

# Gateways

A Newsletter of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America

Spring/Summer2005, Issue 48

## Table of Contents

---

### INTRODUCTION

Letter from the Editor	2
A Letter to the Editor	4
Living with a Question <i>by Margo Running</i>	6

### RESEARCH

Observing the Six-Year Change <i>by Ruth Ker</i>	6
The Secret Garden <i>by Tim Bennett and Melissa Borden</i>	12
The Healing Art of Nursery Rhymes <i>by Suzanne Down</i>	15
Deeper Relationships Between Emmi Pikler's Work and Waldorf Early Childhood Education <i>by Joyce Gallardo</i>	16

### EARLY CHILDHOOD WORK AROUND THE WORLD

Conversations with Parent/Child Pioneers <i>by Nancy Foster</i>	24
Transforming our Parent Meetings <i>by Louise de Forest</i>	27
WECAN Survey	29
News from China <i>by Tammy Hughes</i>	31

### BOOK REVIEWS

<i>The Fourfold Path to Healing</i> by Thomas Cowan, M.D.	32
<i>Lilipoh Holistic Wellness Guide</i> edited by Wiep de Vries	33
<i>The 7 O'Clock Bedtime</i> by Inda Schaenen	33

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	35
--------------------	----

ANNOUNCEMENTS	37
---------------	----

---

## From the Editor

*We speak often, and sentimentally, of being “enchanted” by the natural world. But what if it’s the other way around? What if we are enchanted, literally, by the human world we live in? That seems entirely more likely—that the consumer world amounts to a kind of lulling spell, chanted tunefully and eternally by the TV, the billboard, the suburb. A spell that by now we sing to each other. A spell that, should it start to weaken, we try to strengthen with medication, with consumption, with noise. A slightly frantic enchantment, one that has to get louder all the time to block out the troubling question constantly forming in the back of our minds: “Is this all there is?”*

*If so, then for us as individuals and as a society the deep question becomes how to break that spell. A kiss offers the traditional antidote, of course, but a kiss is what the culture keeps giving us. A nice soft kiss, day after day. Sometimes a shirt full of bees seems more effective. “Turn off the air conditioner,” the great desert writer, Ed Abbey, would tell tourists when he was a ranger at Arches National Monument in southwest Utah. Take off your sunglasses. Get out of the car. Feel the heat, feel the cold, feel something. All those senses—all those emotions—work outside the narrow range in which we normally set our personal thermostats. It’s a sorry thing to admit that you’re so thick it takes seventy-six yellow jacket bites to pierce you. . . . But the lesson was well worth the price—that desperate clarity was one of the greatest gifts the world ever gave me. When I try to imagine the Holy Spirit, I hear buzzing.*

Bill McKibben, *Yoga Journal*,  
Aug./Sept. 2004

These words resound deeply as we enter into springtime, and nature all around us awakens. How do we break the spell that has enchanted our senses and thinking, and created so many habits that do not serve us as individuals, that do not serve the children we care for and that do not serve the earth?

How do we awaken and then stay awake? Bill McKibben received seventy-six bee stings, an awakening he says was well worth the price. But perhaps there are other ways to awaken from enchantment?

Rudolf Steiner suggested two ways that can help one to awaken from the enchantment of this modern, materialistic, consumer world. One is an active practice of true observation, especially of nature. Spend some time in nature, (even in a small place within a city) and allow what you perceive to enter into you unchanged by you. Practice observing objectively, it’s not easy, but it can help in developing a capacity to truly see what is before us. We can learn how to allow our sense perceptions to speak in us without thought, judgment, diagnosis, or dreaming, and thereby wake up to the speaking of the world in which we live.

The other is embarking and continuing on one’s own path of self-reflection and self-education. Who am I, what are my own patterns of reaction, what are my core needs and values and what are my habitual strategies for meeting those needs? Can I become free in that I choose my responses in challenging situations rather than react to what comes toward me?

This is the most challenging work we have, and often it takes a personal crisis of some sort for us to begin to penetrate into our core and attempt to become aware of how we process the sense perceptions that we receive. Courage is needed here to truly look at oneself, to attempt to *Know Thyself*. Observation of self can begin to reveal those aspects that we would choose to work on. Then one can begin to recognize when a new response is called for, a chosen action instead of a reaction. New things become possible that weren’t before. One can become aware especially from painful situations and personal crises, but also joy filled ones. Can we meet the world and each situation with a mood of questioning: What is truly being asked of me? What can I learn in this? What new capacities must I develop to meet this? Can I find a place of gratitude within myself for difficult situations and face them

with courage as learning opportunities? This is a path of development of the will as Steiner described in Lecture Four of *The Study of Man (The Foundations of Human Experience)*.

There can only be self-directed activity in this modern path of development. It can only be done from the inside. No one can do it for us. Both the questions and the striving for answers must arise within us and yet, it enables us to live more fully in the world and be truly present in experiences, feelings, and thoughts. It is a path of awareness and attentiveness in all aspects of life including one's own thinking, feeling and willing and the working to transform them to "higher" capacities. Rudolf Steiner offered many exercises that help in this self-development work, and there are many books where he gives guidance, particularly *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*.

This past February marks one hundred, forty-four years since the birth of Rudolf Steiner, and I would like to include here my immense gratitude for the work he did and the freedom in which he left us to take up that work or not, and to find our own way with it.

This newsletter focuses on the education and development of the young child from an approach based on anthroposophy that has become known as Waldorf education. It has sprung from the fountain of Steiner's spiritual research, though many others have continued the work of spiritual science, of anthroposophy, since Steiner.

At Christmas 1923, the Anthroposophical Society was founded, and Rudolf Steiner united himself and his life's work with this spiritual organization. Membership in this organization is for those who support the work of anthroposophy and want to see it continuing in the world. One can say that it is because of the Anthroposophical Society that Waldorf education exists in the world.

There is direct connection between my work, the work of WECAN and all Waldorf schools and initiatives, and the Anthroposophical Society. This Easter, many of our colleagues from North America joined with others from all around the world at a world conference on the young child held at the Goetheanum, the world center for the Anthroposophical Society, located in Switzerland.

I would like to encourage each reader to consider their own relationship with the source of our work,

the Anthroposophical Society. We each already have a relationship of some sort to anthroposophy since we are working in a field directly springing from that source. Of course, it is essential that each person is left free to come toward anthroposophy and the Anthroposophical Society; that is the basis for this path. Nonetheless, I ask the reader to consider her or his connection to anthroposophy and consider what we want it to be.

This issue is filled with many wonderful articles and reviews. Hopefully, there is a new trend in which an abundance of articles comes toward the editor and the challenge is choosing from among them. I much prefer that situation than when I have been searching and begging for articles.

I want to again thank all the writers who have offered their thoughts in writing for the pages of this newsletter. We are all grateful. Thanks to Nancy Foster, Ruth Ker, Joyce Gallardo, Melissa Borden, Tim Bennett, Louise de Forest and Suzanne Down. I especially want to thank Margo Running for sharing some of her own deep questions, and I encourage all of you to consider sharing your own questions and thoughts. These will help to enliven our newsletter.

*Stephen Spitalny, Editor*

*Through continued practice or soul work that is, by holding the attention on the activity of thinking, feeling and willing, these experiences in a certain way become spiritually "condensed." They grow thicker and stronger in themselves. In this state of "thickening" they reveal their inner nature that cannot be perceived in ordinary consciousness. Through such exercises, one discovers how in order to achieve ordinary consciousness our soul forces are so "thinned" that they become imperceptible in their "thinness." The soul exercises consist in the unlimited intensification and increase of faculties that are known to ordinary consciousness, but usually never reach a state of intensification. The faculties are attention and loving surrender to the contents of the soul's experience. To attain the aim, these abilities must be intensified to such a degree that they function as entirely new soul forces.*

Rudolf Steiner, *The Riddles of Philosophy*

## *A Letter to the Editor*

*This note from a long-time Waldorf early childhood colleague (slightly edited):*

I heard from a colleague who had sent out her new assistant this last summer to an introductory week on Waldorf Kindergarten at the Rudolf Steiner College, taught mostly by Stephen Spitalny. The young assistant had come back with some questions and confusion. One was a statement that the colors of the day and their use in the kindergarten never came from Rudolf Steiner and, therefore, have no validity or application to the kindergarten. The other was that painting could happen any time you wanted to. I do not know what was behind this idea except that perhaps it was mentioned that painting could happen on a different day each week—that painting need not be tied to a specific day of the week in terms of planetary rhythms and moods.

From her questions, I began to wonder if there was a dismissal of kindergarten practices as taught in the Waldorf early childhood trainings. Is this attitude the "new wave" and

supported by the WECAN board or does it have more to do with an individual's views that may or may not reflect the understanding of the kindergarten principles practiced by a wider group of teachers.

*My response:*

First of all, my intention in giving a course or lecture, or just a sharing of ideas is to stimulate others to their own thinking. I am, perhaps, an obsessive reader of Steiner and many others whose written works help illuminate the work with the young child. Even when Steiner did, in fact, say something, he also made it clear that he did not want to be taken at his word, though it is hard not to. I quote Owen Barfield:

*I cannot think it is unduly paradoxical to say that it is really a kind of betrayal of Rudolf Steiner to believe what he said. He poured out his assertions because he trusted his hearers not to believe. Belief is something that can only be applied to systems of abstract ideas. To become an anthroposophist is not to believe, it is to decide to use the words of Rudolf Steiner (and any others which may become available) for the purpose of raising oneself, if possible, to a kind of thinking which is itself beyond words, which precedes them, in the sense that ideas, words, sentences, propositions, are only subsequently drawn out of it.*

*This is that concrete\* thinking which is the source of all such ideas and propositions, the source of all meaning whatsoever. And it can only take the form of logical ideas and propositions and grammatical sentences, at the expense of much of its original truth. For to be logical is to make one little part of your meaning precise by excluding all the other parts.*

*To be an anthroposophist, then, is to seek to unite oneself, not with any groups of words, but with this concrete thinking, whose existence can*

*only finally be proved by experience. It is to refrain from uniting oneself with words, in the humble endeavor to unite oneself with the Word.*

(\*The word “concrete” may here be taken as meaning “neither objective nor subjective.”)

Even as a Board member of WECAN, I can still only speak my own perspective, my ideas, not the pronouncements of WECAN. In fact, I think the WECAN Board doesn't really have a “party line” on anything except to attempt to work with Steiner's ideas to the best of anyone's research and ability.

Regarding the colors of the day, Steiner most certainly made reference to certain metals, woods, foods and colors being related through their qualities to certain planets and that a particular planet shines more strongly on a particular day of the week, hence the names of the days. As far as my research has led me, I have not found that Steiner suggested teachers wear a particular color on a particular day. To add to the mix, Steiner articulates how, “. . .the day is divided into four parts and every part has a planet assigned to it.” For example, Wednesday morning–Mercury, Wednesday afternoon–Venus, Wednesday pre-midnight–Sun, and Post-midnight–Mars. (*Correspondence and Documents*, R. Steiner and M. Steiner von Sivers, p. 73)

Additionally, Steiner described that the young child's etheric body is not yet fully developed, and, as a result, they experience the complement to the color they see. So then how would that tie in to the wearing of the color of the day? Wearing the supposed color of the day seems to me to come from the realm of Waldorf myth and acquired tradition that becomes dogma. And as far as I have gathered, it is mostly a West Coast Waldorf phenomenon.

Regarding painting, I do think that painting could be held any time one chose. The important thing is being that is done in a

consistent rhythm, i.e., at the same time and same day each week. Rhythm is what is important, not a particular time when every Waldorf kindergarten in the same time zone is painting.

As it is with many aspects of our work, the important thing is that one has a rhythm that is consistent. It is more important to me to try to connect with and understand the qualities of the planets than to have any sort of outer symbolic representation of the planets that one could say are somewhat arbitrary. Steiner said how the stars once spoke to us, and now they are silent and waiting for us to speak to them.

With regard to these thoughts, I also want to call to your attention a **Gateways** article entitled *The One and Only Way*, by Cynthia Aldinger, included in the Fall/Winter 2003, issue #45.

*Stephen Spitalny, Editor*

### *Fly on the Wall*

At the conclusion of the last telling of Jerry Spinelli's, *The Little Star That Did Not Shine*, all was quiet as I reached for the candle snuffer, when a four-year-old asked “What's good will?” Another four-year-old immediately said, “It's that place where you take your old clothes.”

We snuffed out our candle and said our closing verse.

## *Living with a Question*

Margo Running

If the Christ lives in the etheric and the etheric is in the present and young children live in the present, if we as early childhood educators are asked to be present with young children, it follows that we live in Christ. If we live in Christ, we should be energized by our work.

I am wondering, as a caregiver of babies to three-year olds and a former kindergarten teacher, why so many feel that we should only be with children four to six hours, so our etheric won't be drained. The trainings and work should focus on how to live in the present. Is the drain actually from not really being present for the children? Not truly living in Christ? If caregiving in the future becomes needed more and more full time, we need to find a way to be with these children of the community in a natural way, so no one is exhausted, rather so all will be refreshed at the end of the day. I think, feel, and know it is possible.

“We need to work so the caregivers' lives are seamless.” (Cynthia Aldinger) Work life and home life have the same flow and even flow into each other. It follows that a child in childcare can experience the same, if our connection with parents is true and good, a seamless childcare experience, where home life and daycare flow and connect. A child need not be exhausted from long days in childcare, in fact, may be refreshed and ready to spend quality time with the parents.

These are some of my thoughts as I have heard how tired some kindergarten teachers are after four hours of work. The work may need to be focused differently. I also keep hearing how young children drain our etheric forces, and we must build ours up consciously. I am looking to dispel a myth and find the truth.

RESEARCH

## *Observing the Six-Year Change*

Ruth Ker

This article is written from the many observations that I have made over the past thirty years during my work in early childhood. For twelve of those years I have had the privilege of working in mixed-age kindergarten settings where some of the children are going through their “first puberty.” I have had much to learn from the “sometimes mystifying and formidable” older child in the kindergarten.

Much has been said in the Waldorf movement about the nine-year change. But what about the six-year change? It is obvious that sometime around the age of six children undergo another transformation. As kindergarten teachers, we need to support each other to accompany the older children in the kindergarten through this very profound and overwhelming period of transition. By understanding what the child is undergoing during

this time, it is much easier to respond with the inner attitude of “I see you are going through transformations. I love you *and* these new changes and I will help you to find your way.” Of course, this would never be spoken to the children directly. However, if we as caregivers can be prepared *inwardly* to see and meet the behaviors that characterize this transformation, then the children and parents are more at ease in our presence. Then the children have a safe place to test out their newfound need to push for a boundary, we are braced to meet them and the parents can have trust that we truly understand their children. Sometime between the ages of five-and-three-quarters to seven we begin to see that the children are asking for something more from us in addition to our continued working out of imitation. Let's look at some of the developments that naturally

occur at this time. These developments lie behind the changes in the child's responses to his world. Taking interest in what's happening for the child will help us to know what is the best way to respond. There are two helpful diagrams that I share with the parents. The first is the flow line showing the three-year ego incarnation times.

#### GRAPH 1

We know that each of these ego incarnation cycles is accompanied by varying degrees of antipathy on the part of the child. This antipathy is necessary because it helps the child to separate more and meet the world on his/her own. The six-year cycle marks the time when the child's etheric begins to separate more from the parent. The parents and the children feel this "pulling apart" whether it is at a conscious or unconscious level. Some parents suddenly want to homeschool as they feel their children separating from them. Some children react by not wanting to come to school. They may one day cling to the parents' legs and another day tell their parents that they want to come into the school by themselves. "Please stay in the car, Mommy. I want to go in by myself today."

I'm reminded of the morning that Iza came to school carried in her Dad's arms. Iza was a child who had very creative and imaginative play and her love for the kindergarten was obvious. We had begun to see the change in her outwardly for a couple of weeks because her usual calm and elaborately costumed dress-up play had been replaced by a frenzied need for movement. We were pretty sure that she was experiencing some aspects of the change because her limbs and torso were stretching and growing also. But we were not prepared for her appearance one morning in our play yard with her head buried in her Dad's shoulders. "I don't want to go to school. Everyone is so mean to me," she said.

At that point the father was prepared to withdraw Iza from school. I winked at him, sent Iza off to pick flowers with a friend and we talked some more about what we both were experiencing with Iza's behaviors. The next time we looked, Iza was playing happily with her many friends and father went home grateful for the realization that Iza was showing him how she was experiencing some of the

new kinds of feelings that were awakening in her as she felt the change coming. It is not uncommon that children will experience a regression before they launch into their new independence. A few days later, I overheard Iza saying to some friends, "You know what? I just pushed my Dad away today! I said, Daddy you get out of here."

Every year I begin to talk to the parents about the six-year change at the beginning of the school year. I tell the parents to expect great changes in their children and I explain this in detail at our first meeting. It is very helpful to have already developed this rapport with the parents before their children begin to show behavior and body changes. Although there are many usual body and consciousness changes to look for, each child tends to have their own unique way to display this. It's important to open up the channels of communication with the parents so that both teacher and parent can take comfort in shared observations. When the children have passed through the change, especially if they have been met with loving firmness, there is the possibility that they can re-enter their surroundings transformed and in a more peaceful state. Children need their teachers to develop this rapport with their parents.

What children like Iza teach us is that the change happens on many different levels. It is a very profound physical phenomenon, but the effects also ripple into all aspects of the child's development. We know that in each of the seven-year cycles there is a period of more developmental emphasis on willing, feeling and thinking. Within these cycles there are also times where little seeds of willing, feeling and thinking are cultured and developed for future developmental phases. Below is a line graph to show this.

#### GRAPH 2

Running the risk of oversimplifying a complex topic, this can help us to see a number of things. If you look at the graph at the place around the period of five-and-three-quarters to seven you will see that the child is experiencing a great deal at this time. We see the will of the feeling life coming from the future and the awakening of ideas is shown by the thinking/willing aspect. For the first time since

birth, thinking and feeling are strong presences in the child's biography at the same time as willing. Of course, the nature of these capacities does not yet resemble that of the adults and older siblings in her life. Few of us understand what the young child faces in his experience at this time. It appears that willing, feeling and thinking are operative all at the same time with a double dose of will! Again, please know that these capacities do not manifest in the child as we experience them in the adult.

### *Working with the Imagination*

Many adults are tempted to approach children using intellectual reasoning now but what the child really needs is for us to attach to his lively imaginations. In fact, Rudolf Steiner in Lecture Two, page 35 of *The Kingdom of Childhood* goes so far as to say we can "ruin" a child if we speak to him in intellectual ways instead of in pictures at this time. In Lecture One, pages 27-28 of *The Roots of Education*, Steiner also says, "We are often particularly gratified if we can teach a child something that he can reproduce in the same form several years later. But, this is just as though we were to have a pair of shoes made for a child of three and expect him to wear them when he is ten. In reality our task is to give the child living flexible ideas which can grow in his soul. We must ourselves partake in the inward activities of the child's soul, and we must count it a joy to give him something that is inwardly flexible and elastic; and just as he grows with his physical limbs so he can grow up with these ideas, feelings and impulses, and in a short time he himself can make something else out of what we have given him." In Lecture One, pages 30-31 of *The Kingdom of Childhood*, Steiner says that children at the change of teeth need "soul milk" from us now and "you must take the keenest interest in what is awakening at the change of teeth. . . You must allow the child's inner nature to decide what you ought to be doing with him."

One six-year-old expressed to her parent, "Mom, everything is different. You and Daddy are different. The trees look different. Even Harlequin the cat is different now. And Mom, it's just like I don't even know how to play anymore." Another child expressed, "Everything is boring. It's boring at home. School is boring. I'm going to run away to the Fairy Mother's house." If we are lucky enough to hear

these things as teachers we can know that these children need our attentiveness and support.

### *Physical Changes*

This can be a confusing and very serious time for children and they certainly don't feel in control. Their body is changing, their consciousness is changing and their connection to their world is changing. Let's look more closely at some of these changes.

Physically, we know that the etheric body is actively working to penetrate and fashion the child's body. The child is trying to make his body his own and to break away from the ties of heredity. When the etheric has penetrated the hardest substance in the body, the bones, then it is free to move on to its new work. Although, in the past, educators have paid much attention to the release of the milk teeth and second dentition as a signal for this readiness, now we are being advised to pay more attention to the appearance of the six-year molars as a sign that readiness is coming.

The activity of the etheric also shows itself outwardly in the movement of the children. They tend to have more frenzied gestures, race around and steadfastly seek out movements. We could say that they are doing their best to assist the etheric in its work. As teachers we need to meet these changes with warmth and the attitude that "this too shall pass" and then provide opportunities for the movement expression to happen. For this we must hone our powers of observation. The children are not unlike bubbling pots. A child who, from the beginning of the school year, has shown calm and careful eating habits at the snack table all of a sudden is not able to sit still at the meal and we begin to wonder if she is going to fall off the bench. We also notice that the child's limbs begin to stretch and their waistline, wrists and neck become apparent. Baby fat begins to disappear and, along with that, dimples on the hands and face. The older children love to challenge themselves with obstacle courses, long adventure walks, skipping, working with real tools, purposeful work and running games. I have found traditional games to be an ideal tool at this time to help the children socially and to support their need for organized movement. Doing things for others—helping the farmer to clean out stalls,

feed his chickens, herd the lambs; picking up scraps of litter on Mother Earth on morning walks; taking apart the grain grinder to clean it; cleaning and oiling outdoor tools; building paths, fire pits, gardens—all of these things can help to channel the will that we have nourished throughout all of the early years into purposeful moral activity not frenzied, erratic behaviors. I have found it effective to have one or two children everyday be the “kings” and lead our morning walk. I begin this practice when the class understands about being “all together” on our walks. If the leaders run on ahead and leave the others way behind then I beckon them back to the group with my bell and they wait for another day to lead us on our walk. At the present time, the children in my class are spreading “soil that the worms made in our compost pile” on the playground for the lower grades’ children. “The big children are going to be so glad that we’re doing this,” is something the children say over and over everyday. We have a responsibility as teachers to help the children to find worthy channels for their activities and ways that we can assist them as their etheric completes its task of penetrating the body.

### *Changes in the Classroom*

As their body stretches and grows and their appetite increases, children begin to give us clues in their play. They often try to build furniture up to the ceiling or outdoors, they want to climb onto the roof of the shed. A child is fortunate indeed to have an environment where the teacher can help him to find ways to meet this need to stretch upward while, at the same time, maintaining healthy boundaries. In one school setting I visited, the children were provided with a sturdy rope that the teacher threw over a strong tree branch. The children raised and lowered each other up and down out of the tree while the teacher attentively watched. We can see this stretching experience in other ways, too. In their drawings we can see ladders and zig-zag lines. The children are showing us their experience of the change of teeth and the stretching of their torso and limbs. Of course, along with this time come complaints of tummy aches and joint pains.

At a more invisible level the children are also working to establish their dominant side and to be able to comfortably cross over the vertical and

horizontal midline. Clapping games like *Hot Cross Buns*, *Pease Porridge Hot*, *A Sailor Went to Sea, Sea, Sea*. or bringing crossover gestures into circle time can assist the children. Symmetry and balance begin to appear more in the children’s drawings as their rhythmic system is more stabilized. The figures in their drawings are also often drawn standing on the earth. They can skip, balance, and hold a tune more easily.

### *Emotional and Social Changes*

Probably the most individual differences are seen in the emotional and social changes that a child undergoes at this age. Some children respond with more bravado while some inwardly ferment their six-year-old brew.

One of the most common responses I’ve witnessed is the need of the children to be the boss. Parents, teachers and their peers are no longer safe from being corrected at every mistake. This, coupled with the arrival of a sense of time (before, after, etc.), can show itself at circle time when the child speeds up the verse to be finished before the others or slows down her walking during the morning walk so that she can arrive way behind the others. Going along with what everybody else is doing is no longer an unconscious priority. Some children love to play at being different. With their friends there are long conversations about who is “first boss.” We hear the children say over and over again, “But I want to be the boss!” or “I know. You be first boss, you be second boss, you be third boss. I’ll be fourth boss and I get to say what we do!”

We need to remember that the children’s consciousness is changing from a state of being where they unite with the objects of their play to a state of being where they have an imaginative idea about the play that they want to implement. As mentioned above, this can be a frustration to the children and they may become listless or watchers in the play for a while until they can find their way with this new capacity. This is not necessarily a bad thing. It can be a graceful transition time if the children do not become too anxious. However, if the teacher feels that it has gone on long enough, then bringing the children (hopefully one at a time) to help with the teacher’s work can be enough of a jumpstart to propel the children back into the play. From that perspective of doing the work and

watching other's play the children can often see something interesting that they want to join. It's often the play of the younger children that encourages the older children to re-enter the play. Often the older children also like to help set up the creative activities and arrange props for dramas or puppet plays. They can also be invaluable in assisting with doing things for the younger children: tying shoes, holding hands on walks, threading needles, assisting with handwork projects etc. It's also always a thrill when the older children can get to the point in the course of the year where they can make the bread, prepare the soup or clean the kindergarten all by themselves.

Tying the finger-knitted ropes into all sorts of lines, cobwebs, and telephone wires is often a sign of the presence of this new "thinking." The arrival of these picture imaginations in their consciousness propels the children into a real need to have the experience of their idea being played out. We need to assist these children to develop useful social skills so that this need can be fulfilled. As I write this, Gabriel comes to mind. Gabriel was a capable, hardy and fiery boy. He had a passion for leading the play but was very able to play co-operatively. Somewhere around six-and-three-quarters, he began to grow quite bossy with the children. Daily he would try to organize the whole class into his play. Most of the time the children would ignore his bossy ways but this did not deter him. I watched him one week desperately trying to herd, cajole, and manipulate the class into his game. All week I observed Gabriel desperately struggle to be "first boss." Then, on Friday, with great satisfaction, he constructed a corral with a fence that raised and lowered and, one by one, he captured the interest of his peers and he was able to herd the ponies, donkeys, pigs, and cows into his corral. The look of conquest on his face was palpable.

Sometimes, children can become stuck in their play as this new capacity for picture imaginations floods in. They love to play the same game over and over again or take most of the play session to set up scenarios. It warrants careful observation to see when the child is served by the imagination or when it could be helpful to move it on by a simple introduction of a complementary idea. Freya Jaffke explains this very well in an example she gives on page 68 of *Work and Play in Early Childhood* where

she describes helping the stagnating play of a group of six-year-olds by suggesting that now the animals in the circus needed to eat. It took only one sentence well placed by an observant teacher.

Some other common things that we may encounter in the child's play at "first puberty" are the tendencies to wrap presents and give them to others, playing at getting married, getting drunk, whispering to others to do naughty things, making up teasing rhymes about others, playing at being a "teeenager," playing dogs on leashes (master and servant), making money, theme play like restaurant, store, hospital, airport, and much more. There is also a tendency for the children to want to pair off and choose a special friend. Playing at exclusion becomes a pastime. Of course, it is important to meet all of these behaviors and themes with the matter-of-fact attitude that the right way of the world will be upheld. We'll still be remembering our kindergarten ways. "The big teachers say that the children need to know their kindergarten ways before they come to Grade One." Even though the child has these experiences and impulses flooding into him, he still needs to rest in the security that the world is a safe and moral place and there are others that will help him to make it so. Again and again, I have experienced the gratitude of the children when I have met their pushing of the boundaries with loving firmness. Often they will come and sit on my lap, take my hand or hug me. They want to press up against this comforting boundary and, on some level, they are grateful for its consistency and availability while they are trying out their newfound, confusing state of being.

### *Awakening Ideas*

Sooner or later during the school year the children begin to have conversations about God and infinity. What a privilege it is to overhear these precious communications. If only we could keep alive the power of these wonderings! The most recent conversation I overheard about infinity happened when two children were discussing it around our snack table. "Infinity means 1068!" said one child. "No," said another. "It just means keep on going." We can begin to see that the children are no longer so bound to the present and they can feel the future coming to them. Some children are able to relay

their dreams. One mother told me about her daughter's dream. "Veronica dreamed that the kindergarten door opened and everyone in the class, even the teachers, got wings! We all flew down the hallway together opening up the doors of the big school and looking around to see what was inside." The past also becomes more retrievable in their memories. They begin to tell their parents the stories they have heard in kindergarten; we see them looking out and away as they imagine the stories at story time or as they imagine what their bedroom looks like when we ask them about it. One child said to her mother, "I don't need to go to Grandma's house anymore. I can see Grandma whenever I want to."

One gets the impression that the children delight in stretching their capacities in many ways. They love to play out some of their favorite games and circle verses by going through the motions silently. It exercises their developing capacity of hearing the words inwardly. I love to play a game centered around the Wynstones verse "Little Brown Bulb." The children delight in circling around two or three other children covered up in a blanket representing Mother Earth. We mouth the words to the verse silently, going through the gestures of King Winter roaring and Lady Spring tiptoeing and then we see if our friends hidden under the blanket can "peek up their heads, throw off their nighties and jump out of bed" at the appropriate time. One day as we were playing this game, I forgot one of the lines. One little boy looked at me ponderously and said, "That wisdom must be coming up your legs and making your head so big that you can't find those words." I thought, "Does this sound like what we'd expect to hear from a six-year-old? Is he describing my condition or his own?" We can learn so much from the children if we develop a relationship with them so that they know we are interested in hearing what they have to say.

In closing, I would like to encourage all of us to acknowledge the grandness of this change that happens for the children somewhere between five-and-three-quarters and seven. Please truly listen to and cultivate the eyes to see what is happening for them. Make your own observations and take interest in the older children in the kindergarten. As teachers in mixed-age kindergartens we are a bridge for the children when they are passing through this truly

amazing transformation. We are a bridge from the age of imitation to the time when the children have a growing need to see the world through the eyes of a beloved authority. Perhaps if we are able to respond to their activity at the time of first puberty with healing deeds and imaginations, then this is one way that we can fulfill our task as educators to work with what Steiner called moral imagination. We can be instruments to help guide the children in building a moral foundation. We must accompany the children in such a way that the powerful will that we have nurtured in them has a proper vessel in which to germinate and grow. It is an honor always and a trial sometimes.

The interest that we take in the children enables us to connect to their imaginations and endorse their attempts to stretch into these new horizons. Taking up and embellishing their interests is perhaps one of the most powerful tools we have. We are doing the world a service when we can take courage to be lovingly present at this threshold for these children.

*Ruth Ker is a longtime Waldorf early childhood teacher in British Columbia.*

# *The Secret Garden*

Tim Bennett and Melissa Borden

In the children's classic, *The Secret Garden*, a little boy is described who may have been an anomaly in the early twentieth century, but is sadly reflective of various aspects of children in the kindergarten today. Colin Craven is a pale, peevish, demanding child whose restricted life has rendered him feeble and unable to move or play like other children. Regrettably, teachers of today are seeing more and more children who, like Colin, suffer from anxiety related issues.<sup>1</sup> Being fussy about clothing and picky about food, young children can display inflexibility around what parents once took for granted. Nationally, there is a rising concern about insomnia and depression in children under the age of six. Like Colin in the book, who was a fretful hypochondriac, children today are often beset with myriads of worries about health and safety. Parents and teachers notice a new alertness and verbal precociousness in young children. At the same time, these alert young children often have an irritable commanding presence with adults. Frances Hodgson Burnett refers to Colin as "the young "rajah." How many young rajahs do we teachers hear issuing orders to their parents each morning in the kindergarten cubby room! Today's parents are remarkably tolerant and chagrined when the teacher speaks of "good manners" in the kindergarten.

In *The Secret Garden*, Colin is contrasted with the rosy-faced young Dickon who spends his days on the English moor taming wild animals and playing his flute. The climax in the story comes when Colin is persuaded to leave his sick bed and enter the mysterious Secret Garden. The vitalizing forces of nature and the wondrous pageantry of the changing seasons as experienced in the garden affect a cure. Everyone lives happily ever after.

Today kindergarten teachers find themselves striving to unravel the perplexities of highly individualistic young children who can be imperious, irritable and subject to anxiety. Teachers regularly report a notable reluctance or inability in children to engage in free, unencumbered movement. Research of Waldorf kindergarten teachers indicates a rise in the number

of children with sensory difficulties and related struggles with the four lower senses as described by Rudolf Steiner.<sup>2</sup> Tied to this are concerns about obesity in young children and the continuing rise in Asperger's, ADD and ADHD syndromes.

Since 1987, we have taught kindergarten at the Seattle Waldorf School. The beautiful yard at Kinderhaus in Seattle is no less than a Secret Garden. An old American chestnut tree shelters the chicken coop and supports a pendulous rope swing carrying three children at a time. Pear, plum and apple trees festoon the yard with garlands of blossoms in the spring and sweet fruit in the autumn. The outdoor space is rich with the forces of growth and the pulse of changing seasons. Over the years we have spent together, we have observed the sense-calming influence of the Kinderhaus play yard on the children. Those who were fractious and even aggressive indoors were often better able to play and find social equilibrium in the outdoor space. We came to see that outside time could be easier for some children, offering a diversity of movement possibilities such as running, jumping, skipping and digging. In our work as teachers, we posed two questions for ourselves: One, how could we in the kindergarten help the children incarnate into their physical bodies in as a harmonious way as possible? Two, how could the social life in the kindergarten be nurtured without forced social contrivances and rules of conduct to be imposed by the teacher? In an effort to answer these questions and to make the kindergarten day more joyful for all the children, we expanded the walls of the kindergarten by considering the outdoor space to be a part of the classroom. We hoped to allow the sense world in its natural harmonies to create a mood from which the children could move physically and socially together. The garden with its fruit trees and animal life offered a multitude of outdoor activities that were much more satisfying to the children. This was especially true for the six- year-olds who had grown somewhat restless with indoor playtime. We saw that the indoor play life in the kindergarten represents, in

some ways, the dreamy inward archetypal world of the young child. The healthy five-year-olds were supremely happy with a boat made out of a box and two branches for cannons. The six-year-old, who created an elaborate pirate ship with sails and anchors, looked out of a spyglass, longing to know more of the world outside. We observed that the six-year-olds often appeared especially gratified by a more expansive use of their developing limbs and by work and play in the outdoor environment. Every kindergarten teacher will recognize the characteristic refrain from the six-year-old who calls, "Look at me!" as he or she struggles to master large motor skills. The boys, in particular needed activities that made them sweat and move their eager little muscles. Tim's background in Spacial Dynamics® was particularly valuable in observing the movement of the child as he becomes part of the world and truly incarnates. We strove to find diverse movement possibilities for the children. More recently, in the AWSNA publication *Renewal*, Spring 2004, Jacquelyn Davis wrote, "The key desirable factor in a child's movement experience is variety. Different kinds of movement activities give more possibilities for soul and ego in childhood and later."<sup>3</sup>

After a visit to the Seattle Waldorf School, therapist Bonnie Rivers recommended a "sensory journey" each morning for several of the kindergarten children. This activity, she said, could be used both diagnostically and therapeutically.<sup>4</sup> In our teaching, we had noticed that lightly aerobic, rhythmic activity was both physically settling and socially satisfying to the children in the kindergarten and that an early morning walk to a local park set the whole day off to a good start. We saw that a walk offered an expanded movement venue with hills to climb and mud puddles to splash in. We began to regard the walk time as an ideal opportunity to observe the children's movement as, one by one, each child met the many movement challenges afforded by this "sensory journey." Therapeutic exercises such as the "zoo exercises" were naturally integrated into this part of the morning.<sup>5</sup> In addition, an overall calming influence from the morning walk was enjoyed as the children settled themselves and relaxed into a more harmonious social mood.

Today, in the three kindergartens at the Seattle Waldorf School, we start each morning with a walk.

Our destinations are one of the many local parks and green spaces near the school. It is our intention to have the children walk for much of the outing. We have experimented and found that if the walk is shortened, the positive effect of calming the children is noticeably lessened. When considering the young child, Rudolf Steiner often referred to the importance of supporting healthy breathing in children. He speaks of the breathing rhythms of life such as waking and sleeping as well as the steady flow of air into and out of the lungs.<sup>6</sup> The rhythmic breathing elements of walking are, in themselves, beneficial to the children. Not surprisingly, there is a delightful range of sensory experiences open to the children when walking to and through nature spaces. A walk is a time of grace when the children seem to find their own stride. The walk is both a nature journey and a sensory expedition. The seasons and elements become the teachers. Very busy are the six-year-old "thing finders" whose curiosity about the wide world is so especially keen. The class inhales and exhales in deep satisfaction as the seasons come and go. The return to the kindergarten everyday is as pleasurable as is the exploration. Pale cheeks have become suffused with color. Hands and feet are warmed. Appetites are quickened and tempers calmed. The class returns, eager to take up life in the kindergarten.

Parents have long known that outdoor play and lively daily walks are healthy experiences for children. The fretful, inactive Colin was a curiosity in 1911 when *The Secret Garden* was written. However, today there exists in urban life an unintentional conspiracy to keep children sedentary and indoors. Parents and teachers find it increasingly necessary to contrive to have their children spend time outside. We look for opportunities for our children to breathe deeply and rhythmically. We seek to settle their nerves and bring them into a natural use of their limbs, providing for free, unencumbered large motor movement. The two questions we had asked ourselves seemed in some measure to be answered. It has been our experience that a morning walk is an essential part of a successful kindergarten experience. Over the years, student teachers have spent time in our kindergarten and have found this model to be valuable to their experiences with their own classes. The use of the play yard as part of the classroom and inclusion of the daily walk in the

rhythm of the day can make the kindergarten experience a satisfying one to many young children today. To Helle Heckman's exhortation to explore the urban green spaces and parks with our kindergarten classes, we would add the endorsement of a good walk.<sup>7</sup> Call to mind the last scene in *The Secret Garden* in which the restored young Colin sets off with his father to enjoy at last the blessings of a long morning walk.

**Endnotes:**

1. Kohler, Henning, *Working with Anxious, Nervous and Depressed Children*.
2. Steiner, Rudolf, *The Twelve Senses*, Kolisko Conference, WECAN, 2001.
3. Davis, Jacquelin, *Renewal*, Spring 2004
4. Rivers, Bonnie; Gradalis seminars, Boulder, Colorado.
5. McCallum, Audrey, *Extra Lesson*.
6. Steiner, Rudolf; *Study of Man*.
7. Heckman, Helle; *Nokken: A Garden for Children*.

*Melissa Borden and Tim Bennett are both kindergarten teachers at the Seattle Waldorf School.*

# The Healing Art of Nursery Rhymes

Suzanne Down

*Here is an introductory peek into the vast and wonderful world of the healing power of nursery rhymes and puppetry. The hope is that this research will grow and eventually be made available in book form.*

As the soul descends from spiritual worlds to be born on earth, there is a sacrifice of the cosmic rhythms of planets and stars to enter earthly chaos. The newborn arrives with no rhythm; the first breathing is chaotic. The baby needs this inner rhythm restored from the outside life by the parents, especially the mother. The mother begins to establish a daily earth rhythm of feeding, sleeping, rocking, and soft lullabies. All through the early years, parents and first teachers work to bring this spiritual support on earth-rhythm. A rhythmic life from this new beginning helps build the forces of inner strength which later form the moral forces for the soul's future. This is essential today in a world that lacks rhythm and lacks morality.

The prime gift of the nursery rhyme is in this power of rhythm. Rudolf Steiner states that, "rhythmic processes are nothing physical whether in nature or in Man. They might be called semi-spiritual. The physical as a "tang" disappears in the rhythmic process. . .rhythm replaces strength." We can see the incredible spiritual support to the young child when we work with rhythm.

The meaning of the words in the nursery rhymes takes a back seat to the possibilities of rhythm and repetition to help establish a clear healthy breathing, circulation, and immune system throughout the body, right down to the toes! The nursery rhymes work right into the heartbeat and circulation, not into head thinking. They mirror the cosmic rhythms for the young child finding his way on earth.

As timeless world rhymes, their language has become lifted and alive rhythmically in the world ether. This means they have an added etheric quality to them. We can say when we speak or sing them, we do so with a more etheric breath. This nourishes the physical and emotional breath, bringing order and balance to the etheric/physical/emotional circulation.

Nursery rhymes take the power of rhyme, repetition and rhythm that together heal inner chaos and make order within the cellular level. These

qualities go right into the body, right into the circulation, releasing the child from chaos. Nancy Mellon, therapist and therapeutic storyteller, emphasizes that, "Seventy to seventy-five percent of the power of the nursery rhyme is in the rhythm and repetition. The picture and images provide the other thirty percent. The real work is the etheric rhythmic element helping the clear breathing and circulation go through the body. We don't want to dwell on their meaning. It is the delicious rhythmic that strengthens and helps the physical and emotional circulation. All comes into order and balance."

We can think of speaking the nursery rhymes with a "lifted language" parallel to singing in the mood of the fifth. In this way the speaking is truly the rhythm of the heart and pulse, not a beat that has more the hard physical quality of a hammering. This differentiation between bringing the nursery rhymes rhythmically instead of with a beat is key to it developing a healing potential. If we begin to look at the rhythm "long – short" as in to following:

Cobbler, cobbler mend my shoe,  
Have it done by half past two.

\* \* \*

Humpty dumpty sat on a wall,  
Humpty dumpty had a great fall

\* \* \*

Rock a bye baby  
In the tree top  
When the wind blows  
The cradle will rock.

We see in this long/short a gentle incarnating rhythm. The long/short rhythm is not spoken in a syllabic way, but with a flow in the words. Imagine a mother rocking her baby or young child, and crooning "rock a bye baby." She is creating an etheric rhythmic substance within and around the child, which is working deeply on the inner life of the child, bringing order with right rhythm.

One way a teacher can support the healing rhythmic work of the young child is to bring the nursery rhymes with puppetry. When we imbue our puppets with an etheric substance, making the nursery rhymes visible in this refined semi-physical way, we deepen the healing quality we offer the child.

Here is an example of using puppetry with the nursery rhymes. I have developed a mother rod puppet that holds a puppet baby—the archetypal mother, a model imperative for the child. The puppet sings “rock a bye baby” lovingly holding and rocking the baby in a gentle lemniscate. The lemniscate as a form is the doorway to the etheric realm, a potent choreography for puppetry. The observing child inwardly mirrors the rhythmic quality and movement/gestures of the puppet, all created with intention and consciousness to offer a healing experience. The child breathes rhythmically and deeply when watching, inner order is being established. This lullaby can be repeated three times (or more!). Then the mother puppet puts the baby in her cradle for a nice sleep. Teachers can greet the day like this, or use it at rest time. Parents can do this for a peaceful bedtime ritual. Children are

desperate for these healthy rhythms. Nursery rhymes and puppetry are one of the joyful rhythmic and etheric supports available to us. The visual pictures of the puppetry holds the child in the imaginative space while the nursery rhyme rhythms do their deep and wise work.

*Suzanne Down is the director of Juniper Tree School of Story and Puppetry Arts, now based out of Vancouver Island in Canada. She offers puppetry trainings and workshops which are described in the Calendar section on page 35.*

## *Deeper Relationships Between Emmi Pikler’s Work and Waldorf Early Childhood Education*

Joyce Gallardo

During the summer of 2004, I had the immense good fortune of attending the first English language course (with fourteen other women) offered at the Pikler Institute in Budapest, Hungary. I was also able to observe groups of children at Loczy, the residential nursery at the Institute.

It was a life-changing experience. Each day was filled with the wealth of a lifetime of experience which Anna Tardos, director of the Pikler Institute, shared with us—from the time when her mother, Dr. Emmi Pikler, was a family pediatrician during the 1930s and 1940s in Budapest, to the early days of Loczy in 1946, when Dr. Pikler was commissioned by the city of Budapest to organize

and direct a foster home where children would live until they were three years old—to the present. This institute was called the *National Methodological Institute*, and later *Loczy*, for the street on which it is located.

Fortunately for the children who came to Loczy, the task of organizing this foster home was not given to a professional with experience in institutional care, but to a family pediatrician who was convinced that the key to the task was to be found in the principles and methods developed during her work with families. These principles provided a rich, happy, active and peaceful

childhood for the children living with the families with whom Dr. Pikler had worked.

For the past sixty years, Loczy has been housed in the same building, a house that had been the home of a married couple and abandoned after the war. It was redesigned and rebuilt according to Emmi Pikler's specifications. She also gave dimensions for furniture, changing tables, bathtubs, and eating tables, and carefully selected the materials to be used for clothing, sleeping sacks, soft shoes, etc.—all of natural fibers. Every small detail was important. Thirty-five children, who had been abandoned or orphaned during the war, or of parents with tuberculosis, came to live there initially. Over the next seventeen years, some one thousand, eight hundred children lived at Loczy, where the nurses, doctors, and other staff professionals carefully documented their growth and development. At present, children who are not adopted by age three may stay at Loczy until they are of school age, six-years-old.

I am very grateful to Anna Tardos and her dedicated, wonderful colleagues who made this course possible. The human encounters were permeated with warmth, friendship, and collegiality as we gathered in the conference room on the third floor of Loczy each morning around a table arrayed with bowls of ripe, red cherries or raspberries from the home gardens of the staff. And always the cries, the shouts of joy, the tears, and the laughter of the children playing in the garden were in the background.

As I took notes during the course, I repeatedly made more notes to myself in the margin, which related what we were studying of Emmi Pikler's work to Waldorf education, out of my frame of reference as a Waldorf early childhood educator. Two of the salient themes were the development, the care and the nurturing of the four lower or bodily senses, the sense of life, the sense of touch, the sense of movement and the sense of balance, and the development of the will. The name given to these aspects of the work being done at Loczy was cooperative caregiving and self-initiated independent movement. There are many common insights between the work of Emmi Pikler and that of Rudolf Steiner. Below, I have attempted to outline some of the themes that are woven together in the pedagogies of these two pioneers.

### *Self-Initiated Movement*

Anna Tardos told us:

*The key elements of the Pikler idea are free movement, free space and time. Children do not have the experience of a position until they try it themselves. We do not put the child into a position! Self-initiated movement creates a sense of competency and self-reliance in the child. Flexibility in movement leads to independent, psychic flexibility, and eventually, to independent, flexible thinking.*

We know out of our study of Waldorf pedagogy that the *will* evolves from the earliest moments of infancy, through the play of childhood, and, finally, manifests in adult activity in living thinking and initiative.

Anna continued:

*When a space and time is provided for the infant to develop and one observes the capacity of self-reliance in the child, our image of the infant changes from one of the child needing us to guide him to his capacity to the image of the child as active, independent and capable without our presence and help in all instances.*

Dr. Pikler noted that the child's transitional postures from supine to turning on the belly, stretching and rolling, creeping on the belly to crawling on hands and knees, all before the "milestones" of sitting, standing and walking, are critical in the development of the child's motor capacities.

The children I observed were steady and sure on their feet, both graceful and agile in their movement and play. I soon observed the *capacity of self-reliance* of which Anna spoke, in Hajnalka, a small and delicate three-and-a-half-year-old girl, who had undergone heart surgery in April 2004. Hajnalka was a particularly agile child. At naptime, her nurse buttoned her into her sleeping sack, carried her outside to the row of beds and laid her down for her nap. One by one, the children were brought out and laid down in their cribs. Then the nurse went inside to tidy up. As soon as the nurse was out of sight,

Hajnalka stood up in her crib and began climbing the bars (in her sleeping sack) from crib to crib until she reached the end of the row of beds, where she lay down next to the child in the last crib, who was almost asleep. The nurse observed her through the window and went out to pick her up and carry her back to her own bed. As soon as the nurse went back inside, Hajnalka began climbing from crib to crib until she reached the other end of the row of beds! I held my breath as I watched, worried that she might fall, but she was quite sure of herself. Again, the nurse came out and carried her back to her own bed, where she stroked her head gently and spoke softly to her. By now, the other children were asleep. Hajnalka was soon fast asleep, tired out from her climbing escapades!

Rudolf Steiner also emphasized non-interference and a respect for the infant's autonomy and independent movement. He tells us that the first two-and-a-half years are the most important of all, ". . .during this time the child is learning to walk and speak and the formative forces of the head are shaping those organs which have the most intimate connection with the development and self-confidence of the individual in later life. In these years the child really does do everything of its own accord. It repels any will that seeks to impose itself from without." (*Understanding Young Children*, p. 2)

Rudolf Steiner also describes how in developing the sense of movement, in the contraction and elongation of the muscles, the child perceives a feeling of freedom, the experience of being free in his soul. "The experience of oneself as a free soul is the radiating out of the sense of movement and the radiating into the soul of muscular contraction and elongation, just as inner comfort or discomfort is the radiating into the soul of the results and experience of the life sense." (*Man's Twelve Senses in Their Relation to Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition*, p.16).

He tells us in Lecture Three of *Human Values in Education*. "During the first seven years of life there is an interest in gesture, in everything connected with movement. . . Speech develops out of movement in all its aspects, and thought develops out of speech." In the same lecture, about learning to walk and speak, Rudolf Steiner said, ". . .we should leave everything to the child. Of the child's

own accord she will raise herself into an upright position when the right time comes. Premature efforts at walking and standing or gymnastic exercises can only do damage."

Both Emmi Pikler and Rudolf Steiner note that the child's very individuality and experience of competence arise out of self-initiated independent movement and that the proper attitude of the adult is of paramount importance to the child's development.

### *Attention to Detail*

"Peace begins on the changing table." (Ute Strub, German physical therapist)

At Loczy, as well as in Waldorf kindergartens, nurseries, and parent-toddler programs, careful attention is given to detail. The preparation for the caregiving times of the children at Loczy is done with meticulous care down to the last detail. The bathtub water, the soap, the clothing, oils for cleaning, diapers, etc. are prepared by the nurse before the baby is touched by her sensitive, tender hands and before she speaks to him in a soft voice that expects an answer. The nurse is also inwardly preparing herself for this time when she will give her undivided attention to the child. When she finally lifts the infant from his bed, she informs him of what she is doing, what is about to happen to him and around him. During changing, bathing, and dressing, the nurse speaks softly to the child, her movements are delicate and considerate, she plays little private games with him, and he knows she is there just for him. There is a rhythm to what the nurse does, day after day, week after week, with the children in her care, which creates an invisible mantle of security around the children, a profound sense of well being.

In Waldorf programs, the teachers painstakingly prepare the physical space to receive the children daily. We, too, work with the principles of rhythm, repetition, and attention to the smallest detail in order to create a basis of security for the children. Each activity of the day is carried out with careful attention to detail, and repetition and rhythm are components of everything we do with the children. This rhythm and repetition nourishes their sense of life daily—the rhythm of the morning circle, the

preparation of the morning snack together, kneading the dough for bread, free play time, always with the smells of delicious food wafting in from the kitchen, rest time, washing hands in lavender water and gently drying them with a soft towel, and finally, the ritual of sharing the morning snack, lighting the candle, singing the blessing, serving each child a bowl of warm food and a cup of warm tea, savoring slowly and deliberately the colors, tastes, and textures of our food with the children—all with reverence and gratitude.

### ***Observation***

The nurses at Loczy, with meticulous care and attention to detail, record daily observation of the children's growth and development. These observations are shared amongst colleagues in weekly meetings. Out of these meetings, new insights about the children come to light and help guide their caregivers as to how they may best care for them. Out of her daily experiences, the nurse also writes a *development diary* for the two children for whom she is the *own-nurse*. This *development diary* is written on the day of the child's birthday every month, with the help of the group's pedagogue. She writes about the child's emotional state, his relationship with his own nurse and the other nurses, parents, companions, the development of his play and motor skills, speech, eating, bathing, sleeping habits, the child's joys and difficulties. A well-written development diary is a valuable tool, through which the nurse also evaluates her own work: whether she has given to the child everything that he needed.

An important aspect of our work in anthroposophy is observation. Rudolf Steiner repeatedly emphasized the value of observation. He told us: "When you have love for the other, their whole being will be illumined for you." Waldorf early childhood teachers have child studies wherein we create a picture of the whole child for our colleagues through our observations—his birth experience (from what the parents have told us), his appearance, movement, gestures, speech, soul faculties and social qualities, play, etc., with careful attention to detail. We then share these observations with colleagues and out of this sharing often come

insights about who the child is and how we might best serve that particular child.

### ***Reverent, Cooperative Caregiving***

*Receive the child in reverence,  
Educate him in love,  
And send him forth in freedom.*

Rudolf Steiner

Observing the reverence and quiet devotion with which the nurses at Loczy approach the infants in their care, one senses what a holy task it is caring for these motherless babies. Bodily care becomes a sacred ritual, as Anna Tardos pointed out to us when we were observing a nurse gently applying oil on a cotton ball to the creases in the baby's body, hands and feet after his bath. "She is anointing the child, as Mary Magdalene anointed the feet of Jesus," Anna told us. Here on the changing table, the infant's trust in the caregiver and in the world develops through the engaging of the nurse's finely developed higher, social senses with the child's lower bodily senses of life and touch.

"The mother cares for the child because she loves him. The nurse loves the child because she cares for him," wrote French psychiatrist, Myriam David, co-author of *LOCZY: An Unusual Approach to Mothering*.

Every physical contact with the child is preceded by a verbal announcement and a visual announcement to the child, e.g. when the nurse holds up the diaper, she tells the child, "I am going to change your diaper now." Anna told us that speaking to the infant during caregiving helps the nurse to keep her thoughts organized and focused on the child (the engagement of the ego through speech). When the child is able to trust that the adult is really there for him during care, when the caretaker's gestures are sensitive and questioning, waiting for the child to respond, a real dialogue, a profound relationship between the adult and the child can emerge. Cooperation can develop between them when the adult consistently prepares herself to be fully present to the infant and his reactions.

The caretaker encourages the child to cooperate with her words, "Please give me your hand, your foot, etc." and she waits for the child to respond by

offering his hand or his foot. The child is helped to develop self-awareness by being encouraged to actively participate in what is happening to him. Out of this self-awareness, the infant begins to experience a meeting with his physical environment and, as he grows older, naturally, this includes awareness of and encounters with other children.

Dr. Henning Kohler, in his book *Working with Anxious, Nervous and Depressed Children*, describes the infant's and young child's need for *nourishing and warming acts of bodily care* and says: "These acts must be done with true inner participation." At Loczy this inner participation is called *fully conscious caregiving* or *face-to-face caregiving*.

Dr. Kohler continues to describe the life sense:

*This sense of being sheltered and stable, which starts with bodily self-perception, is of utmost conceivable importance for later life. Not only does the degree of our self-confidence and trust in existence depend on it, but also, as we have seen, it relates to our looking forward to an ongoing course of development or else facing a life that is a conglomeration of fragmented, disconnected single events. But this sense is far from mature at birth. . . Babies are so at war with their bodies that all they want to do is sleep so that they need not notice they have bodies! There is scarcely a trace of well being to be seen. Their bodies cause them constant annoyance. A few weeks later, if everything goes well, the condition called "positive peaceful waking" in developmental psychology sets in. Rudolf Steiner describes this sense when developed as "feeling comforted and comfortable through and through."*

In Waldorf early childhood education, the teacher holds the image of the children as coming from the spiritual world, where they are cared for by angels, where goodness is what they breathe and beauty just is. There is a recognition of the child's spiritual as well as earthly origin and the teacher sees her task as continuing here on earth the work of the angels. As Helmut von Kugelgen wrote in *Working With the Angels, The Young Child and the Spiritual World*, "In the highest sense we work in accordance with the angels, the archangels and the archai. It is these beings of the third hierarchy who employ us, who give us our work. . . When we care for a child out of

this understanding, we are endeavoring to ease the pain of this loss of the human being's spiritual home. . . We know that our task is to continue the work of the angels as we care for the child trying to make himself at home in his physical body."

Emmi Pikler recognized the child's struggle to feel at home in his physical body:

*In the beginning, the child feels more or less uneasy during the care situation. Often he doesn't like it, he cries, wants his peace and quiet. . . If, from the start, we handle an infant peacefully, patiently and carefully, she will discover ever more joy in these activities, learning at the same time to trust us more and more, and to take an increasing part in our work.*

When one reads the following paragraph in Henning Kohler's book, one is struck by how closely it echoes Emmi Pikler's principles in her book, *Peaceful Babies—Contented Mothers*:

*It is a fact of educational practice that a child's life sense maturing is given the right support by devoting enough attention to his bodily care, to gentle handling in the way we feed, warm, and dress him. . . For this we need an unhurried sense, patience, foresight, a capacity for inner quiet that allows for what might be called a reverential atmosphere.*

During this course, we were not given an explicit picture of the child as both earthly and spiritual, yet caregiving at Loczy is so exquisite that one observes how the nurse's every deed is designed to ease the pain of the loss of the child's birth home and of her family. The nurse's soft voice, her eyes, her gentle hands, create a reverential atmosphere and help the child to feel at home in her body, to feel trust and joy in the world around her with each caregiving encounter. Nor was there any reference to the care and protection of the senses of the child. Yet every caregiving encounter I observed was palpably a deed of the higher, social senses of the adult working upon the child and her lower, physical senses, particularly the life sense and the sense of touch.

Nurturing the four basal, or lower, senses is so important because they provide the soil for the maturing of the higher, social senses in adolescence: the ego sense, the conceptual or thought sense, the

speech sense, and the sense of hearing. The life sense and the touch sense form a unity. Out of the development of the life sense unfolds the capacity for tolerance, which is one of the preconditions for understanding our fellow humans, while out of the development of the touch sense evolves the capacity for establishing and enjoying close relationships with others. Development of the sense of movement is essential for the development of speech and the sense of word. Balance and inner calm are the preconditions for development of the sense of hearing. Albert Soesman quotes Rudolf Steiner in his book *Our Twelve Senses, Wellsprings of the Soul*: "The birth of our true humanity depends on the right nourishment through the well-springs of our senses as essentially as the air we breathe and the food we eat."

### *The Gesture of Protection*

Another aspect of both pedagogies is *protection*. At Loczy, the children are surrounded by a gesture of protection. They are sheltered from the onslaught of the many sense impressions of our modern world. The daily life of the children is quiet, rhythmical, stable and predictable, which gives them a deep sense of security and well-being.

One sunny morning, I accompanied Gyurika, a four-year-old boy and a staff doctor on a short bus ride and outing to a nearby small shopping center. I was asked to remain a bit apart from the boy and the doctor and to not speak or interact with them, but only to observe. The doctor told me that this was the boy's first ride on a bus and the first time he had been to a shopping center, that by now he was old enough to experience wider parameters. Gyurika was a delight to observe during the excursion. He was in complete awe of all that he saw. It was the escalators that totally fascinated him. He observed for several minutes how passersby stepped up on the escalator, took hold of the moving railing, and were carried by the moving steps to the next level. At first, he was a little frightened and cautious about placing his foot on the first step, but once he summoned the will to do it, he gingerly stepped up as he had seen the others before him do. Holding tightly onto his companion's hand and grasping the moving hand rail, he reached the last of the stairs and jumped off

the top step triumphantly with a wide grin. His companion was right by his side, speaking to him in a soft, encouraging voice.

Of course, Gyurika wanted to go back down on the escalator. His companion solicitously encouraged him to take the first step alone, and to hold onto the moving handrail, rather than take her hand. Again and again the boy went up and down the escalators. His companion stayed a few steps behind, patiently encouraging him with her warm smile. After ten or twelve trips up and down the escalators, Gyurika's interest and curiosity was at last satiated. He was ready to walk on and experience other things in the mall for the first time with his wide-eyed openness and interest. His companion patiently and quietly responded to his barrage of questions in Hungarian until it was time to go home again. All the while she spoke in a soft, encouraging voice, always giving him the space to choose where he wanted to go and what he wanted to see. She offered her hand only when he asked for it. When we arrived back at Loczy, I spent the rest of the morning in Gyurika's group and observed him excitedly relating to his friends all that he had experienced that morning. The other little ones were, of course, all ears!

Later that afternoon, we met with Anna Tardos and Gabriella Puspoky, pediatrician at Loczy for the past thirty-eight years. They shared with us the history of the children we had observed and I learned that Gyurika had been a beggar in his sixteen-year-old sister's arms. His family rarely came to visit him.

There is a high level of conscious respect and protection for the children at Loczy, which one cannot help but admire. Two or three of us were standing on the balcony outside of the conference room watching a group of children below in the garden playing. Anna asked that, out of respect, we did not observe the children if they did not know we were observing them. Before our observations of the children in their groups, Anna asked us not to speak to, nor to interact with the children, as this would distract them from their play or their interaction with their caregiver. We were asked to sit quietly to one side of the room and to be as unobtrusive as possible.

In Waldorf early childhood programs, we also enfold the children in a protective gesture against the many sense impressions of our modern world. The development and protection of the child's senses are central in our work. Daily life in the kindergarten is

quiet, rhythmical, consistent and predictable. Visitors to the Waldorf early childhood programs are few and are asked to not converse with the children or to distract them from their play. As at Loczy, visitors are asked to remain quietly in the background.

### *Imitation*

Dr. Falk, a colleague of Anna Tardos, spoke to us about imitation, “We believe in the ability of the children to learn and behave like the adults around them. We must be aware of what we do and say in the presence of the children so that they can develop properly.” At Loczy, they recognize that the adult’s whole relationship to the world is copied by the child’s fine sensing imitateness: how one speaks, how one relates with others, how one moves, one’s handling of everything about us, even lifeless objects.

In Waldorf early childhood education, we recognize that young children are completely united with their sense impressions, and because of this are deeply imitative. Everything in their surroundings makes a deep inner impression.

Rudolf Steiner has told us that the young child learns through imitation. He said that a caretaker of young children must be *worthy of imitation*, for in imitating us the children are continuing to do what they did in the spiritual world before they were born—when they imitated the angelic beings. Since they come from the truth and goodness of the world of spirit, they see the world as truthful and good and all those by whom they are surrounded on this earth as good. It is our task to create truth and goodness for the children to “breathe” and imitate here on earth.

This is what they create at Loczy, by giving the children a model for qualitative imitation in the caregiver’s reverent care, in her profoundly respectful manner, her unhurried, deliberate movements, her gentle, considerate hands, her clear, soft voice, her equal treatment of all the children alike. This model for imitation extends to the other adults around the children who respect and support each other and act out of insightful, finely developed higher, social senses.

### *The Etheric Mantle Around Loczy*

The children whose life circumstances bring them to Loczy are received into a home whose very walls have

been hallowed by the selfless love, hard work, and dedication of many nurses, caregivers, doctors and others over the past sixty years. The protective etheric mantle around Loczy is a living reality, created by this long history of sensitive, devoted care of motherless, abandoned or abused children and by the respectful, supportive collegial relationships of the adults who care for them. One is enveloped in this etheric protection as soon as one steps through the big wrought-iron gates at Loczy.

The wellsprings of the pedagogies of Emmi Pikler and Rudolf Steiner are profoundly deep and give us much to guide us in our work with young children. It was a truly inspirational experience to be in the presence of and to learn from the wonderful adults and children at Loczy. My daily work with the children in my care has been deeply enriched by all I saw and learned and by the deep human connections I made there. I look forward to returning to Budapest for the second and third component of the course.

### *Afterword*

This report would not be complete without mention of the sense of community across worldwide borders that lived amongst the participants and faculty during the weeks we were gathered at Loczy. Our long days of study and work together were balanced by carefree social times in the evening—dinners together at lovely garden restaurants, coffee and exquisite Hungarian pastries in the center of Budapest, concerts, and visits to the national museum.

One evening we were invited to visit a Waldorf school located one hour from the city and later to the home of one of the teachers for a delightful dinner in the garden beneath a luminous, full, summer moon. Each of these social encounters helped to nurture and strengthen our sense of world community.

But most memorable of all is the evening when Anna, her husband, Marton, and Gabriella came to visit my husband and I at the flat we had rented. We joined hands in a circle and danced to traditional South American music played live by a group of Ecuadorian friends who live in Budapest. Anna and Gabriella were transformed, as the tiredness of the long day fell away and became pure joy in the spirit

and light-hearted movement of the dance. Music, laughter, and comraderie brought the fresh bloom of youth to their faces, a picture of them that I will carry always in my heart.

*Joyce Gallardo is the director of Los Amiguitos (Little Friends), a N.Y. State-licensed Family Day Care Home, offering a Waldorf Nursery and Kindergarten program. She has taught kindergarten, high school Spanish, and calligraphy at Hawthorne Valley School in Harlemville, N.Y. As the director of Los Amiguitos Puppetry Troupe, Joyce has brought marionette performances to national and international audiences and offered marionette-making workshops to Waldorf teachers in Quito, Ecuador. She and her husband, David are founding members of Centro Educativo Micael Waldorf School in Conocoto, Ecuador, near Quito.*

## *Conversations with Parent/Child Pioneers*

### *From the Workings of the WECAN Parent/Child Task Force*

Nancy Foster

“Thank you for the parent/child class! I thought the school was for my son, but I think the bigger education happened to me.” “After all my reading and listening to talks, I finally understand what Waldorf education is about.” “My son’s delight and the warmth in the classroom have been magical for me.”

Every parent/child teacher is familiar with comments like these. Parent/child groups, by whatever name, have become the gateway through which many families first enter the world of Waldorf education. They have also provided a supportive community for parents who may otherwise feel isolated in today’s fast-moving world.

The WECAN Parent/Child Working Group would like to recognize some teachers who were pioneers of this work in North America, creating new forms to meet the needs of families with younger children. We identified four such pioneers, based on information available to us, and they were gracious enough to share their experiences for *Gateways*. It is always good to remember our roots, and there is much to be learned from such retrospection. We interviewed Patti Wolfe of Toronto; Cecelia Karpoff of northern Virginia; Connie White of London, Ontario; and Erica Carnay Jayasuriya of Portland, Oregon.

Patti Wolfe received teacher training at Emerson College and returned to Toronto where she taught kindergarten at the Toronto Waldorf School for three years. After some years at home with her own children, her parent/child work began in 1989 when she was asked by the school to meet with families with young children. The demand grew, and she now teaches five Parent and Tot groups each week.

Cecelia Karpoff had been a nursery teacher at Acorn Hill Waldorf Kindergarten and Nursery for several years when a visit from Erika Grantham, who described her work with parents and children at Michael Hall in England, inspired Cecelia to try a new approach. After three summers of a pilot parent/child program, begun in 1990, a parent/child program was incorporated into Acorn Hill’s regular offerings. She now teaches parent/child classes at

Potomac Crescent School, a Waldorf initiative in northern Virginia.

Connie White began her teaching career in the Canadian public schools, later completing her Waldorf kindergarten training in Detroit in the mid-1980s. After a number of years in the London Waldorf School kindergarten in London, Ontario, her health required a change. Aware of the parent/child work recently begun in Toronto, she visited Patti’s program. She then wrote a proposal to her school, and began a Parent and Tot class in the mid-1990s. She has now turned the work over to another teacher, but continues to be involved with the school.

Erica Carnay Jayasuriya received a combined grades and kindergarten training through Antioch. Having done her practicum at the Portland Waldorf School, she was asked in the spring of 1996 to take up the fledgling parent/child program there. During her three years of parent/child work, she began to develop an approach different from what she had inherited. Later she took a third grade class at Cedarwood School in Portland, making a commitment through fifth grade, which she is now completing. Erica plans to return to parent/child teaching next year.

As it happens, all four pioneers began their programs within the context of an established school. Connie noted that it can sometimes be more challenging to begin parent/child work in older schools, where space may be a difficult issue or the need may not be recognized. In new initiatives, by contrast, a parent/child program is often the first offering. Still other programs exist independently in a group leader’s home or other setting.

***The pioneers were asked, in the interviews, to discuss the motivation and inspiration for their work.***

As a kindergarten teacher Patti had experienced that many parents arrived without any knowledge of Waldorf ideas, and she saw the parent/child work as a way to reach the parents while their children were younger. She was not aware of anyone else doing such work at the time, so she began with what she

knew, gradually developing ways to meet the needs she perceived.

Cecelia had been concerned about the children in her nursery class who did not seem ready to separate from their parents. She saw, on the other hand, that parents were looking for a school experience for younger children. Erika Grantham's work with parents and children together provided Cecelia's inspiration for addressing these observations.

Connie's immediate motivation for beginning a parent/child program was her health-related inability to continue as a kindergarten teacher. When she visited Patti's program in Toronto, however, she felt that everything she had done in her life had prepared her to take up this parent/child work.

Erica began to develop parent/child work because she was asked and, as a mother of a young child herself, she was interested in the task. Through the remedial training at Rudolf Steiner College, she had been awakened to the cornerstone role of the earliest months and years of life, and she recognized the potential role of a parent/child program in supporting healthy development.

***What has been the main focus of your work with parents and children together?***

For Patti, the image of greeting people at the door is primary: she is the one who has the privilege of welcoming parents coming to meet Waldorf education and each other. This is her goal—to help parents, often lonely and isolated, find community with each other in the context of the Waldorf approach to living with young children. Over the years, she has changed her approach to achieving this goal. In the past, she found, if parents *understood* a concept, such as rhythm in the home, they could put it into practice. Now she finds that understanding is often not enough to bring about change, so she tries to make the concept experiential and may even offer exercises for individual parents who need help, or to the group in response to something that arises.

Cecelia has focused her approach on the needs of the children and on including the parents in the work of the classroom (her “household”) in a way that creates a mood of calmness, purposeful activity, and warm support. She was surprised initially to discover what an impact it had on the parents to be in a setting where the Waldorf approach to early

childhood is modeled. In her experience, the parents see the results of this approach and are inspired to learn more about it and to carry it into their home life. For this reason, parent evenings for questions and discussion have been an important part of her work.

To Connie, it was of central importance to model for parents a sense of enjoyment and appreciation of their children. She wished to enkindle in the parents the desire and ability to see their children more deeply. In the beginning, she offered a focus of craft work for the parents, but reading about domestic work in the parent/child class helped her take a next step to creating a warm, social mood for the parents while enfolded the children in work activities and an understanding consciousness.

When Erica entered parent/child work she hoped to help parents understand the importance of early movement experiences. Through a visit to a Waldorf center for at-risk children, she was profoundly affected in her understanding of the role of touch coming through imagination, and this inspired her to develop a “grandmother's lap” model of circle time emphasizing parent/child interaction. A further focus in her work was educating the will of the parents, helping them to model activity, to observe their children with understanding, and to be aware of and trust their own parenting instincts.

***What challenges have you faced in developing the parent/child work?***

A common challenge to these pioneers was to meet the needs of both parents and children: the parents' need to connect with each other, to talk together, and the children's need for a quiet space within a situation where much activity is taking place.

Patti mentioned the etheric demands of dealing with so many different people, and the need to accept that she can't help every parent right away—that there is a time process that must be respected and allowed to ripen before “results” can be expected. She also spoke of the teacher's need to be conscious of what she is modeling, always to have the appropriate gesture and tempo for the young child, while constantly balancing the dynamics of the group.

As a nursery teacher, Cecelia had been accustomed to creating a mood for and with the

children. She had to learn how to include the parents and bring them also into an appropriate mood— without offending them! She experienced, however, that parents recognize calmness and they themselves wish for it.

Connie had wanted to include study and conversation with parents during class, but after trying various approaches, she abandoned this attempt. She found it best during class simply to point something out in the moment, for example, “There’s an example of imitation.” Deeper conversation was best saved for other times.

A challenge Erica faced was in helping her colleagues in the kindergarten to understand why her approach was different from theirs. Her intention was to focus more on the parents as a key to the work with the children, rather than offer a form similar to the kindergarten.

***What has been most important to you in the parent/child work, and what advice would you offer those who have taken it up more recently?***

All the pioneers have felt deeply rewarded by parent response to the parent/child classes. Parents express that being in this environment and learning from their experiences transformed them and their lives with their children. The pioneers have recognized the gift to the teacher of truly coming to accept and respect parents as they are, realizing, as Patti said, that all are seeking the best for their children, and seeking for a place that honors the spirit. These teachers have been happy to be able to share their developing work with others through talks, workshops, and welcoming visitors to their classes.

As for advice, each of the pioneers has so many insights to offer that it is difficult to choose what to share! Here are a few thoughts that were offered:

- \* Strive to be very organized before everyone arrives so you are free to respond to needs as they arise.
- \* Continue deepening your understanding of the developmental needs of the very young child in order to develop appropriate activities and material.
- \* Hold an orientation meeting and parent evenings rather than trying to meet these needs during class.

\* Stay current with what is being offered to parents outside of the Waldorf movement, to help parents sort out conflicting advice and find their own way.

\* Develop your observation skills in order to meet both parents and children appropriately.

\* Strive for a warm, non-judgmental atmosphere, develop a big heart, and work from compassion toward education.

\* Work for full recognition in the school of the importance of this work and of meeting its needs for a large-enough space, a trained teacher and assistant who are provided with good salaries and benefits. We can be most grateful to these pioneers for forging a path for this work with parents and young children. Clearly it requires vision, sensitivity, creativity, courage, and energy, as well as the essential grounding in Waldorf education and the insights of Rudolf Steiner. In speaking with these pioneers, I felt joyful at both the similarities and the differences in their approaches, and it seems right to close with advice from Patti, “Feel fine about working out of your own circumstances, strengths, and passions. There are many ways to come together.”

*Those wishing to learn more about these teachers' approaches to parent/child work may contact them as follows: Patti Wolfe, 905-727-7489; Cecelia Karpoff, 703-451-8768; Connie White, [connie39@sympatico.ca](mailto:connie39@sympatico.ca); Erica Jayasuriya, [ejjece@yahoo.com](mailto:ejjece@yahoo.com).*

*Nancy Foster has been a teacher at Acorn Hill Waldorf Kindergarten and Nursery in Silver Spring and is a visiting faculty member at Sunbridge College.*

## *Transforming Our Parent Meetings*

Louise de Forest

In most Waldorf kindergartens that I know, when a class meeting nears, teachers feel burdened and apprehensive about meeting with the parents, and parents feel burdened by yet another thing to do in their already exhausting day. Many parents are reluctant to leave their children with babysitters or feel too tired by 8:00 p.m. to drive to school yet again, and teachers, who have given their all during the day, dread a late night when they have school the next morning. While we are all too busy for our own good, I think this holding back from one another also points to an uneasy relationship we have with one another; teachers may ask themselves, “What if a parent asks a question I can’t answer?” or “How can I put into words what I do with their children everyday?” Parents can sometimes feel judged or guilty or, let’s face it. . .bored.

Now that I have been teaching close to twenty years, I realize that one of the greatest gifts I’ve received (and the most unexpected) is to get to know adults I would otherwise never have known, either because of lifestyle or generational differences. I am so grateful to these courageous and intuitive parents who send their children to a Waldorf school, thus enabling me to unfold my life’s work and giving me an opportunity to be intimately connected with their families during a very formative period of growth and development. As we know, each child “chooses” a particular family where he or she can best prepare for the tasks awaiting them in life; so, too, does each family that comes to my class help me develop capacities and overcome inner obstacles that I might otherwise never have the opportunity to do. Out of our mutual gratitude we can develop a relationship based on trust and respect, thus supporting the children in a way that we could never do separately.

Last year I mailed out an informal survey to fourteen Waldorf early childhood programs from Tennessee to Maine. The questions asked covered the number of class meetings a year and their attendance, inclusion of parents in the classroom

and school, class meeting topics, parent/teacher conferences, regularity of communication between parents and teachers, changes perceived by teachers in the parent body and the joys and challenges experienced by the teachers in working with parents. What I found was interesting and supported my sense that a change is needed (and has already started) in parent/teacher relationships. Most teachers agreed that helping parents effect positive changes in their home life was deeply satisfying and that building community among the class parents gave teachers great joy. Many teachers also mentioned that parents today have more access to the classroom, accompanying children on walks, joining them in their daily work and celebrating festivals together. Teachers also noted that parents are more anxious, stressed and overwhelmed than ever before and that attendance at class meetings is sporadic and generally low. Many teachers admitted that they only call the parents when their child is doing poorly in the class, never when he or she is doing well. Several teachers mentioned that parents are more critical and that they are hesitant to be candid about their child’s challenges or difficulties. And all the teachers mentioned the ongoing challenge that parents have of protecting their children from media, establishing home rhythms and safe guarding their children from over-stimulation.

Parent education today—indeed any adult education—needs to be experiential. No longer are adults content with taking someone’s word for it, but need to find their own relationship to new ideas. As a new parent, I was often deeply moved by the eloquent words and clear thoughts of various speakers and would leave a lecture inspired by that person’s wisdom. The flip side of that, however, was that I left the lecture feeling that I knew less than I thought I did, and if only I could be as wise as the lecturer I had just heard. . .you get the idea.

In my parent meetings, I want the parents to leave feeling that they know more than they thought they knew; I want them to leave feeling strengthened in their role as parents and more confident in their

understanding of their child. I strive to create a situation where I can enable parents to have a certain experience and, out of that experience, arrive at their own conclusions. An example of this way of working is what I have come to call the Toy Workshop, developed long before I began my career as a Waldorf teacher. It came from my question, as a parent, about what kind of toys promote healthy play and support the creative imagination of my children.

In my class meeting, I introduce our work together by saying that we are going to play with toys and that the point of our exploring toys is *not* to compare Waldorf toys (“good toys”) to “bad toys,” but to reach an understanding of the role toys have in determining how satisfied our children are with their play. What are the possibilities and limitations of different kinds of toys? I start our meeting by talking about the receptivity and freshness of children’s senses and that it is through their senses that children begin to form a relationship with the world. I then have the parents close their eyes, and I pass around natural and man-made articles, asking parents to try not to identify the object but to feel it, smell it, etc. What feels good in your hand? What wants to be held? And what feels too hard or too cold? I pass around plastic and wool toys, pine cones, shells, dolls, stones—anything that is an interesting tactile experience. The parents quietly pass things to each other around the circle, without commenting on them, and, as they finish, I place the objects in the center of our circle. Parents then open their eyes, and I ask them to comment on their experience. Were there surprises? Were there unpleasant sense impressions? (You may be surprised to find that some of the Waldorf toys are not as sense friendly as you thought!) What felt especially good?

I then divide the parents into groups of four to five (separating couples), and then send them (ideally) into different classrooms. In each room, there is a covered pile of toys. I try to make a fairly typical assortment of plastic and more natural toys—what one would possibly find in an average toy chest at home (so there are some broken toys, mismatched toys, etc.). In one pile, I put plastic, mainstream toys and, in the other pile, I put toys from my classroom. Ideally, these piles should be in different rooms. I ask the groups to create a story

line out of what they find in their pile and to play it, using the toys available to them. It is important to let them know that I am not interested in what their story line is: that they are not going to have to repeat the story afterwards. What I am interested in is how they carry the story through the toys they have. They then have fifteen to twenty minutes to play in their groups, and I go from one group to the other, keeping them on track. As we all know, when adults get together, we tend to be chatty, and my job is to be sure that they are not talking about their children or their week-end plans but are focused on bringing their stories into form. Sometimes, especially with the more formed toys, play ends earlier than the allotted fifteen minutes, but I ask them to keep going until the time is finished. They then take apart what they have created, cover the pile again and go the other room and do the same thing all over again, but with another type of toy. After fifteen to twenty minutes, we cover everything up again, come together in our circle, and I ask them what their experience was. I have done this experiment with hundreds of people—many of them not involved with Waldorf education, and the results have always been the same. The “Toys-R-Us” type of toy results in more difficulty carrying a story line and invariably ends in more violent, louder and more destructive play. I find that all I have to do is ask the questions, and the parents, out of their own experience, discover that the more fixed the form of the toy, the harder it is to sustain the imagination. After we have had a discussion, I then speak about the image of the human being, and we compare several types of toys depicting the human being. Which is stronger: the plastic day-glo colored Hulk or the simple prince table puppet my son was given for his birthday by his kindergarten teacher? Which is more feminine: Barbie or a princess marionette? Which is more human: the transformer or the little knot doll? I speak very little during this part; I just pose the questions and let the parents arrive at their own conclusions. Again, I reiterate, this is *not* about good vs. bad toys; it is about being more conscious about what we bring into our homes and how we give an opportunity to our children to express themselves fully and creatively through what they play with. Usually by the next day, I have bags of discarded toys! The parents have formed a bond through their work together, and the community we teachers strive to create among the parents has been strengthened.

So, for your class meetings, find a topic of interest, and then see how you can turn it into an experience, with the parents as active participants. You and they will have a wonderful time!

*Louise de Forest recently joined the board of WECAN. She will be taking a sabbatical from her many years of kindergarten work at Green Meadow Waldorf School next year.*

## WECAN Survey

Collated by Stephen Spitalny

In January 2004, WECAN sent a survey to all of its member groups and individuals. Sixty-five surveys were returned with a plethora of information, more information than was possible to summarize. Some of the areas of response had to be left out of this summary. Collating the results was a challenging task since so many written answers to the questions were submitted. So what follows is an attempt to summarize the results and give a flavor of the thoughts behind the answers when possible. Where it is stated "most common age range for Nursery/Preschool," that signifies "the most common age range only among the programs that responded." Of the many programs that responded, some are early childhood programs connected to or part of a Waldorf school and some are Waldorf home-based kindergarten/preschool programs. Semantics makes summarizing the results challenging, because there are not commonly used names to describe similar programs. What is a preschool as different than a Nursery program, for example? With all the preceding in mind, the following survey results are offered.

Thanks to all the many who responded.

Approx. Age Ranges in Kindergartens	Number of Programs Reporting
3 to 6.5	22
4 to 6.5	15
5 to 6.5	5

The most common age range for the kindergartens that responded is a mixed-age group of three- to six-year-olds.

### Nursery/Preschool Age Ranges

Most start at two-and-a-half or three-years-old and include up to four-and-a-half or five-years-old. Many of the respondents are home-based programs. The most common age range for nursery/preschool is from three- to five-years-old.

Here are some excerpts of written comments collated from the question:

*Any comments on how the mixed ages are working for you? If you do not have mixed ages, any comments on why not? How wide a range seems to work best for you?*

Most who answered this question touted the joys and benefits of mixed-age groups. But the survey was not very clear and precise. There is not a common definition for a mixed-age kindergarten; some consider four years-and-nine-months to six-years-old as a mixed-age group, some think a wider age range is signified.

1. Mixed ages work well. It gives the children a broader developmental group to work within. The older children role model for the younger ones and help them. It feels more like family. The older ones can "revert" and play baby stuff, if they want to.

2. I like the small group (eleven children) with mixed ages. A three-year span works well. In the fall and spring we spend more time outside. The mixed ages seem to interact more outside than inside in their play.

3. We enjoy working with the mixed ages. Some of the younger three-year-olds tend to stay close to the teacher. This works because classes are smaller than some other programs (twelve to sixteen children).

4. We value our mixed-age kindergartens. The children complement each other in their different levels of abilities and give a family feeling to the kindergarten. It also allows a child to be in one classroom for three years.

5. Works very well with careful planning of activities and plenty of time to help younger ones.

6. Mixed-age groups work extremely well. The little ones look up to the older ones and over the course of the two or three years that the children are

here, I see them grow from a busy follower to a confident and patient leader in play and other activities.

7. I love working with the mixed ages! The older children are quite happy to do simple songs and movement with the little ones and later they go into another room for music and movement with only the older ones. Free play is completely interactive.

8. I love mixed-aged classes and have been working with them for seventeen years. This feels so right for the children.

9. We have five classes of three- to six-year-olds with twenty children, a teacher and an assistant. All the teachers enjoy the mixed ages, but find it challenging having more than three three-year-olds.

10. In the small group, it works out very well. We are seeing how the circle activity can become more difficult with more children at wide age ranges in terms of attention, interest, ability and mobility.

11. Mixed ages work very well as long as I have an assistant to work with.

12. Two years, nine months to six years seems to work great. Sometimes the craft project is too complex for the younger ones and it is difficult to find a craft that works with the wide range of ages.

13. We are strong advocates for mixed-age classes. It works wonderfully. We have tried same age groups in the past but love mixed ages. We wouldn't do it any other way.

14. A two-year span seems to work best, although the youngest class mixes with the oldest on many occasions. We have been restricted by space the past few years. Next year we will have more flexibility.

15. It works well to have a separate younger group (three to five) and an older group (four to seven). Part of the preference for the younger group is that parents do not want their young ones in a five-day program. [Ed. The survey doesn't differentiate between five-day and three- or two-day programs.]

16. Last year, I had a kindergarten group ages three to six-and-a-half. I found this was too large a spread. This year we opened a preschool so the kindergarten range was narrower (four-and-a-half to six-and-a-half). I found this easier.

17. A range of no more than two years works best, but the younger the children, the narrower the gap must be.

18. Four-and-a-half to six years works very well. We have requirements for licensing for programs

with younger children that are different than kindergarten age program requirements. They come under two different levels of government. We find children under four-and-a-half can be overwhelmed in the older groups. Also it gives us an opportunity to meet children's specific needs in smaller group. Our preschool is three-and-a-half- to four-and-a-half-year olds.

Most of the schools that responded offer parent/child groups of various age ranges of children. Most of the responding programs offer extended care to all ages of the children they serve. Most programs at schools have extended care staff who are either paid hourly (per hour pay ranges from \$7.00 to \$20.00) or on a part-time salary basis with few exceptions.

One unique program for extended care was described as this: "Our extended/after care program is run by parents out of their homes. Three parents have taken three to four children each into their homes for an aftercare program. They pick up from the kindergarten and preschool at 12:00 p.m. Children stay for one hour to five hours (5:00 p.m. is the latest). They serve hot lunch to the children. The financials are separate from the school. Each parent bills the families directly. Fifty to sixty percent of the kindergarteners use aftercare."

## *News From China*

Tammy Hughes

At the International Kindergarten conference at the Goetheanum, the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America and China formed a partnership in order to support the development of Waldorf education in China. We had the great pleasure of meeting face to face with members of WECAN who had so kindly and graciously raised nearly \$3,000 towards the cost of the trip for the Waldorf teachers working in China and to present our work. As an American working in China, it was very meaningful to stand with my American colleagues and my new Chinese colleagues. In our brief presentation, we showed pictures of the Waldorf school in Chengdu and talked about our work that began in the fall of 2004. It was challenging to pick only fourteen pictures to represent our kindergarten, grade school, and adult education work. The presentation included songs from our two cultures, an American repetitive animal song and a Chinese one about a frog. It was a good cultural exchange to teach each other songs. And it was wonderful to be recognized by the individuals working with Waldorf education all over the world. We can now look to the future and work to make this relationship a true partnership. We need much support as our Waldorf school in the far west of China helps the new initiatives and we look to North America for strength in many ways. Deeds small or large are so appreciated. We welcome your ideas on the development of a lively, collaborative relationship.

*Contact Tammy Hughes at*  
tammyhughes@fastmail.fm  
waldorfchina@126.com.

*The Fourfold Path to Healing: Working with the laws of nutrition, therapeutics movement and meditation in the art of medicine.*

Thomas Cowan, MD, with Sally Fallon and Jaimen McMillan, 2004; New Trends Publishing; 245 pp.  
Reviewed by Stephen Spitalny

The first time I met Dr. Tom Cowan, he was speaking to a group of teachers and described how a disease is merely the body's healthy response to a situation and that healing is not merely elimination of symptoms. Healing is a transformation or integration of some underlying conditions that the body responded to. That thinking was a breath of fresh air for me.

Thomas Cowan's own path in medical practice underlies the approach he takes in this book that attempts to offer "accurate information and effective advice" for the patient. Dr. Cowan decided to become a doctor after reading Weston Price's *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration*. After his training in family medicine, he began his medical practice twenty years ago. He came to believe the reason long term diseases were so hard to treat was that the wrong medicines were being used. So he turned to alternative approaches and natural remedies including herbs and homeopathy. There were some good results, but still a number of patients did not respond. So he began to think about the mystery of why some get better and some don't and began to think about lifestyles and personalities and many other non-biological factors in the patient's situation. He discovered the work of Rudolf Steiner, which radically affected the way he thought about the human being.

This in-depth book is truly a fourfold look at healing the human being. The healing of the physical body is affected in large part by nutrition. Right diet leads the way here, and Dr. Cowan is indebted to Weston Price for his thoughts on the food we eat. Also included in the book is a chapter on food preparation and recipes. In the realm of the etheric body, or life-force body, healing for Dr. Cowan is especially through natural medicines, homeopathy and herbal extracts. The emotional body, or soul, the part of the human being involved in all sorts of relationship with other human beings and life itself, finds healing through movement and exercise. The fourth realm of the mental body or

spirit can attain health through discovering one's own life purpose on a path of self-observation and meditation. Dr. Cowan stresses the importance of finding a healthy balance and integration between the working of the various bodies of the human being. His goal is "healing on all levels and all of us are moving toward that goal. The wise physician no longer dispenses drugs to treat a catalog of symptoms. She realizes that the medicines she prescribes and the therapies she recommends must be aimed at specific imbalances. She knows that diet, life-style, exercise and the life of the mind must all be addressed for true healing to occur.

Sally Fallon (*Nourishing Traditions*) and Jaimen McMillan (Spacial Dynamics®) were both inspirational and supportive in the writing of this book. Their specialties (diet and nutrition, and movement) are integral in the healing approaches brought by Dr. Cowan in this unique book that attempts to transform our thinking and offer a practical approach to healing. This book is filled with exercises, both physical and mental, descriptions of the processes of various diseases, understandings of particular herbs and remedies, and a plethora of useful information that can build up a wide and deep understanding of the activity of healing. Bravo, Dr. Cowan, for offering a fine resource on all aspects of human healing!

## *Lilipoh Holistic Wellness Guide* *Special Edition: New Light on Children's Health*

Edited by Wiep de Vries, summer 2004,

52 pages.

Reviewed by Stephen Spitalny.

The editors of Lilipoh in cooperation with the Wellness Nurses of the Los Angeles Alliance for Childhood have entrusted Wiep de Vries, an anthroposophic nurse, to edit this new edition. It was originally compiled from suggestions of many doctors and nurses and filled with their many years of medical experience, and now has been revised and updated.

The central section of this wonderful new booklet is a twenty-five page *A to Z Wellness Directory* wherein can be found guidance for all sorts of ailments and accidents that a child might experience. Concise listing of symptoms and basic immediate care are put together with remedy and treatment suggestions. The booklet also includes sections on supporting healthy tooth development, treating fever with homeopathy, whole foods for healthy kids, ADHD as a normal stress response, baby comfort care, and suggestions on the contents of a home health care kit. This booklet is a great resource for families and children's care providers and teachers. It

is accessible, easy to understand and offers simple remedies that are easily available. One will refer to this guide again and again for down-to-earth help with many types of situations. My only criticism of this fine resource is its format. It is a floppy magazine and likely will not withstand the test of time, and may get lost in a pile of other magazines and papers before it wears out. I hope a more permanent version is published soon because it would be a shame for this *Children's Wellness Guide* to disappear from usefulness. That said, I recommend that every kindergarten and preschool, and every parent thinking in terms of the health of the whole child, purchase this fine resource and put it on your shelf in an easy-to-find location!

### *The 7 O'Clock Bedtime*

**Inda Schaenen**, ReganBooks, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2001.

Reviewed by Nancy Foster.

"Early to bed, early to rise, makes a child healthy, playful, and wise." Thus reads the cover of *The 7 O'Clock Bedtime* by Inda Schaenen. As a Waldorf early childhood teacher, I have heard so many parents bemoan the difficulties of getting their children to bed at night, and I have observed so many tired, cranky children who seem obviously sleep-deprived. In this sensible, funny, poignant, and, above all, helpful book, Inda Schaenen goes beyond anecdotal evidence to present studies that document the sleep requirements of infants and children, and also the results of inadequate sleep. Ms. Schaenen also describes convincingly and enticingly the benefits to the adults of the household

when children are put to bed early in the evening. Many parents of toddlers and young children can scarcely remember what it was like to sit down with a good book in the evening, early enough to read without immediately falling asleep; to have peace and quiet in a tidy house; to have time for adult conversation. Yet this author claims to have these opportunities every single night! What is her secret? Ms. Schaenen is uncompromising in giving priority to her children's need for enough sleep, so that they can face the world each morning with strength, calm, and energy for the day ahead, and go to sleep peacefully each night before they fall apart physically and emotionally. This priority dictates the way she organizes the daily life of the family, and affects every part of the day. In a wonderfully undogmatic and practical way, she makes suggestions that can be adapted to a particular family's situation. She touches on almost every aspect of family life—

working parents, children of different ages, special occasions, naptime, snacks, homework, after-school activities (keep them to a minimum!), outdoor play, story time, and meals. Through sharing her own trials and learning experiences as a new parent, Ms. Schaenen helps the reader to see that changes can be made even if a difficult pattern has already been established. She is encouraging without promising the impossible; even she, it seems, can have a bad day now and then!

The approach offered by this author is very much congruent with the ideals of Waldorf early childhood education. She advocates a daily rhythm which is attuned to the physical, social, and emotional needs of the child, and points out the essential role of adult responsibility in setting priorities and ensuring, lovingly and firmly, that the rhythm is followed and expectations are met.

Unfortunately, the book's cover design leaves something to be desired; nevertheless I recommend the book with wholehearted enthusiasm. The only part I cannot vouch for in the same spirit is the

section of recipes for quick family dinners. I tried out only one of them, but I am afraid it was not a big hit at our house. Other than that, I can only say: do read this book yourselves and make it known to parents of young children. It is most worthwhile.

### *Fly on the Wall*

The conversation began with, "You're not the boss of me!"

Next child: "Marianne is the boss of the whole school."

"No, Ms. Bishop (the administrator) is the boss."

"No, the man upstairs is the boss."

"I don't even know the man upstairs. Who is that?"

"God, our heavenly father."

"Who is our heavenly father?"

"Jesus."

Finally, "Jesus is a bad word."

I had to smile at the innocent denominational diversity within our little classroom!

*Marianne via Cynthia Aldinger*

## Calendar of Events

### **Conferences, Workshops and Summer Courses**

**Our Children and What They Tell Us**, Logos Foundation Public Conference, June 20-24, 2005 at Sunbridge College, Chestnut Ridge, NY, with Georg Kuhlewind and adjunct faculty include Gregor Simon-Macdonald (Inner Work), Linda Garafallou (Massage), and Will Crane (Spacial Dynamics®), \$495. The new generation of children includes many who bring special gifts and unusual constitutions. How do we recognize and meet these unique and wonderful children? This course is for caregivers, parents and teachers of children from birth through the early grades. Topics include phenomenology, attention, the child's developing separation experience, the inner work of the caregiver, Spacial Dynamics®, and principles of Hauschka massage. Practical exercises and meditative activity will both be practiced as tools for working with children. This is the first of an optional three-part series with weekends in the fall 2005 and spring 2006. Georg Kuhlewind is the founder of the Logos Foundation, an international institute for the promotion of developmentally appropriate child rearing and education. Contact: Matt Burns, 845-425-0055 ext. 24, mburns@sunbridge.edu.

**Summer Eurythmy Week**, June 19-24, 2005, Eurythmy Spring Valley, Chestnut Ridge, NY, with Jennifer Kleinbach and Annelies Davidson, \$400. One-week immersion in the art of eurythmy and is open to all. Sculpture sessions will accompany our work with tone and speech eurythmy each day. Contact: 845-352-5020, ext. 13.

**Fundamentals of the Waldorf Kindergarten**, June 26-July 1, 2005 with Stephen Spitalny and Cynthia Lambert at the Rudolf Steiner College. Beginning with the exploration of early childhood development, the course will look at the basic ideas and activities of the Waldorf kindergarten. Contact: 916-961-8727, www.steinercollege.edu.

**Therapeutic Art of Nursery Rhymes for Circle and Puppetry**, July 4-8, 2005 with Nancy Blanning, therapist and early childhood teacher trainer, and Suzanne Down, Juniper Tree School of Story and Puppetry Arts, at the Rudolf Steiner Institute in Vermont. Explore the nursery rhymes as therapeutic inspiration to circle work and story time with puppets. What lives in their rhythm, repetition, gesture and movement, and story voice work brings harmonious breathing and soul healing to the children. Contact: Rudolf Steiner Institute, 800-774-5191, registrar@steinerinstitute.org

**World Citizen: The Child from Birth to Seven**, LifeWays workshop at Rudolf Steiner Institute in Vermont, July 10-22, 2005, with Susan Silverio and Cynthia Aldinger. A two-week course on early childhood development with inspiring content in an inspiring place and an opportunity to meet the new East Coast LifeWays Program Director, Susan Silverio. Contact: Rudolf Steiner Institute, 800-774-5191, registrar@steinerinstitute.org.

**Spiritual Embryology: The Human Being Between Heaven and Earth** at the Rudolf Steiner Institute in Vermont, July 10-16. One-week intensive with Jap van der Wal exploring the developing human embryo. Learn to "read" the act of incarnation through biology and biography, heredity and evolution, microcosm and macrocosm. Accompanied by eurythmy with Rachel Ross. Contact: Rudolf Steiner Institute, 800-774-5191, registrar@steinerinstitute.org.

**The Child in the First Three Years**, a one- or two-week audit course, July 11-15 and 18-22, 2005 at the Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene, NH. Week One with Susan Weber and Jane Swain from Sophia's Hearth; Week Two with Carol Pinto of RIE (Resources for Infant Educators) and Helle Heckmann from Nøkken, Denmark. Contact: 603-357-3755, info@sophiashearth.org.

**Introduction to the Waldorf Kindergarten**, August 1-5, 2005, at Sunbridge College, Chestnut Ridge, NY. One-week course, open to all, \$510, including materials. Connie Manson, Celia Riahi and Patricia Rubano will offer presentations, discussions, handwork, crafts, and music as an introduction to the ideals and practical details of a Waldorf kindergarten. Underlying all the course activities, as in the kindergarten itself, is the image of body, soul, and spirit developing harmoniously together. Contact: Matt Burns, 845-425-0055 ext. 24, mburns@sunbridge.edu.

**Spiritual and Practical Nurturing for the Young Child**, August 10-13, 2005 with Nancy Jewel Poer, Lauren Hickman, Susan Johnson, M.D., Uwe Stave, M.D. at the Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oaks, CA. This course will combine the spiritual insight into child development with practical care for the infant and young child. Contact: 916-961-8727, www.steinercollege.edu.

**I and Thou: Forging the Chalice of Collegueship: Annual Association of Waldorf Schools Teacher's Conference**, August 7-10, 2005. How do we build upon our encounters with one another on our path to self-knowledge? How can we work to develop a College of Teachers and collaborate with spiritual beings who seek to

help us? Keynote speaker: Christof Wiechert, leader of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum. Hosted by the Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Contact AWSNA at 612-870-8310 or at [www.awsna.org](http://www.awsna.org) for online registration

**Parents and Children Together**, preliminary date November 12-13, 2005, at Camp Glen Brook, Marlborough, NH. A conference for those interested in parent-child work with experienced practitioners, in-depth workshops, keynote talk; Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene, NH. Contact: 603-357-3755, [info@sophiashearth.org](mailto:info@sophiashearth.org).

### *Training Programs*

**Sunbridge College Part-Time Early Childhood Teacher Education.** New program begins June 2006. A two-year, part-time program, with three week courses each summer for three summers, plus a week in the fall. **Wisconsin LifeWays (North America Child Care and Human Development Training)** Opened 05/24/2005, with Cynthia Aldinger, Mary Schuchman, Suzanne Down, and both the LifeWays staff, East Troy and Milwaukee LifeWays Centers and Michael Eisler. **Starting point** found a training group for childcare providers in homes and centers, pre-school teachers in homes, parent-child group leaders, and parents. This certificate training is comprised of two summer sessions with an autumn and a spring weekend in between and mentor-supported independent study. Contact: Cynthia Aldinger, 262-560-9695, [ck.aldinger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ck.aldinger@sbcglobal.net).

**The Child in the First Three Years**, a fourteen-month, part-time training course with the first summer module beginning July 11-22, 2005. Week One with Susan Weber and Jane Swain from Sophia's Hearth; Week Two with Carol Pinto of RIE (Resources for Infant Educators) and Helle Heckmann from Nøkken, Denmark Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene, NH; a course for those interested in an in-depth study of the child and family from pregnancy through the third year of the child's life that includes a thoughtful study of the physical, cognitive, emotional and spiritual growth of the child in the context of his family including artistic work, child development working out of the foundations of anthroposophy and Waldorf education, complemented by

the work of Emmi Pikler and Magda Gerber. Contact: Sophia's Hearth Family Center, 603-357-3755, [info@sophiashearth.org](mailto:info@sophiashearth.org).

**LifeWays North America Early Childhood Training**, October 22-28, 2005, with Cynthia Aldinger, Rena Osmer, Suzanne Down, Trisha Lambert, Rosario Villasana Ruiz and others at the Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oaks, California. Starting our second training group for childcare providers in homes and centers, pre-school teachers in homes, parent-child group leaders, and parents. This certificate training is comprised of one week in the autumn, one week in the spring and two weeks in the summer with mentor-supported Independent Study. Contact: Rudolf Steiner College, 916-961-8727, [rsc@steinercollege.edu](mailto:rsc@steinercollege.edu).

### *Puppetry Events, Workshops and Courses*

**Therapeutic Puppetry Weekend Workshop: The Curative Clock and the Healing Art of Puppetry**, June 24-26, 2005 with Adola McWilliam, Master Curative teacher trainer, co-founder of Ita Wegman Association and Glenora Camphill Farm, and Suzanne Down of the Juniper Tree School of Story and Puppetry Arts. Explore the Curative Clock, the twelve human conditions influenced by the Zodiac with practical therapeutic puppetry indications and practice for four of the conditions: the thin-skinned, thick-skinned, autistic, and encephalitic. Puppet making included. Contact: Suzanne Down, 1-888-688-7333, [suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com](mailto:suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com).

**Juniper Tree School of Story and Puppetry Arts: New East Coast Training** beginning July 11-21, 2005 with Suzanne Down, in Keene, NH. A new training series will begin this summer. Part one of three summer intensives. Will focus on pedagogical puppetry, focusing on early childhood puppetry indications birth to nine and practice. Contact: Suzanne Down, toll free 1-888-688-7333, [suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com](mailto:suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com).

**Juniper Tree School of Story and Puppetry Arts: New North California Training** beginning July 28-August 7, 2005, with Suzanne Down, Sacramento, CA. See description and contact information above.

**Juniper Tree School of Story and Puppetry Arts: New South California Training** , beginning August 10-20, 2005, with Suzanne Down, Highland Hall School, Los Angeles, CA. See description and contact information above.

**LifeWays Puppetry and Speech Development Workshop**, September 23-25, 2005, with Suzanne Down, Cynthia Aldinger, Mary Schunemann, at the Wisconsin LifeWays Centers on the development of speech and puppetry for the young child. Contact: Cynthia Aldinger, 262-560-9695, ck.aldinger@sbcglobal.net.

**Third International Puppets for Peace Day** , Sept. 29, 2005, worldwide. Join an ever- widening circle of puppet friends around the world offering a puppet show on the same day to honor cultural diversity, transform for the good, or bring healthy positive energy through the joy of a story. Together we can bring light to the world energy. Contact: Suzanne Down with your story and venue information, suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com.

**New York State Regional Early Childhood Puppetry Intensive**, Oct. 15-16, 2005, with Suzanne Down, location TBA. Explore telling stories with several types of puppets suitable for the young child and create a magical rod puppet storyteller. We will also work on what makes this amazing kind of puppet come to life with a healing artistry. Contact: Suzanne Down, 1-888-688-7333.

**Massachusetts Regional Early Childhood Puppetry Intensive**, Oct. 22-23, 2005 with Suzanne Down, location TBA. See above description and contact information.

**Washington Regional Early Childhood Puppetry Intensive**, Oct. 29-30, 2005 with Suzanne Down, location TBA. See above description and contact information.

**Second Annual Oregon Regional Early Childhood Puppetry Intensive: Therapeutic Art of Nursery Rhymes and Puppetry** with focus on the Magical Rod Puppet, Nov. 5-6, 2005 with Suzanne Down, location TBA. What makes the nursery rhymes so therapeutic is the rhythm, repetition, and archetype of gesture and movement. Join us to delve deeply into this profound world of consonants, vowels, and breathing. We will

create a nursery rhyme rod puppet storyteller puppet and learn to enliven him with healing movement and verse for the children. Contact: Suzanne Down, 1-888 688-7333.

**Master Class in Marionette Artistry and Archetype** , Nov. 12-13, 2005 with Suzanne Down, in San Francisco, CA. This weekend class is for people with experience in the marionette work. Our focus will be to work deeply into the ensoulment process using spiritual archetypes as our guide to gesture, movement, relationship, and choreography. You may bring your own marionettes to work with. Contact: Suzanne Down, 1-888 688-7333, suzanne@junipertreepuppets.com.

## *Announcements*

Anyone interested in participating in a survey on the effects of puppetry on the etheric body please contact: Joyce Anderson, eleda@panax.com.

### *Classified Advertisement*

**Maple Ridge Sheep Farm:** Natural colored wool batts and rovings for felt or stuffing. Machine washable sheepskins, wonderful infant and toddler sleep mats. Maple Ridge Sheep Farm. 802-728-3081. www.mrsf.com.

Editor: Stephen Spitalny  
Editorial Advisors: Susan Howard  
Barbara Klocek  
Managing Editor: Lydia Roberson  
Administrator: Melissa Lyons  
Copy Editor: Sandy Milczarek  
Cover Art: Michael Howard  
Art Work: Erika Merklung  
Production: Frank Costantino  
Graphic Artist: Pamela Weidel

### *Special Thanks*

We would like to thank everyone who contributed articles for this issue directly, or indirectly through other publications.

Past issues of *Gateways* are available online with many articles posted at <http://www.waldorflibrary.org/gateways.html>. The most recent issues will not be posted online. Hard copies of current issues and back issues can be ordered from WECAN.

### *Seeking Your Contributions*

- \*Articles based on your experiences, observations or research.
- \*Practical activities such as stories, circle times and crafts.
- \*Book reviews of books that are resources for our work as early childhood educators.
- \*Reviews of books that support our work.
- \*Articles about or interviews with the elders in the Waldorf early childhood movement.
- \*Websites that support early childhood work.
- \*Your comments and questions about *Gateways* and past contents.

Annual individual membership, which includes subscription, is \$30.  
Deadlines for articles and advertisements are September 15 and March 15.  
It is preferable that articles be sent on disk or emailed as an attachment to  
[publications@waldorfearlychildhood.org](mailto:publications@waldorfearlychildhood.org)

*Gateways* is published twice yearly by  
the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America, 285 Hungry Hollow Road,  
Spring Valley, New York, 10977. Telephone (845) 352-1690, Fax (845) 352-1695.

# *Gateways*

A Newsletter of the  
Waldorf Early Childhood Association  
of North America

**Spring/Summer 2005**  
**Issue 48**