

## Waldorf Learning Expectations and Assessment Project (LEAP)

Last January thanks to a joint grant from WERI and the Midwest Gifting Group, the Waldorf Learning Expectations and Assessment Project took its own leap off the drawing board into a living process. Project Coordinators Freda Easton and Roberto Trostli on the East Coast and Betty Staley, Karen Anderson and Bob Anderson on the West Coast began working with a small group of volunteer Waldorf teachers to develop the first drafts of Waldorf student learning expectations. Teachers from the Hawthorne Valley School in New York and from a duster of Northern California schools in the Sacramento and Bay areas began by crafting expectations for student learning in four areas of the language arts: speaking, listening, writing, and reading-in kindergarten through third grade. The key questions guiding the work were “What are some of the most important things Waldorf students are expected to learn or be able to do in each area and at each grade level? And what do teachers look for to tell if their students have learned those things?”

These questions, of course, led to many more as the work stimulated a lively exchange of ideas among teachers, project leaders, and members of the project's Advisory Committee. For example, in articulating expectations, how do we recognize and honor differences between individual children? Can we describe a developmental continuum of student learning that will help teachers see where an individual student is (and where he or she might need help) without suggesting that all students will or should be at the same place at the same time? Despite or maybe because of the stimulating questions raised, teachers involved in the pilot program (January through June) found the process rewarding. One noted that thinking about learning expectations had already helped her communicate more effectively with parents. Another commented, “This project has given me hope. I see such a need for this work.” The materials completed in the first phase of the project will be built on as the project continues, with the goal of creating learning expectations in mathematics as well as language arts for kindergarten through eighth grade, and of compiling an anthology of teachers' lessons, assignments, and activities, with examples of student work and teacher commentaries.