needs of already-experienced teachers—we return to the basic questions of “what is essential, how much is enough?” Many of us who are thinking deeply about this question agree on several core essentials.

First, the Waldorf approach views education as an art and the teacher as artist, taking basic principles and knowledge and creatively working to meet the needs of a particular group of students in a particular place and time. This role implies that preparation must involve personal transformation and self-knowledge. If we are to be artists, we need to develop our awareness of self and others, our powers of observation, and our ability to be mindful. Immersion in the arts is the perfect vehicle for this transformative work, along with exercises in inner work and mindfulness practices, observation of phenomena, and biographical work to help us understand what it is that we bring with us into the classroom. Through this work, we develop a deep understanding that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25

AT THE HEART OF EDUCATION

Essential Principles of Public Waldorf Education

BY LIZ BEAVEN

What is essential for an educational approach or a school to be considered “Waldorf?” This question has become more complex in our country as Waldorf education has expanded beyond its traditional private school domain into new communities. The topic has been taken up in many quarters and was the subject of a recent one-day conference in Sacramento, California. On a sunny Saturday, over 100 public and private educators gathered to explore what lies at the heart of Waldorf education: those core principles that are essential to this approach. The Conference was offered by the Pedagogical Section Council (PSC) and was co-sponsored by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) and our Alliance. This collaborative event took place at George Washington Carver High School of Arts & Sciences (an Alliance member school), and was coordinated by Jennifer Snyder, a member of the Pedagogical Section Council and one of a growing number of teachers with direct experience in both private and public school settings.

The Pedagogical Section is part of the Anthroposophical Society. Anyone who sees the merit of Steiner’s spiritual research and its implementation can join the Anthroposophical Society; specialized Sections devoted to the major areas of anthroposophy in the world are available to those members who wish to work further on behalf of that research. Waldorf education is possibly the most visible of Steiner’s many endeavors. In this country, the Pedagogical Section’s Council is comprised of twelve individuals with lengthy careers in Waldorf education. Their task is to interest themselves in and research contemporary experiences and issues of child development and education wherever Waldorf education may be finding expression. The Council views itself as a sense organ for Waldorf education and is traditionally focused on the inner life and work of the teacher and on broad trends that impact our work. Recent topics have included questions of technology and festival life. Council members come from across the country to meet in person four times each year.

AWSNA and, more recently, our Alliance, are more focused on questions of implementation of Waldorf education in schools. With the development of a broader spectrum of schools working from the impulse of Waldorf education, there has been protracted discussion on what is and is not a “Waldorf school;” therefore the Section Council decided to work to identify the “core principles” of Waldorf education. This task paralleled work on the international stage, conducted by the International Forum, reflecting the fact that Waldorf education worldwide

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

Teaching the Teacher

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24 but will accompany us throughout our professional career as a wellspring for professional and personal renewal, allowing us to continually refresh our teaching. This is our essential foundation.

Second, there is a body of knowledge that must be studied and grasped. Although there are differences of opinion on what this should include, I believe that at minimum it should cover the context of Waldorf education: an overview of founder Rudolf Steiner’s life and works; and an understanding of the development of Waldorf education and its similarities and differences to other educational approaches (at some point in our career as Public Waldorf teachers, we will be asked to articulate the differences between Montessori and Waldorf!). We need a thorough grounding in Steiner’s model of the developing human being; the SCOPE study highlighted the importance of this, stating that the Waldorf approach is based on an unusually coherent model of child development. We see education as a holistic and integrated process, so all teachers need knowledge of the entire spectrum of childhood, from early childhood through twelfth grade.

Of course, we need to focus on curriculum and instruction, taking that picture of the developing child as a basis of understanding what is taught when, how it should be taught, and why it supports the developmental journey. An understanding of this builds confidence and ultimately gives a teacher enormous freedom to meet the needs of her or his students in a truly creative way: education as an art that will grow far beyond replication of a “curriculum chart” to a living, relevant, culturally sensitive classroom.

In addition to immersion in the arts for personal transformation, we need to understand the curricular arts and how to integrate arts into our lessons, to use their remarkable capacity to teach skills and enrich content. The Waldorf arts must encompass story and drama in addition to the more traditional drawing, painting, sculpting and music.

In order to meet the needs of our diverse learners, we must study the Waldorf approach to assessment and remediation. We need to be able to recognize data in a Waldorf setting and to understand how our approach interfaces with district and federal approaches and requirements. We need to practice skills of child observation and to understand the power of a well-conducted child study.

There must be sufficient and varied practical experience: observations of different teachers and classrooms, practice teaching, internships, supervision, and mentoring. The essentials here will differ for currently practicing teachers and for those new to the profession. It needs to consider the realities of school life and to employ the three “R’s:” to be reasonable, realistic, and rigorous.

Finally, the preparation of teachers must encompass the indefinable. At the end of the day, I teach who I am. When I am uncertain, I default to what I experienced, either as a child in school or in earlier teacher education. This is where the ongoing process of self-exploration and learning, unlearning, and relearning becomes crucial. Parker Palmer, in *The Courage to Teach*, beautifully reminds us of this: “As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together.”

As your Alliance Board takes up the question of effective teacher preparation, we will be eager to hear from you. How do you define “essential?” What has worked or not worked? What is needed? Please watch for a survey on this topic and let us know what you think. ■

Essential Principles of Public Waldorf Education

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25 has expanded beyond its original European base and focus and that this expansion has brought exciting questions and challenges for everyone involved in the work. Questions of definition have become more urgent—how do we recognize and protect the essentials of a Waldorf approach in any setting, yet support necessary change and innovation?

The Sacramento conference provided a forum for discussion and exploration. It began with the chair of the Pedagogical Section, Elan Leibner, stating the importance and timeliness of the topic and the PSC’s desire to look at the entire movement, rather than focus on differences between public and private expressions. Mr. Leibner emphasized both the core essentials and the need for taking them as a basis of innovation, continuing to enliven the art of education. He raised some provocative questions, including: Why do we see so much replication in schools of practices that were established many, many years ago? How many of these practices can be linked to Steiner’s indications? Might Steiner be startled if he appeared in a modern Waldorf classroom, and be moved to ask why we are still doing some things that were relevant for children in 1919 Germany but possibly less relevant for American children today? What can we identify in a school that truly reflects the unique aspects of its surroundings, community, and time? From this, Mr. Leibner spoke of the delicate balancing act between maintaining fidelity to essential, core principles and the imperative to innovate in order to keep our educational approach alive and to truly meet the need of contemporary children.

Next, Stephanie Rynas, one of AWSNA’s executive leaders, described AWSNA’s work in developing and updating their Principles, which will be used as a basis for the AWSNA self-study and accreditation process. I represented the Alliance, describing our board’s process of developing and refining the Core Principles of the Alliance. Both AWSNA and the Alliance used the Council’s Principles as a basis for alignment and then clarification of the unique and essential qualities of their member schools.

Through its research, the Pedagogical Section Council members arrived at seven principles

that they consider to be core to Waldorf education, regardless of its setting. (For those interested in reading more, Council members have written articles on them, published by the *Research Bulletin for Waldorf Education*.) The Principles address:

1. The Image of the Human Being
2. Phases of Child Development
3. Developmental Curriculum
4. Freedom in Teaching
5. Methodology of Teaching
6. Relationships
7. Spiritual Orientation

Conference attendees were able to select two of these topics and participate in discussion groups. Lively conversation was reported from all groups. A range of artistic workshops followed the discussion groups. The day concluded with singing led by Christiana Quick-Cleveland. Most of us left feeling enlivened and eager to continue discussions with colleagues on these crucial aspects of Waldorf education.

The Alliance also arrived at seven core principles:

1. **Image of the Human Being:** Public Waldorf education is founded on a coherent image of the developing human being;
2. **Child Development:** An understanding of child development guides all aspects of the Public Waldorf educational program, to the greatest extent possible within established legal mandates;
3. **Social Change through Education:** Public Waldorf education exists to serve both the individual and society;
4. **Human Relationships:** Public Waldorf schools foster a culture of healthy human relationships;
5. **Access and Diversity:** Public Waldorf schools work to increase diversity and access to all sectors of society;
6. **Collaborative Relationships:** Public Waldorf school leadership is conducted through shared responsibilities within established legal structures;
7. **Schools as Learning Communities:** Public Waldorf schools cultivate a love of lifelong learning and self-knowledge.



It is interesting to note where the Pedagogical Section Council’s original Core Principles directly overlap with those developed by the Alliance and where they diverge. When the Alliance board completed its work on these and approved them at its September meeting, it was with great enthusiasm and a sense that we have developed a set of foundational “essentials” that will ensure the quality of our member schools yet will allow for the uniqueness of each school. We believe that our Principles will support an ever-expanding spectrum of Public Waldorf education as educators respond to local interest, enlivening education and meeting the needs of a diverse group of students.

Formation of our Core Principles has been a large part of our ongoing engagement with AWSNA on use of the Waldorf/Steiner service mark, as we have worked to define essential, shared characteristics, identify the differentiation that is necessary for a public school setting, and develop a means of assuring the quality of our member schools. We will be sharing more details of the Principles at our January Conference, and will ensure that there is ample opportunity for the type of discussion and exploration that was enjoyed at the one-day conference. We are working with AWSNA on final approval of language of our Principles: they will then be available to schools and to the public and will form the basis of a revised self-study and membership process. We greatly look forward to active exploration with our schools and teachers of what lies at the heart of Public Waldorf education.


GRADUATION

George Washington Carver
School of Arts & Science
SACRAMENTO, CA

Allegra Alessandri, Principal of George Washington Carver School of Arts and Science, sat down with a couple of graduating seniors to reflect on their education as they approach the end of their high school careers. **Mauricio Crespo** attended Public Waldorf schools since fifth grade. **Diana Ormanzhi** started Waldorf as a Carver freshman.

MAURICIO CRESPO, CARVER CLASS OF 2015

Allegra Alessandri: You've attended Public Waldorf schools since fifth grade. Tell me about the highlights and memories from your journey.



Mauricio Crespo: When I think of my Waldorf education, I think of the freedom I've experienced. Switching from mainstream school to John Morse [now Alice Birney] broadened my horizons. I had new experiences, like learning the violin. That was perhaps the most significant change. It was huge. I learned that we could work together as a class in unity to create beautiful music. I loved Pachelbel's "Canon." Together we could make something beautiful, creating beauty—that's teamwork. Other new experiences were the Greek games—learning to throw the javelin, archery. Learning the recorder. These were significant for me because they opened my mind and broadened my experiences.

Also significant was that I experienced that the whole class could be a group. I'd come from an elementary school where, in order for others to take an interest in and be kind to me, I needed to develop a skill, like soccer. At Waldorf, I was part of the whole class just for being me.

AA: What are your plans for life after Carver?

MC: I will attend the University of California at Santa Cruz. I plan to double major in Biology and Environmental Science and minor in Education. I want to be a teacher or a professor—I guess like my science teacher, Mr. DeWaard!

AA: How has your Waldorf education shaped you? How do you think it sets you apart from your peers?

MC: I come from a community of Argentine immigrants. Most are working class—struggling economically. Some live in unsafe neighborhoods where kids grow up carrying knives and brag about owning guns. This is a strong, negative influence. I feel as though I could have been surrounded by that negative influence. Whereas now in Waldorf I'm surrounded by students and teachers in a college-going, career-focused education. A high percentage of students at Carver are ambitious and high achievers preparing for college.


AA: What is one element of your journey that you appreciate the most? What seems most precious?

MC: At Carver, I experienced freedom. First, I learned the importance of building great relationships of respect and mutual understanding. Second, I found that by building these deep relationships with my

teachers and other students, I was given the freedom to direct my own decisions in the service of my learning. An example was the blood drive that I organized for my civic action project. Last year when I donated blood I vomited. It beat me! So this year I organized another blood drive so that I could conquer it and to contribute to the memory of the family members I recently lost. It was a real way to contribute to their memory. The drive was able to draw 35 pints of blood! I presented my project at Sacramento State University to a college class. I spoke about my passion for this project. They were surprised that one person could make such a big contribution.

DIANA ORMANZHI, CARVER CLASS OF 2015

Allegra Alessandri: You started Carver without having attended a Waldorf elementary school. How was the change for you? How does Carver differ from your middle and elementary schools?



Diana Ormanzhi: I didn't know what to expect in high school. I came from a small charter where I was able to study Russian—my family is Ukrainian and Moldovan—and my parents wanted me to stay in a small charter for high school. When I got to Carver I found it artsy. I've been drawing since I was two, so the adjustment to a Waldorf school was easy for me, because I was already artistic. Some people might not appreciate or understand why art is important. It's always hard for me to explain to people who don't know about Waldorf or Carver.

AA: At Carver you've excelled in the arts. You won the Congressional Art Award last spring, which earned you a trip to Washington, D.C., and now your art is hanging in the Capitol. Just this spring, you won the Platinum Award for the California Supreme Court's Law Day, called Operation Protect and Defend. Your grand-prize-winning art will hang in Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy's Library here in Sacramento. Your work embodies Carver's values of social and environmental justice. Can you tell me about your inspiration?

DO: I don't have an exact source of inspiration or a muse. I need pressure to create art. I hate pressure, but it helps me creatively. The winning pieces originated because I felt the pressure to meet a deadline. I felt pressure to find a good idea, and that allowed me to brainstorm deeply. I had no idea where to start. I began asking questions like, how does media affect us? How would it affect a juror? Piece by piece, my ideas evolved as I worked.

AA: What are your plans for life after Carver?

DO: I will start college at American River College in the fall. In an ideal future I will be a curator for a museum or gallery and eventually have my own gallery. People tell me that you can't make a living as an artist, that it's a risky job. But they are thinking of the struggling artist, not the gallery owner or museum curator. At ARC, I will study art history and studio art, of course. But I can also take classes in gallery curating. Part of that course involves an internship in a local gallery or museum.

AA: How has your Waldorf education shaped you? How do you think it sets you apart from your peers?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

GRADUATION



One of Diana's award winning paintings.

DO: My high school education has opened my eyes to the problems with technology and our children. My fear is that technology and electronics are taking over. I'll put pen and paper in front of my children before I give them technology to play with. I want my child to learn creativity, to draw, make art or play an instrument.

My study in history has shaped my thinking. My ideas have expanded and deepened. Before Carver, I had never even thought about women's rights or that they might be endangered. Now, I see how big an issue this is around the world. We are watching *Miss-Representation* in Government class right now. The arguments presented in the film make me angry and emotional. In this is the inspiration for me to make something artistic. I believe I can create art to bring more attention to the issue of inequality. If I can use art to make one more person aware of these issues, that's making change.

AA: What is one element of your high school journey that you appreciate the most?

DO: My parents never took me to a museum. I am thankful for the opportunities at Carver to go to museums and art installations. I am so grateful for the opportunity to make so much art. As a sophomore I thought I was really good! Now looking back, I can see how I've grown. In my junior and senior years a new kind of thinking happened for me. I am grateful to my teachers at Carver, who showed me a way to discover deeper knowledge. By introducing me to deeper and more important ideas, Carver has helped me to evolve my thinking about the world. And I can express this through art. Art at Carver gave me the tools and ability to

express my deep and valuable new leaning.

I submitted my AP Studio Art portfolio as a junior and earned the highest score. There was lots of pressure to create three pieces every two weeks. My portfolio centered on the theme of my childhood self and my present self. My mom had saved many of my drawings growing up. I chose twelve of these to recreate and compare the child's drawing to the seventeen-year-old me. One comparison was of a circus. The six-year-old me drew a happy scene with a girl eating ice cream, a joyful jumping clown with the circus happening in the background. My current self depicted a close-up of the circus, with a slightly opened curtain revealing the clown with his head in his hand, showing despair or fatigue. I wanted to show how my thinking changed as I developed through childhood.

I am thankful for the opportunity to see art as a future for me, that I can have a realistic career as an artist. How amazing that my career can revolve around my passion for art! I value that. My passion can be my life. I can use art to educate and share ideas.

Desert Marigold School

PHOENIX, AZ

This profile of Desert Marigold senior Samantha Romero was written by Sade Moore, a Desert Marigold ninth grader who is interested in studying journalism and who served as the lighting technician for the school's recent production of "West Side Story."

SAMANTHA ROMERO, DESERT MARIGOLD CLASS OF 2015

This spring, seniors at Desert Marigold and everywhere else are getting ready to end a chapter of their lives and start a new one. As they plan their futures, what lessons and skills acquired from peers and mentors during their high school career will they carry with them? Samantha Romero is not afraid to show her appreciation for the four years she has spent as a public Waldorf student.

Samantha came to DMS in her freshman year. She could have started in sixth grade,

the year her younger brother joined DMS as a kindergartener; but she decided it was best for her to wait until high school since changing schools halfway through the year felt too complicated. About her brother, she says, "He never wanted to go to his first school. But once he started here, he loved it." She also says she has seen his artistic and social skills grow exceptionally. Her once closed-off brother is now outgoing and "all over the place." Samantha is certainly glad about making her own decision to attend DMS. One memory that stands out to her is how friendly everyone was on her first day. "When I first started here as a freshman, everyone was hugging each other. At first the kindness threw me off, but then it grew on me. People are so kind here!"

After four years at a Public Waldorf school, Samantha has grown to love the curriculum. "At my old schools, I often felt overwhelmed and rushed. Here, the work is hands-on and moves at a steady pace." She also says the artistic approach is particularly useful in subjects like science, where illustrating can help her visualize concepts. Before coming to DMS, Samantha wasn't particularly interested in visual arts, but the curriculum has sparked her interest, and she has found many uses for her newly acquired skill. For example, Samantha now turns to art therapy in times of stress.

She says her senior class has a variety of students, ranging from "Waldorf their whole life" to "completely new to the concept." When asked how she is with her classmate, she laughs. "A little too close," she says. "We're all like siblings."



She explains that many of her peers have similar interests and goals for the future, most related to the sciences in one way or another. One is interested in studying genetics and several are interested in psychology. Samantha's immediate plan is to

attend Carrington College in Phoenix for a year to get certified as a veterinary assistant. After that, she plans to complete her study of [CONTINUED ON PAGE 29](#)

GRADUATION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28 Italian. She has enjoyed studying Japanese at DMS and says she would like to learn another language. She is fairly sure her desire to become a veterinary assistant was inspired by the farm at DMS. "I remember taking care of chickens in my first year."

Samantha's class will be just the third to graduate from DMS, and she admits having had doubts about attending such a young school. However, she is extremely thankful she stayed, and believes the school has grown a lot during her time. She says her teachers have been trustworthy, caring, aware, and great people to talk to, in addition to being supportive of her academic career. She especially appreciates how they prioritize helping students to understand concepts over just making. In all, Samantha expresses real gratitude both for the public Waldorf curriculum and for the people with whom she has fondly shared her four years at DMS. She says she has learned to stay positive and to take things as they come. She savors the upcoming responsibility of having her own apartment and starting anew, and hopes to become more independent after this year. "It's scary and exciting at the same time," she says. It is clear Samantha embraces the challenge of taking what she has learned at DMS and putting it to good use as she enters the next invigorating stage of her life. ■

Credo High School

ROHNERT PARK, CA

CAITLIN LONG,
CREDO CLASS OF 2015

This June marks the closing of my twelve-year Waldorf education. Thinking back four years ago, the idea of being a Waldorf advocate or even dipping my toe into Anthroposophy was absurd, yet here I am writing about the experience I'm most grateful for.

I began first grade at Stone Bridge School, a rather dissonant hub within the conservative community of Napa, California. I didn't question the flower wreaths, veiled



Caitlin is shown here sculpting her senior portrait project.

movement classes, goji berry granola meals, and Birkenstocked teachers, because it all made sense and had its own purpose. Then seventh grade came around, and as we all know, thirteen is an age when the whole world flips upside-down. I slowly realized I had an individual opinion and that I didn't need to conform to the beliefs of adults; suddenly, the smell of rebellion was too sweet to pass up. By eighth grade, I was "so done" with the hippy Waldorf system, and wanted to go to Napa High with the rest of my classmates.

Luckily, a new public Waldorf high school would be opening the following year, not more than a 45-minute drive away. Of course, my mother saw no reason not to seize this opportunity and wisely gave me no choice but to attend. I grudgingly accepted my role at the opening ceremony as a member of the pioneering class of Credo High School. As the only class on campus, we found ourselves with the huge responsibility of having to represent all of Credo and give it a good reputation for future students. There were about forty of us, most of whom were hesitant about this leadership role at the start, yet as the year ticked on we began to realize that our position could be beneficial: we had been given the opportunity to have our voices heard, our opinions matter, and the ability to inaugurate traditions for future years.

The leadership role was loaded mostly onto the shoulders of the founders and faculty of Credo, who simultaneously built the nest while feeding the birds. Their heavy task was carried out with unparalleled courage and passion, and every ounce of their energy was sacrificed towards building a community of thriving, sustainable humans. It is a fertile learning environment where the teachers want

their students to succeed, not competitively, but within themselves. The Credo teachers' intention is to plant a seed within us, which we can then cultivate into something that still holds integrity with our own individual truths.

Our classes did just that. There is nothing greater than having a class outside on a cold, cloudy day, huddled around burning embers, and pounding metal. Blacksmithing is one out of several remarkable classes I experienced, also Mandarin, Farming, Astronomy/Planetary Archetypes, Civics, Biomimicry, Yoga and Clay Sculpting. Every year starts off with one Morning Lesson block followed by a weeklong Adventure Learning trip. Freshmen embark on a grounding, 25-mile backpacking expedition, which provides an opportunity to build strong personal relationships while maintaining a healthy group atmosphere. Sophomores venture out by way of kayak and learn how to maneuver themselves on the water just as they are studying Ocean Ecology and reading *The Odyssey*. Juniors are given the chance to expand their comfort zones with zip-lining and ropes courses, as well as exploring the night sky from an observatory in preparation for the upcoming Astronomy block. Seniors are released into the wilderness for a 24-hour solo quest, a space that allows them to spend time with themselves and ignite their inner fires. A class called Personal Sustainability, which ties in closely with the senior solo trip, guided me the most in knowing how I want to carry myself in this world. It's a class I am absolutely in awe of every time I participate, for it is striking to witness a group of teenagers speak so genuinely from themselves and be heard with the utmost respect and acceptance by their peers.

To have received twelve years of education is in itself the deepest privilege, but to be a Waldorf graduate is worth every grain of gratitude I can muster. It has built the foundation on which I will go out into the world, and I am well prepared. After I graduate, I will be attending Quest University in British Columbia, Canada, a college focused on giving students a well-rounded education that teaches them how to think independently. I have decided to devote my life to healing the earth and to finding innovative methods of approaching world issues, whether by means of green engineering (biomimicry), architecture, social work or travel journalism. As I approach graduation, I now know that if I follow my own truth, it will lead me where I need to go on behalf of the world.

Woodland Star Charter School

The Future of Public Waldorf Education

SONOMA, CA

BY BROOKE SEVENAU

Woodland Star Charter School, in Sonoma, CA, is unusual among schools founded on the core principles of Public Waldorf education in that it serves a significant and growing population of Latino families and English Learners. This growth is a direct result of conscious intention by the school's founders to serve all of the children of the Sonoma Valley, and of fierce determination by a succession of school leaders to pursue diversity over the sixteen-year life of Woodland Star. In October 2016, twelve former and current school parents, teachers and administrators met to talk about Woodland Star's process, successes and challenges of attracting and serving Latino families. This knowledgeable group created a timeline of the growth of the Latino population and of significant events that supported that growth. This article tracks those events chronologically in the hope that it can point to actions that other schools may take to broaden their populations to reflect local demographics.



Brooke Sevenau

From even before its founding in 2000, Woodland Star has striven to reflect the demographics of the Sonoma Valley, where about 50% of public school students are Latino. Founder and former administrator Chip Romer honored founding parent Jennifer Goode for her leadership in ensuring the school's diversity: "Jennifer did the research about how to attract and serve Latino families. She advocated that we have a \$2,000 annual salary bump for Spanish bilingual staff and, recognizing that we would be serving working parents, planned an aftercare program from day one. Jennifer led the outreach campaign to La Luz (the Latino community center) and at all kindergarten fairs and community events, such as Sonoma's annual Cinco de Mayo celebration. Diversity was her drumbeat."

Woodland Star offered Spanish instruction to grades K-8 from the beginning, has always offered Spanish language school tours and done bilingual outreach to the community. The school currently has all important communications, including the school newsletter, translated into Spanish. In 2002, the school placed its first Latina, Monica Conway, on its board, and the following year two Spanish bilingual class teachers were hired. One of them, Anna



Left to right: **Annie Cassidy**—parent, volunteer kindergarten Spanish teacher, Charter Council member; **Anna Pier**—retired bilingual class teacher and Spanish teacher; **Gabriela Padilla-Sanchez**—parent, Padres Unidos Vice-President, kindergarten assistant; **Heather Graham**—step-parent, parent, former Spanish and EL teacher, Padres Unidos/ELAC supporter; **Evelin Sanchez**—parent, Padres Unidos President; **Nilda Pizano-Arguello**—parent, Padres Unidos member; **Sonia Mendoza**—parent, Padres Unidos member; **Jose Diaz**—parent, Padres Unidos member; **Sallie Romer**—kindergarten teacher; **Jamie Lloyd**—Spanish bilingual administrator. Not pictured: **Chip Romer**—founder and former administrator; **Trina Saldana**—parent, Padres Unidos member, Charter Council member.

Pier, who also taught Spanish, initiated an annual Dia de los Muertos celebration with a large altar in the school's main hall. "It was easy and organic to start that tradition because that fall the father of one of my third graders had been hit on his bicycle and killed. Danny O'Reilly was a leader of the Parent Council, and our whole community was grieving, so the altar was widely embraced. The tradition has continued ever since."

The following year, the school funded an English Language Development program, headed by Anna Pier. Ms. Pier, Mr. Romer and Spanish speaking parent Annie Cassidy formed a committee that met weekly with the intention of building Latino enrollment, promoting the school at numerous community events in English and Spanish, and developing a Latino parents' social group, which eventually became Padres Unidos. When Mr. Romer expressed his frustration with the difficulty of attracting a diverse student body, a friend in the Latino community advised him to focus on finding one family, promising that one happy family would lead to others. By this time, the school was gaining in popularity, and enrollment lotteries threatened to sabotage any outreach success. Mr. Romer explained how he overcame this: "Fortunately, we had an enrollment preference for children of employees, and I was able to hire a Latino custodian with twins and a Latina aftercare assistant with two boys; as employees, they were able to get their children into the school. It finally felt like we had some momentum."

In 2005, Annie Cassidy, from the Latino outreach committee, was elected to the Charter Council. When budget cuts in the following year threatened kindergarten Spanish, Ms. Cassidy became the volunteer kindergarten Spanish teacher. In 2007, Anna Pier brought an English language summer camp for Spanish speakers to the campus, offering a Waldorf model that integrated teaching with carpentry, gardening and the arts. Offered through Common Bond, a Sonoma non-profit that promotes cultural opportunities and understanding between the Spanish and English communities, the camp introduced many new Latino families to Woodland Star.

In 2007, parent Heather Graham (then Zavaleta)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

The Future of Public Waldorf Education

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30 was hired to teach Spanish throughout the grades and to teach English Language Development. She worked actively with Padres Unidos to initiate a new tradition with an annual Posada, a Mexican Christmas celebration during which families participate in a procession that re-creates the pilgrimage of the Holy Family on their way to Bethlehem. Parent Jose Dias recalled, "When I went to the first Padres Unidos and all the teachers there were speaking Spanish, it made me feel so good that they were speaking my language. People actually taking the time to learn our language is awesome. It's good, really good!"

In 2008, the first Spanish-only speaking student entered the school in Sallie Romer's Dandelion Kindergarten. "As a kindergarten teacher, my initial response to students who arrived with no English was to be impressed that this curriculum is tailor made for English learners because it is so verbal—they just started speaking English because it's all around them and they can take their time as learning arises. Now, with more experience, I'm seeing that immersion isn't enough—we have to turn our attention to what is getting missed."

In 2007, Latina parent, Trina Saldana, enrolled her son, Aaron, in kindergarten at Woodland Star. Her decision to join the community was reaffirmed when her son's teacher asked her if Ms. Saldana would prefer that she and the class use the Spanish language pronunciation of her son's name. Ms. Saldana had not initially indicated that preference but was very appreciative of the teacher's proactive cultural sensitivity.

In 2009, Ms. Saldana joined the Charter Council. She talked about an ongoing challenge: "As happy parents, we're always trying to 'convert' families to Waldorf; but this is a big hurdle for families who don't speak English. To stand by the pedagogy takes strength when we're surrounded by wary family members and people who aren't familiar." Padres Unidos President Evelin Sanchez agreed: "Everyone in our families questions our choice of Waldorf. As Latinos, we're not used to this type of curriculum. It is totally different from what I experienced from my education in Mexico, and that is why I wanted it for my kids. They get to be kids here. Kindergarten is play and learning at the same time without the kids knowing that they're learning. I didn't have that. This is more loving and welcoming. It's totally right—but we have to put

up with a lot of negativity and criticism because it is so unfamiliar. We're here because we are strong."

Gabriela Padilla agreed, "As a kindergarten assistant I saw that it's a huge challenge to talk about Waldorf philosophy. People don't get it easily. Parents need information, little pieces everywhere. Parents are busy all the time. When parents have two jobs, kids, they're all over the place; how do you translate Waldorf for them? We need a whole packet of information."

"I'm always learning from the school and sharing about it with others," Nilda Pizano-Arguello reported. "As I talk about it, people want to learn more. Before coming to this school I called a psychologist in Mexico and a teacher in Mexico to ask, is this the right thing for my kids. Will it work for them? Both said, 'Don't do that.' But my husband said, 'It's up to you.' So I'm here and very happy that it's working."

Jose Diaz confirmed this challenge: "Many of our parents didn't have an education. We have parents who didn't even finish second grade. So some kids are coming from a house where there is no education at all. We can't expect parents to quickly understand Waldorf. We're the new era. We are the people who are thinking beyond. I want my kid to be a kid. When I grew up in Mexico I was always playing. When I see my kid playing hide and seek I remember that's what I used to play. I like that, instead of looking at my kid playing video games. When I see my kid painting rocks, which is kind of weird, I'm fine. It's what he likes. He's happy."

In 2010, the school initiated Homework Club twice a week for Latino students, led by volunteer teachers and parents. One of these teachers was Sallie Romer: "We are waking up to what extra services we need to provide so that English Learners proceed successfully through school. Just because a student acquires English fluency in the kindergarten doesn't mean she's finished. I can look at my whole class and see them progressing well, but I need to keep refining the way I see English Learners to be sure that they are truly progressing. I worry that if we're not careful, English Learners can start compensating and, while it looks like they are understanding everything, they might not be. This is a frontier. We have some catching up to do here." Now

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



Scenes from lively Woodland Star kindergarten classrooms.



Scenes from grades classrooms at Woodland Star Charter School, founded in 2004.

The Future of Public Waldorf Education

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31 Homework Club is ongoing and available to all students.

In 2011, parent Gabriela Padilla and teacher/parent Heather Graham founded a Mexican folk dance troupe for girls and boys, Las Estrellas, which represented Woodland Star the subsequent year at “Waldorf at Weill,” the annual performance gathering of ten North Bay Waldorf schools, both public and private. “With a mariachi band and our wildly colorful Mexican costumes, Woodland Star was really different from the other schools,” Ms. Padilla said. That same year Padres Unidos was formally organized as Woodland Star’s English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) with Evelin Sanchez as President and Gabriela Padilla as Vice President. “This gave the group—and the Latino community—formal authority in the school, and in the district,” Heather Graham said. Trina Saldana was pleased: “The Latino community at Woodland Star is embraced and encouraged to take leadership roles. It’s a real testament to the Woodland Star community.”

To build on the Homework Club intervention, in 2013 Heather Graham initiated a faculty-led summer camp to maintain academic progress over the summer for Latinos and especially English Learners. This was popular and successful, has continued in subsequent summers, and is now open to all Woodland Star students.

In 2012, Teresita Landin, bilingual/bicultural parent, was hired to assist Heather Graham with Spanish instruction as well as English Language Development. Today she and Cristina Ruiz, bilingual/bicultural Spanish teacher hired in 2014, conduct a robust Spanish language program spanning kindergarten through eighth grade and manage ELD for the school.

In 2014, to further serve needs of working parents, the school began before-school care, including breakfast, at 7:00 AM.

In 2016, Woodland Star hired Spanish bilingual Jamie Lloyd as administrator. Formal faculty study is being initiated to improve English Language Development. “The ELD program is my biggest curiosity right now—and will be the focus of many faculty meetings,” Mr. Lloyd said.

NEXT CHALLENGES

“[Current ELD teacher] Teresita Landin and I worked really hard in developing the ELD program,” Heather Graham recounted. “We needed to ensure we had the services in place to meet student needs. It required funding—the school had to put the money where the need is. This was huge. We still have to work to get teachers trained so that they are integrating ELD in the classroom. This struggle is not unique to Woodland Star; this struggle is in every school throughout California that has English Learners. Teresita was a very smart, driven partner in developing that program. She was an English Learner herself, so she knows how the process works. We didn’t have a road map—because it’s Waldorf and ELD. Having to put those pieces together has been a real challenge. English Language Development should always be connected to curriculum, not something randomly floating out here on the side. Ideally, the ELD program would be done in the classroom, by the most educated person in the room—the class teacher.

“If the EL education is done poorly, there is a certain danger. We have families with English Learner students who have left the school because it didn’t work for them. It’s a really sticky piece—how to bring along academic

language, bring along those early reading skills for English Learners in such a way that kids are successful, or if they’re not being successful you catch it and remediate with interventions early on. If that doesn’t happen, and kids get up to sixth or seventh grade, parents have a feeling of betrayal because there were promises and commitments made. The grades teachers need to get on board with what does it take to teach an English learner. If it’s done poorly, it affects that child’s academic development forever. This piece needs to be tightened—not just at Woodland Star; everywhere. Because Waldorf students stay with the same teacher over a number of years, there aren’t the checks and balances you have in a mainstream school where a student is going from teacher to teacher.

“English learners are a more vulnerable population, so assuming the responsibility for their education is huge. I felt that responsibility every day and took it very seriously. With Waldorf teachers taking on a new curriculum every year, English Language Development has to be a piece of every year’s preparation. Teachers have to be thinking: what are my interventions throughout the year? What is my ELD plan?”

Jose Diaz agrees: “I went through the whole public school system, but it was only when I was working that I learned English. I came to the U.S. as a ten year old, and in school I didn’t learn anything. It was really hard. It’s always embarrassing as a kid learning another language. I can tell you from my experience. It looked like I was learning, but I was not. Because of the language barrier, I was afraid to communicate, to tell the teacher that I wasn’t understanding. I wanted to do it, but they didn’t have enough people to help. Woodland Star is different. It’s a learning experience, even for myself as a parent. I want it.” ■