

winterberry

Community Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 16, 2010
VOLUME 6, ISSUE 1



GRADE 4 PARTNERS WITH STAFF AT THE EAGLE RIVER NATURE CENTER

What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the wintertime. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the Sunset.

- Crowfoot, a leader of the Blackfoot nation

A Word from Ms. Mall...

This past weekend I had the pleasure of spending a few hours alone with my oldest son while my husband was running the Klondike and the other two boys were sleeping. Yes, in case you are wondering, we stayed up past both of our bedtimes!

Later that night we snuggled into "the family bed" as our youngest calls it and he fell fast asleep. As I watched him I realized that it was probably one of the last times he would willingly snuggle in bed with his mama. When he awoke in the morning he would be ten years old.

I was struck by the swift passage of time in a way I had never been before.

I remember the day he was born. We had walked through the falling autumn leaves the day before, followed by a night of labor. In the morning, just before nine, as the sun's thinning rays filtered through a spruce tree and into our living room he flowed from me and into the birthing tub. As we lifted him to my chest, time seemed to slow almost to a stop.

Oh, the promises we make to these beings so fresh to Earth. What we wouldn't do for them. I promised to make time and do things differently than my parents. While I have succeeded in many ways, in other ways I have failed miserably!

I am so grateful for the time we shared that night and hope I am able to keep a commitment to make more time for this connection. One lesson I continue to learn at Winterberry is to value the time we have together. It is my hope that we all find time to connect in the days and weeks ahead.

Blessings, Shanna

September

20th – 30th: School Mentors Visit
George Hoffercker &
Donna Burgess

October

1st: 6th Annual Harvest Dance,
6pm

7th: WPG Meeting, 6pm @
Winterberry

14th: ALL SCHOOL ASSEMBLY,
1pm @ the PAC/Discovery

15th: NO SCHOOL • In-service

21st: WCC Meeting, 6pm @
Winterberry

26th–28th: Parent/Teacher
Conferences, 12:30 release

November

4th: WPG Meeting, 6pm @ Winterberry

11th–14th: Waldorf Teacher Trainers
visit our Faculty Cohort

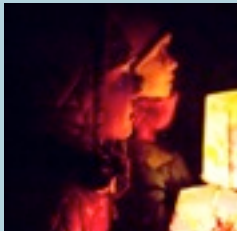
18th: WCC Meeting, 6pm @
Winterberry

19th: Early Release 12:30 for Lantern
Walk Prep

6th Annual

LANTERN WALK,

6pm @ Goose Lake



25th – 26th: NO SCHOOL
Thanksgiving Holiday

December

2nd: WPG Meeting 6pm @ Winterberry

9th: WCC Meeting 6pm @ Winterberry

15th: **WINTER ASSEMBLY,**
6:30pm @ the PAC

17th: NO SCHOOL, In-service

18th – 31st: NO SCHOOL, Winter
Holiday...continued in January...

January

1st – 2nd: NO SCHOOL, Winter Holiday

6th: WPG Meeting 6pm @ Winterberry

A Dandelion for My Mother

How I loved those spiky suns,
rooted stubborn as childhood
in the grass, tough as the farmer's
big-headed children — the mats
of yellow hair, the bowl-cut fringe.
How sturdy they were and how
slowly they turned themselves
into galaxies, domes of ghost stars
barely visible by day, pale
cerebrums clinging to life
on tough green stems. Like you.
Like you, in the end. If you were here,
I'd pluck this trembling globe to show
how beautiful a thing can be
a breath will tear away. *- Jean Nordhaus*

It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

- William Carlos Williams

GRADE ONE

Friday, September 8, 2010 ends our first three weeks of school as well as our first full block of form drawing. We have established our daily rhythm with confidence and fluidity and are ready to meet the upcoming challenges of capital letters during our Language Arts block.

Our forms have followed along with the adventures of Pierello, Mog Noddy, and Mother and Father Blackcap in our read aloud story, "The Wind Call". We have experienced the adoption of Pierello into the Blackcap family and moved with the images of this tale into our first twelve forms. We have found the forms in our bodies, along the coastal trail on our nature walks, in the classroom and around school. We have looked for signs of winter's arrival and for the call of the wind that indicates to all of the natural world that it is time to prepare for winter. As the voles and mice, butterflies and moths, birds and bees get ready for the winter in our story, so does the world outside our classroom. It has been a wonderful journey.

-Ms. Drinen

GRADE TWO

Today in 2nd grade, freshly picked apples simmered all day in a crockpot. The apples were gifts from the tree in John's yard and an apple orchard on Rabbit Creek Road. After adding brown sugar and cinnamon, we enjoyed the warm applesauce while working on drawings for a birthday book for Ivalu.

We had classes with all of our specialty teachers. We knitted with Ms. Paula. Some students have begun to knit gnomes! We sang with Mr. V.

January, cont...

14th – 16th: Waldorf Charter School
Conference @ Rudolf Steiner
College, Fair Oaks, California

17th: NO SCHOOL, Martin Luther
King, Jr. Holiday

20th: WCC Meeting 6pm @ Winterberry

22nd: ASD Alt. Schools Fair

28th: 12:30 Release to Prep for Winter
Faire...

29th: **WINTER FAIRE!**

6th Annual Winter Faire @
Winterberry Charter School,
11-4pm



BRING YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS,
AND NEIGHBORS... EVERYONE IS
WELCOME!

31st: NO SCHOOL, In-service

February

3rd: WPG Meeting 6pm @ Winterberry

17th: WCC Meeting 6pm @ Winterberry

17th – 20th: Waldorf Teacher Trainers
visit our Faculty Cohort

21st: NO SCHOOL, In-service

We happily greeted Mr. Harmon with a “Dobre Utra!” on our first day of 2nd grade Russian class.

We drew a picture of the Town Mouse on his way from the city to visit his friend the Country Mouse as we heard in our story yesterday. We started to hear the story of St. Jerome and the gentle lion who protected the donkey as it traveled to town.

During math practice, we thought of over 20 things that come as sets of 2 (eyes, elbows, pant legs, twins...) We chose one thing from the list to draw pictures of for a chart of 2's. (Wings received the popular vote, closely followed by motorcycle tires and earrings.)

August/September Birthdays:

Ryanne (Aug. 3), Trethan and Cameron (Aug. 4), Adler (Aug. 10), Siobhan and Ms. Towner (Aug. 14), Khryo (Aug. 23), Johnathan (Sep. 6), Ivalu (Sep. 15), Sayora (Sep. 25)

We are thankful for...

Mr. Harmon's return today!

The beautiful summer weather last week.

The parents who have joined us on our nature walks and brought in food and supplies.

Our time spent learning and playing together.

- Ms. Towner

GRADE THREE

I hope to continue to instill in the children a sense of reverence and responsibility for the earth. It is important at this developmental age that the children have hands on experiences in working to transform raw materials into a product that they can use.

In this light, I am very pleased that we have had such an incredible show of parent volunteers, community volunteer and the grace of the weather to really do the salmon fishing block that is nearing completion.

We have observed and tried out spinning rod and fly rod silver salmon fishing. On our first Ship Creek Walk we saw 2 silvers landed. The children have all tried their hand at fishing with a rod at Ship Creek.... It was a gift that the day we fished at high tide we were not in anyone's way, we could just practice casting, the silvers were not in the creek! BUT the HOT COCOA was delicious and the cow parsnip raft creations kept everyone active in ways to experience our very local creek.

These events neatly led up to the first huge event for 3rd Grade.... My family's gillnet successfully caught 15 lovely red salmon on our recess hill, there has been huge excitement about picking the fish, filleting the fish, chopping the fish, brining the fish, smoking the fish.... Vacuum packaging the fish, and so on! ESPECIALLY eating the smoked fish with friends and family!

- Ms. Eggleston

GRADE FOUR

March

3rd: WPG Meeting 6pm @ Winterberry

4th: NO SCHOOL, In-service

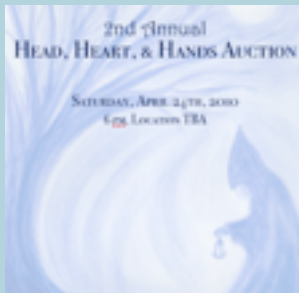
5th – 13th: NO SCHOOL, Spring Break

14th – 25th: School Mentors Visit
George Hoffecker &
Donna Burgess

19th: 3rd Annual Winterberry...

Head, Heart, & Hands Auction

6pm, Location TBA



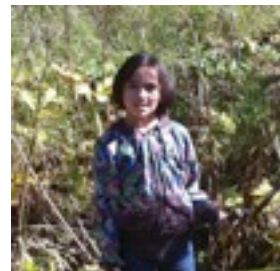
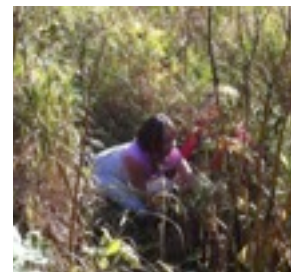
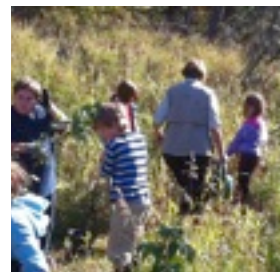
25th & 26th: 2nd Annual...

WINTERBERRY CIRCUS!!!

28th – 30th: 12:30 Release, Parent /
Teacher Conferences

31st: SBA Testing in Science for Grade
4 & 8 Students

April



-Ms. Mayer

5th – 7th: SBA Testing for grades 3 – 8
in Reading (T), Writing (W), and
Math (R)

April, cont...

7th: WPG Meeting 6pm @ Winterberry

18th: NO SCHOOL, In-service

21st: WCC Meeting 6pm @ Winterberry

May

5th: WPG Meeting 6pm @ Winterberry

6th: ALL SCHOOL ASSEMBLY, 1pm @
the PAC/Discovery

13th: FRIDAY FIELD DAY,
11am – 3:30pm

19th: 8th Grade Graduation, 10am @
the PAC

19th: Student's Last Day of School

20th: Teacher's Last Day of School

August 2011

16th: 2011/2012 School Year Begins
for Grades Two – Eight

23rd: Grade One & Kindergarten
students begin...

GRADE SIX

Sixth Grade is off to a crisp start. After a week of unbearable heat, we have installed two fans, live with the windows open, and are quite comfortable in our cozy space. We are a full 27 students this year: we welcome the families of Magnola Edge, Jacob Rees, James Bolton, Amanda Heitsmith, Ray Van Deusen, Louis Garby, and Mosheh Machiyach. Already I feel that a new dynamic has settled on the class, and our new students are a big part of this. We are stronger, smarter, and healthier than ever as a class, thanks to some wonderful new energy!

Sixth grade, or the ages of 11 and 12, is a time of great polarities of thought and feeling—not unlike second grade, but with powerful new capacities for thinking and reasoning beginning to emerge as well. What do we get if we mix polarized feeling with incredible intellectual capacities? Yes, we get a new time of strong judgment about the world. These students are no longer content to accept the judgment of others, but instead delight in forming their own judgments about the world around them. This is also a time for the rule of law: of strong, clear boundaries to push against, with no quibbling, so that these young people can feel that the world is a strong, safe place that can be relied upon, at least for a few more years, to be predictable and nourishing. It is the inner life that is really developing now, and rules and boundaries can help that.

We have just finished our first block: World Biomes. This block focused on the polarities of the earth, and the mirroring that happens on a large scale on the planet. We studied Admiral Byrd's Antarctic explorations, heard about the Shackleton expedition, looked at the sea as an inverted mountain (though much more vast), and surveyed the major biomes of the planet. As I write this, we are preparing to celebrate this study with a "Bionteering" field trip to Kincaid park, where we will search for as many biomes as we can find in this very diverse piece of the Anchorage Bowl.

Welcome all, to a new year! Blessings.

-Mr. Crawford

GRADE SEVEN & EIGHT

During the first few weeks of chemistry, seventh and eighth grade students studied principles of inorganic chemistry. We examined the differences between physical and chemical changes, combustion of various metals and salts, oxidation, the solubility of various substances, the phenomenon of the candle, and the water cycle. Students were expected to take close observations of the phenomena that occurred in each experiment. As a class we collectively reviewed each demonstration so that students had a clear picture of the sequence of steps (the procedure). Taking the time for this opportunity gave all students a chance to contribute what they saw and felt. The next day, at the beginning of class, students were called to recapitulate the experiment(s) from the day before as well as make sense of the phenomenon. As a class, we arrived at many audacious conclusions of what was observed. I believe our favorite experiment thus far was making colorful fireworks by blowing various metals and salts into a Bunsen burner flame. We were pleasantly surprised when the metal vaporized in the heat of the flame and the incandescing vapor gave the flame its vibrant color(s).

Seventh and eighth grade students will soon take a look at limestone and examine the lime cycle as an introduction to the properties of acids and bases. We will also be studying various gasses (hydrogen, oxygen, carbon dioxide) along with the basic metals.

During the last few weeks of chemistry, seventh and eighth grade students will be investigating these major themes in organic chemistry: photosynthesis, carbohydrates, generating carbon dioxide and oxygen gases, examining alcohol, lipids, oils, and proteins. Throughout these last few weeks, we will be looking at sources, extraction, chemical properties, uses, tests, and comparisons/contrasts of carbohydrates, cellulose, fat/oils, and proteins. Without a doubt, organic chemistry will thoroughly deepen our understanding of health and nutrition in our daily lives.

Parent Reminder: Our next 7th/8th grade Parent Meeting is **October 6th @ 6:00 p.m.**

-Ms. Besh

HANDWORK

1st Grade~

"My hands are a bowl, they hold water just fine.
My hands are a shelter, a pillow, a line.
My hands are a hammer and a nail too!
My hands are my most important tool !"

Learning "reverence for the hands" is the predominant focus for these vibrant little children. They are already showing their desire and ability to "focus", whether it is learning the verse for handwork, tying a slipknot, the felting process or finger knitting. This class is well on their way to the all-important process of knitting. Following instructions and learning to be patient is so huge for this grade.

It's in the wonderful tradition of Winterberry Charter School that a parent or group of parents make the handwork bags to present to the class on that all important first day of knitting, so the children will have their bag in which to place their handwork project for safe keeping. Let me know if this is something that you'd love to have a part doing. I'm looking forward to working with your children as the year unfolds and invite you to come join us anytime as extra hands are always welcomed in these beginning stages. We're off to a really wonderful start and I am excited by the prospects ahead

2nd Grade~

I look at my hands with fingers so fine and I want to be proud that they are mine.
For deep in my heart lies a golden chest with secret treasures that no one can guess-
Unless, my hand do their very best, to work and work and open that chest.

This is truly a golden year for the second grader who's experience from the first grade was filled with baby buntings, flute bags, rainbow balls, and various animals so that they know what their hands are capable of doing. We are going to follow the "continuous thread" again this year in the knitting, stuffing and sewing of a little gnome, culminating in the introduction to crochet, which is how the gnomes' hat is made. This is almost a full years' project using the child's choice of color for clothes, hair, and hat. Rolling the bones (stuffing) will be revealing for them. "Firm not fat" or puffy is our aim so the body of the gnome holds its shape during the years of play following their creation.

We will be refining our work, so attention to detail will be important- learning to cast on and cast off will give them a lot of independence and not make them so reliant or have to wait for someone to help them. It's always about the "process" and when you're able to follow the continuous thread for knitting projects it sets the child up to be able to follow a continuous line of thought down the road.

I look forward to opening up a “golden time” for your children and in that spirit I’ll leave you till next time. As always you are welcome to second grade handwork when time allows for you.

3rd Grade~

We use our hands to fashion the feelings of our heart....
And we thank this beautiful planet, and all the stars above!
We ask for as a blessing from plant and earth and sky,
That I may do my handwork using hand and heart and mind!

Having followed this class from the 1st grade through now, our start to this year has been amazing as they embark on the finite stitchery projects heralding the ninth year a year of great change in which they are seeing their worlds in a whole new light. Making their own felted world sphere on which they will be stitching a design of their creation using the back-stitch and coloring their own world as they see fit. They are showing real divergent thinking in their creativity. To ease into this project we’re doing what was originally a bookmark morphing into pincushions, wall hangings, mats and small pillows. True to this class, I’m hearing that they are making these things for others, which of course is music to my ears, as this class really does think of others so much. Thus putting the “heart” into this head, heart and hands education.

4th Grade~

My two arms are folded so straight on my chest
Crossing each other with right over left
I think of the trees crossing branches and twigs
Vines in the forest, legs dancing a jig
Windowpanes, rafters, and joists on the floor
Heroes at battle cross-bright flashing swords.
When crossing my T’s or crossing the street
Birds fly above, worms under my feet
Each cross-stitch I do is so clear and so true
A mirror of the world in all that I do.

Symmetry, balance and mirror image is the cognitive event going on for the fourth grade. The verse vividly points out the symmetry existing everywhere if only we look. Our first introduction to recognizing this is to make a “string game” using only 11 yards of cording, using the butterfly knot as an introduction to the larger project of the jump rope, which uses 20 yards of jute, and cording. Also the cross-stitch itself is being gradually introduced as people finish the string game.

These students are so willing and ready to make new discoveries through finding the balance in their handwork projects. I’m happy to invite them into the process.

5th Grade~

Let us make a thing of beauty, that long may last when we are gone!
Let us make a thing of beauty that humble eyes may feast upon!
Whether it be leather, cloth or clay, let us make a thing of beauty, lifting spirits in beauty’s way.

Socks! Socks! Socks! The subject of circular knitting in the round finds fifth grade well on their way to making their own knitting needles. They are delighted by transforming oak dowels into beautiful wooden needles. Right now they are even saving the dust from the sanding into little boxes calling it the “gold”. They are keeping a journal to document

learning the anatomy of the sock. They each have written a story from the viewpoint of the sock. Ask your student to share it with you. We'll be learning songs and more prose about the humble sock. These will be fun and frustrating days for them. Please encourage them all you can. I know they can complete a pair of wonderful warm socks and from time to time they will be bringing them home as homework. There are some expectations around this, as they will need to keep up with me in a timely manner.

Drop in, as you are welcomed to attend a handwork class. Helping hands and encouragement are always appreciated. I look forward to bringing to fruition the work of their hands!

6th Grade~

While we're growing through the great warm earth,
As we're rising like stars in our own universe!
With fire in our belly we'll pursue the work of our hands,
The colors of our mind giving it vibrance and life,
Bringing all to an artful finish.

The sixth grade is well into understanding the mammal they have chosen as their gusseted animal- three-dimensional project. This is a hand-sewn animal that will be stuffed, hopefully, lifelike. To ease into this project the students have drawn front, back and sideways views of their animals. Clay has been a transforming way of looking at the animal as they drew out of the clay the image of the mammal. Now we're exploring armature (or skeleton) using pipe cleaners to make a 3 dimensional structure. It's been interesting seeing even these can make a flat object filled out and rounded. We're off to a great start and I look forward to seeing them put their hands, hearts and heads into all our endeavors this year.

7th & 8th Grade ~

Steadfast I stand in the world,
With certainty I tread the path of life.
Love shall be in the depths of my being,
Hope shall be in all my deeds,
Confidence I shall impress into my thinking.

Introducing the "sewing machine" has raised these students awareness of what the industrial revolution has done for us. Simple, but efficient, the same sewing that took days and weeks now takes only a fraction of the time. Hence, necessity, the mother of invention, has given us so much and I believe in time their projects will prove to them how valuable these mechanisms can be. Starting with a "driving test" on paper with spirals, and mazes along with simple seams, they're learning to navigate the machine understanding the need to be problem solvers, because when they are working they're wonderful, but as you know there are those times when even they need tweaking. The first project will be a pillowcase that maybe can be transformed into another useful object. We'll see what the students come up with. I'm excited by the year and look forward towards working with each of these students.

Best of Days to All,

- Ms. Paula

MUSIC

Welcome back one and all for an exciting start to the school year! If I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting you, I am Mr. Kyle Vander Schrier (Mr. V). After a 5,000-mile trek across North America, I am so pleased to be at Winterberry Charter School. The warm welcome I received from the students, parents, and staff has been wonderful.

I couldn't ask for a better environment to be in and I am looking forward to an exciting year in both music and movement classes.

Students in grades one through three have been working on their musical skills through singing, partner games, and movement. We will continue to build our song repertoire and will soon be working with the Orff instruments.

Fourth and fifth grade students will be starting playing their violins in string class shortly. If your child does not yet have a violin, there is no need to worry. Violins can be rented from Petr's Violin Shop, Inc. for only \$19 a month. Go to <http://www.violinshop.net/> or stop by the store for more information. Students should have their violins by Monday, September 27 so we can begin our string adventure.

The sixth and seventh/eighth grade students have started the basics of choral singing and are off to a great start. Students will be working throughout the year on developing their voice and music reading skills. I have heard many compliments about the students' voices and am very proud of their work thus far.

- Mr. Vander-Schrier (Mr. V)

CROSS COUNTRY RUNNING: GRADES 5 - 8

XC Running

Please come out and show your support for our 2010 Winterberry XC Running Team!!!

Anderson, Graham

Bickford, Riley

Bickford, Ryan

Brudie, Eli

Brudie, Esme

Campbell, Kaeli

Dana, Gretchen

Foss, Dillon

Herzog, Nora

Kinnaird, Giani

Robicheaux, Mary

Smith, Alejandra

Strain, Brandon

Mark your calendar for the following XC Running Races:

Wed. Sept. 22nd at Hillside Lake at 4 p.m.

Tues. Sept 28th at Kincaid at 2 p.m. All school relay

Thurs. Sept 30th at Kincaid at 2 p.m. All school Championships

You can also find the schedule at the ASD site on the following page: <http://www.asdk12.org/activities/middle/xrunning.asp>

Go Winterberry!!!

Alicia Besh & Arthur Harmon

If you have any questions:

Besh_Alicia@asdk12.org or Harmon_Arthur@asdk12.org

XC Running Parents: A few updates and reminders:

- 1) Practice begins at 3:45 and ends at 4:45 unless further notice.
- 2) All students must have a current physical on file at Winterberry.
- 3) Please encourage you child to drink plenty of water throughout the day and after practice.

ENRICHMENT

This past month in WEP, our priorities have been getting to know one another and setting a healthy rhythm for the rest of the year. Our weekly schedule looks like this:

Monday – Art Club at Modern Dwellers or Kaladi Brothers;

Tuesday – Bal-A-Vis-X with McKenzie Weimer of Stone Soup Group and Waldorf-inspired WEP activities;

Wednesday – Cooking Club;

Thursdays – team building activities and off-site adventures;

Fridays – Walking trip to a downtown park (Frontierland Park or Elderberry Park).

A high point of WEP so far has been watching our new junior aides (students in grade 5 and 6) gracefully take on their role of helpers and model participants; they are shining lights to everyone in the program! We are also thrilled with our new staff, Miss Arin and Miss Rebecca, who are cheerful, loving and dependable additions to our school community.

We look forward to a year of continued growth and fun.

- Ms. Amy

The Winterberry Enrichment Program, a Before, Kinder and After Care program, is currently serving 55 students over the course of each day. All programs have some open spots; there is room in Kinder Care only on M, T, R and F. For more information: WinterberryEnrichmentProgram@gmail.com or 980-2280.

*The Winterberry Enrichment Program
seeks to provide a nurturing and enriching experience
while supporting the WCS mission and vision
for children before and after school.*

“LIVING WALDORF PEDAGOGY: TIMELESS THEMES AND TIMELY CHALLENGES”

By: George Hoffeecker, Waldorf Educator & Winterberry School Mentor

Rudolf Steiner frequently pointed to the critically important role that vigorous scientific inquiry plays in advancing truth and social renewal. He included material science along with the social, psychological and pedagogical science, the so-called “spiritual sciences”.

At the time of its inception, Waldorf educational psychology was a leading-edge pedagogical approach; integrating academics, arts, movement, social and practical skills through an experiential methodology within the context of a trusting student-teacher relationship. A tall order at any time in human history!

It is a known fact that Steiner expected those who would step forward to take up such a professional calling to recognize that it is a living pedagogy with the built-in imperative to stay up with its times and even to point the way forward.

While certain elements may be core to Waldorf education and seen as “constants,” the design implicit within the approach invites innovation. Steiner might even take that further and urge constant refinement and flexibility in order to respond to the unfolding needs of the children of the times.

The presentation will explore some of the treasured “constants” of Waldorf pedagogy especially as it is evolving within public charter schools. Then we will look at the opportunities and challenges being offered by the times in which we live.

A Partial List of Guiding Principles in Waldorf Pedagogy

Rudolf Steiner gave many indications concerning what might be called today, “best practices,” for the pioneer Waldorf teachers. These practices and accompanying “attitudes of soul” have been taken up by countless Waldorf teachers across the globe over the past 89 years. The wisdom embedded in this brief grouping of some of the “guiding Waldorf principles” has served thousands of children and adults alike. The list has been adapted from several sources including the Waldorf Mentors’ Collaborative sponsored by The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America.

Some communities draw closer to deepening their understanding of Waldorf Education, and that which lies foundational to it, by establishing study groups where some of the following practices are considered through dialogue, conversation and inquiry.

- ∞ When working with the children, whether it be forming as a class and doing group work, or teaching reading, mathematics and science, start with the “whole” and move to the “parts”. The young child sees the world and herself “as one”. The very young child, five years and younger, can be observed almost “drinking in” her experiences. Certainly the ability to absorb and reproduce the mother tongue is a vivid example of our ability to learn by uniting strongly in an imitative way to our external environment. Given that the right hemisphere of the brain develops at a more rapid rate than the left, our cognitive processes up to the age of eight or nine, depending on the individual, are strongly linked to our immediate experiences brought to us through our imagination and our sensory/motor system. Our strong ability to imitate allows us to conquer so many early learning operations. It is as if the world and we are one.

As we leave the early childhood years, cognitive differentiation and personal individuation emerge as the left hemisphere of the brain begins to more actively influence our way of viewing the world and ourselves, bringing its gifts of analytical, longitudinal thinking, memory retrieval, and new capacities for self reflection, conscious task analysis, and the

ability to link abstract thought with sense perceptions of the “outside world”. According to contemporary neurological research in brain development, we can observe a progression from holistic perceiving to analytical cognizing as children develop toward their tenth year. Guiding children on their developmental journey “from the whole to the part” is one critical aspect of the educator’s task, especially tied to the elementary school years. A second critical aspect involves the task of lovingly and truthfully guiding the adolescent from “the parts” back to the whole again, seeing himself fully as a citizen of the world, capable of practically and creatively contributing to the welfare of society.

- ∞ All lessons, (as well as relationships, conversations and self development, for that matter!), need rhythm: alternating between movement (action, expression) and repose (stillness, reception).
- ∞ Bring all lessons into a picture. Teach by bringing the content into an imagination that can engage the students. Present material through vivid descriptions rather than through defined concepts or abstractions, even in the middle school. In this way we “school the imagination” which is the foundation of higher level abstract thought and a core capacity for creative problem-solving that can serve the individual throughout his/her life.
- ∞ When presenting lessons first bring “the encounter” then “the concept”. First the “doing” then the understanding. This “phenomenological” approach engages the whole child and invites her to make the experience her own. “Comprehension” becomes possible on a deeper, capacity-building level because the child has a direct, kinesthetic, and imaginative connection with the subject. Following the establishment of this direct connection to an experience, the concepts, abstractions, or symbols that follow can have an experiential “anchor” in the child’s being. The child can have a sense of “personal understanding” of the subject matter “from the inside out”. It has been said that Waldorf education is centrally concerned with building capacities within the children upon which information, facts and formulas rest as opposed to being foremost an “information- driven” pedagogy.
- ∞ Especially in today’s world, we teachers and parents need to resist the temptation towards cynicism and negativity, when relating to the students, and find the “good, the “beautiful” and the “true” living in the world. Given our adult perspective, sometimes we have the tendency to see only what isn’t “good” “beautiful” or “true”. We may even try to justify, to the students, our way of seeing as “realistic” or “responsible”. When we bring the trials of this world, and the shadow side of life, to the children we can serve them best if we remember to put these in contrast to what is good, beautiful or true. In this way, the dynamic tension between “polarities” can help to bring accuracy and balance to our presentations and lead the students to develop independent and flexible thinking strategies.
- ∞ In Waldorf Education the most important fundamental dynamic, outside of the family system, is the relationship between the child and his teacher. Rudolf Steiner said on many occasions that we must know our teachers and expect that each one is committed to a path of inner self-development that will lead to a deep understanding of how children learn best and what wants to unfold within each individual. As teachers, we can become enthusiastic about the task of removing obstacles from the child’s path so that he can be freed to bring his particular gifts into the world. By cultivating deep interest in the child and connecting to the inner questions living within him, especially the unspoken ones, it becomes possible to lead him on his path to discovery.
- ∞ At one point, Rudolf Steiner said this about our lessons in Waldorf education:” A crossing over to what is physical and practical in life, that above all is what a Waldorf school is meant to be”. Our lessons must be rooted in the real world. They must speak to the child in ways that relate to his/her experience and then lead to a practical refinement and application of those experiences.

- ∞ Middle school children, especially, need to learn how to separate “the essential from the non-essential”, in their school work and to be able to organize in their thinking and written work what is objectively necessary. The adolescent needs to learn to discern the essential from the non-essential, the relationship between cause and effect and how to ever more mindfully apply learned skills and concepts to novel situation.
- ∞ Alertness, objectivity, precision and thoroughness are four key values the teachers of middle school children need to address. This is exemplified in the beginning of the sixth grade curriculum when the students are taught to use mechanical drawing instruments to create precise and complex geometrical forms. The science lessons and their careful and complete record of the experiments and their conclusions are further examples of the growing attention in the child’s studies, to detail, analysis, precision and understanding “weighted values”. This, all the time, being demonstrated by the students in an artistic and beautiful way.
- ∞ In the so-called “Conference Lectures”, Steiner spoke about home work from fourth grade onward in the following way: ...”What we must strive for is to master the material so well that we do not need anything outside of the school lessons....but the lessons, just are not always so interesting. Therefore, I do believe, that one must come to a kind of modified homework”.

Given the complexity of contemporary curricular content as well as multiple standards and expectations originating from within and from without the schools, it becomes clear that the teachers, as well as the students, need to be able to separate the essential from the non-essential and to make good use of the time allotted to them. In order for the students to learn what we think we are teaching, our teaching must be lively and artistic, rooted in practical interest and experience, and clear about each lesson’s intended learning outcomes.

Noting that each child learns at his/her own pace, differentiated instructional approaches need to become part of every teacher’s skill set. Two inherently “Waldorf” elements are crucial to being able to accomplish this. The first is the vitally important role of the teacher in being able to carefully select “just the right story” for each lesson. Through the story, specific rich and compelling images can be offered up to the class which can help the students, individually as well as a group, comprehend the paired academic content for subsequent application. Core academic content is offered on the wings of carefully selected compelling and empowering images from stories that truly engage the students.

The second gift of Waldorf is the central importance of the many “specialty subjects”. Main lesson teachers and specialty teachers need to find time and ways to regularly share the content and key generative images being used within the class in any given main lesson block at any given time. The full power of this *interdisciplinary* approach to amplify, reinforce and apply academic, artistic and practical skills needs to be tapped in order to accomplish all that is expected, in a meaningful way.

Emerging Trends

- ∞ Regarding testing the important issue is the *mood* created by the teacher. What has been sufficiently practiced can form the content of a test. (Brief tests for the younger child.) Students can also test themselves, if the criteria are made clear to guide their analysis. (Nine years and older). Teacher’s corrections need to be without delay.

- ∞ Corrections of the child's work and/or behavior need to be made after the teacher has first made a connection with the child. This can take place very quickly and seamlessly if there is the prerequisite strong relationship between teacher and student.
- ∞ Regarding discipline and the role of the teacher, Rudolf Steiner referred at one point to the teacher striving to be the "loving self-evident authority" as she stands before the class. Praise and rewards and punishments give way, in light of this image by Steiner, in favor of *encouragement* and clear communication of what the teacher wants (rather than what she doesn't want) and *celebration of the child's accomplishments* as truly the accomplishments of the *child*, (rather than judgments from the teacher that could diminish the child's ownership of the experience). A core value in Waldorf education is for the student to find the motivation for doing tasks *from within*. At another point Steiner notes that if the relationship is strong between the teacher and the student the child will also want to do the things asked of him "out of love and respect" for the teacher, another manifestation of intrinsic motivation.
- ∞ Bring movement into all lessons. Teach through movement as much as we teach through images.
- ∞ Bring the students into a more dynamic relationship with nature throughout the grades. This concept already has many applications in Waldorf kindergartens and again in the third grade curriculum, however nature awareness, and natural ecology are emerging as important elements to be included in all the grades. For several years "nature schools" have been thriving in Europe. These schools have much to share with all schools involved with educational reform, especially Waldorf-inspired public charter schools.
- ∞ Social inclusion (social ecology) is being seen as a pedagogically economical course of study, even in the younger grades. By teaching the children how to communicate their needs directly to one another and to the adults around them, in non-blaming ways, we give them life long tools for building successful relationships. The social challenge today, for teachers and parents alike, is to be able to align our social behaviors with our stated values in order to provide powerful models for the younger generation-to truly make our schools places where these words from Steiner's motto of the Social Ethic, can be actualized:

*The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul,
the whole community finds its reflection,
and when in the community the virtue of each one is living.*

CONSENSUS AT WINTERBERRY

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:

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. But 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

Consensus Process in action...

Unity, not unanimity...

Ask yourself, "Is the spirit of the action moving in the direction of the shared values?"

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 about principle or preference before adding to the discussion.

Stand Aside / Step Aside...

Typically happens when a person realizes they are too attached to personal preference and are only holding the group process back. Once a person stands or steps aside he or she is agreeing to let the group move forward without them. In doing so they agree 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 and has been estimated that a person who uses consensus consistently in their 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.

Tools for Consensus Making...

Rule of Three...

If the group is going to make a major policy decision it should be brought to no less than three meetings. When there are time concerns special meetings can be called, but the format should be:

Mtg 1: Introduction of the issue and dialogue (20-30 minutes): Prior documentation should be provided to committee/board/group members. From here the issue gets sent to committee with the mandate to create/bring a proposal. This should be sent out to members prior to the second meeting.

Mtg 2: Full discussion of the proposal by the group (60-90 minutes): Send all recommendations back to committee for revisions after input. Once revisions are finished the new proposal should be sent out to group prior to the third and final meeting.

Mtg 3: Final discussion and decision (45 minutes)

Define the Role of the Mandate Team or Committee...

This can be anything the group wants it to be. One example is making clear that maximum representation of stakeholder input be solicited prior to a recommendation being made. Another is that the proposal be objective and principle based.

Documentation...

While time consuming to create, this is a total time saver in the life of a group's meeting time. At least one paragraph should be offered for every item to be discussed at the meeting. Each item on the agenda should have a sponsor who provides the history and documentation of the proposed issue. Good practice says no sponsor/no documentation equals no consideration by the group.

Timely Agenda...

The agenda should be sent out in a timely fashion and adequate time should be allowed for the topics at hand. A group should have a calendar of the year and its yearly goals should drive agenda topics when possible. There should be a good energy flow to the meetings and breaks or moments of silence should be taken when necessary.

Clear Minutes...

Minutes should not be a play-by-play representation of the meeting. The minute taker should strive to capture the key points and identify the "Minute of Decision" or the motion/unity of the group.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS DUE BY TUESDAY OF NEWSLETTER WEEKS

Please send all newsletter submissions to

mall_shanna@asdk12.org by Tuesday, September 28, 2010

01
OCTOBER
FRIDAY • 6PM



WINTERBERRY'S 6TH ANNUAL

HARVEST DANCE!

WENDLER MIDDLE SCHOOL

**LIVE, ACOUSTIC MUSIC! DANCING
WITH CALLER BOB HUME!**
VOLUNTEER IN THE LOBBY!

COST:

\$ 3.00/PERSON, \$12.00/FAMILY

POTLUCK

A - F • BRING DESSERT

G - K • SIDE DISH

M - Z • MAIN DISH

**GRADE EIGHT STUDENTS WILL BE
AUCTIONING THEIR TALENTS SO
BRING YOUR CHECKBOOK AND
QUICK REFLEXES!**

WINTERBERRY FAMILIES...

**BRING YOUR FRIENDS, EXTEND THE INVITATION, EVERYONE
IS WELCOME! CALL SARAH ROBICHEAUX @ 338.8516**

**BRING YOUR OWN DISHES & UTENSILS TO CUT DOWN ON
WASTE & BE ENTERED INTO A DRAWING FOR A DOOR PRIZE!**



6th Annual Harvest Dance!

Friday, October 1st!

Live, acoustic music! Dancing with caller
Bob Hume! Potluck & auction of Grade Eight
Student Talents! Call Sarah Robicheaux for
information 338.8516

Winterberry Charter Council Members (WCC)

Melissa Janigo, Chair	janigo_melissa@asdk12.org
Arthur Harmon, Staff/Secretary	harmon_arthur@asdk12.org
Erin Fleischer, Parent	erininak@gmail.com
Della Swartz, Parent	ddswartz@mtaonline.net
Franny Hall, Parent	frannyinak@yahoo.com
Meggan Judge, Parent	ericandmeggan@gmail.com
Tara Smith, Parent	taramarlene@gmail.com
Vacant, Parent	
Lynne Jablonski, WPG Rep	lynnejeffrey@yahoo.com
Meg Eggleston, Faculty Chair	eggleston_margaret@asdk12.org
Shanna Mall, Principal	mall_shanna@asdk12.org

Monthly Meetings: 3rd Thursday of each month, 6pm, second floor of
Winterberry Charter School unless otherwise stated & advertised.

Winterberry's Dress Request...

In order to reduce classroom distractions, continue our commitment to upholding Steiner's views on materialism, and respect the needs of all students, families, and staff, we respectfully ask that student attire be comprised of:

- * solid colors,
- * stripes,
- * polka dots,
- * or patterns.

We also ask that all outerwear and accessories (including indoor shoes and lunch boxes) also follow these guidelines. Please choose plain shoes that do not include electronic lights, sounds, wheels, or commercially produced pictures.

When students come to school with items that do not meet these guidelines, school staff may ask them to alter the clothing so it is not distracting (turn a shirt inside-out, for example), give the student an alternative item to wear instead and/or work together with families to find an alternative within a reasonable period.

Our goal is that we can come together on this issue out of respect for all community members knowing that while such items may not distract one, they do distract another. Thank you for your commitment to creating and maintaining the highest quality environment for our children.

As always, thank you for your willingness to grow and work together to create a culture of caring and respect at Winterberry!

Winterberry Parent's Guild Members (WPG)

Vacant, President	wpgkillion@aol.com
Tiffany Mamae, Vice President	tiffanymamae@yahoo.com
Julie Pepe-Phelps, Treasurer	pepephelps@yahoo.com
Meggan Judge, Secretary	ericandmeggan@gmail.com
Lynne Jablonski, Fundraising , Kindergarten	lynnejeffrey@yahoo.com
Mike Rehberg, Grade One , Grade Two	mike@rehbergs.net
Peter Smith, Grade Three	petersmith@as.net
Dave Swartz, Grade Four	ddswartz@mtaonline.net
Louke Ellenbroek, Grade Five	louke_ellenbroek@hotmail.com
Sarah Robicheaux, Grade Six	sarahr@alaska.net
Rebeka Edge, Grade Seven/Eight	edgefam@yahoo.com
Shanna Mall, Principal	mall_shanna@asdk12.org

Monthly Meetings: 1st Thursday of each month, 6pm, second floor of
Winterberry Charter School unless otherwise stated & advertised.